

1914-10-12

Regiment. 1st Wiltshire

Location France, [La Contoure]

Entry (Monday) 9.30a.m. Bde marched from HINGES to neighbourhood of LA COUTURE, where Worcesters, S Lincs and R I R became engaged with the enemy along the left bank of the river LOISNE. C Coy went in to fill gap between 7th & 8th Bdes and D Coy went to reinforce the Worcesters, but, were ordered back about midnight. B Coy remained with 42nd Bde R F A as escort.

1914-10-13

Regiment. 1st Wiltshire

Location France, [La Contoure]

Entry (Tuesday) Bde advanced across the river LOISNE driving the enemy back. Battn H Q removed to E entrance to LA COUTURE which was shelled at intervals throughout the day. 8.45p.m. C Coy returned from the firing line reported 9 killed 8 wounded.

Diary entries for 12 and 13 October, 1914 for the 1st Bn. Wiltshire Regiment.

Charlie had already died by the time news of his wounding appeared in *The Wiltshire Times and Trowbridge Advertiser* of 5 December 1914:

Wilts Regiment Casualty List.

WOUNDED.

8219 Pte. H. T. Ashman
6250 Pte. P. B. Cleverly
6511 Pte. G. Batt
8881 Pte. M. Kirby
9045 Lce.-Corpl. G. Pound
9048 Pte. C. H. P. Randall
7471 Pte. G. J. Tomkins
6016 Pte. E. W. West
7009 Pte. A. J. Page

The Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette of 11 December 1915, published details of monies held by the War Office for distribution to the next-of-kin of many soldiers who had died which to us, one hundred years later, may seem macabre:

DEAD SOLDIERS' MONEY.

In pursuance of the Regimental Debts Act, 1893, a further list has been issued this week by the War Office of deceased soldiers who have left balances standing to their credit in the hands of the regimental authorities, which balances are held for distribution amongst the next-of-kin or other persons who can prove themselves entitled thereto. The present list contains 336 names, including the following, the amount of the personal estate being appended in each instance:—
Pte. W. D. Callahan, 1st Batt. Somerset L.I., £7 12s. 2d.; Sergt. J. Cove, 1st Batt. Somerset L.I., £17 8s. 5d.; Pte. J. E. Hooper, 1st Batt. Somerset L.I., £6 6s. 7d.; Pte. P. G. Staddon, 1st Batt. Somerset L.I., £4 15s. 2d.; Pte. E. Emery, 1st Batt. Wiltshire Regiment, £1 19s.; Pte. J. Phillips, 1st Batt. Wiltshire Regiment, £5 6s. 9d.; Pte. C. H. P. Randall, 1st Batt. Wiltshire Regiment, 12s. 1d.; Drummer G. H. Howell, 2nd Batt. Wiltshire Regiment, £15 11s. 5d.

The Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette of 11 December 1915

Entries from the 'Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects 1901-1929' shows the amount of money due to Charlie's family upon his death and how it was distributed:

151707	<i>88886</i>	<i>Randall</i>	1 st Bata	13/10/14			<i>Esceker</i>	6	13	3		<i>6</i>	12-2
		<i>Charles</i>	<i>Wilt's</i>	<i>Drainy</i>			<i>Grampis</i>						12-2
		<i>Henry</i>	Regt	Station									12-2
		<i>Portlock</i>	<i>De</i>	<i>Liferno</i>									12-2
		<i>A. W. 5070 Cent</i>	9048	<i>Carroy</i>									12-1
				<i>Grampis</i>									12-1
				<i>Wounds</i>									12-1
		4 APR 1919											12-1
							WAR GRATUITY.						
							1919/20						
							Transfer 3689		<i>4234/14</i>				5
							Regd. Paper		<i>21/1946</i>		<i>621</i>		0
							Serial No.		1201				0

			<i>Esceker</i>	6	13	3		<i>12-2</i>	<i>107.0</i>	<i>1/15</i>	<i>8.11.15</i>	<i>Mrs. Allan</i>	-	12	2
			<i>Grampis</i>					<i>12-2</i>				<i>" Frank</i>	-	12	2
								<i>12-2</i>				<i>" George</i>	-	12	2
								<i>12-2</i>				<i>" Sidbey</i>	-	12	2
								<i>12-1</i>				<i>" William</i>	-	12	1
								<i>12-1</i>				<i>5. Mrs. Annie Cottrell</i>	-	12	1
								<i>12-1</i>				<i>" Mrs. Mary Parker</i>	-	12	1
								<i>12-1</i>				<i>" Mrs. Daisy Brock</i>	-	12	1
								<i>12-1</i>				<i>" Mrs. Florence Richards</i>	-	12	1
								<i>12-1</i>				<i>" Mrs. Ellen Stevens</i>	-	12	1
								<i>12-1</i>	<i>m-02/1814</i>	<i>3-75</i>		<i>Mrs. Mrs. Elsie Brown</i>	=	12	1
												<i>Mrs. Sydney</i>	5		

Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects 1901-1929: the entry for C H P Randall

Charlie was awarded the 1914 Star, the Victory and British War Medals. In addition, he received the 1914 Star Clasp, sometimes known as the Mons medal, indicating that he had enlisted between specific dates, i.e. 5 August and 22 November 1914.

69

Campaign :— **1914**

(A) Where decoration was earned.

(B) Present situation.

Name	Corps	Rank	Reg. No.	Roll on which included (if any)
(A) RAYDALL <i>miller</i>	<i>Re</i>	<i>9048</i>		MEDAL <i>8/1/102</i> VICTORY <i>9/11 1199</i> BRITISH <i>do do</i>
(B) <i>Charles</i> H. P.	<i>—</i>	<i>—</i>	<i>—</i>	<i>14</i> <i>9/13 94</i>

Action taken
Done

Clasp 2/26/19

QUALIFYING DATE. *14 8.14*

(6 34 46) W234—HP5590 500,000 . 4/19 HWV(P240) K608 [OVER.]

Medal Index Card for Charles Henry Portlock Randall showing his entitlement to the 1914 Star and Clasp, Victory and British War Medals



Charlie remembered on a panel at Le Touret Memorial



In Memory of
Private

Charles Henry Portlock Randall

9048, 1st Bn, Wiltshire Regiment who died on 13 October 1914 Age 19

Son of the late Allan and Jane Randall.

