

PRIVATE ALBERT HENRY CORNISH

242152, 10th Battalion, Worcestershire Regiment

Died aged 21 on 20 September 1917

Remembered with honour at *Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium*; Panel 75 to 77
Commemorated in Tewkesbury at the Cross and in the Abbey, and in Twynning



Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium



Worcestershire Regiment

ALBERT HENRY CORNISH was born in 1896 in Corsham, Wiltshire, to Ernest and Naomi Cornish. He was the eldest of five brothers and one sister. In the 1911 Census Ernest's occupation was recorded as 'Farm Bailiff', the family living at Puckrup Farm, Twynning, except for Albert who was living, as an apprentice, with Charles Chatham, butcher, and his family at 38 High Street, Tewkesbury. Albert was an old boy of the Abbey and Council Schools. When Charles Chatham gave up his business in May 1914, Albert took it over – with considerable success. However, in 1915 he decided to volunteer. He closed the shop and, together with his assistant, joined the Worcestershire Regiment, intending to continue his business later.

Initially, Albert joined the Worcestershire Yeomanry but he was subsequently transferred from the Cavalry to an Infantry Battalion. It was originally formed in September 1914 as part of Kitchener's 'New Army' and landed in France with 19th (Western) Division in July 1915, although Albert was not posted to France until 1916. Albert was invalided home suffering from trench feet, spending some weeks in hospital; after convalescence he went to a training centre and then returned to the front line.

Private Albert Henry Cornish was killed two weeks later on 20 September 1917 during the *Third Battle of Ypres*, sometimes referred to as *Passchendaele*. In fact it comprised a series of set-piece battles and Albert was killed during the attack carried out on the first day of the third phase, the *Battle of the Menin Road Ridge*; it was a particularly successful action. According to the Regimental website: *'after the fighting of the previous month, the Germans still clung to the*

edge of the high ground ... and the attack of the 19th Division, of which the 10th Worcesters was one of the assaulting battalions, was to drive them down the slope into the valley beyond'. It continues: 'at dawn ... on September 20th the gun-fire all along the front rose in intensity, and the British battalions advanced to the attack. Apparently the enemy had not expected the attack to be prolonged ... and the German resistance, though stubborn, was not well supported. The attack was completely successful'. The cost of this attack, however, was one officer and 20 Other Ranks killed with six officers and 95 Other Ranks wounded and 28 missing.

It was some weeks before his family knew his fate. Initially posted as missing, a letter dated 27 October from Albert's C.O. confirmed that he had been killed in action on 20 September, also that *'He was an excellent fellow and appeared to be in such great form. ... He was buried on the field of battle and his comrades erected a cross over his grave.'* The *Tewkesbury Record* commented that *'the family and Miss P. Wilkes of Bredon, to whom this gallant young soldier was engaged, will have the sympathy of a large circle of friends, for the deceased was a young man who, by his sterling character and cheerful and pleasing manner, was held in high regard by all who knew him.'*

Although Private Cornish was buried on the battlefield, his body was not recovered or identified and he is therefore commemorated on the Memorial to the Missing at *Tyne Cot Cemetery*, Belgium, for Commonwealth soldiers (35,000) who have no known grave.

Albert's younger brother, **Reginald**, was also serving in France in the Royal Flying Corps.