



Headstone Finally Erected In Honour Of Chippenham War Hero

A Chippenham war hero has finally had a headstone put up at his grave, four years on from his commemoration by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Private Percy Little, who lived in Tugela Road, Chippenham, fought in the First World War but was discharged from the Army after falling ill and dying of TB in 1918 aged 25.

Historian Richard Broadhead first put the case for Private Little's grave at St. Paul's Church to be recognized in 2010 but was told more evidence was required.

The Commission told the Gazette and Herald at the time that there was insufficient evidence that Mr. Little's discharge from the Army in 1917 was due to tuberculosis, which caused his death in 1918.

However, after further campaigning from Mr. Broadhead, with the assistance from North Wiltshire MP, James Gray, the case for Private Little of the Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry progressed and he was commemorated by the commission in November 2011.

Mr. Broadhead said: "We have waited since then for a headstone for his grave. We put a cross on his grave in 2011 and thought it would be there for six to eight months, we didn't think that cross would still be there now".

"We are planning a ceremony at his grave in a few weeks' time with the Royal British Legion. We are going to remove the cross and the cross will go into the Chippenham museum with how he was commemorated."

"It's great for him and I am glad he has been commemorated too. I'm really pleased but I don't think it should have taken years to do it."

Commonwealth War Graves Commission spokesman said that Mr. Little's original headstone was damaged in transit from France and a replacement was shipped on June 12.

A Spokesman said: "We are extremely grateful to those dedicated individuals who raised the case with us and provide the evidence to allow us to commemorate Percy. The Commission regrets the length of time it took to resolve this case but we are honoured to add Percy to our records and will ensure he is cared for in perpetuity."

Recognising the memorial as a war grave is extremely important, Mr. Broadhead explained, as it protects the area from being re-used.

James Gray, MP said: "I am delighted that thanks to Richard Broadhead's sterling efforts over a number of years, the War Grave Commission have at last recognised the Chippenham's Percy Little was indeed a casualty of war, albeit dying after he returned from France.

"I will look forward to visiting the newly installed grave in St. John's [sic] Churchyard together with Richard."

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