

**IN MEMORY OF  
1798235 PRIVATE CHARLES PERCY TOPHAM  
OF THE PIONEER CORPS 34 COY.  
KILLED IN ACTION DURING WW II  
ON 16TH MARCH 1943, AGED 21**



**CAP BADGE OF THE PIONEER CORPS**

**AND**

**23523 SERGEANT PERCY RILEY OF THE  
15th SHERWOOD FORESTERS, NOTTS AND  
DERBY REGIMENT. KILLED IN ACTION IN  
FRANCE ON JULY 17TH 1916 AGED 21**



**THE SHERWOOD FORESTER'S CAP BADGE**

**BY SAMUEL T STEWART - APRIL 2024**

## **PREFACE**

Both Private Charles Percy Topham and Sergeant Percy Riley have been included in the same publication because they were connected through adoption. Percy Riley was the brother of Helen (Nellie) Riley who married Charles Frederick Topham and Charles Percy Topham was their adopted son.

**Part 1** is dedicated to Charles Percy Topham and **Part 2** to Percy Riley

## **ACKNOWLEDGED RESEARCH RESOURCES**

Information has been gathered from numerous resources including the CWGC website, various newspaper reports and the publication "Lest We Forget" in Memory of the Fallen in the Great War, North West Leicestershire.

Photographs of St. John's Chapel and the graves were taken by the author.

## PART 1 - PRIVATE CHARLES PERCY TOPHAM

### COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVE COMMISSION CERTIFICATE

In Memory Of

Private

**CHARLES PERCY TOPHAM**

Service Number: 1798235

Pioneer Corps who died on 16 March 1943 Age 21

Son of Charles Frederick and Helen Topham, of Coleorton.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR ADOPTED SON CHARLES PERCY. "THY WILL BE DONE"

Remembered with Honour

COLEORTON (ST. JOHN) CHURCHYARD

|||||  
COMMONWEALTH  
WAR GRAVES



**ST. JOHNS MORTUARY CHAPEL AND GRAVEYARD, COLEORTON WHERE  
PTE CHARLES PERCY TOPHAM IS COMMEMORATED ADJACENT TO HIS  
ADOPTIVE MOTHER'S GRAVE BY THE CWGC GRACESTONE**



**THE CWGC COMMEMORATIVE GRAVESTONE FOR PRIVATE CHARLES PERCY TOPHAM**





**HELEN (NELLIE) TOPHAM'S GRAVE WHICH INCLUDES A COMMEMORATIVE INSCRIPTION TO HER BROTHER SERGEANT PERCY RILEY WHO WAS KILLED IN THE GREAT WAR IN FRANCE AND FEATURES LATER**



Sadly, Charles Percy Topham's adoptive mother, Helen "Nellie" Tophan (nee. Riley) who was born in 1893, died on the 11th of November 1927 aged 33 / 34. She is buried in St. Johns Mortuary Chapel graveyard, Coleorton. Strangely there is no mention of her husband, Charles Frederick Topham on her gravestone. As they adopted Charles Percy (born in Whitwick) as a baby, Nellie would have died c.5 years following his adoption.





**COLEORTON GREAT WAR AND 2nd WW MEMORIAL.**  
**THE FALLEN IN THE 2nd WW ARE SHOWN ABOVE WHICH INCLUDES**  
**PRIVATE TOPHAM**



BURTON-ON-LOYD, Sgt. (Pilot) DONALD ROBERT, 1435153. THE-WOLDS R.A.F. (V.R.) 7th December, 1942. Age 22. CHURCH Son of Walter Charles and Edith Rose Loyd, Cemetery of Wood Green, Middlesex; husband of Doris U.K. 2123 Loyd (née Hensman). Row E. Grave 13.

McLEAN, Flying Offr. (Pilot) DONALD RAE, J/20010. R.C.A.F. 25th April, 1943. Age 23. Son of Allan Grant McLean and Donald Ruth Weir McLean, of Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. Row F. Grave 4.

MILLARD, Sgt. (W.Op./Air Gnr.) NORMAN KENNETH, 1380773. R.A.F. (V.R.) 6th December, 1942. Age 22. Son of Walter Douglas and Lily Evelyn Millard, of Thame, Oxfordshire. Row E. Grave 14.

PITHARA, Sgt. (W.Op./Air Gnr.) STELOS PETRON, 1336315. R.A.F. (V.R.) 2nd August, 1943. Age 25. Son of Petros and Polixeni Pithara, of Pera, Orinis, Cyprus. Row F. Grave 5.

