

Lance Corporal Arthur Dudley Tallis

Arthur died of his wounds on 1st May 1916 in France. He was the eldest son of Arthur Ernest and Frances Sarah Tallis of 30 Woodbridge Road, Moseley.ⁱ He was 28 years of age. During the last seven months of his life, Arthur was severely wounded but recovered sufficiently to be sent back to the trenches to fight. He also suffered the loss of his father who died suddenly while he was away in France, His application for compassionate leave to return home was refused. This unfortunate affair lead a family friend to write a visceral letter to the editor of the local newspaper about 'young Tallis'.

The family originated from the Evesham area of Worcestershire. Arthur's grandfather, Edward, had by 1871 moved to Aston with his family where he earned a living as a carpenter and joiner. Arthur's father, however, on leaving school took up a very different form of employment in the printing industry. Starting out as a 'reader and printer' he had by 1891, completed, what at that time would have been an informal apprenticeshipⁱⁱ, to become a reporter and journalist for the Birmingham Post and Honorary Secretary of the Birmingham Press Club.ⁱⁱⁱ



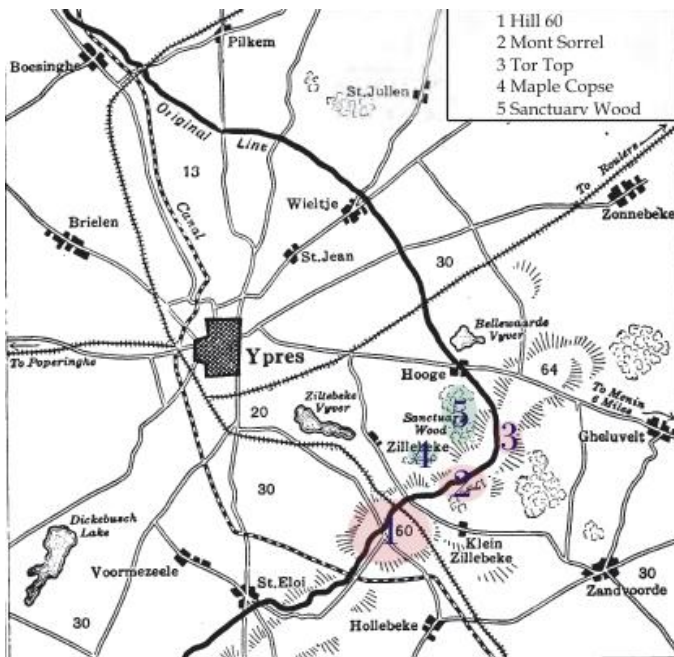
Figure 1: 143 Trafalgar Road

Arthur Dudley Tallis, known as 'Dud' was born in the autumn of 1888, the first of four children. The family were living 143 Trafalgar Road at the time. Arthur's mother, Frances (née Crew^{iv}), employed a general servant to help with the domestic chores, while she was bringing up the family. By 1901, the family had moved to 30 Woodbridge Road, Moseley (this is now demolished and the site of new residential accommodation) where they remained for many years.

On leaving school Arthur worked for the Orchard Company in Evesham until the summer of 1905. A year later on September 29th, Arthur and three friends were caught picking cob nuts from his previous employer and summoned to appear before a magistrate for stealing nuts to the value of 2s 0d. Although Arthur did not appear, sending a letter admitting the theft, it emerged in court that the under gardener for the company owner had given permission for the nut picking and that there had been no felonious intent. None-the-less the magistrate considered that Arthur, having

worked for the company, should have known better and he was fined £1 and 12s 5d costs. The under gardener was sacked.^v The 1911 census records Arthur still employed somewhere in Evesham as a 'fruit merchant's clerk'.

At the outbreak of war in August 1914, Arthur joined the 3rd Battalion of the Worcester Regiment as Private 15020.^{vi} The first contingent of the regiment left for France on 15th August^{vii}, but Arthur remained in training for a few more months before embarking to join them on 18th February 1915.^{viii}



Map 1: Location of Hill 60 and Sanctuary Wood near Ypres

The Birmingham Daily Post reported that Arthur had been wounded in its publication on October 21st 1915. It is unfortunate that the war diaries for the regiment only name the officers killed or wounded. As a result it is not clear where Arthur was wounded. It could have been either, during fighting in trenches among the shattered remnants of Sanctuary Wood or possibly in support of the 46th North Midland Division in trenches near Hill 60, around SW Ypres on October 8th.

As a result of his injuries, Arthur was invalided home.^{ix}

Within a year of war being declared it had become obvious that it was not possible to continue fighting by relying on voluntary recruits. In March 1916 the Military Service Act was passed. This imposed conscription on all single men aged between 18 and 41, but exempted the medically unfit, clergymen, teachers and certain classes of industrial worker.