Remembered with Honour
Le Touret Memorial



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

**When you go home, tell them of us and say,
For your tomorrow we gave our today.
Charlie's Family History**

Allan Randall and Jane Portlock, parents of Charles, married in the Register Office in Cheltenham in 1874. They lived in Birdlip for several years where four of their children were born. Thereafter, they moved frequently according to where work could be found, spending time in Northleach, Withington, Bourton on the Water and Eisey. They had twelve children: Alan (b. 1875), Frank William (b. 1876), Anne Elizabeth (b.1878), George (b. 1879), Alice Mary (b. 1882), Sydney Charles (b. 1884), Florence Emily (b. 1886), Daisy Blanche (b. 1888), Ellen (b. 1890), Elsie (b. 1890), William Charley (b. 1895) and Charles Henry Portlock (b. 1898), known as 'Charlie'.

Charlie was the last child born to Allan and Jane Randall in Eisey in 1898. A year later Allan passed away and the census of 1901 shows that Jane and nine children remained in the area on Alix Farm. Three sons, Frank, George and Sydney, aged 24, 20 and 17 years respectively, helped to support the family by working as general labourers. In time, the children became independent, married and had families of their own. Jane passed away in 1908.

On 6 May 1916, William Charles Randall and Lily Rose Eatwell were married in the village church. The Eatwell family had lived and worked in the local area for almost two hundred years, the first recording of their name in our parish records being that of Elizabeth Eatwell in 1748/9 and one assumes her parents to have been resident before then. William, a carter, was not present in the village in the census of 1911 but appears to have arrived in the village nearer the date of his marriage.

William Charles and Lily Rose Randall raised their seven children in Winterbourne Bassett: Catharine Rose (b. 1917), Margery May (b. 1920), Olive Mary (b. 1922, who married Ron Bridges, a resident of Winterbourne Bassett until his death on 28 July 2017), William Charles Edward (b. 1924), Irene (b. 1930), Alice Maud (b. 1934) and Donald (b. 1936).

According to electoral rolls, William's brother, Frank, moved to Berwick Bassett at about the time the war came to an end. He married Mary Jane Merritt in 1919 in the Marlborough Registry Office. From 1926, he and Mary Jane lived in Winterbourne Bassett and immediately before the outbreak of the Second World War, they were living at 'No. 36' located at the west end of the village. This places two brothers in the local area at the time criteria were being established with regard to those names which were to be included on the memorial plaque.

On their respective deaths in 1962 and 1955, William and Lily were buried in the village churchyard. William's granddaughter, Barbara Heaton, occasionally travels from the Liverpool area to the village to visit her cousin, Mary Stevens, and the grave of William and Lily. She has confirmed Charles Henry Portlock Randall's genealogical connections with her family, i.e., he was her great-uncle.

One cannot be sure of the reason for the use of 'C E' on the memorial plaque but evidence appears to support the conclusion reached: C E Randall was Charles Henry Portlock Randall based on 1) the familial relationship between William, Frank and Charlie, 2) research shows that C H P Randall has not been included on a memorial elsewhere in this country, and 3) the 'Register of Soldier's Effects 1901-1929' shows the distribution of back pay to Charlie's eleven siblings upon his death and a war gratuity to one brother. All the names of the siblings agree with the names of siblings entered on pre-war censuses once again verifying Charlie's relationship with William and Frank.

If an error was made it was one which appears to have been accepted by the family. If the error is the writer's, then who was C E Randall?

Albert Edward Eatwell
1st Bn. Wiltshire Regiment

Killed in Action
19 October 1914
France

Private Albert Edward Eatwell lost his life on 19 October 1914 in Ligny le Grand, some 10 km as the crow flies from La Couture where Private Charles Randall of the same battalion and also from Winterbourne Bassett, died just a few days earlier on 13 October 1914. Albert's connection with Charles Randall was through his sister, Lily Rose Eatwell, who married Charles's brother, William Charles Randall in 1916. It is uncertain whether the soldiers were acquainted with each other prior to this marriage and the onset of World War One. Four years later on 24 October 1918, a cousin of Albert and Lily Rose Eatwell, Arthur Tom Swadden, was also killed in action in France while serving with the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Munster Fusiliers. Born the same year and living in the same village, Albert and Arthur would have attended school together, played together and may indeed have enlisted together.

Albert, born in Winterbourne Bassett in 1893, enlisted in the 1st Battalion of the Wiltshire Regiment immediately upon the outbreak of war in August 1914. By the 14 August he was serving with the Wiltshires in France. Albert's early days in the army followed the same pattern as described for Charles Randall:

A wire confirming that Britain was at war was received at Tidworth on 5 August 1914. The 1st Battalion, already on standby from the day before, began mobilisation in earnest and after several days of musketry training, drills, inoculations and inspections, two trains of soldiers finally left Tidworth during daylight hours on 13 August and delivered 1,014 soldiers of all ranks to shed 23 at Southampton docks where they embarked on the SS *South Western* and the SS *Princess Ena* and sailed for France arriving in Rouen the following day: the 14 August was the qualifying date for many Wiltshire soldiers awarded the 1914 Star Medal at the end of the war.

Several days of long marches and overnight billets eventually brought the battalion, as part of the 3rd Division of the 7th Brigade, to Cibly where the battalion billeted on the night of 22 August and began entrenching north of Cibly, facing Mons. During the following day and throughout the night of 23 August, the soldiers came under enemy shell fire. The earliest deaths of soldiers, officers and horses of the 1st Bn. of the Wiltshires were recorded on 24 August, 1914.

During the ensuing weeks, the battalion entrenched, retired, retreated and entrenched repeatedly in different areas, all their comings and goings, battles and skirmishes being recorded in the war diaries of the 1st Battalion Wiltshire Regiment. During the remainder of 1914, the battalion saw action at The Battle of Mons, The Battle of Le Cateau, The Battle of Marne, The Battle of Aisne and the Battles of La Bassee and Messines and the First Battle of Ypres.

On 6 October 1914, the battalion had arrived in Abbeville by train and during the next days marched on to La Triquerie Chateau, then on to Regrauville and Pernes, reaching Hinges on 11 October.

The brigade marched to the area of La Couture on 12 October where fierce fighting followed on 13 October as companies of the battalion crossed over the Loise River. C Company lost nine men and eight were wounded. The Wiltshires advanced to Ligny le Grand where sporadic fighting continued resulting in further injuries and loss of life.

Excerpts from the battalion's war diaries for that period reveal the number of soldiers wounded and killed, one of whom was Albert who died on Monday, 19 October 1914 on a day which saw intense shell and rifle fire and heavy guns used by the enemy later in the day:

1914-10-14	
Regiment. 1st Wiltshire	
Location France, [La Couture]	
Entry	(Wednesday) B Coy returned off escort duty to R F A. A reinforcement of 1 officer (2nd Lieut Gee) and 86 other ranks joined the Battn and were posted to A 13, B 16, C 57. 6.10p.m. Alarm in the firing line. Battn stood to arms, but dismissed about 9.45p.m. 2 men of B Coy wounded. Half A Coy escort to guns at night.