WHALLEY, Sgt. (Air Bomber) WILLIAM STEPHEN, 1473130. R.A.F. (V.R.) 8th September, 1943. Age 20. Son of Elsie Maud Whalley, and stepson of Walter Needham, of Great Sankey, Warrington, Lancashire. Row F. Grave 7.

**CASTLE DONINGTON CEMETERY**  
(Index No. U.K. 2125)

ASTON, Gnr. ARTHUR LAWRENCE, 1763646. Royal Artillery. 6th April, 1946. Grave 763.

BRUCE, Ldg. Sio. FRANK, P/K.X.88939. R.N. 26th March, 1946. Age 29. Son of Frank and Elsie Bruce, of Castle Donington. Grave 576.

MASSEY, Sgt. (Air Bomber) CHARLES WILLIAM, 1575137. R.A.F. (V.R.) 11th April, 1944. Age 22. Son of William and Ethel Grace Massey, of Castle Donington. Grave 847.

POINTER, L. Bdr. CHARLES SIDNEY, 843193. 24 Field Regt., Royal Artillery. 5th June, 1940. Age 21. Son of Ernest Pointer and of Florence Emily Pointer, of Ramsgate, Kent. Grave 2.

TAYLOR, Sjt. HERBERT GEORGE, 845090. 10 Field Regt., Royal Artillery. 5th June, 1940. Age 24. Son of Herbert George Taylor and of Emma Elizabeth Taylor, of Walsall, Staffordshire. Grave 1.

**COALVILLE (BROOM LEYS) CEMETERY**  
(Index No. U.K. 2126)

BALL, Sgt. (Pilot) KENNETH, 1180226. R.A.F. (V.R.) 19th April, 1942. Age 20. Son of Amand George and Olive Elizabeth Ball, of Coalville. Sec. B. Grave 5822.

BOOTH, Flt.Lieut. (Pilot) CHRISTOPHER RICHARD, 46846. R.A.F. 16th December, 1945. Sec. B. Grave 826. *58*

CRESSWELL, A.C.2 DONALD WILLIAM, 1678544. R.A.F. (V.R.) 6th April, 1943. Age 18. Son of William and Millicent Cresswell, of Coalville. Sec. B. Grave 707.

**COALVILLE (HUGGLESCOTE) CEMETERY**  
(Index No. U.K. 2127)

EDWARDS, Sgt. (Air Gnr.) KENNETH, 1577779. R.A.F. (V.R.) 24th July, 1943. Age 20. Son of Joseph and Elizabeth Mary Jane Edwards, of Hugglescote. Sec. A. Grave 287.

FINCH, W.O.II. (R.Q.M.S.) JOHN HENRY, 13013310. Pioneer Corps. 11th February, 1943. Age 49. Son of John and Millicent Finch; husband of Dorothy Lilian Finch, of Coalville. Sec. A. Grave 240.

HARES, Flt. Sgt. (Air Bomber) FRANK, 1581827. D.F.M. R.A.F. (V.R.) 214 Sqdn. 4th March, 1945. Age 21. Son of James and Beatrice Mary Hares, of Hugglescote. Sec. A. Grave 217.

JARVIS, Pte. GEORGE WILLIAM, 4859086. 1st Bn. The Royal Leicestershire Regt. 27th December, 1947. Age 27. Son of George Frederick and Gertrude Jarvis, of Coalville; husband of Irene Jarvis, of Coalville. Sec. C. Grave 2775.

KNIGHT, Sgt. (W. Op.) GEORGE WILLIAM, 626731. R.A.F. 4 Sqdn. 4th May, 1941. Age 21. Son of Ernest and Helen Knight, of Hugglescote. Sec. B. Grave 3428.

PLATTS, Lt. (Q.M.) ALONZA CHARLES, 4849817. The Leicestershire Regt. 26th April, 1943. Age 42. Son of Freeman and Rhoda Platts; husband of Elizabeth Mary Platts, of Brookwood, Surrey. Sec. C. Grave 767.

SAUNDERS, Gnr. RALPH GEOFFREY, 14638000. 4 Calibration Troop, Royal Artillery. 12th October, 1946. Age 35. Son of John Munt Saunders and Martha Ellen Saunders, of Hugglescote; husband of Doris May Saunders, of Coalville. Sec. A. Grave 61.

**COALVILLE (WHITWICK) CEMETERY**  
(Index No. U.K. 2128)

HOLLAND, A.B. JOHN HENRY, C/JX.214808. R.N. H.M.S. *Horne*. 10th August, 1943. Age 23. Son of Percy and Kate Holland, of Coalville. Sec. A. C. of E. Grave 428.

