

In Memory of

Private HERBERT KNIGHTON

**8253, 2nd Battalion, Wiltshire Regiment
who died of wounds age 21 on 17 May 1915**

Brother of G. Knighton (Irish Guards)

Remembered with honour BETHUNE TOWN CEMETERY

Bethune is a town 29 kilometres north of Arras. For much of the First World War, Bethune was an important railway and hospital centre, as well as a corps and divisional headquarters. The Town Cemetery contains 3,004 Commonwealth burials of the First World War.



Battalion War Diary – 17 May 1915: About 8.30am the Battalion received verbal instructions to occupy the trench M3, M5. M6. M9 and to push out to P14 with 2 Coys ... B Coy proceeded along this trench headed by a bombing party, and supported, by A Coy. ... This trench was a narrow communicating trench which had been badly knocked about by shell fire and was not bullet proof ... and the end of it was commanded by the house M9 ... On arrival at this house, it was found to be occupied by the enemy. Further the enemy were holding trench from M9 in the direction of L12 and one from M9 Eastward. This trench was out of bombing range and did not appear to have suffered from shell fire. So an attack was begun from roughly about M8 on the road junction and N12. But this attack was subjected to a cross rifle and machine gun fire from their right and quickly failed. ... In the meantime the enemy had placed a barrage of fire across the area which prevented this attack receiving any support. The result of this was that B Coy was cut in two and the position of the leading platoons became very precarious In the meantime A Coy had deployed on this line and began to dig themselves in ... All this time the trench M3 – M9 was subjected to a heavy enfilade artillery fire. ... D Coy was ordered up to assist the attack of A & B Coys but by the time D Coy arrived, the attack had failed, so D Coy dug themselves in.

Born in Chippenham, Herbert attended Christian Malford School living at the time with a guardian, Charles Knott of 63 The Green, who was also guardian to Harry George Hunt. Herbert was a professional soldier who the 1911 Census shows was serving with the 1st Battalion in South Africa.

From the Parish Magazine: After hearing in the middle of June that Private Herbert Knighton had been wounded, the sad news came about a week later that he had died of wounds, and the Rector announced his death on Sunday morning, June 27. Herbert Knighton had no relatives here, but some years of his life as a boy were spent in the village, and those who remember him speak highly of him and recall the fact that he was a choir-boy - and our Roll of Honour has lost another worthy son.