

GUNNER ALFRED ERNEST JORDAN

92965, 88th Royal Field Artillery Regiment

Died aged 21 on 12 August 1918

Buried with honour at *Heath Cemetery, Harbonnières, France*; IV F 1

Commemorated in Tewkesbury at the Cross and in the Abbey



Heath Cemetery, Harbonnières



Pte. A. E. Jordan [R. Glasspool]



Royal Field Artillery Regiment

ALFRED ERNEST JORDAN was born in Tewkesbury in 1897, the eldest of three sons and one daughter of Alfred Israel Jordan and Elizabeth Kate (formerly Bridges). Alfred senior was also born in Tewkesbury but Elizabeth came from Birmingham; he worked as a Railway Labourer, but died in 1904 at the age of 30. The family lived for many years in Gravel Walk and Alfred junior was a pupil at Trinity School. In 1911 Alfred was working as an errand boy for a bookshop; he also worked at Gyngell's Garage.

Alfred originally joined the Territorial Force, subsequently enlisting as a volunteer in Birmingham on 10 October 1914. He was then posted to the 88th Battery of the Royal Field Artillery Regiment. This Battery, within 14 Brigade Royal Field Artillery, 4th Division, had been part of the original British Expeditionary Force sent to France in 1914. The battery was equipped with 18-pounder guns, the standard weapon of the field artillery.

Unlike infantry units, artillery batteries were moved more frequently to where they were needed. In January 1917 Alfred found his unit changing Brigades and Divisions so that, by the time of the Armistice, it was attached to the Fourth Army. (This is known because of the location of the cemetery in which Alfred was interred.) In addition, the artillery was increasing its fire power: the Brigade expanded during 1918 to include four Batteries, each one operating six 18-pound field guns.

In August 1918 the Fourth Army was in the Somme sector, and played a prominent part in the campaign known as *'The Last Hundred Days'* which saw the Allies inflict a series of crushing defeats on the German Army, culminating in the Armistice. The campaign started on 8 August, at the *Battle of Amiens* (8-11 August 1918), the British offensive often taken to be the turning point of the First World War on the Western Front.

Private Alfred Ernest Jordan was killed on 12 August 1918, around the time the *Battle of Amiens* was coming to an end. The manner of his death illustrated the increasing threat of air power. He was apparently the victim of a bomb dropped from an enemy aeroplane whilst *'on his way back from the YMCA Hut: [he was] very plucky until the last ... and our pal'*. He was buried in a local churchyard but after the war he was re-interred in *Heath Cemetery*, Harbonnières. This cemetery was created after the Armistice when graves were brought in from the temporary battlefield burial grounds. Heath Cemetery is located around the mid-way point on the straight main road from Amiens to St. Quentin, just behind the British front line at the time Alfred was killed.

At the time of his death, his address was given as 116 Chester Street, Birmingham. This was probably the address of his mother, Elizabeth Kate Jordan, who originally came from Birmingham, the city in which Alfred enlisted.