

In Memory Of
Lance Corporal

A J DOVEY

Service Number: 27859

14th Bn., Worcestershire Regiment who died on 29 June 1918

Husband of M A Dovey, of Church Bridge, Nash, Tenbury Wells, Worcs.

Remembered with Honour

ENGLEBELMER COMMUNAL CEMETERY EXTENSION

E. 20.



|||||
COMMONWEALTH
WAR GRAVES
|||||

COMMEMORATED IN PERPETUITY BY THE COMMONWEALTH
WAR GRAVES COMMISSION

Alfred John Dovey was the 11th of the 14 children born to John and Mary Ann Dovey (nee Postans). His father was an agricultural labourer from Cleobury Mortimer and his mother was a local girl. The Dovey and Postans families appear regularly in parish records in and around Tenbury Wells and Cleobury Mortimer, including our parish of Nash and Boraston, and there are several Postans burials in the churchyard at Nash.

Alfred's family were farm workers who moved around the Tenbury, Bromyard and Cleobury Mortimer area. Although most of his older brothers and sisters were born in Tenbury Wells, he was born at Knighton on Teme early in 1890. A year later, when the 1891 Census was taken, the Doveys were at The Pike in "Tilsop Township", Nash, which was somewhere between Wood Farm and Tilsop. By then, a couple of his older siblings had left home, and 1 year old Alfred was living at The Pike with his parents, 2 older brothers and 4 older sisters – a family of 9 in a farm workers cottage!

By 1901, the family had moved to Lea Lane Cottage, Upper Sapey, where Alfred, now aged 11, was living with his parents, older sister, Edith, 3 younger siblings and a baby niece. Both of Alfred's parents died at Newnham Bridge in quick succession in April 1910 – and by the time the next Census was taken a year later in April 1911, Alfred, a 21 year old single man, was living with his married older brother, William, at 5 Prince Albert Street, Dudley and working as a "canvasser" at the Marston Boot Company.

Alfred John Dovey married Florence Marina Ann Jenkins from Avenbury near Bromyard at Tenbury Wells in January 1914. Although we can't see from the records where they settled after the wedding, it is likely that they stayed in the Tenbury area. On January 9th 1919 when Alfred's War pension was awarded to his widow, Florence, she and their 2 young sons, John Jellicoe and Alfred James Dovey, were living at 2 Spur Tree, "Burford" (which is actually on our side of the parish boundary in Boraston), and the address recorded on Alfred's headstone in Englebelmer Communal Cemetery Extension is "Church Bridge, Nash". Although he was killed in action in June 1918, his body was re-buried at Englebelmer after the Armistice – so it is likely that his wife and sons moved from Spurtree to Churchbridge later in 1919 or 1920.

Alfred Dovey's war service began in the latter part of 1915 when he joined the newly formed Severn Valley Pioneers, which became the 14th Battalion of the Worcestershire Regiment. Although his Service Record is one of those that were lost when the army records office was bombed in WW2, a pencil footnote on his Pension Index Card indicates an enlistment date of December 10th 1915.

In 1914-15 the protracted trench warfare in France and Flanders resulted in an ever-increasing demand for skilled labour to assist the sappers with building “redoubts, emplacements and other field works”, so a small number of specialist Pioneer battalions made up of skilled construction workers such as miners, excavators and bricklayers was raised, including the 14th Worcestershire. Although they were originally intended to be non-combatant, the men had to work under fire and be capable of fighting on the front line.

Alfred joined the battalion, which was based at Norton Barracks on the edge of Worcester, in December 1915 by which time he was a 25 year old married man with a one year old son, John Jellicoe, and a second child on the way. The battalion remained at Norton until the spring of 1916 when it relocated to Salisbury Plain for specialist training in military construction techniques; so Alfred was still in England when his second son Alfred James Dovey was born on February 1st 1916.