The war diary entry of the 1st Wiltshire Regiment for 14 October 1914

1914-10-15	
Regiment. 1st Wiltshire	
Location France, [La Couture]	
Entry	(Thursday) Remained at LA COUTURE. Eleven sick and wounded rejoined fit.

1914-10-16	
Regiment. 1st Wiltshire	
Location France, [Neuve Chapelle]	
Entry	(Friday) Advanced to NEUVE CHAPELLE via RICHEBOURG relieved S Lancers in outpost lines in the BOIS DE BIEZ about 10p.m. a difficult task owing to very dark night.

1914-10-17	
Regiment. 1st Wiltshire	
Location France, [Ligny le Grand]	
Entry	(Saturday) 6a.m. Bde advanced in line delayed by 9th Brigade on left. Wilts made LIGNY-LE-GRAND by 10.30 and got into touch with the enemy. Advance continued very slowly, the left always meeting with opposition. The Bde became very attenuated owing to divergent attacks by the Bdes on our flanks. Entrenched a position at night E of LIGNY-LE-GRAND 18 men wounded.

1914-10-18

Regiment. 1st Wiltshire

Location France, [Ligny-le-Grand]

Entry (Sunday) Endeavoured to make ground to the front, but, enemy appeared to have been strongly reinforced, only succeeded in making about 200 to 300 yards. Germans shelled trenches and village, made another effort to get forward at dusk. Heavy firing continued till 10.30p.m. but little progress made. Enemy employed guns, search light and star shells, they also fired hay ricks. Casualties 2nd Lieut Gee dangerously wounded, 2nd Lieut Gaskell slightly wounded, other ranks 3 killed, 21 wounded.

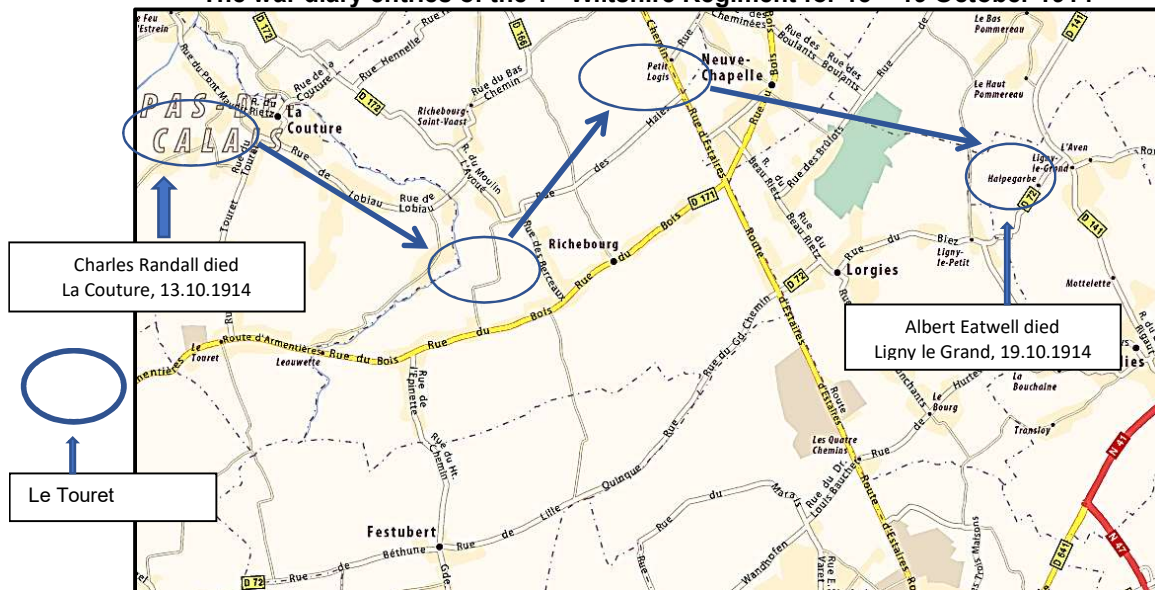
1914-10-19

Regiment. 1st Wiltshire

Location France, [Ligny-le-Grand]

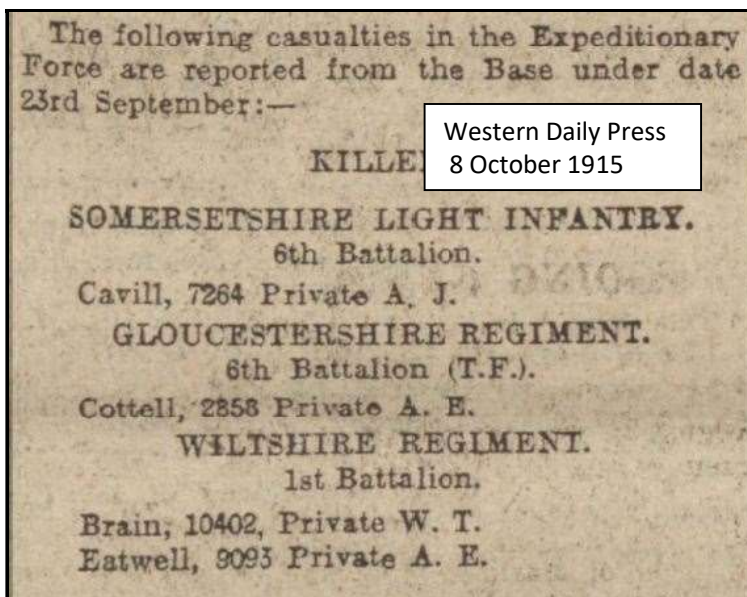
Entry (Monday) A & B Coys made a little ground but, shell and rifle fire very heavy. 2nd Lieut Lloyd succeeded in making a lodgement with one platoon of D Coy in the outskirts of ILLIES and was joined by 2nd Lieut Rose with his platoon. At dusk, enemy fired a rick close to B Coy line which prevented wounded and dead being brought in till late. Rain helped keep the fire down. Enemy used heavy guns during the afternoon. 2nd Lieuts Lloyd and Rose withdrew as their effectual support impossible. Casualties 12 killed and 21 wounded. Capt Stoddart granted the CROIX DE CHEVALIER and ORQMS Warwick the MEDAILLES MILITAIRES of the LEGION OF HONOUR. Special orders of the day received. (App. VIII)

The war diary entries of the 1st Wiltshire Regiment for 15 – 19 October 1914



The route from La Couture to Ligny le Grand, via Richebourg and Neuve Chapelle, a distance of approx. 10km as the crow flies. The location of Le Touret Memorial is also shown where both Albert Eatwell and Charlie Randall are remembered.