NEEDHAM, Wt. Offr. (Pilot) FRANK, 659072. R.A.F. 19th February, 1945. Age 24. Son of Albert and Ursula Needham, of Whitwick; husband of Gwendoline Laura Needham, of Whitwick. Sec. A. N.C. Grave 250.

ROE, Sgt. (W.Op./Air Gnr.) LAWRENCE JOSEPH, 1326327. R.A.F. (V.R.) 57 Sqdn. 6th January, 1942. Age 28. Son of James and Ada Roe, of Whitwick. His brother Leonard Francis also died on service. Sec. A. R.C. Grave 121.

**COLE-ORTON (OR COLEORTON) (ST. JOHN) CHURCHYARD**  
(Index No. U.K. 2129)

GRANGER, Pte. LEWIS, 10630532. Army Catering Corps, attd. Royal Corps of Signals. 6th October, 1945. Age 29. Son of Edgar and Edith Ann Granger; husband of Alice Granger, of Loughborough.

TOPHAM, Pte. CHARLES PERCY, 1798235. Pioneer Corps. 16th March, 1943. Age 21. Son of Charles Frederick and Helen Topham, of Coleorton.

**COSBY CEMETERY**  
(Index No. U.K. 2130)

GIBSON, A.C.W.2 LILIAN, 2163474. W.A.A.F. 11th November, 1947. Age 19. Daughter of Frederick Percy and Doris Wynn Gibson, of Cosby. New Sec. Grave 156.

SHENTON, A.B. HARRY C/JX.169104. R.N. H.M.S. *Warspite*. 6th January, 1947. Age 28. Husband of Edith Shenton, of Leicester. Church Sec. Grave 48.

**COUNTESTHORPE CEMETERY**  
(Index No. U.K. 2131)

BROTHWELL, Flt. Sgt. (Pilot) ROBERT SIDNEY, 1238487. R.A.F. (V.R.) 20th August, 1943. Age 21. Son of Wilfred Wright Brothwell and Florence Brothwell, of Countesthorpe. Grave 347.

★ CHAPMAN, Pte. DOUGLAS ARTHUR, 7674382. R.A.P.C. 26th April, 1942. Age 24. Son of Mrs. S. Chapman, of Countesthorpe. Solicitor. Grave 342.

CREASEY, L.A.C. HENRY ERNEST, 1304130. R.A.F. (V.R.) 15th May, 1943. Grave 710.

HICKFORD, A.C.2 EDWARD CHARLES (TED), 1008557. R.A.F. (V.R.) 504 Sqdn. 5th April, 1941. Age 26. Son of Owen and Ethel B. Hickford, of South Wigston. Grave 441.

HILL, Gnr. THOMAS CHARLES, 11002061. 195 Coast Bty., Royal Artillery. 23rd March, 1945. Age 35. Son of Roland and Susan Hill; husband of Frances Annie Hill, of Countesthorpe. Grave 761.

**CROFT (ST. MICHAEL) CHURCH CEMETERY**  
(Index No. U.K. 2132)

WALE, Pte. LAWRENCE, 5051789. The North Staffordshire Regt. 25th February, 1940. Age 22. Son of Henry J. Wale and Hannah E. Wale, of Croft. Grave 167.

**COPIES OF CWGC DOCUMENTS WHICH REFER TO CHARLES PERCY TOPHAM**

LY.

County: LEICESTERSHIRE GRAVES REGISTRATION REPORT FORM Schedule No. : 1.

PLACE OF BURIAL: COLE-ORTON (OR COLBORTON) UNITED KINGDOM DISTRICT  
Controlling Authority: (ST. JOHN) CHURCHYARD.

The following are buried here :

Certified complete and correct.  
SIGNATURE Y.H. Lundy M.A.S. Gaslen Area DATE 13.9.56

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)	(j)
P.R.G.	No. and Rank	Initials, Name and Honours	Unit	Date of Death	Details of Grave marking including Screen Wall	By whom maintained, if at Commission expense state fee payable	Ownership of Grave	REMARKS
	1798235	Pte. C.P. TOPHAM	Pioneer Corps (34 Coy)	16. 3.43.	C/H	Vis. 7/6d. p.a.		PI
	10630532	Pte. L. GRANGER	A.C.C. ATT. R. SIGNALS	6.10.45.	C/H	ReIs.		PI



COLE-ORTON or (COLEORTON) (ST. JOHN) CHYD., LEICS. No.1

1521/1/A/8 1  
 1798235 Private 14  
 C.P. Topham 12  
 Pioneer Corps 18  
 16th March 1943 Age 21  
 (Cross) 14  
 In loving memory 15  
 Of our adopted son 12  
 Charles Percy. 13  
 "Thy will be done" 98

1524/1/A/8 2  
 10630532 Private 15  
 L. Granger 17  
 Army Catering Corps 19  
 6th October 1945 Age 29  
 (Cross) 11  
 Remembrance, 16  
 God's greatest gift 78

**CWGC GRAVESTONE DETAILS**



## COMMENTS

Although we know that Pte Charles Percy Topham was serving with the "Pioneer Corps" when he was killed. We don't know where he enlisted or how or where his death occurred. Research is ongoing to try and establish this.