Four months later the 14th Worcestershire was posted to the Western Front, arriving in billets at Chamblain Chate on June 23rd 1916. The men saw action on the Somme at the Battle of Ancre in November 1916, mended roads under shellfire during the Battle of Arleux near Arras in April 1917 and in the autumn they endured the mud and squalor of Passchendaele. The following abridged extract from their War Diary gives a flavour of the work Lance Corporal Alfred Dovey and the Pioneers did there:-

“On the 12th of October 1917, a day of vile weather, the British Armies attacked again. Once again the attacking battalions ploughed forward through rain and mud against the block-houses and shell-hole positions of the enemy. Some little ground was gained on the slopes of the ridge of Passchendaele; but on the whole the results of the attack were disappointing” “Behind the battle front working parties of the 14th (Pioneer) Battalion laboured at various tasks under heavy shellfire”.

Casualties;

October 10th and 11th : 3 killed, 1 officer (Lt. L. N. Jotcham) and three men wounded.

October 12th : 2 killed, 7 wounded.

October 19th : two subalterns (2/Lts. W. N. Miles and S. E. Couves) were wounded”.

“The failure of the attack on October 12th showed clearly that more extensive preparations would have to be made if the Passchendaele Ridge was to be won. For a fortnight, the guns kept up a relentless bombardment” while the main energies of the unit “were devoted to the improvement of communications over the devastated battle-ground, the laying of cables and duck-board tracks, the digging of gun emplacements and assembly trenches, and the countless other tasks necessitated by the complexity of modern war”.

By May 1918 the 14th Worcestershire had returned to the Somme battlefield near Albert, where Lance Corporal Alfred John Dovey, a 28 year old father of

two, was killed in action on June 29th 1918. He is buried in Plot E20 of Englebelmer Communal Cemetery Extension alongside one of his comrades from the 14th Worcestershire who fell on the same day.

Englebelmer is at the centre of the Somme battlefield, and the village remained in Allied hands throughout the War. It was used as the base for a front-line field ambulance station and subjected to occasional shelling in autumn 1916 and again in May and June 1918.

Although the majority of burials in the Englebelmer Communal Cemetery are French, there are 51 from Britain and the Commonwealth. After the Armistice, the remains of a further 148 soldiers including Alfred John Dovey were brought in from makeshift graves on the battlefield to the north and east and re-buried in the Cemetery Extension. As well as British comrades, he lies alongside soldiers from France, Canada, New Zealand and Germany.

There is a sad postscript to Alfred's story. Although he was their only casualty from Nash and Boraston, he wasn't the only member of the Dovey family to die in the First World War. One of his older brothers, George Henry Dovey, died on the Western Front in June 1917.

