

ST JAMES CHURCH TAUNTON

WORLD WAR 1 MEMORIAL PROJECT

Alfred George Cross

Name: Alfred George Cross

Rank: Private

Service Number: 26644

Regiment: Somerset Light Infantry

Battalion/Unit number: 8th Battalion

Date/year of Birth: c. 1898

Place of Birth: Taunton

Date of Death: 5 Laburnum Street

Place of Death: Ypres

Burial/Memorial: Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial

Alfred was the son of Theophilus and Keziah Cross. He was the youngest in a family of nine, three boys and six girls. Theophilus and Keziah Stowell were married in 1880, and originally lived in Paradise Square but later moved to Winchester St and then Laburnum Street. In the 1891 census Theophilus was a fireman with the electrical company but in 1901 his occupation is given as carpenter.

In 1908 Theophilus died leaving his widow to bring up the family. Alfred was only 10 at the time, but it seems his mother ensured he still stayed at school, and he is the only one of his family still at school in 1911. His mother worked as a laundress and other older members were employed in a range of manufacturing occupations.

Alfred was only about 16 when war was declared. He appears to have joined up in about 1916, as he served two months in England and ten months in France before he was killed in July 1917.

He joined the Somerset Light Infantry 8th Battalion, which had been stationed in France since 1916. He died on the first day of the Third Battle of Ypres, which marked the beginning of the hard fought offensive that led to Passchendaele in November over three months later. His name is commemorated on the Menin Gate, one of the four memorials to the Missing. The site of the Menin Gate was chosen

because of the hundreds of thousands of men who passed through it on their way to the battlefields.