Although next of kin were advised of a soldier's death by telegram, casualty lists were published in newspapers. Albert's death was reported 12 months after the event:



An entry in the 'Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects 1901-1929' shows the distribution of back-pay and the war gratuity to Albert's parents, William and Emily:

202837	Eatwell	1st Bn Mildesire Edward	19.10.14. Evoked 10/15	4 1 -	4 1 -	M.O. 4/15	26.11.15	£2. = William	4 1 =
		Private 9093					1.9.19	£10 = Emily	5 - -
		A.F.W 5070 Ser. A		5 - -					
		20 MAY 1918							
				WAR GRATUITY.					
				1919/20					
				transfer 14.2.1915					
				10/15					
				1919/20					
				10/15					
				1919/20					
				10/15					
				1919/20					
				10/15					
				1919/20					
				10/15					

The 'Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects 1901-1929' shows the entry for Albert Eatwell and the awards to his parents, William and Emily Eatwell

Campaign:— 1914

(A) Where decoration was earned.

(B) Present situation.

Name	Corps	Rank	Reg. No.	Roll on which included (if any)		
				MEDAL	ROLL	PAGE
(A) EATWELL	Wiltshire A.	Pvt.	9093	VICTORY	C/1/02 B4	460
(B) A. E.				BRITISH	do - do	do
				14 STAR	C/1/3	37.

Action taken
Killed.

14-8-14

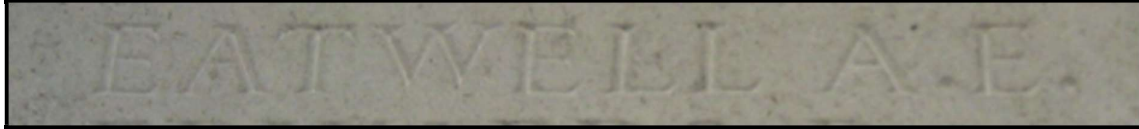
QUALIFYING DATE.

(6 34 46) W234-HP5590 500,000 4/19 HWV(P240) K608 [OVER.]

Medal Index Card: Albert Edward Eatwell showing the award of the

British War and Victory Medals and the 1914 Star and Clasp

Albert is remembered at Le Touret Memorial located about 3 km south of La Couture and Richebourg.





Albert remembered on one of the many panels at Le Touret Memorial

In Memory of
Private
Albert Edward Eatwell

9093, 1st Bn, Wiltshire Regiment who died on 19 October 1914 Age 21
Son of Mrs. W. Eatwell, of 6, Fox Row, Winterbourne, Bassett, Swindon.

Remembered with Honour
Le Touret Memorial



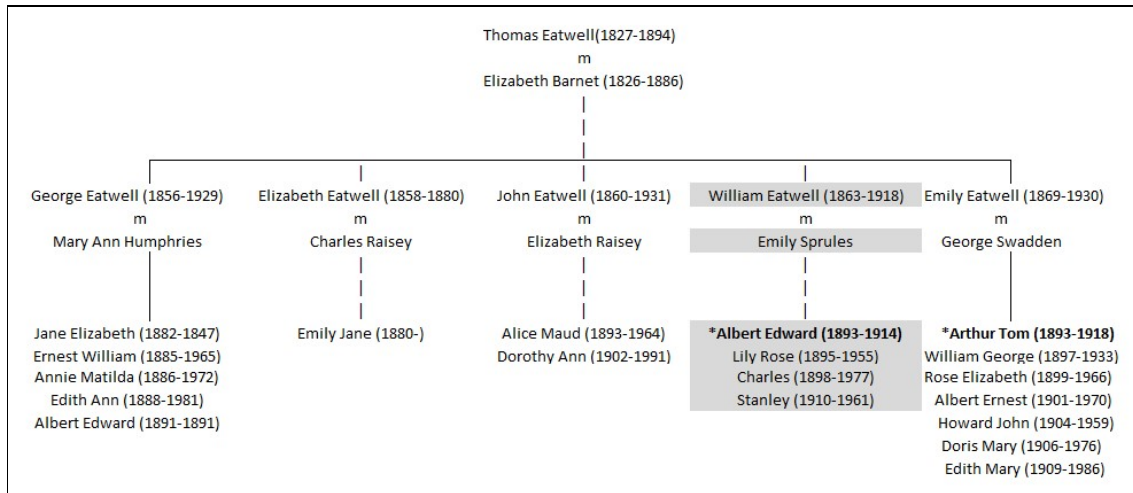
Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

At the entrance to Le Touret Cemetery, you will find the following inscribed in both English and French:

**To the Glory of God
and in Memory of 13,482
British officers and men who fell
fighting in this neighbourhood
from October 1914 to September 1915
whose names are here recorded
but to whom the fortune of war
denied the known and honoured burial
given to their comrades in death.**

Albert's Family History

The first-known presence of an Eatwell family in Winterbourne Bassett (W.B.) occurred with the baptism of Simon and Rebecca Eatwell's daughter, Elizabeth, in February 1749. Many generations of Eatwells have lived in the village since then, mostly working on local farms, and although many have moved on, there are still descendants living in the area.



Descendants of Thomas and Elizabeth Eatwell

*Both soldiers killed in action

The 1911 census shows that shortly before the outbreak of war, several Eatwells were employed at Whyr Farm. It was customary for accommodation to be provided for farm workers and the censuses place the Eatwells at Gripps Cottages during their earlier years of employment on the farm and at Whyr Cottages in the early 1900s. While the 1841 and 1851 censuses do not clearly distinguish one address from another in Winterbourne Bassett, the 1861 census does so and we find Thomas and Elizabeth Eatwell living at 4 Gripps Cottages with their three young children, George (b. 1856), Elizabeth (b. 1858) and John (b. 1860). A further two children were born during the next decade: William (b. 1863) and Emily (b. 1869). By 1871 the two elder sons, George and John, were employed as plough boys on the farm. A decade later John was working as a labourer on a farm in East Ilsey, boarding with the Raisey family.

As time passed each of the children married. Elizabeth was the first to do so. She married Charles Raisey in St Katherine and St Peter's on 7 December 1878. She died towards the end of 1880 soon after the birth of her first child, Emily Jane.

John married Elizabeth Raisey, believed to be Charles Raisey's sister, in 1881. They lived at Prior's Hill, Wroughton for many years.

George married Mary Ann Humphries in St Katherine and St Peter's on 12 November 1881 and moved into separate accommodation at Gripps Cottages.

Elizabeth passed away at the age of sixty-three and was buried in the village churchyard on 3 October 1886. Thomas remained on in Gripps cottages with William and Emily.