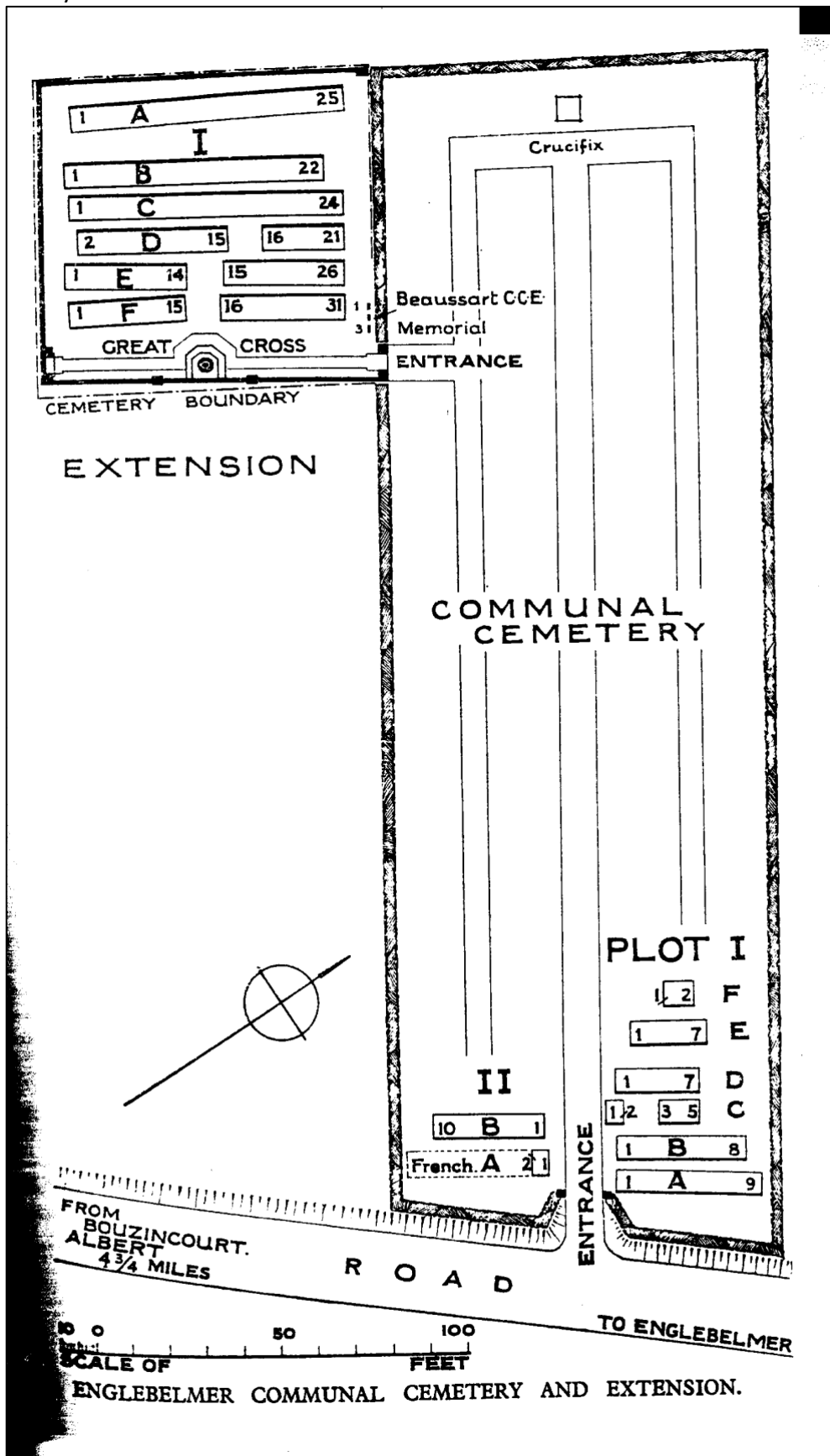
Bobbie Matulja

November 19th 2021

Sources

- Ancestry.co.uk and the Ancestry Fold 3 database
- Wikipedia
- Imperial War Museum website
- The Worcestershire Regiment website - www.worcestershireregiment.com – for the history and War Diary of the 14th Worcestershire Pioneer Battalion.
- The Commonwealth War Graves website (www.cwg.org)

Plan of Englebelmer Communal Cemetery - including the Extension, where Alfred John Dovey was laid to rest in Plot E20



Alfred John Dovey's WW1 Pension Ledger Index Card

His widow, Florence MA Dovey was living at 2 Spur Tree, "Burford" when his pension was awarded on January 9th 1919 although Spurtree is - and was - in Boraston back then. The date "16-12-15" is noted in pencil under Date of notification of death. Although Alfred's service record was one of the majority that were lost when the Army Records Office was bombed during WW2, this date has been used to calculate his pension - conclusive proof that it was his Enlistment Date.

