

SECOND LIEUTENANT LEONARD TYSOE

Durham Light Infantry then 39th Company, Labour Corps

Died aged 38 on 31 May 1917

Buried with honour at *Mindel Trench British Cemetery, St. Laurent-Blangy*; C 14

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



Mindel Trench British Cemetery



Durham Light Infantry



Labour Corps

LEONARD TYSOE was born in 1879 in Tewkesbury to Congreve John Tysoe and Ellen (formerly Greening). The family was a Tewkesbury dynasty of grocers, which came originally from Lower Swell and lasted from 1850 to 1948, latterly at 5 Barton Street (occupied in 2015 by a tattoo shop). Both parents came from Tewkesbury, having nine children. Congreve died in Tewkesbury in 1900 at the age of 53. Leonard's brother, John William, was the son who stayed and managed the shop whilst Leonard, a former pupil of the Abbey House and the Grammar Schools, left Tewkesbury to find employment as a surveyor with Hammersmith Council. In 1901 Leonard was boarding in Richmond, Surrey, described as a civil engineer. In 1911 he was recorded on the census as a visitor in Datchet, Buckinghamshire, his occupation shown as a municipal surveyor's assistant. From 1913 to 1915 he lived in Brentford, Middlesex. On 8 October 1914 he married Hilda Amelia Balls in Mutford, Suffolk; they had one son, Leonard F., in 1917 when Hilda was living at 38 Droitwich Road, Worcester.

Unlike his two younger brothers, Leonard was not an Abbey Volunteer. However, on 28 April 1917 the *Register* reported that he had been 'released to serve in the war', which suggests that his employer may have been trying to keep his services. It is likely that he was called up as a result of conscription, introduced in 1916. Leonard was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Labour Corps and sent to France in March 1917 where he was posted to the 39th Company. The Labour Corps was formed in January 1917 by consolidating into a

single organisation the disparate units that had previously undertaken the immense amount of logistical work required to support the British Expeditionary Force, such as maintaining the huge network of roads, railways, buildings, camps, etc.. Although the Corps was typically manned by officers and other ranks who had been medically rated below the 'A1' condition needed for front-line service, it is feasible that Leonard was assigned because of his civil engineering skills.

Second Lieutenant Leonard Tysoe was killed in action on 31 May 1917, in the final throes of the *Arras Offensive*. Nothing is known of the circumstances of his death but it is likely that he was carrying out work to secure ground captured in the offensive. Leonard's body was recovered and he was buried in *Mindel Trench British Cemetery*, near Arras.

Leonard's obituary in the *Birmingham Daily Post* on 6 June 1917 provided more information: 'eldest son of the late C. J. Tysoe and Mrs. Tysoe of Droitwich Road, Worcester [who] has been killed, was well known in hockey circles, and ... was honorary secretary of the Richmond club'. As well as in Tewkesbury, Lt. Tysoe is commemorated in the Roll of Honour in Worcester Cathedral and on the Memorial at St Stephen's Church, Worcester.

Leonard's younger brothers both served and survived the war: Carlton Edward in the Worcester Yeomanry and Northumberland Hussars, and Allan Harris in the Australian Army Medical Corps; Allan was *Mentioned in Dispatches* and awarded the *Meritorious Service Medal*.