On her marriage in June 1892 to George Swadden, a cowman, Emily moved from Gripps Cottages into the village. (They too lost a son in the Great War.)

William Eatwell and Emily Sprules were married in the village church in September 1892 and made their home with Thomas as the three men (Thomas, William and George) were still employed on Whyr Farm. It is likely that three of their four children were born in Gripps Cottages: Albert Edward (1893-1914), Lily Rose (1895-1955) and Charles (1898-1977). Their last child, Stanley (1910-1961) was probably born after their move to New Buildings in the village. The highlighted area on the tree above shows the immediate family of soldier Albert Edward Eatwell.

Thomas died aged sixty-six in 1894 and was buried in St Katherine and St Peter's on 4 April. He lived to see each of his five children married and welcomed several grandchildren into the world. Although just infants in 1894, he would have known his two grandsons, Albert and Arthur, killed in France in 1914 and 1918 respectively.

Due to the need to vacate the ageing Gripps Cottages around the early 1900's, George moved to the newly constructed Elm Tree Cottages at Whyr Farm while William and Emily moved to 31 Winterbourne Bassett (New Buildings) where they would have received the news of Albert's death in 1914. William died at this address in 1918. Emily moved to 6

Fox Row and at the time of her death in 1930, she was living at 4 The Common in Marlborough. Both were buried in the churchyard of St Katherine and St Peter.

Arthur Thomas Swadden
2nd Bn. Royal Munster Fusiliers

Died of Wounds
24 October 1918
France

Arthur Tom Swadden was born in Winterbourne Bassett early in 1893 and baptised in St Katherine and St Peter's Church on 2 April of that year. As a child he attended the local village school and grew up alongside many of the boys who would one day go off to war. After leaving school, he was employed as a farm labourer, as was his younger brother William. He was 21 years of age when war broke out.

As Arthur's service record forms part of the commonly called 'burnt documents' we are unable to establish the date he enlisted but when he did so, it was with the Wiltshire Regiment in Devizes (service no. 12561) and he was subsequently assigned to the 6th Battalion Royal Munster Fusiliers (RMF), with service no. 3221.

Campaign:—		(A) Where decoration was earned.				
1914-15.				(B) Present situation.		
Name	Corps	Rank	Reg. No.	Roll on which included (if any)		
(A) SWADDEN.	<i>R. Munst Fus</i>	<i>Pte</i>	<i>3221.</i>	MEDAL	ROLL	PAGE
(B)				<i>VICT</i>	<i>A/10389.</i>	<i>1517.</i>
				<i>BRITISH</i>	<i>cc.</i>	<i>cc.</i>
				<i>15 STAR</i>	<i>A/138</i>	<i>307.</i>
Action taken				<i>Died.</i>		
THEATRE OF WAR				<i>(26) Balkans</i>		
QUALIFYING DATE.				<i>9-7-15.</i>		
(6 34 46) W234—HP5590 500,000 4/19 HWV(P240) K608				[OVER.		

Medal Index Card for Arthur Tom Swadden showing his entitlement to the Victory, British and 1915 Star Medals

ROLL OF INDIVIDUALS entitled to the Victory Medal and/or British War Medal granted under Army Orders 301 and 256 of 19 19. 1917 B.		REGIMENT OR CORPS.		REMARKS	
Regt. No.	Rank	NAME	Service No.	Theatre of war in which served	Remarks
3221	Pte.	SWADDEN Arthur Thomas	5/R. Munst. Fus. Pte. 3221, 2/R. Munst. Fus.		D. of War 24.10.18.
16456	Pte.	SWAIN Charles	10/R. Dub. Fus. Pte. 26152 2/R. Munst. Fus. 16456 1/R. Munst. Fus.		Dischd. on Demob., 31.3.20.
16237	Pte.	SWAIN Patrick	10/R. Dub. Fus. Pte. 26415 2/R. Munst. Fus. 16237		Presumed dead 22.3.16.
20455	Pte.	SWALLOW Issac	Desert R. att'd. 7/R. Munst. Fus. Pte. 13611, 6/R. Munst. Fus. 20455, 2/R. Munst. Fus.		Dischd. on Demob., 31.3.20.
3973	Sjt.	SWANTON Michael	8/R. Munst. Fus. Sjt. 3973, 1/R. Munst. Fus.		K. in A., 26.1.17.

I certify that according to the Official Records the individuals named in this ROLL are entitled to the Medal or Medals as detailed above.

Place: *Cork.* Date: *27.9.20.* Signature and rank of Officer certifying: *M. H. ... Captain.*

RMF Roll of Individuals entitled to the Victory and/or British War Medals: Tom served with the 6th Bn. RMF which was absorbed into the 2nd Bn. RMF in June 1918

The progress of the 6th Battalion of the RMF during the war is closely allied with that of the 7th Battalion. Indeed, the 7th Battalion was absorbed into the 6th Battalion in November 1916 and the 6th Battalion into the 2nd Battalion in June 1918 before being disbanded. Arthur died while serving with the 2nd Battalion some eighteen days before the Armistice.

Arthur's Medal Index Card above shows that he entered the theatre of war in the Balkans on 9 July 1915. On this date the 6th and 7th Battalions sailed from Liverpool aboard the *H.M.T. Mauretania* arriving in Mudros Harbour, Island of Lemnos on 16 July 1915. On landing, water was found to be scarce and almost immediately the men succumbed to diarrhoea and dysentery reducing the battalion strength by some twenty per cent.

As part of the 10th (Irish) Division, the 6th and 7th Battalions RMF, raw and unaccustomed to combat, embarked on the *H.M.T. Rowan* for the Suvla area of Gallipoli on 6 August, arriving 7 August. The intention was to open the way to Constantinople by disembarking units north of the Turkish troops, cutting off their route north. Parts of the 10th (Irish) Division were landed on the wrong beaches and only five battalions, including the 6th and 7th RMF, disembarked according to plan. The objective was to take Kiretch Tepe Sirk Ridge along the north side of the bay, an almost impossible objective given that from the outset the Division was depleted by some eight battalions. The action became known as The Battle of Sari Bair Ridge. For the duration of August and the month of September, men of the 6th Battalion and other units were in action with 'unreliable' maps, poor communications and lack of leadership at Corps level, scarcity of water, intense heat, exhaustion, relentless sniping, shelling and naval bombardment; they were confined to trenches night after night, endured long periods of little or no rest and with few advances being made or objectives achieved. The numbers wounded, killed or who died from disease immensely depleted the strength of the units involved. The campaign was disastrous. On 30 September the 10th (Irish) Division withdrew to Mudros with only half the 1,500 men who had landed. Tom survived this baptism of fire.

