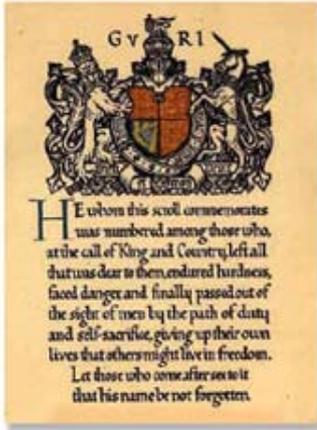
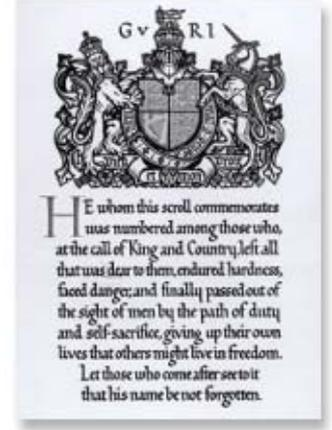


Ephraim Cumberbatch 1894 – 1917



He whom this scroll commemorates was numbered among those who, at the call of *King* and *Country* left all that was dear to them, and endured hardness, faced danger, and finally passed out of the sight of men by the path of duty and self-sacrifice, giving up their own lives that others might live in freedom.

Let those who come after see to it that his name be not forgotten.



45216 Private Ephraim Cumberbatch

25th Machine Gun Company, Machine Gun Corps and formerly 3, 8th Service Battalion Royal Fusiliers

Born: *Silverdale, Staffordshire* 1894 and was Killed in Action in *France* 12th October 1917

Ephraim Cumberbatch was born in January 1894 in *Silverdale, Staffordshire, England* and was the son of **Ephraim**, Senior a Coal Miner, & **Eliza Alice** his wife. Following his school years he initially followed his father into the Colliery before answering the call of King and Country.

On *Monday 10th August 1914*, and at the age of 20 years and 8 months, he left his family home in *Silverdale* and travelled to *Stoke-on-Trent* and enlisted in the Army. With God's help, he took the Oath of Allegiance to King George Vth.

This 130lb, 5 ft 9' man with a 37½' chest was in good physical shape. He had been vaccinated as a child and had a fresh complexion with brown eyes and brown hair. He had perfect vision with his right eye, but his left eye was short-sighted at 6/9. With his left eye, he could see clearly objects at 6 ft where his right eye could see them at 9 feet. However, it took the examining Captain Doctor N. Wall no time at all to declare him fighting fit and to approve and appoint **Ephraim** to the *Royal Fusiliers*. He joined for a three year term and was assigned regimental number 3.

His military service clock officially began ticking on Tuesday 11th August 1914 when he was posted to the *Royal Fusiliers Regiment* and joined them at *Hounslow*. He was posted to the *8th Service Battalion Royal Fusiliers* on Wednesday 12th August 1914.

Ephraim Cumberbatch 1894 – 1917

Sadly the trail goes cold for 18 months, until he becomes an active service casualty in the field when he is admitted for [shell] shock on 3rd & 4th March 1916 to a *General Hospital* in *Rouen, France*. On the 22nd March 1916 he is posted back to his Base Depot and then posted to the 5th Battalion on 2nd June 1916.

He transferred to the *Machine Gun Corps* on Monday 31st July 1916 and was assigned regimental number 45216. He travels from *Folkestone, England* to *Boulogne, France* on 13th August 1916 and joins his Base Depot at *Camiers* in *France* on 14th August 1916.

On Monday 25th September 1916, **Ephraim** sprains his back and is admitted to a *General Hospital* at *Rouen*. Four days later he is transferred to a convalescence unit at the hospital. The Army considers his sprained back to be of a trivial nature and that it would not interfere with **Ephraim's** military duty. He returns to *Camiers* on 9th October 1916 following his discharge to duty from the *Rouen Hospital* on 6th October 1916.

He contracts *Bronchitis* at *Camiers* 18th November 1916 and then contracts *Tuberculous Myalgia* at *Camiers* on 17th February 1917 and is admitted to hospital on 23rd February 1917 for one day. He returns to the convalescence depot and rejoins his Base Depot 7th April 1917. He once more is admitted to hospital on 15th April 1917 and discharged to duty 6 days later and returns to his Base on 22nd April.

He rejoins his 26 *Machine Gun Company, Machine Gun Corps* in the field of battle on 21st June 1917. On 12th October 1917 **Private Ephraim Cumberbatch** is killed in action.

For taking part in the *British Expeditionary Force* in *France*, **Ephraim Cumberbatch** is awarded the 1914-1915 *Star*. He also qualified for the *British War* and *Victory Medals*. He was buried at the *Tyne Cot Cemetery, Zonnebeke, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium*, where a memorial exists on Panel 154 to 159 and 163A.

Ephraim was not married and therefore, left no wife or dependent children. He did leave his 89 year old grandmother **Mary Sumnall**, parents **Ephraim** and **Eliza Alice**, an elder brother **Henry** and **William**, elder sisters **Mary** & **Lottie** and two younger sisters **Alice** and **Edith**.

The *War Office* swung into action. They wrote to the Officer in Charge of the *Machine Gun Corps Records Dept* to ensure that **Ephraim's** personal property and

Ephraim Cumberbatch 1894 – 1917

medals are sent to his father at the family home of 26 *Vale Pleasant, Silverdale, Staffordshire, England.*

On 19th October 1920 Ephraim's father received a letter from the *Machine Gun Corps*. It simply read:

“Dear Sir or Madam

I beg to enclose herewith *His Most Gracious Majesty's* letter together with the *Memorial Scroll* of 45216 *Private E Cumberbatch*. Kindly acknowledge receipt hereon. Prepaid slip enclose for same”

The receipt was returned by **Ephraim's** father with his signature and with the additional words hand written on the receipt:

“ Received with thanks, yours truly **E C**”



The letter **Ephraim's** family received would be like the one to the left, which read:

“*Buckingham Palace* I join with my grateful people in sending you this memorial of a brave life given for others in the Great War. **George R.I**”

The *Memorial Scroll*, has been illustrated at the beginning of this document.

The final award, which was dispatched under separate cover in stiff card wrapping enclosed within white envelopes bearing the Royal Arms and again accompanied by a letter from King George V which bore his facsimile signature, was the “Next of Kin Memorial Plaque”. This was commonly referred to as the “Dead Man's Penny”.



May *Ephraim Cumberbatch* rest in the peace that he helped to create for us all.

For more details on the background of the *Next of Kin Memorial Plaque* see: <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/exhibits/plaqueor.htm>

Sources: WO 363/C 1889 Army Service Records - “The Burnt Series” The National Archives-formerly the Public Records Office; “Medal Index Card” and Medal Rolls The National Archives-formerly the Public Records Office; “Soldiers Died in the Great War” The Naval & Military Press; The Commonwealth War Grave Commission www.cwgc.org; Imperial War Museum www.iwm.org.uk