Name Dovey Alfred J. Regimental No. 24859 Case No. WCC.25.48
 Regiment Worcester 14th Rank Lt Col Case No. 2623.
 Form 104-88 received 14.4.18 Date of notification of death 10.7.18 Form 104-76 received 30.7.18
 Date and cause of death 29.6.18 Killed in Action
 Widow Florence M. A. 2 Spur Tree, Burford Date of birth 22.10.94
 Children:— W. Leabury, Wells

Name	Date of birth	Date of expiry	Remarks
<u>John Jellicoe</u>	<u>14.9.14</u>	<u>14.9.30</u>	<u>£7 Grant Paid 17.9.18</u>
<u>Alfred James</u>	<u>1.2.16</u>	<u>1.2.32</u>	<u>No. for whom S.A. is paid 2. N/S</u>

19-10-89
 AWDs. PILE DESTROYED
 19.5.92

Pension 25/5^d a week from 13.1.19
 Date awarded 9.1.19 If refused, reason _____
 Papers _____

(9 38 108) W5811-8773 25,000(2) 8/16 HWV(P1.66)
 16972-327 25,000 6/17

1891 Census showing the Dovey Family living at "The Pike", Township of Tilsop, Nash

1891 England Census for Alfred J Dovey
 Shropshire > Nash > ALL > District 2

Administration County of Shropshire The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the Township of Tilsop Page 11

House No.	ROAD, STREET, ALLEY, or NAME of HOUSE	RELATION to Head of Family	SEX	AGE last Birthday	PROFESSION or OCCUPATION	WEEKS WORKED
59	<u>Trappnell</u>	<u>Thomas Griffith</u> Head M 41			<u>Analyst & Valuer</u>	<u>Talsp, Shropshire, Merton</u>
		<u>Edith</u> Wife F 38				<u>do Milton</u>
		<u>William</u> Son S 20			<u>Bookbinder</u>	<u>do Kim Hill</u>
		<u>Robert</u> Son S 18			<u>Bookbinder</u>	<u>do</u>
		<u>James R.</u> Son S 17			<u>Bookbinder</u>	<u>do</u>
		<u>James Rogers</u> Son S 15			<u>Scholar</u>	<u>do</u>
		<u>Thomas P. Griffith</u> Son S 14			<u>do</u>	<u>do</u>
		<u>Henry Griffith</u> Son S 12			<u>do</u>	<u>do</u>
60	<u>Underley</u>	<u>William Redford</u> Head M 41			<u>Farmer</u>	<u>Shropshire, Biddulph</u>
		<u>Martha</u> Wife F 38			<u>do</u>	<u>do</u>
61	<u>Wood Farm</u>	<u>John Dovey</u> Head M 39			<u>Farmer</u>	<u>Shropshire, Lepton</u>
		<u>Thomas</u> Son S 28			<u>do</u>	<u>do</u>
		<u>Rhoda J. Smalley</u> Daughter F 17			<u>do</u>	<u>do</u>
		<u>Alfred Wale</u> Son S 16			<u>do</u>	<u>do</u>
62	<u>The Pike</u>	<u>John Dovey</u> Head M 34			<u>Agicultural Labourer</u>	<u>do</u>
		<u>Mary</u> Wife F 37			<u>do</u>	<u>do</u>
		<u>William</u> Son S 12			<u>Scholar</u>	<u>do</u>
		<u>Richard</u> Son S 9			<u>do</u>	<u>do</u>
		<u>Elizabeth</u> Daughter F 8			<u>do</u>	<u>do</u>
		<u>Blair M.</u> Daughter F 6			<u>do</u>	<u>do</u>
		<u>Edith J.</u> Daughter F 4			<u>do</u>	<u>do</u>
		<u>Alfred J.</u> Son S 3			<u>do</u>	<u>do</u>
63	<u>Lower Tilsop</u>	<u>Thomas L. Corfield</u> Head M 40			<u>Farmer</u>	<u>Shropshire, Bromington</u>
		<u>Frank</u> Son S 18			<u>do</u>	<u>do</u>
		<u>Richard L.</u> Son S 14			<u>Scholar</u>	<u>do</u>
		<u>Thomas P.</u> Son S 12			<u>do</u>	<u>do</u>
		<u>Thomas L.</u> Son S 10			<u>do</u>	<u>do</u>
64	<u>Tilsop</u>	<u>William Muddock</u> Head M 40			<u>Agicultural Labourer</u>	<u>do</u>
		<u>Rebecca</u> Wife F 38			<u>do</u>	<u>do</u>

Total of Houses and Tenements with less than Five Rooms: 61
 Total of Males and Females: 1119

Note.—Draw the pen through each of the words of the headings as are inappropriate.