The tasks of the Pioneer Corps were varied but often involved manual labour. Many units found themselves stationed at ports, railheads and bases to help load or unload supplies. Work was also carried out on the construction and repair of roads and railways, often with the Royal Engineers. The **Royal Pioneer Corps** was formed in 1939, and amalgamated into the Royal Logistic Corps in 1993. Pioneer units also performed a wide variety of tasks in all theatres of war, including full infantry, mine clearance, guarding bases, laying prefabricated track on beaches, and effecting various logistical operations. With the Royal Engineers they constructed airfields and roads and erected bridges.

In September 1939, a number of infantry and cavalry reservists were formed into Works Labour Companies, which were soon made the **Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps** (AMPC); a Labour Directorate was created to control all labour force matters. A large number of Pioneers served in France with the British Expeditionary Force

From its inception, this was ranked as a combatant unit - a status no previous pioneer unit had achieved. In June 1940, many of the AMPC's companies had to be pressed into use as combat troops during the Battle of France (1940), before being evacuated.

In November 1940, the unit was renamed the Pioneer Corps. Its recruits included Jewish and anti-Nazi refugees who had fled from Austria, Germany and Eastern Europe.

The author leans towards the view that the Pioneer Corps were in France making preparations for the D Day landings and this is when Pte Charles Percy Topham was killed.

## COMMENTS

Although Charles Frederick and Helen Topham are credited on records as being from Coleorton on Charles Percy Topham's death records (1943), Helen had died in 1934 and no information as to where either Helen or her surviving husband Charles Frederick were living in Coleorton at any time has been found, and no Topham's are recorded in the 1939 register.

In the 1921 census, Helen and Charles Frederick were recorded as living at 167 Loughton Road in Whitwick with their adopted son Charles Percy Topham (under 1 month of age) and Helen Topham's mother Annie (aged 50 & born in Moston, Lancs) who was a retired matron at Ashby Workhouse.

In 1921, Charles Frederick was employed as an engineering fitter at Stableford's Waggon works in Coalville

It can be assumed that they must have moved to Coleorton before 1934 as Helen is buried in St. John's cemetery as shown in the preceding photographs.

## **PART 2 - 23523 SERGEANT PERCY RILEY**

### **COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVE COMMISSION CERTIFICATE**

In Memory Of

Serjeant

**P RILEY**

Service Number: 23523

15th Bn., Sherwood Foresters (Notts and Derby Regiment) who died on 17 July 1916

Remembered with Honour

GUILLEMONT ROAD CEMETERY, GUILLEMONT

VI. L. 4.



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

COMMEMORATED IN PERPETUITY BY THE COMMONWEALTH

WAR GRAVES COMMISSION

**744 TOTAL IDENTIFIED CASUALTIES COMMEMORATED OR BURIED**



## COPIES OF RELEVANT CWGC DOCUMENTS MENTIONING SERGEANT PERCY RILEY

PUTTOCK, Pte. A. E., 79317. 9th Bn. Royal Fusiliers. Killed in action 28th Aug., 1918. Age 18. Son of Percy S. and Frances Puttock, of 105, Leopold Buildings, Columbia Rd., Bethnal Green, London. III. F. 4.

PYE, Rfn. F., B/203380. 11th Bn. The Rifle Brigade. 13th March, 1917. I. D. 12.

QUANTRILL, Pte. W., 40025. 9th Bn. Norfolk Regt. 15th Sept., 1916. Age 19. Son of Mrs. Caroline Quantrell, of 77A, Millers Lane, New Catton, Norwich. VI. G. 2.

QUAYLE, Pte. R. J., 29715. 19th Bn. The King's Liverpool Regt. 30th July, 1916. III. N. 8.

QUINN, Pte. W., 21662. 7th Bn. Royal Irish Fusiliers. 9th Sept., 1916. III. E. 10.

RADFORD, Lce. Serjt. C., 14757. 12th Bn. Gloucestershire Regt. 3rd Sept., 1916. Age 20. Son of Henry and Mary A. Radford, of Bridge Cottage, Church St., Dawlish, Devon. XIII. I. 9.

