

COLLINGHAM IN THE GREAT WAR

Name, Rank & Regiment of Soldier:
Hunt, Robert Stanley

Private 2/8th Sherwood Foresters (4663)

Service no. 27555

10th Royal Warwickshire Regiment



Above: Sherwood Foresters' cap badge (Pte Hunt's first regiment) image courtesy of M Barnard

Date of birth	Date Killed in Action	Age
1894	October 25 th 1916	22

Background: **Robert Stanley Hunt**

Robert Stanley Hunt was the only child of farmer William Barton Hunt (1858-1940) farmer (1901 census) later a joiner's labourer (1911 census), and his wife Lois Elizabeth Hunt (née Boccock) (1863-1943) whom William married in St John the Baptist Church, South Collingham in 1886. Robert was part of a long dynasty of Hunts going back six generations, many of whom had strong connections to the Baptist Church. On his mother's side, the Bocoeks were another long-established Collingham family. Robert could count at least three of his Boccock cousins - Charles, Joseph and James - already away fighting in the war, not to mention his cousins on his Uncle Thomas and Auntie's Ruth's side – Robert in the Navy and Betty¹ and Nellie, doing their bit as nurses.

The Hunts lived on Newark Road in 1901 but had moved to a 4-roomed cottage Low Street by 1911 (somewhere around nos. 49-53 – 'The Bog Cottages').

¹ See profile on Sister Elizabeth Hunt died 1917

Military History: Private R S Hunt

Robert had just completed his joiner's apprenticeship when he enlisted with the local regiment of the 2/8th Sherwood Foresters under the command of the much-respected Lieut. Col. William Coape Oates in June 1915.

Injured during the Easter Uprising in April 1916, Robert spent three weeks in a Dublin hospital recovering. He wrote to his parents: *'The street fighting has been awful. The rebels have had machine guns. We have lost lots of officers and men. When we started to fight we had no artillery so we were mown down. There were five lads with me and I am the only one with a whole skin. We should have lost more, only we had a good leader, Captain Oates.'*²

A few months later Hunt was posted to France and transferred to the 10th Royal Warwickshire Battalion (part of the 57th Brigade/19th (Western) Division – under General Hubert Gough's 5th Army).

The timing couldn't have been worse for Robert's chances of survival. He was plunged straight in to The Battle of the Somme, one of the deadliest and bloodiest phases of the entire war. The Germans called this phase *'materialschlacht'* – an acknowledgement of how the war was now being fought with the might of metal and machine guns, not cavalry and bayonets.

The 10th Royal Warwickshire (Service) Battalion, which had been on the Western Front since 15th July 1915, were involved in many of the front-line engagements including the Battle of The Ancre Heights (1st Oct – 11 Nov) fought at the time Robert was killed.

Eleven out of the 44 names listed on the Collingham War Memorials (in other words, a quarter) died in this period between July 1st and 18th November 1916.

Private Hunt's body was never recovered.

² Collingham in the Great War T Frecknall p 74 published in 2015

Memorials

Private Hunt is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial (Plot: Pier & Face 9A 9B & 10B), on a brass plaque dedicated by his parents originally in the Collingham Baptist Church now in the War Memorial Hall and on the North Collingham Parishioners' Plaque & War Memorial.



Above: Photo of the commemorative plaque originally in the Baptist Church on Baptist Lane. After this closed in 2011, the plaque was transferred to the War Memorial Hall. Photo HP 2017

Sources:

Commonwealth War Graves Commission website

- Collingham in the Great War by T Frecknall p 74 published in 2015
- Nottinghamshire Roll of Honour website
- East Trent Genealogy database by Christine Hasman
- The Long, Long Trail (<http://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/>)
- The History of the 2/8th Sherwood Foresters by Lt Col W C Oates published 1920 (available in Newark Library Reference Section & as a reprint to buy)

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