

Sidney Frank Toop Age 19

Sidney Toop was born on Christmas Day, 1895 in Wareham, Dorset, son of Edward Toop, an agricultural labourer and his wife Fanny. The 1901 census shows the family living in West Street, Wareham. Sidney had two sisters, Mary and Bessie, but he was the only son.

The family moved to Long Sutton sometime after 1911 and Sidney worked as a farm hand at Stapleton. He joined Prince Albert's Somerset Light Infantry as a regular soldier about 12 months before the start of the war. He went to the front in August 1914, and took part in the retreat from Mons. This was a shambolic flight during which troops experienced the hardship of German shelling and prolonged periods without food, fresh water and shelter.

He was wounded in February 1915, but on his recovery he returned to the front with the 1st Battalion in mid-June 1915. He died of wounds on the 7th July 1915, age 19.

The Langport and Somerton Herald reported that when the news of his death reached Long Sutton, the Union Jack flag on the church was flown at half mast and the minute bell tolled for one hour in memory. At the conclusion of the Sunday service, the organist played the Dead March in Saul. Sidney Toop is buried in Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Belgium which was used by the nearby casualty clearing stations.

Saturday, July 24th 1915



PRIVATE SYDNEY FRANK
TOOP.

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DIED FROM WOUNDS.

We regret to record the death, on July 8th, of Private Sydney Frank Toop, 1st Somerset Light Infantry, from wounds received in action in France.

The sad news was conveyed to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Toop, of Long Sutton, in a letter from the War Office which was received on Sunday morning.

The deceased was the only son. He was 19 years of age last Christmas Day, having celebrated his birthday in the trenches. Prior to joining the Somersets he worked as a farm hand for Mr. Saunders of Stapleton. Deceased joined the 3rd Battalion of the Somerset L.I. about 12 months before war broke out. He went out to the Front with his regiment in August and took part in the retreat from Mons and much of the subsequent fighting. He was afterwards transferred to the 1st Battalion of the same regiment. He was wounded in February and came back to England to recuperate. On his recovery in March he came to his home at Long Sutton for three weeks' leave. He then rejoined the regiment at Taunton and transferred to Plymouth. He returned to the Front about three weeks ago and received the wounds which proved fatal very soon afterwards. The sad news came as a terrible shock to his parents who were unaware that he was even wounded.

Much sympathy is expressed with Mr. and Mrs. Toop in their great sorrow.

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