RANDALL, Pte. A. E., G/5981. 1st Bn. The Buffs. 15th Sept., 1916. Age 28. Son of John Thomas and Mary Ann Randall, of 1, St. John's Rd., Margate. XII. J. 7.

RANDALL, Gnr. Clarence George, 39791. "D" Bty. 77th Bde. Royal Field Artillery. Killed in action 7th Sept., 1916. Age 21. Son of William and Annie Randall, of 7, Chetwode Rd., Trinity Rd., Upper Tooting, London. Native of Balham, London. II. B. 6.

READ, Pte. W. F., 40026. 9th Bn. Norfolk Regt. 15th Sept., 1916. Age 18. Son of Walter Edward and Harriett Read, of Island Cottages, Westacre Rd., Swaffham, Norfolk. Native of West Raynham, Fakenham, Norfolk. V. J. 4.

REDKNAP, Rfn. E., S/601. 11th Bn. The Rifle Brigade. 3rd Sept., 1916. VI. F. 7.

REEMAN, Cpl. T., 13852. 9th Bn. Suffolk Regt. 13th Sept., 1916. XII. J. 8.

REES, Pte. J. M., 21607. 19th Bn. The King's Liverpool Regt. 30th July, 1916. V. D. 5.

REID, Pte. John, 5705. 3rd/10th, attd. 1st/9th Bn. The King's Liverpool Regt. 12th Aug., 1916. Age 30. Son of John Reid, of 12, Holly Bank Rd., Clifton Park, Birkenhead. X. F. 4.

REYNOLDS, 2nd Lt. Frank. "D" Coy. 2nd Bn. Sherwood Foresters, attd. 71st Trench Mortar Bty. Killed in action 13th Sept., 1916. Age 24. Son of Rebecca Ann Reynolds, of "Highclere," 14, Snakes Lane, Woodford Green, Essex, and the late Walter Reynolds. XII. J. 9.

REYNOLDS, Pte. G. C., G/6720. 1st Bn. The Buffs. 15th Sept., 1916. XIV. P. 4.

REYNOLDS, Serjt. W. H., 3/9784. 9th Bn. Suffolk Regt. 16th Sept., 1916. VI. J. 3.

RHODES, Serjt. William, 19930. 12th Bn. The King's Liverpool Regt. 9th March, 1917. Age 25. Son of Mary E. Rhodes, of 46, Laverton Place, Queen's Rd., Harpurhey, Manchester, and the late William Rhodes. Employee of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway. I. G. 9.

RICHARDS, Pte. David, 1218. 14th Bn. Royal Warwickshire Regt. 3rd Sept., 1916. Age 22. Son of David and Lucy Richards, of 2, Victoria St., Craig-y-don, Llandudno. Native of West Bromwich, Staffs. XII. D. 9.

RICHARDSON, Pte. Leopold Randolph, 7141. "A" Coy. 1st Bn. London Scottish. Killed in action 9th Sept., 1916. Age 29. Son of Herbert and Sarah Richardson; husband of Ethel Laura Richardson, of 22, Norwich Rd., Forest Gate, London. Born at Flamstead, Dunstable, Beds. VIII. H. 3.

RICHARDSON, Pte. Thomas, 26883. 12th Bn. Duke of Cornwall's Light Inf. Died of wounds 26th Sept., 1916. Age 34. Son of the late Thomas and Sarah A. Richardson, of Hill Top, West Bromwich, Staffs. I. C. 7.

RICHARDSON, Pte. W., 52414. 13th Bn. The King's Liverpool Regt. 16th Aug., 1916. Age 21. Son of John and Mary Richardson, of 49, Miranda Rd., Kirkdale, Liverpool. XIV. C. 10.

RICKETTS, Pte. J. H., 21346. 6th Bn. Oxf. and Bucks Light Inf. 3rd Sept., 1916. VI. O. 6.

RIGLIN, Pte. W. G., 26433. 2nd Bn. Middlesex Regt. 17th Nov., 1916. Age 21. Son of Robert and Louisa Riglin, of 55, Uxbridge Rd., Shepherd's Bush, London. Native of Hammer-smith, London. I. F. 6.

RILEY, Serjt. P., 23523. 15th Bn. Sherwood Foresters. 17th July, 1916. VII. I. 4.

INDEX No. Fr. 294  
GUILLEMONT  
ROAD CEM.  
GUILLEMONT



CONCENTRATION OF GRAVES (Exhumation and Reburials).

Serial No. 79

BURIAL RETURN.