In response to a request from Serbia, the 10th (Irish) Division moved from Mudros to Salonika to prevent Serbia falling to the combined forces of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria. This was the Macedonian Campaign, fought with great difficulty by men kitted out in summer clothes. They not only battled fighting forces but extreme cold at night causing many casualties. They were ordered to withdraw to Salonika at the end of December having failed to prevent the fall of Serbia. Here they remained into early 1916 during which time the 6th and 7th Battalions of the RMF were reinforced once more.

Attack and counter-attack ensued when the Bulgarians crossed the Greek frontier with German support in May 1916 in the Struma River valley area. The 10th (Irish) Division saw action in September in the Struma Offensive and lost 500 men; they withdrew for rest in mid-October. By then the Division was much depleted by lack of recruits and malaria casualties. The decision was taken to amalgamate the 7th into the 6th Battalion in early November 1916. After seeing three more attacks in March 1917, the Division was withdrawn in late summer and sailed from Salonika for Ismalia to participate in the Sanai and Palestine Campaign during which they were deployed against the Turks on the Palestine front. Tom had survived another long year of fighting.

The 6th Bn. RMF hardly saw any action in Palestine until the withdrawal of the Turks in early November 1917 and the 10th Division's return to the line on 25 November. The 6th Battalion encountered much sniper fire on the way to the capture of Jerusalem, which, when it happened on 9 December, was unopposed. Fighting flared up in March 1918 but that was the Division's last action in Palestine before moving to France. The Division had savoured their first taste of success since Gallipoli which would have been a boost to Tom and other soldiers of the Division.

The German Offensive of March 1918 brought huge losses along the Western Front and 60,000 reinforcements were brought to the area from Palestine, including 10 battalions of the 10th (Irish) Division one of which was the 6th Battalion RMF. They sailed from Alexandria, disembarked at Marseilles and entrained for Arques arriving on 6 June. Here the 6th Battalion amalgamated with the much depleted regular 2nd Bn. RMF and later absorbed a further training element of the 6th Battalion at Dieppe. The 6th Battalion, which had suffered relatively low losses since Gallipoli, effectively rebuilt the 2nd Bn. RMF and transferred to the 150th Brigade of the 50th Division at Arras for the start of what was to be known later as the Hundred Days Offensive.

The 'new' 2nd Bn. RMF were set the objective of capturing Le Catelet on 4 October and achieved it but had to withdraw later encountering heavy counter-attacks and failures along the line, losing many of their Gallipoli veterans. Only the next day could search parties be sent out to bring in the dead and wounded. Intermittent activity and gas attacks continued through the following days until the next significant attack: the Battle of Épehy.

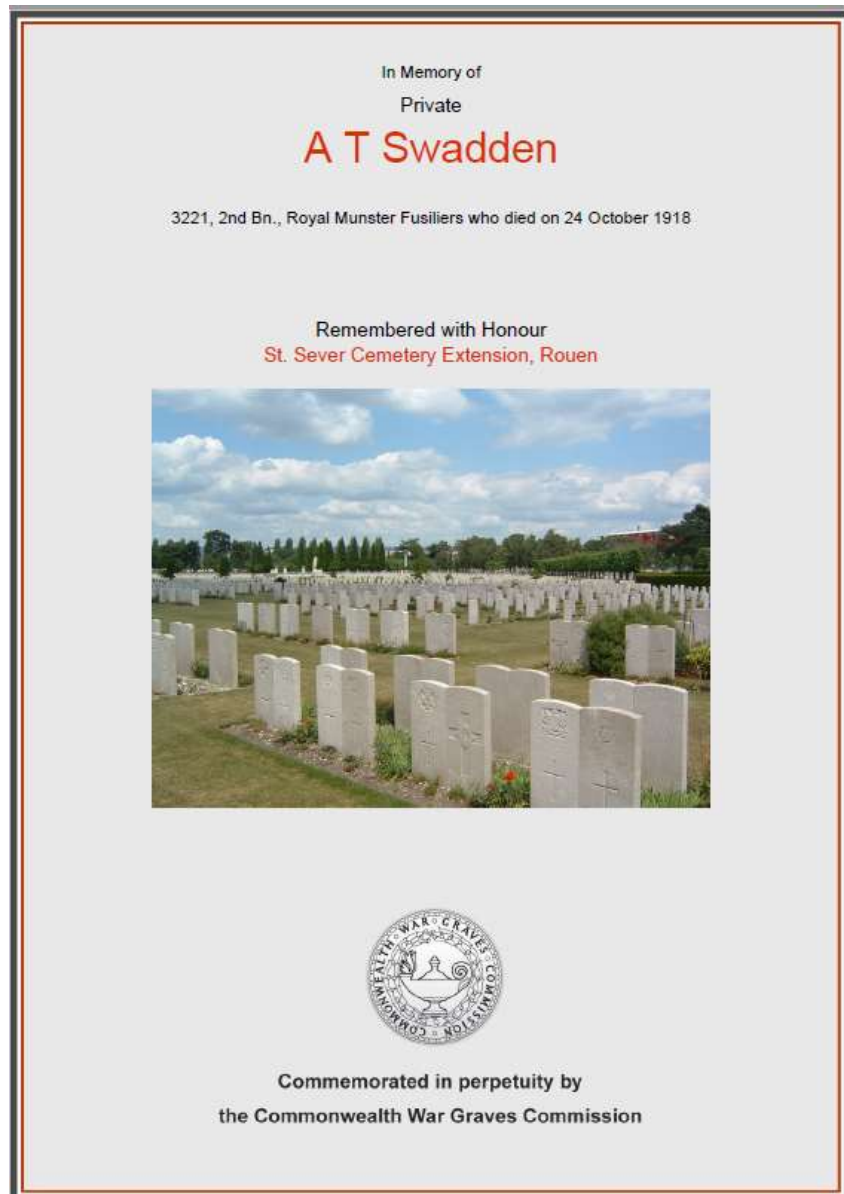
When battle began on 18 October, a heavy fog hung over the battlefield and visibility was extremely poor; a barrage was put down for the main attack and a hostile counter-barrage ensued inflicting many casualties in the Reserve Company of the 2nd Bn. The war diary further states:

07.30 Battalion seized objective and passed on towards BAZUEL. Owing to casualties amongst Coy [Company] officers and impossibility of fully explaining objectives to men prior to attack, it was found that men had got in front of barrage put down for 25 Div and had to be withdrawn. Casualties 25 O.R. [Other Ranks] killed 68 O.R. wounded, 14 O.R. missing.

