

## PRIVATE RAYMOND NOEL COLEMAN, M.M.

203141, 2nd Royal Berkshire Regiment

Died aged 27 on 16 August 1917

Remembered with honour at *Tyne Cot Cemetery, Ypres, Belgium*; Panel 105-6 & 162

Commemorated in Tewkesbury at the Cross and in the Abbey, and  
on the Grammar School Memorial in the Town Hall



*Tyne Cot Memorial, Ypres*



*Military Medal*



*Royal Berkshire Regiment*

**RAYMOND NOEL COLEMAN** was born in 1890 in Tewkesbury to James W. Coleman and Eliza (formerly North). James came from Tewkesbury and Eliza was born in Chelsea, then in Middlesex. James and his father, James G. Coleman, owned an outfitting business at 6 & 11 High Street (in 2014 Rage Hairdressers and Gregg's Bakery). Eliza was the daughter of printer, William North. In 1901 the extended family, including Raymond and his four siblings, was living at 11 High Street. Raymond and his older brother, James George, were educated at Tewkesbury Grammar School; after leaving school Raymond worked for his grandfather and was also a keen footballer.

In 1911 Raymond and James emigrated to Australia, sailing from Liverpool on 18 March on the *SS Dorset*, bound for Brisbane in Queensland. On a 1912 Christmas card they were photographed 'camping in their tent in the Bush'; it stated that Raymond had been an apprentice of the 'Echo' newspaper in Cheltenham before he emigrated (on the passenger manifest Raymond was described as a Machinist and his brother as a Bookseller). Raymond returned to the UK in 1914, arriving in London on 19 July on the *SS Beltana*, but James decided to remain in Australia.

Raymond enlisted in Cheltenham sometime in 1916, probably as a conscript, and was posted to the 2nd Battalion, Royal Berkshire Regiment. This was a regular battalion and, on the outbreak of war, was stationed in India. It was quickly recalled to England in October 1914 and placed under the command of the 25th Infantry Brigade in the 8th Division, which was formed during

October 1914 by assembling regular army units previously stationed at various points around the British Empire. On 5 November 1914 the Division landed at Le Havre and took part in several battles during 1915-1917. According to the *Record*, Raymond fought at the Somme in 1916, during which 'he was buried by a German shell and lay for sometime unconscious. Shortly afterwards he was invalided home, suffering from dysentery and shell shock, where he remained for 6 months. He returned to France on 16 May'.

In 1917 Raymond was awarded the *Military Medal 'for gallantry'* during a night trench raid near Hooze in the Ypres Salient, reported locally on 4 August. In the latter part of 1917, the Division was part of the Fifth Army and was involved in the *Third Battle of Ypres* (31 July-10 November) which ended indecisively with limited gains and significant casualties.

**Private Raymond Noel Coleman** was killed in action on 16 August 1917, the first day of the *Battle of Langemarck* near Ypres. His body was not recovered or identified and he is commemorated on the Memorial to the Missing at *Tyne Cot Cemetery*. Raymond's brother, **Private James G. Coleman** [†], had already been killed in 1915, while serving with the Australian Imperial Force during the Gallipoli campaign.

After the war, Raymond's parents retired to Bredon's Norton, but they were Tewkesbury people. His grandfather had been apprenticed to George Watson in 1841 and had served as an Alderman; his father had served as Churchwarden at Holy Trinity for 40 years; and the family were living and working in the High Street in 1913 and, possibly, in 1919.