D.A.D.G.R. & E.  
No. 3 AREA, WEST.  
REGISTRATION DEPT.

Name of Cemetery of Reburial GUILLEMONT BRITISH CEMETERY 57c, S. 30, D. S. G. No 3 Labour Coy.

Plot	Row	Grave	Map Reference where body found	Was cross on grave?	Regimental particulars	Means of Identification	Were any effects forwarded to Base?
7	I	1	57c, S. 30, c. 6. 8.	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BRITISH SOLDIERS N & Derby	GRU. HD 37	
		2	"	"	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> " "	" " 39	
		3	" 6. 7.	"	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> " "	" " 38	
		4	" 7. 7.	"	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 28423 Sgt. P. RILEY 15/N & Derby	" " 40	
		5	"	"	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 25587 H/O PARKINSON	" " 41	
		6	"	"	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 25516 Pte. H. SPENCER	" " 42	
		7	"	"	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 25594 BRITISH SOLDIER	" " 45	
		8	"	"	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> " " "	" " 44	
		9	" 5. 5.	"	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> " " "	" " 52	
		10	" 6. 5.	"	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 24559 Pte. H.W. ANDERSON	" " 58	

CANCELLED BY  
CERTIFIED REPORT

Initialed... *[Signature]*

*[Red circular stamp: D.A.D.G.R. & E. No. 3 AREA, WEST. REGISTRATION DEPT.]*

*[Handwritten notes: 17/1/16, 54456/4516, 4478, 44568, 17/1/16, Ruy/1/16, 54456/4399, 1/58/E]*

This form to be made out in triplicate, two copies being handed to the D.A.D. (C. of G.) and the other retained by the Burial Officer.



J.C.

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT.

Army Form W. 3372.

GRAVES REGISTRATION REPORT FORM.

3rd. A.S.No. W/ 5698  
REPORT No. 1.

SCHEDULE No. 22c

COMMUNE:- GUILLEMONT.

PLACE OF BURIAL

GUILLEMONT ROAD MILITARY CEMETERY.

Map Reference

57c.S.30.b.5.6.



The following are buried here:—

*Exhumation*

Regiment	No.	Name	Rank and Initials	Date of Death	Cross Erected or G. R. U'd.	Plot, Row and Grave No.
PLOT 7. ROW "H". (cont.)						
		UNKNOWN BRITISH SOLDIER.			All	6 ✓
		-do-				7 ✓
		-do-				8 ✓
		-do-				9 ✓
2/Sher.Fors.	15212 ✓ 15152	HENSON.	Pte. T.	15.9.16	Ref/37890	10 ✓
PLOT 7. ROW "I".						
N.& Derbys.		UNKNOWN SOLDIER.				1 ✓
		-do- (Brit.)				2 ✓
		-do- -do-				3 ✓
15/N.& Derbys.	2-523. ✓	RILEY.	Sgt. P.	17.7.16.	CROSSES S.L./456 / R0/17786 456 / 456	4 ✓
-do-	23687. ✓	PARKINSON.	A/Cpl A.	20.7.16		5 ✓
-do-	25316. ✓	SPENCER.	Pte. H.	20.7.16	4478	6 ✓
-do-	23694. ✓	ATKINS. <del>UNKNOWN SOLDIER.</del>	PA. J.	20.7.16.	4568 Ref/37407.	7 ✓
		-do-				8 ✓
		-do-				9 ✓
15/N do Derby Reg	24559. ✓	ANDERSON.	Pte. H.W.	17.7.16	Ref/11168	10 ✓

S.L./L.S.10/4399

*221*  
*AG 4.3.21*



No. of Contract ..... dated .....  
 Name and Address of Firm. ....

## Imperial War Graves Commission.

Schedule "A" Page 31  
 Name of Cemetery.

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT (A) OF HEADSTONE INSCRIPTIONS  
 to this report is attached  
 COMPREHENSIVE REPORT (B) HEADSTONE TEXTS  
 (those headstones to be inscribed with texts are underlined)  
 and

GUILLEMONT ROAD CEM. "B"  
 To be stencilled on foot of headstones below ground level abbreviated thus:—

TWO STANDARD LAYOUTS (the layouts to be used are quoted on the badge design).

GULL.RD.C.

