

## PICKSLEY, ALBERT - Died 21<sup>st</sup> March 1918 aged 23

31620 Private, 1st Battalion, Lincolnshire Regiment



Photograph courtesy of Janet Stanham, granddaughter of his sister, Emma.

Albert was a bachelor, born on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1894 and the youngest child of John (a miller from Lincoln) and Ann (nee Gowshall of Torrington near Wragby) Picksley. He was twenty four years younger than their oldest child Jesse and his other Brothers and sisters were Annie, Walter, Emma, Maude, Thomas (Tom), Frances, Frank, Elizabeth Ann and Agnes Mary. Frank and Elizabeth died in infancy.

He had a hard life. His father died when Albert was just six years old leaving him living with his mother and Agnes on South Street (Now called High Street.) He was orphaned just a few weeks after his 8<sup>th</sup> birthday and was brought up in that house by his sister Emma and her husband Charles Hill.

Albert went to the village school and then worked on the farm of Robert James Day at Ranyelhow.

He enlisted into the Army at Kirton-in-Lindsey.

At the outbreak of war the 1st Lincolnshire regiment was based in Portsmouth and were some of the first soldiers to set foot in France as part of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF.) They were involved in many major battle including Mons in 1914, Loos in 1915 and the Somme in 1916.

By 1918 there had been more than 3 years of stalemate on the Western Front. The United States had entered the conflict after U-boats began targeting their shipping, but were still training their raw recruits before active service.

Russia had become communist the year before and quickly sued for peace. This allowed the German commander General Ludendorff to move around a million troops from the east as he knew of the need to act decisively before the Americans were able to strengthen the Allied line.

The British forces had been weakened by a lack of reinforcements following the losses of 1917 and also had to defend more of the front after French withdrawals. The frozen ground meant trenches were only half built and the Germans attacked the weakest part of the line.

At 4:40am on the morning of 21<sup>st</sup> March 1918 over 6500 enemy field guns began the heaviest bombardment of the Great War. The onslaught included gas shelling and at 9:40am gas masked German storm troopers went over the top and, helped by thick fog, slaughtered the British, breaking through with ease across the former battlefields of the Somme.

Albert was one of many killed that day and was buried where he fell, somewhere between Epehy and Gouzeaucourt.

In December 1918 the Gainsborough News published two in memoriam :-

*'Could we have stood beside thy grave dear brother,  
And seen you laid to rest,  
The blow would not have been so hard,  
For those who loved you best.*

*From all at home, Emma, Charlie and Frank.'*

*'Gone is the face I love so dear,  
Silent the voice I long to hear,  
Far, too far, thy grave to see,  
But not so far to think of thee.*

*Sadly missed by his loving fiancée, Elsie.'*

On the anniversary of his death two more messages were printed:-

*'This day brings back the memory  
Of a loved one gone to rest;  
And those who think of him to-day  
Are those who loved him best.*

*From Emma, Charlie and Frank.'*

*'He sleeps besides his comrades,  
In a hallowed place unknown,  
But his name is written in letters of love,  
In the hearts he has left at home.*

*Elsie.'*

Private Albert Picksley is remembered on the Pozieres Memorial, Somme, France. PLOT – Panel 23 and 24



**Accreditation: Linda Robson.**

**Source: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/16073544/albert-picksley>**