**Reginald James Epgrave**

Reginald James Epgrave, born in Bushey in 1892, was the son of James and Matilda Epgrave. Reginald’s great grandfather, James Epgrave, was a family butcher on Clay Hill in 1828 so the Epgraves were an established Bushey family. The butchery business continued and Reginald’s father had premises at 51 High Street, which was also the family home. Reginald was one of ten children, three of whom died during childhood.

By 1911 the family had moved to Harrow and was living at 64 St Ann’s Road. Reginald was eighteen and working as a butcher, while his two sisters worked as bookkeepers for the business.

Reginald married Annie Pomia Gery on 8 April 1914. Their daughter, Nancy Irena, was born on 30 July 1915 and he enlisted in Harrow as Private 2790 in the Middlesex Regiment in October that year. He and his wife were living at 140 Herga Road, Wealdstone.

During his service in France an incident arose when he was admitted to hospital suffering from a self-inflicted injury. He had been cleaning his rifle, with the muzzle resting on the toe of his boot, when a shot was fired. The injury was slight but a Field Ambulance was called. Initially, the circumstances appeared suspicious and a court martial was threatened but cancelled when there was no evidence that the act was deliberate. He was, nevertheless, charged ‘with an act to the prejudice of order and military discipline’ in that ‘at the trench Les Boeufs on the Somme on 27 November 1916 he negligently injured himself by shooting himself with a rifle through the toes’. He was disciplined ‘for leaving a round in the breech contrary to orders’.

He continued to serve in France and was killed in action on 6 February 1917 and was buried near to where he fell.

In September 1920, his wife, like many other war widows, received official notification that following ‘agreement the French and Belgian Governments to remove all the scattered graves’ it had been necessary to exhume her husband’s body and remove it to Peronne Communal Cemetery Extension. She was assured that the removal was ‘much regretted but unavoidable’ and that the work of re-burial had been ‘carefully and reverently carried out’ with appropriate religious services taking place.

From 10 September 1917, Reginald’s wife was granted a widow’s pension for herself and one child of 18/9d a week.