1901 Census

The Dovey family – including Alfred - were living at Lea Lane Cottage, Upper Sapey

Administrative County		The undermentioned Houses are situate within the boundaries of the											Page 5	
Civil Parish		Ecclesiastical Parish		County Borough, Municipal Borough, or Urban District		Ward of Municipal Borough or of Urban District		Rural District		Parliamentary Borough or Division		Town or Village or Hamlet		
Upper Sapey		of St Michael & All Saints		Barnes		of		of		of		38		
House No.	ROAD STREET & No. or NAME of HOUSE	Uninhabited	Inhabited	Name and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	Sex	Age last Birthday	PROFESSION OR OCCUPATION	Employer, Worker, or Own account	If Working at Home	WEEK BORN	(1) Deaf and Dumb (2) Blind (3) Lame (4) Inebriate, Habituated		
27	Lea Lane Cottage			William Dovey	Head	M	33	Labourer	Worker		Worcester			
				Maria Dovey	Wife	F	26			Yes	Worcester			
				William Dovey	Son	M	2				Worcester			
				Alfred Dovey	Son	M	21				Worcester			
				John Dovey	Son	M	17				Worcester			
				George Dovey	Son	M	15				Worcester			
				John Dovey	Son	M	14				Worcester			
				John Dovey	Son	M	13				Worcester			
				John Dovey	Son	M	12				Worcester			
				John Dovey	Son	M	11				Worcester			
				John Dovey	Son	M	10				Worcester			
				John Dovey	Son	M	9				Worcester			
				John Dovey	Son	M	8				Worcester			
				John Dovey	Son	M	7				Worcester			
				John Dovey	Son	M	6				Worcester			
				John Dovey	Son	M	5				Worcester			
				John Dovey	Son	M	4				Worcester			
				John Dovey	Son	M	3				Worcester			
				John Dovey	Son	M	2				Worcester			
				John Dovey	Son	M	1				Worcester			
				John Dovey	Son	M	0				Worcester			
Total of Males and of Females						14		15						

1911 Census

Alfred John Dovey, then an unmarried 21 year old, was living with his older brother, William, William's wife, Maria, and their 2 year old son, William junior, at 5 Prince Albert Street, Dudley, a year after the death of both parents at Newnham Bridge in 1910.

CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.												
Before writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions given on the other side of the paper, as well as the headings of the Columns. The entries should be written in Ink.												
The contents of the Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used for proof of age, or in connection with Old Age Pensions, or for any other purpose than the preparation of Statistical Tables.												
NAME AND SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family	AGE last Birthday	PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE				PROFESSION OR OCCUPATION of Persons aged ten years and upwards			BIRTHPLACE of every person	NATIONALITY of every Person	INFIRMITY.
<p>(1) passed the night of Sunday, April 2nd, 1911, in this dwelling and was alive at midnight or</p> <p>(2) arrived in this dwelling on the morning of Monday, April 3rd, not having been enumerated elsewhere.</p> <p>No one else must be included.</p>												
<p>(To be filled up by the Enumerator)</p>												
William Dovey	Head	33	Married					Caracter	Worcester	Worcester	260	
Maria Dovey	Wife	26	Married						Worcester	Worcester		
William Dovey	Son	2	Single						Worcester	Worcester		
Alfred Dovey	Brother	21	Single					Caracter	Worcester	Worcester	260	