Badge Design No. and Layout No.	1st Line.	2nd Line.	3rd Line.	4th Line.	Age.	Centre of Stone.	To be stencilled on foot of Headstones below ground level.	
	Number and Rank.	Initials, NAME and Honours.	Regiment.	Date of Death. <small>In any instance where the entry "NONE" appears in Col. 6, the Age will be omitted from the Headstone and the Date of Death centred laterally.</small>		Relig. Emb.	Plot P. Row B. Grave G.	No. of Stone.
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
LAYOUT 1H ✓		UNKNOWN BRITISH SOLDIER	(FOR PARTICULARS OF LAYOUT INSC. ETC. SEE SCHED. G/H.)				7 H 1	951
LAYOUT 1H ✓		UNKNOWN BRITISH SOLDIER	(FOR PARTICULARS OF LAYOUT INSC. ETC. SEE SCHED. G/H.)				7 H 2	952
LAYOUT 1H ✓		UNKNOWN BRITISH SOLDIER	(FOR PARTICULARS OF LAYOUT INSC. ETC. SEE SCHED. G/H.)				7 H 3	953
1002/1A ✓	19563 LANCE SERJT.	THOMAS HENRY PAYNE	GRENADIER GUARDS	10TH <u>SEPTEMBER</u> 1916	AGE 21	CROSS	7 H 4	954
LAYOUT 1H ✓		<i>UNKNOWN BRITISH SOLDIER</i>	<i>(FOR PARTICULARS OF LAYOUT INSC. ETC. SEE SCHED. G/H.)</i>				7 H 5	955*
LAYOUT 1H ✓		UNKNOWN BRITISH SOLDIER	(FOR PARTICULARS OF LAYOUT INSC. ETC. SEE SCHED. G/H.)				7 H 6	956
LAYOUT 1H ✓		UNKNOWN BRITISH SOLDIER	(FOR PARTICULARS OF LAYOUT INSC. ETC. SEE SCHED. G/H.)				7 H 7	957
LAYOUT 1H ✓		UNKNOWN BRITISH SOLDIER	(FOR PARTICULARS OF LAYOUT INSC. ETC. SEE SCHED. G/H.)				7 H 8	958
LAYOUT 1H ✓		UNKNOWN BRITISH SOLDIER	(FOR PARTICULARS OF LAYOUT INSC. ETC. SEE SCHED. G/H.)				7 H 9	959
<u>1045/1E</u> ✓	<u>15212 PRIVATE</u>	<u>T. HENSON</u>	<u>NOTTS. &amp; DERBY REGIMENT</u>	<u>15TH SEPTEMBER</u> 1916	<u>AGE 29</u>	<u>CROSS</u>	<u>7 H 10</u>	<u>960</u>
1045/1G		UNKNOWN BRITISH SOLDIER	(FOR PARTICULARS OF LAYOUT INSC. ETC. SEE SCHED. G/H.)				7 I 1	961
LAYOUT 1H ✓		UNKNOWN BRITISH SOLDIER	(FOR PARTICULARS OF LAYOUT INSC. ETC. SEE SCHED. G/H.)				7 I 2	962
LAYOUT 1H ✓		UNKNOWN BRITISH SOLDIER	(FOR PARTICULARS OF LAYOUT INSC. ETC. SEE SCHED. G/H.)				7 I 3	963
1045/1A ✓	23523 SERJEANT	P. RILEY	NOTTS. & DERBY REGIMENT	17TH JULY 1916	NONE	CROSS	7 I 4	964
1045/1B ✓	23687 SERJEANT	A. PARKINSON	NOTTS. & DERBY REGIMENT	17TH JULY 1916	AGE 31	CROSS	7 I 5	965

955 To X Grp 51

\*These headstones are not to be executed until further orders.

Proof Checked.  
 Final Check No. 1.  
 Office Copy Prepared.  
 Final Check No. 2.



## THE 15TH SHERWOOD FORESTERS

The 15th (Nottingham) Battalion, Sherwood Foresters (Nottingham and Derbyshire Regiment) was raised at Nottingham in February 1915, by the Mayor and a committee, as a Bantam Battalion, from troops who were under the normal regulation minimum height of 5 feet 3 inches. Following initial training close to home, they joined the 105th Brigade in the 35th division at Masham, North Yorkshire in June 1915. The Division moved to Salisbury Plain for final training in August 1915. They were ordered to Egypt in late 1915, but the order was soon cancelled and they proceeded to France on the 1st of February 1916, and the division concentrated east of St. Omer. They were in action during the battles of the Somme at Bazentin Ridge, Arrow Head Copse, Maltz Horn Farm and Falfemont Farm. The division received new drafts of men to replace the horrendous losses suffered on the Somme.

