

Cheltenham & Gloucester Branch
of
The Western Front Association

Remembering one of Gloucestershire's Fallen



Sergeant Leslie Howard Surman MM & Bar (40549)
4th Battalion Worcestershire Regiment

Leslie Howard Surman was born in Birmingham on 7 March 1897. He was educated at Cromwell Street PE School, Birmingham, Bishops Cleeve PE School and Cheltenham Grammar School between 1908 and 1912, after which he was employed as a clerk in the office of the Medical Officer for Health in the Borough. He enlisted as No 1997 in E Coy of the 1/5th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment in Cheltenham, but was later transferred to the 4th Battalion, Worcestershire Regiment.

He served in France and was awarded the Military Medal for his part in the Battle of Cambrai, where the battalion played a major part in November, advancing from Villers Plouich to Masnieres, a distance of some four miles, but losing their Colonel, shot dead by a sniper, in the process. Sergeant Surman gained a bar to his Military Medal for his leadership on 7 August 1918 in the valley of the River Lys, when a

daylight patrol encountered a German platoon, attacking them hand to hand, killing two and taking two prisoners. He was in the same area in October 1918 during the advance towards Courtrai and was killed during the taking of the village of Ledeghem, where the 4th Worcesters advanced to capture this strongpoint through thick mist, which had been turned into dense fog by a barrage of high explosive mixed with smoke shells.

Sergeant Leslie Surman was one of only two Cheltonians who gained a second award bar to the Military Medal for bravery in the field. He is buried at Ledeghem Military Cemetery and commemorated on War memorials at Bishops Cleeve, Southam and Pate's Grammar School.

(Taken from Leaving All that was Dear - Cheltenham and the Great War by J Devereux and G Sacker)