

CORPORAL ARTHUR GRANVILLE AMOTT

619054, 4th Battalion, Worcestershire Regiment

Died aged 44 on 26 October 1916

Buried with honour at *Heilly Station Cemetery, Méricourt-l'Abbé*, V C 19

Commemorated in Tewkesbury on the Grammar School Memorial



Heilly Station Cemetery, France



Cheshire Regiment



Worcestershire Regiment

ARTHUR GRANVILLE AMOTT was born in Gloucester on 23 August 1871 to George R. B. Amott and Ellen Elizabeth (formerly Herbert); they both came from Gloucester and had seven children. Research has been complicated because Arthur's birth was registered as **Arnott** and he used a pseudonym for most of his military service. The family moved as George changed jobs: in 1871 Gloucester, and in 1881 Bedminster, Somerset, where George died in 1881 aged 46. Arthur appears to have attended the Grammar School 1882-83 aged 11; his address was Inkerman Works, Aston, Birmingham, where his older brother, Sydney Herbert, was probably living and where his mother died in 1884 aged 48.

As an orphan, it was not surprising that Arthur was a career soldier – with a somewhat chequered history. Over 27 years he served in five different regiments – mostly under an assumed name – and was court-martialled once. His first military venture came in 1889, enlisting in the Militia before 18 under his birth name. Three months later he joined the regular Cheshire Regiment, rising to the rank of Lance Sergeant. However, in 1894 he was court-martialled for being *'absent without leave'*, reduced to the ranks and transferred to the Reserve, but was then *'struck off strength for absence'* in January 1898. By then he had already returned to active military life under an assumed name, **'Sydney Herbert'** (derived from family names), which he used for the rest of his army career. Initially he joined the Militia in January 1897 before signing up as a regular in the Royal Garrison Artillery in June 1897. The deception was probably aimed at covering up his court-martial, which may have been an obstacle to further military service had it come to light.

Arthur then served until 1909, including post-

ings to India and Gibraltar, where his true identity was uncovered. On his Artillery record there is a note: *'Found to have improperly Enlisted ... and being absent from Army Reserve, Cheshire Regiment'*. Arthur (Sydney) confessed to fraudulent enlistment, thus avoiding another trial. He actually completed his engagement in 1909, being discharged with 12 years service towards his pension. In 1911 he was living in Birmingham, with his brother, Sydney Herbert, recorded on the census as 'soldier', as he was still in the Army Reserve.

When war was declared, Arthur enlisted as a Reservist in Birmingham but in the Worcestershire Regiment on 19 August – still as Sydney Herbert. He was posted to the 6th Battalion which remained in the UK for the duration of the war, again rising to the rank of 'paid' Lance-Sergeant. Again, he went absent in May 1916 but on this occasion he was merely demoted.

On 8 July 1916 Arthur was posted to France as part of a reinforcement for the regular 4th Battalion. It was soon involved in the *Battles of the Somme* and took part in the disastrous first day's attack. However, it remained in reserve but still suffered 100 casualties. The battalion then spent six weeks near Ypres before returning to the Somme on 8 October 1916, mid-way through the *Battle of Le Transloy*, to capture the Ridge.

'Sydney Herbert' Amott *'died of wounds, received in action'* on 26 October. He was buried at *Heilly Station Cemetery*, Méricourt-l'Abbé, adjacent to a Casualty Clearing Station.

The inscription on his original headstone, registered just after the war, recognised that he served under the pseudonym of 'S. Herbert', although other sources still record him as 'Corporal Sydney Herbert'. **There is no mention of Amott.**