Conscientious objectors, men who objected to fighting on moral grounds, were also exempted,

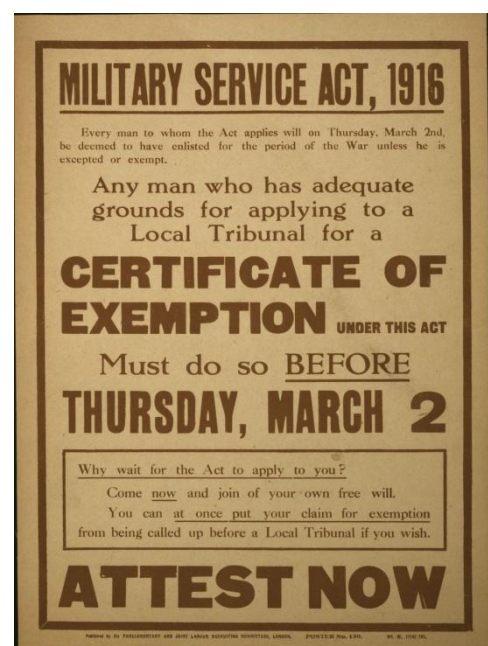
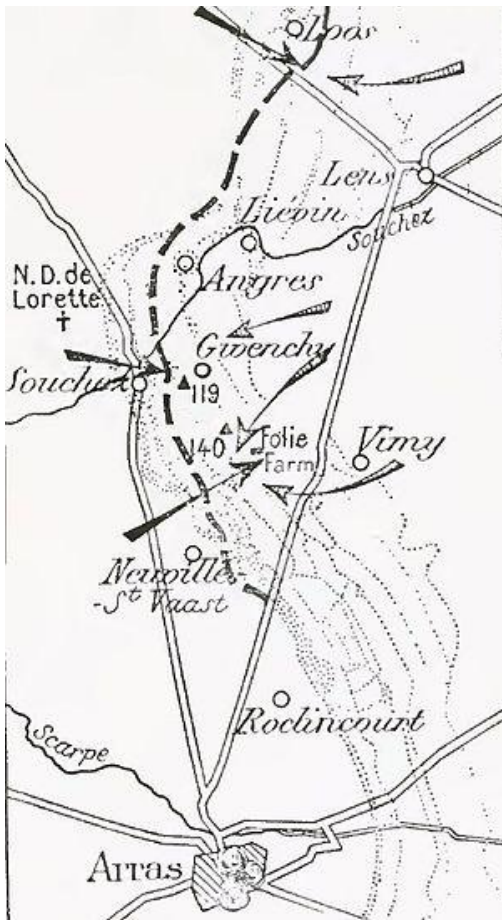


Figure 2: 1916 Poster advertising the Act

and were in most cases given civilian jobs or non-fighting roles at the front. A second Act passed in May 1916 extended conscription to married men.^x



Map 2: Location of Neuville St Vaast in relation to Arras and Vimy Ridge

The shortage of experienced fighting men led to any wounded men on their recovery being sent back to fight with their regiment. With the build up to the 'big push' on 1st July, the Battle of the Somme, it likely that leave home was severely restricted, to the extent that on the death of his father in April 1915, Arthur was given no leave to return home for the funeral or to comfort his mother.^{xi}

Just two weeks later Arthur was also dead from wounds received during intense fighting from the 28th to 30th April around the Broadmarsh Crater on the Vimy Ridge. Earlier in the month the regiment had been carried in motor lorries to Maroeuil, near Arras, where they remained in reserve for a week. The battalion was then split up in to working and carrying parties to assist the mining operations in the front line trenches before being reunited at Acq ready to move forward to relieve the 10th Cheshires in the line just north of Neuville

St Vaast, half way up the slope of the ridge.



Figure 3: Postcard of Neuville St Vaast, 1915

On the next day, 28th April 1916 a huge mine was exploded by the enemy near the left flank of the Battalion's line. A storm of firing ensued as the enemy attacked and the Battalion defended its position over the next two days. It was during this period of time that Arthur received his fatal wounds dying a few days later on 1st May.^{xii}