## BIOGRAPHY OF PERCY RILEY

Percy Riley was born at Mosten in Lancashire in 1895. He was the only son of Joseph and Anne Riley. In 1901, the family were living in Burnley at 3, Lancaster Street and Joseph was employed as a courthouse clerk. Anne worked as a woollen stocking knitter. By 1911, Joseph Riley was master of Ashby Workhouse which was located on Nottingham Road. Joseph's wife was the matron. **This was what obviously brought their daughter Helen (Nellie) Riley who married Charles Frederick Topham to Whitwick / Coleorton.** Apparently Percy Riley, before enlisting with the 15th Sherwood Foresters was also engaged in Poor Law Work, having successfully held the positions of master clerk at Hinckley, Kettering and Basford.



**HELEN (NELLIE) TOPHAM'S (NEE. RILEY) GRAVE WHICH INCLUDES A COMMEMORATIVE INSCRIPTION TO HER BROTHER SERGEANT PERCY RILEY WHO WAS KILLED IN THE GREAT WAR IN FRANCE**

## **PERCY RILEY'S MILITARY SERVICE**

In February 1915, Percy Riley enlisted in Nottingham with the 15th Sherwood Foresters, one of the many Kitchener Battalions. He was posted to France in January 1916. In a short while and at a young age he had risen to the rank of sergeant. In July 1916 the 15th Sherwoods' were involved in the Somme battles and on July 16th they relieved the 6th Northamptons' in the trenches south east of Trones Wood. This is one of the many wooded areas (see above) which were to become notorious for the ferocity of the fighting required to capture and hold them. Percy Riley was killed instantly whilst attacking German lines near Trones Wood on July 17th 1916. He was 21 years of age and as shown on the previous page he is buried at Guillemont Road Cemetery on the Somme, location, VII. 1. 4.

## **FAMILY LETTER**

In a letter to his mother (Annie Riley) confirming his death 2nd Lt. N. H. Beedham wrote - "He was killed instantaneously whilst attacking German lines and was buried near the spot where he fell. Perhaps it will be of some little consolation for you to know that your son was a fine soldier, possessing a high level of duty and was greatly esteemed by all the Regiment who knew him. He met his end nobly and bravely facing the "Hun, even in death". In further testimony of high esteem in which Sgt. Riley was held, Lieutenant Hodgkinson wrote "in the death of your son, the company has lost one of the best Sergeants. For a long time, he was employed on special work at Army Corps Headquarters".

## **NEWSPAPER REPORTS**

**Transcribed from the Coalville Times - Friday August 18th, 1916**

### **ASHBY BOARD OF GUARDIANS**

#### **DEATH OF SERGEANT P. RILEY**

Mr Parker said they could not separate without expressing their deepest sympathy with the master and matron (Mr & Mrs. Riley) in the loss they had sustained by the death of their only son, Sergeant P. Riley, who had been killed in action. They were all very grieved when they heard the sad news, though it was only a repetition of what was happening in many homes at the present time. Here was a bright young man with every prospect before him who volunteered to serve his King and country, and had laid down his life in the noble cause he went out to uphold. He moved a vote of sympathy with the parents in their sad loss.

The chairman, supporting it, said he felt that he could never say enough in these circumstances. It was an awful thing when a father lost a promising son, especially in a war created through malice and enmity. These young fellows, from patriotic feelings, felt that they must go and fight for their country, and it was very sad when they were cut off. It would be a great grief to the master and matron, but it was one of those things which no one could help them to bear. They had to bear it themselves, and he hoped the matron, especially, would be given strength to bear it. (Hear, hear).

The resolution was also supported by the Rev. C. T. Moore, Mr Fowler and Mr Andrews, and was carried in silence by the members rising from their seats.



### **ASHBY WORKHOUSE MASTER'S SON KILLED**

On Thursday morning last week, Mr and Mrs Riley, master and matron at the Ashby Workhouse, were officially notified that their son, Sergt. Percy Riley, had been killed in action on July 17th. Sergt. Riley was in the Notts and Derby Regiment. Before the war he was master's clerk at Basford Union and had held similar posts at Kettering and Hinckley. He was a promising young man and the only son of his parents, for whom much sympathy is felt. Reference was made to the sad event at the Ashby Guardians meeting on Saturday.

**Transcribed from the Hinckley Times and Bosworth Herald - Saturday 19 August 1916**

### **WORKHOUSE CLERK FALLS IN ACTION**

Mr and Mrs Riley master matron of Ashby-de-la-Zouch Workhouse have notified that their son Sergeant P Riley of the Notts and Derby Regiment was killed in action on July 17th. Before the war he was acting as master's clerk at Basford, Notts and joined up soon after war was declared. He had held similar posts at Hinckley and Kettering. Mr Parker made reference to the event at the Ashby Guardians' meeting on Saturday and vote sympathy passed