

Cholesbury Stories

Arthur Edward Batchelor was a Sapper in the 65th Field Company Royal Engineers. was born in Cholesbury, Buckinghamshire on 7th April 1896 and was baptised on 28th February 1897. He was the son of Joseph and Hannah Batchelor (Keen). His father was a general labourer.

During the First World War Arthur enlisted in the Royal Engineers. As part of the 65th Field Company he embarked at Devonport on December 19, 1915, and arrived in Egypt to work on the Suez Canal Defences. As a Field Company, they provided technical skills, including bridging, trench building, and fortifications, supporting the troops defending the Suez Canal. By 1916 the 65th Field Company had moved to Greece. Arthur died of wounds on 15th December 1916 in Salonika and was buried in Salonika (Lembet Road) Military Cemetery, Greece.

Frank Robinson was a private in A Company 17th Battalion Tank Corps (formerly Herts Regiment 2321). He was born on 21st June 1896 in Cholesbury, Buckinghamshire. He was the son of Thomas and Alice Robinson (Briggs). His father was a miller and corn dealer. Both his parents were born in Northamptonshire.

In 1911 Frank was living with his parents, brothers James, William and John and sister Kate at Cholesbury. His father was a corn miller, and Frank was working as a farm hand.

Initially Frank enlisted in the Hertfordshire Regiment before transferring to the 17th Battalion Tank Corps. Between the 10th and 15th June 1918 the Battalion were involved in operations with the French army, having arrived in France in April 1918. Frank was killed on 11th June 1918 and is buried in St Martin-aux-Bois churchyard, France. His is the only CWGC grave in the churchyard.

Mark Humphreys was a private in the 14th Battalion Canadian Infantry (Quebec Regiment). He was born in Cholesbury, Buckinghamshire in 1888. He was the son of Charley and Mary Ann Humphreys (Hoare). His father was born in Hawridge, Buckinghamshire and worked as an under gardener. His mother was born in Cholesbury.

In 1911 Mark was living with his parents and sister May at Cholesbury. His father was a labourer on an estate and Mark was a labourer on a farm. On 1st May 1913 Mark departed England on the steamship Scotia bound for Quebec, Canada.

Mark enlisted in Toronto, Ontario, Canada on 13th July 1915 in the 14th Battalion Canadian Infantry. On 3rd June 1916 Mark was reported missing, then killed in action following an attack near Mount Sorrel. He is remembered on the Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres.

Ultimus George Crawley MM was a private in D Company 6th Battalion Oxford & Bucks Light Infantry. He was born in Wiggington, Hertfordshire on 22nd February 1893. He was the son of Samuel and Sarah Margaret Crawley (Constable). His father was born in Wiggington

In 1901 Ultimus was living with his widowed father in the home of Ann Gomm at Cholesbury Bottom. His father was a general farm labourer. It is likely he was raised by his grandparents.

Ultimus joined the navy in 1910 and in 1911 he was at the Royal Naval Barracks in Chatham where he was an officer's steward. Having served on several ships he was discharged as unsuitable in October 1912.

At the outbreak of the First World War, he enlisted in Oxford in the Oxford & Bucks Light Infantry. At dawn on 20th September 1917 the 6th Battalion were involved in an attack on German lines, but almost immediately faced sustained and heavy enemy machine gun fire forcing all companies to look

for cover in shell holes. Ultimus was killed in the action of this day and is remembered on the Tyne Cot Memorial, Zonnebeke, Belgium. He was awarded the military medal for bravery in the face of the enemy.

William Mcllwrick was a Lance Corporal in J Special Company Royal Engineers (formerly Oxford & Bucks Light Infantry 24845). He was born in Theydon Mount, Essex in 1883.

In 1901 William was living with his grandfather William Mcllwrick in Ongar Park, Essex. His grandfather was a shepherd, and William was an agricultural labourer.

He married Louisa Mary Pittock in July 1913 in Dover, Kent. They had a daughter Constance on 17th December 1915.

He enlisted in Aylesbury in the Oxford & Bucks Regiment but later transferred to 'J' Special Company Royal Engineers. 'J' Special Company, Royal Engineers, was a specialized chemical warfare unit active on the Western Front during WW1. Formed in 1916 as part of the Special Brigade, it was primarily responsible for discharging poisonous gas from cylinders. In 1918, Special Companies were heavily involved in supporting the Allied offensives on the Somme, at Bapaume, and in the Battles of the Lys. They used the Livens Projector frequently in 1918, including supporting the Australian Corps in July 1918. William was killed in action on 18th July 1918 and was buried in Neuf-Brisach Communal Cemetery Extension, Haut-Rhin, France.



Arthur Batchelor



Military Medal – Ultimus (Altimus) Crawley