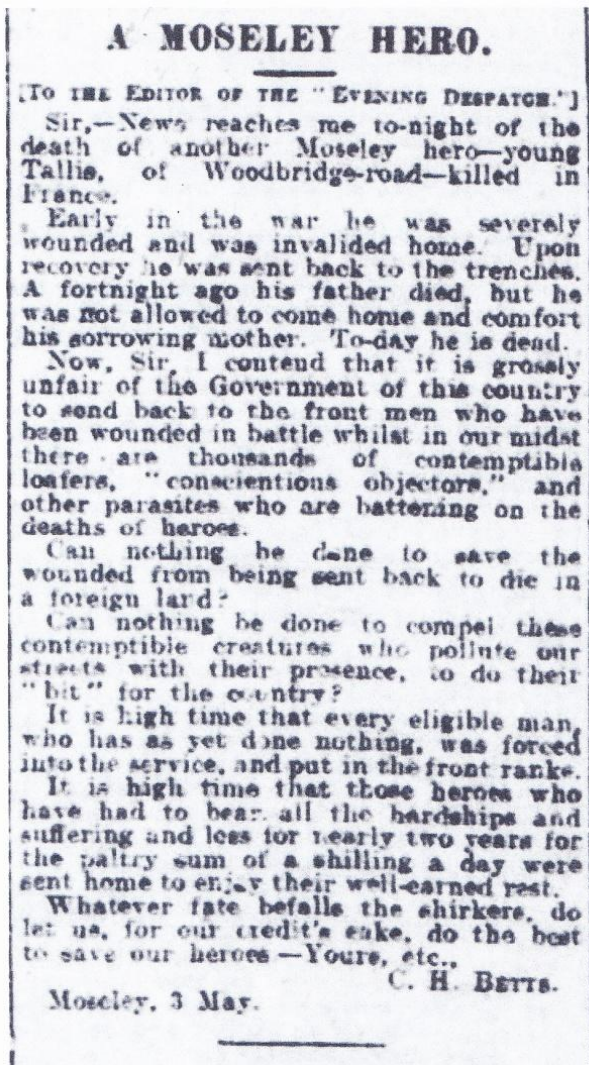


Figure 4: Letter to the Editor from C H Betts

Arthur is buried at Étaples Military Cemetery, France.^{xiv} His two younger brothers Cornelius and Lionel both served in the Army Service Corps and survived the war.^{xv}

On the left is a copy of the letter addressed to the editor of the Evening Despatch was written by a C W Betts, someone who obviously knew the family well. There is a Charles Hall Betts who lived at 68 Oxford Road, Moseley on the 1911 census. It reflects the public opprobrium of men who refused to be conscripted and the social pressures they must have been subjected to. Nationally 90,721 cases were dealt with by local tribunals for exemption from conscription, 34,750 of which were given exemption certificates.^{xiii}



Figure 5: Étaples Military Cemetery, France.

Cornelius ran a butcher's shop in Woodbridge Road for many years. His son, Dudley Arthur Ronald, finding life as a chartered accountant clerk 'too humdrum' signed up for the RAF in 1938 as a wireless operator and gunner at the age of



sixteen. He made more than 40 flights over the continent including missions to Berlin and Italy.^{xvi} He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Medal for his service but in 1942 he was reported missing after a night time bombing mission over Cologne on 30 - 31st May 1942.^{xvii} (see picture left^{xviii}). Arthur's other brother Lionel never married.

Researched and written by Edwina Rees, Moseley Society History Group

Footnotes

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- i Commonwealth War Graves Commission
file:///C:/Users/Edwina/Downloads/TALLIS_ARTHUR_DUDLEY.pdf
 - ii Brake, Laurel and Demoor, Marysa. (2009). *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland*. Academia Press, Ghent, p326
 - iii *Birmingham Mail*, 9th May 1941
Birmingham Post, 9th December 1890
 - iv England and Wales marriages 1837-2008, 1887, Dudley, volume 6C, page 49
 - v *Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucester Graphic*, 27th October 1906, page 4, column 6
 - vi Forces War Records
 - vii WW1 Medal Record Index Card
 - viii 3rd Battalion Worcester Regiment
http://www.worcestershire-regiment.com/wr.php?main=inv/bat_3
 - ix Stake, Captain H FitzM. *The Worcester Regiment in the Great War*, p 129
Midlands Historical Data at www.midlandshistoricaldata.org
 - x Your Country Needs You: Conscription. The First World War.
<http://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/private-lives/yourcountry/overview/conscription/>
 - xi *Evening Despatch*, 4th May 1916
 - xii See ix, pp155-156

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- xiii Roberts, Sian. (2014) *Great War Britain: Birmingham: Remembering 1914-1918*. The History Press, Stroud, p 107
- xiv Commonwealth War Graves Commission
File:///C:/Users/Edwina/Downloads/Downloads/TALLIS_ARTHUR_DUDLEY.pdf
- xv WW1 Medal Index Cards
- xvi *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, 9th May 1941
- xvii DNW, Auction House, 27th June 2002
https://www.dnw.co.uk/auction-archive/specialcollections/lot.php?specialcollections_id=221&lot_id77065
- xviii See xvi

Illustrations

- Figure 1 143 Trafalgar Road, Moseley. Photograph by Edwina Rees
- Figure 2 Military Service Act Poster
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_Service_Act1916
- Figure 3 Post card of Neuville St Vaast c 1915
<https://istworldwarhibbettletters.com/tag/maps-of-neuville-st-vaast/>
- Figure 4 Letter to the Editor, *Evening Despatch*, 3rd May 1916
- Figure 5 Étapes Military Cemetery
<http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/56500/ETALPLES%20MILITARY%20CEMETERY>

Maps

- Map 1 Battle for Hill 60
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Hill_60_\(Western_Front\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Hill_60_(Western_Front))
- Map 2 Vimy Ridge Map
https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herbstschlacht_bei_La_Bass%C3%A9e_und_Arras