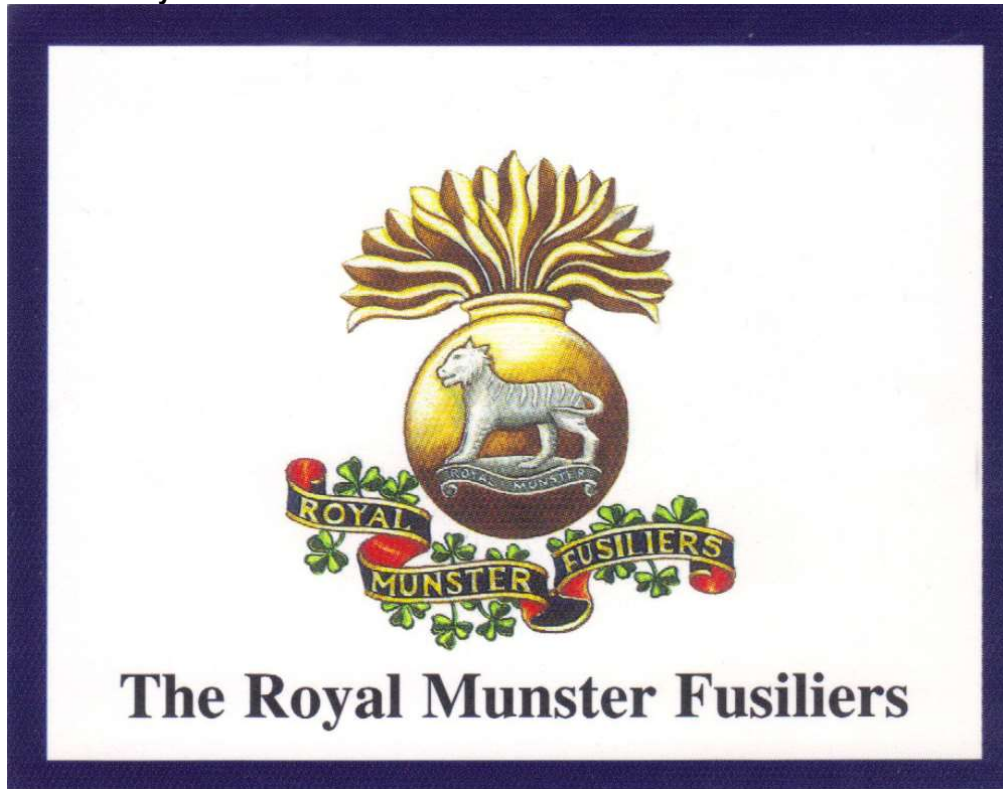
The following day, 19 October, there were a few casualties from 'minnewerfer' fire but activity calmed sufficiently to allow military awards to be made to soldiers of the battalion for previous brave actions.

The days leading up to 24 October 1918, the day Tom 'died of wounds', were relatively quiet and no activity was reported in the war diary on that day. It is likely that he died as a consequence of injuries sustained during any one of the many actions involving the RMF between 3 - 19 October.

Tom was buried in St Sever Cemetery Extension at Rouen.



SWADDEN, ARTHUR THOMAS. Reg.
No. 3221. Rank, Private, Royal Munster
Fusiliers, 2nd Batt. ; died of wounds, France,
October 24, 1918; born Winterbourne
Bassett, Wiltshire.

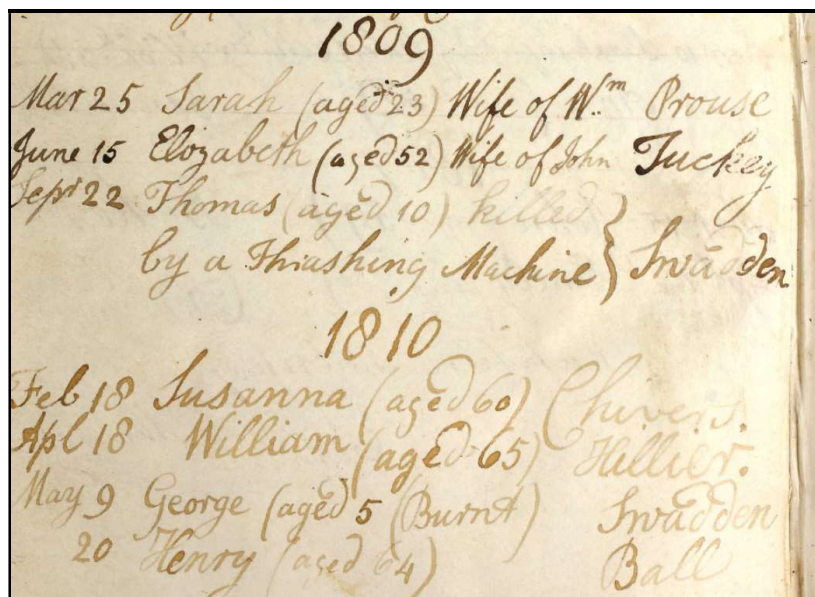


Regimental Cap Badge of the Royal Munster Fusiliers

RMF Motto: *Spectemur agendo*
"Let us be judged by our acts."

Tom's Family History

The Swadden family has had a long association with the village of Winterbourne Bassett. The name Swadden, sometimes 'Swaddon' or 'Swatton', was first mentioned in parish registers in the late 18th century when Richard Swadden and Margaret Addams were married in St Katherine & St Peter's on 27 February 1791. The six children born to the couple during the next years were baptised in the same church: Richard (b ~1798), Thomas, Hannah, George, Elizabeth and Margaret. Tragically, Thomas was killed by a threshing machine at the age of 10 in 1809 and George died aged 5 in 1810 from burns as the burial register shows:



