

Driver Edward Samuel Bernard Colkin T/138311

3rd Ambulance Car Company,
Royal Army Service Corps

Died 24th October 1940, whilst a prisoner of war
in Germany aged 22

Malbork Commonwealth War Cemetery,
Poland, Plot 5, Row A, Grave 3

Son of Mr Samuel E and Mrs Kate E Colkin of
Burbage

St Catherine's Church War Memorial
Burbage War Memorial



Bernard in the garden at
Forrester's Road

Edward Samuel Bernard Colkin was born on Valentine's Day, 14 February 1918 at Church Street, Burbage. Bernard as he was known by his family had two elder sisters Gladys and Freda who were also born in the village. His father Samuel Colkin was a hosiery hand and later he was employed as a warehouse man.

The family had lived at 84 Hinckley Road, then by 1914 at Canning House, Church St, which may have been where Bernard was born. Canning House was the Burbage Constitutional Club, founded in 1911.

On 11 September 1922, Bernard started school in the mixed infant's class at The Burbage National School under the headship of Stanley Higham. On the school photograph of Miss Dudley's Class in 1927, the nine-year-old Bernard is pictured with two other pupils, John Lord and Fredrick Howarth who also died in the War. In 1927 Bernard would have been one of the first pupils at the newly opened Burbage (Grove Road) School, he would have left school in 1932 at the age of 14.



One of many school photographs which seemed to have been taken quite frequently in the 1920's. This particular one, chosen from many, was taken at the Church of England School in 1927, and shows (left to right)—
 Back Row: Miss Dudley (Teacher), Harry Powers, Donald Gent, Jim Robins, Harold Robinson, Ray Whitmore, John Lord, Jack Briggs, Wally Smith, Stanley Meadows, Frank Reece, Bernard Colkin, Jack Simpson.
 2nd Row: Myrtle Wright, Madge Spinks, Joan Scattergood, Ivy Reynolds, Alice Bass, Gwen Herbert, Mag Shilton, Nelly Shilton, Mabel Bennett, Edna Harding, Alice Cooper, Mary Craythorne, Alice Moore.
 3rd Row: Ivy Bates, Mona Wright, Edna Howkins, ? Nancy Goodwin, Eilene Robinson, Winnie Harding, Nelly Jordan, Peggy Clift, May Puffer, Eadith Beecher.
 Front Row: Arthur Higginson, Fred Howarth, Jack Middleton, Kenneth Hill, Joan Higginson. Headmaster: Stanley

National School Photo

Bernard served in the war from the start in 1939. Joining the 3rd Ambulance Car Company Royal Army Service Corps based at Wolverhampton. During May 1940, he was involved in the evacuation of Dunkirk serving as part of an ambulance car crew. These crews were unarmed, their vehicles were marked with a large red cross their only protection against enemy fire.

It was on one such operation Bernard was taken prisoner and transported to one of the Stalag camps near Marienburg. His family had received a letter from him stating he was well but had to work hard, By October, he had died and was buried at a local burial ground. After the war all casualties from the former POW camps were reinterred in the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery at Malbork, Poland.



Malbork War Cemetery, Poland

Hinckley Times – 13th December 1940:

Official notification has been received this week by Mr and Mrs Sam Colkin of Forrester's Road, Burbage that their son, Driver Bernard Colkin, has died whilst a prisoner of war in Germany.

Private Colkin joined the RASC as a militiaman and was serving in France at the time of Dunkirk operations. He was taken prisoner, Mr and Mrs Colkin had received a letter from him since he was taken prisoner stating that he was all right but had to work very hard.

Private Colkin, according to the communication died in October. He was very well known and respect in the district and much sympathy is felt for his bereaved parents.



Home of Mr & Mrs Colkin 10 Foresters Rd