

Cheltenham & Gloucester Branch
of
The Western Front Association

Remembering one of Gloucestershire's Fallen



Private Albert James Richards (L/4975)
9th (Queen's Royal) Lancers

Albert (Bert) James Richards was the son of the Chairman of Charfield Parish Council, who was also the village postmaster. A former Dursley Territorial, he enlisted in September 1913 and joined the 9th Lancers, who landed in France on 15 August 1914.

At the end of October 1914 the 9th Lancers were located in trenches in the Messines area. At dusk on the 30th they relieved the 11th Lancers in front of Messines village. All through the night they sustained heavy shell fire and attempted German incursions into their line. At dawn they were subjected to an attack from both sides. For twenty three hours they held their position, at a cost of three quarters of their officers and a third of their men becoming casualties. They were then

ordered to withdraw to support positions west of Neuve Eglise and during this manoeuvre two officers and three men were posted as missing in action. It is probable that Bert Richards was one of these.

Wounded and captured by the Germans, he was taken to Brussels, where he died of his wounds in hospital, on 3 November 1914, aged 21. He was buried in Ixelles Communal Cemetery, where his is now one of thirteen British and Irish graves from the Great War.

Three of his brothers also served on the Western Front, two becoming a prisoner of war and another sent home suffering from the effects of gas.