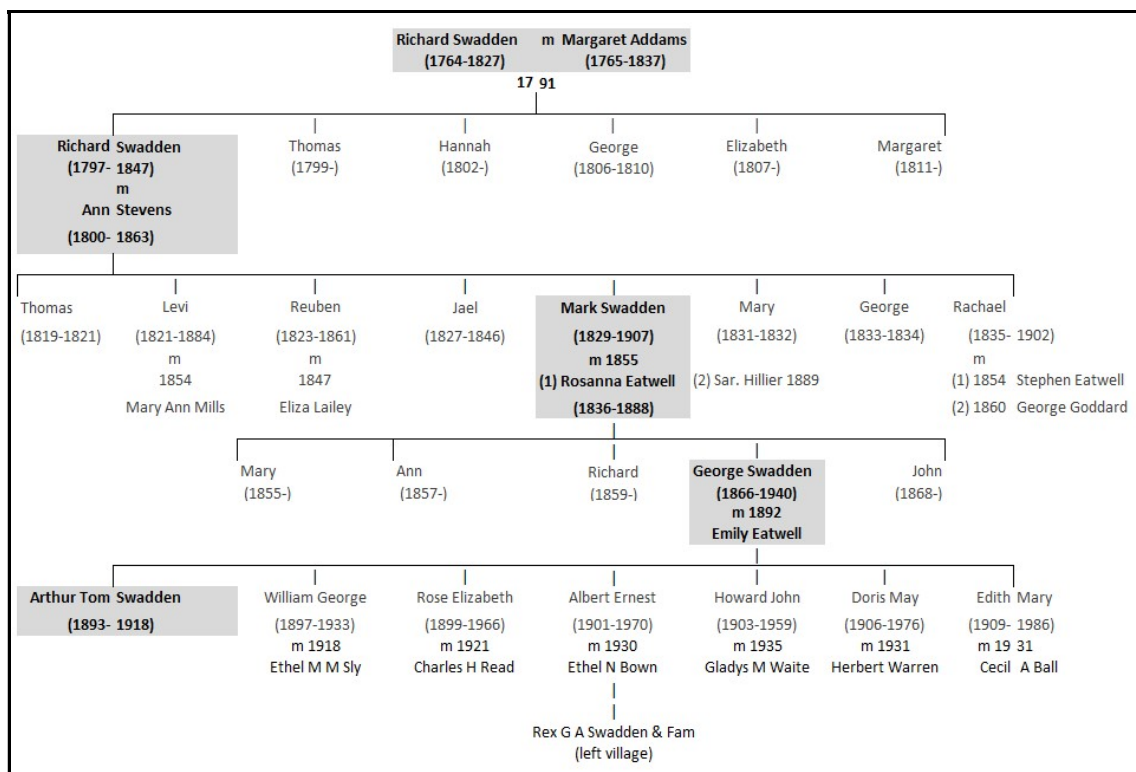
The Parish Burial Register for 1809 and 1810

The claims for shepherds rearing lambs, (received by the secretary at the meeting held at Warminster, on Wednesday the 16th of June), was produced to the committee on the preceding day. The first premium was awarded to Thos. Bailey, shepherd to Edward Polhill, esq. who reared 700 lambs from 705 ewes ; the 2d to Richard Gilbert, shepherd to Mr. Thomas Gilbert, of Marden Farm, who reared 580 lambs from 587 ewes ; and the 3d to Richard Swadden, shephord to Mr. Budd, of Winterbourne, who reared 617 lambs from 600 ewes, (but none of those ewes were two-toothed, which was the case as regards the flocks of the other claimants.)

Richard Swadden b. 1798 received a mention in *The Devizes and Wilshire Gazette* of 22 July 1830

The surviving son in the family, Richard Swadden, became a shepherd to Captain Budd of Manor Farm and received a mention in the local press in 1830 for the number of lambs reared on the farm.

Another family which had a long association with Winterbourne Bassett was the Eatwell family whose name is first mentioned in parish registers in 1749. From 1791 there were two marriages between an Eatwell and a Swadden in the direct line of descendency from Richard Swadden to Arthur Tom Swadden.

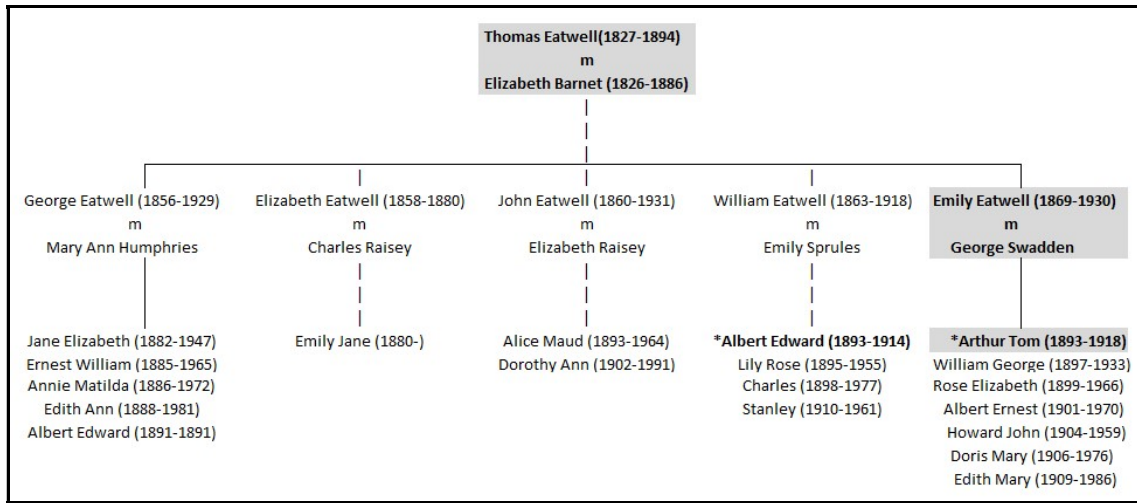


The direct line of descent from the first known Swaddens in Winterbourne Bassett to Arthur Tom Swadden

Arthur Tom Swadden was the first-born son of the 1892 Swadden/Eatwell union. George Swadden and Emily Eatwell married on 12 June of that year and remained in the village for all of their married life with George working as a cowman, labourer or gardener at various times. He sought alternative employment just once before his marriage: the 1891 census places him in lodgings at 74 Clifton Street, Swindon as he had found employment as a labourer on the Great Western Railway (GWR) but census records show that he returned to agricultural work in Winterbourne Bassett where their seven children were born. All were baptised in St Katherine & St Peter's Church: Arthur Tom (b. 1893), William George (b. 1897), Rose Elizabeth (b. 1899), Albert Ernest (b. 1901), Howard John (b. 1903), Doris May (b. 1906) and Edith Mary (b. 1909).

The children attended the local village school and grew up alongside many of the boys who went to war. After leaving school, Arthur was employed locally as a farm labourer.

Arthur was 21 years of age when war broke out. He enlisted with the Wiltshire Regiment, was assigned to the 6th Bn. Royal Munster Fusiliers, served in Gallipoli, the Macedonian Campaign, Palestine and on the Western Front and tragically died on 24 October 1918 just eighteen days before the cessation of hostilities on 11 November 1918.



**The family of Emily Eatwell, mother of Arthur Tom Swadden and aunt of Albert Edward Eatwell.
* Both young men died in the Great War**

The Eatwell and Swadden families will have shared their grief when each lost a beloved member of their respective families: Albert Edward Eatwell at the beginning of the war and Arthur Tom Swadden only days before the Armistice.

Emily Swadden died in 1937 and George in 1940 while living with his son Howard and family in the village.