

Lance Corporal Alfred Thomas Howgate 12253 King's Royal Rifle Corps died on 23/04/1917 aged 21. He has no known grave but is commemorated on the Arras Memorial.

He was the son of John Robert & Alice Howgate of 39 Moorgate, Retford, Notts.,



In the Retford Times of 18 May 1917 the following appears "As recorded in our last issue the sad and distressing news has been received of the death of a second son of Mr John R. Howgate, Moorgate, Retford. The gallant young hero who has now paid the great sacrifice is Pte Alfred Thomas Howgate, King's Royal Rifles. Only a week or two ago we reported the death of another son, Pte A.E. Howgate, who died of wounds on April 15th. Much sympathy is felt with Mr & Mrs Howgate and family in their sad bereavement. The young hero whose photo we publish, joined the King's Royal Rifles as a regular soldier in January 1915 and after training went to France in May. He had only been in the trenches three days when he was wounded at Ypres receiving three machine gun wounds in the shoulder, neck and another in the arm. He was in Hospital at Oxford for 8 months and afterwards spent some in a convalescent home. He was sent back to France, after spending a short time at home, on June 27th 1916, and was again wounded on July 27th, having been in the trenches only 3 weeks, with a piece of shrapnel in his hand. Writing to his father he says - "It is not so bad this time. Only a bit of shrapnel in the hand. It is the back of the hand and on the knuckle of the first finger. I do not think it has broken any bones but it will be a little while before it heals up as there are a few bits of shrapnel in it. I suppose they will be sending me convalescent in a day or two and it shan't be long before I am coming home, but I can tell you I don't want to go out there anymore. I thought the last do was bad enough but it is not a patch on this. IT IS NOTHING BUT MURDER. We made two charges over the ridge between ---- and --- Wood. The first time we had to come back when we got to the parapet, but the second time we managed it all right, but lost a terrible lot of men. I was very lucky to get out as I did. I was in the ----district all the time, but could not tell you, as we were not allowed to write letters. In a later letter he explains that it was "a bomb that got me just a few yards from the German trenches". He was confined to hospital for five months and went back to France for the third time on January 13th 1917. He was killed on April 23rd. This brave young hero whose career as a soldier was such a sad and chequered one, was with Mr Iremonger, boot and shoe maker, Retford, for 6 years before joining the forces. He was a keen athlete and won many prizes, was a crack shot in the Wesleyan School section of the Boys' Brigade and was much liked by a host of friends.