

## PRIVATE JOSEPH LEONARD ALDRIDGE

*Service Number: 142313*

*9th Battalion Machine Gun Corps (Infantry)*

*Killed in action on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1918, Aged 29*

*Soissons Memorial, Aisne, France*

*Burbage & Sharnford War Memorials*

*Congregational Church War Memorial*



Joseph Leonard Aldridge was the youngest of five children of Joshua and Ellen Aldridge. He was born in 1889 and lived with his family in Back Lane Sharnford (now known as Chapel Lane).



*Figure 12 Back Lane, Sharnford*

As a child he attended the local All Saints school in Sharnford. His father was a bricklayer but on leaving school Joseph followed his older brother William into the local quarry industry. By the age of 22 he had become a Stone-Wheeler in a nearby quarry. In 1913 he married Ada Moore from Burbage. On the 5<sup>th</sup> September 1913 his son Harold Leonard was born and the new family moved to 6¼ Church Street, Burbage. This was a row of three cottages which stood where the Congregational Church car park on Church Street is now situated.



*Figure 13 6¼ Church Street, Burbage*

The family would have attended the nearby Congregational Chapel and his name is recorded on the memorial organ plaque at the church see page 186.

It is not known when he enlisted; probably when conscription started for married men in 1916 as he was not serving in an essential industry. He joined the Machine Gun Corp (Infantry) and was sent to Soissons in France. The area was held by the French but was well in the range of the German artillery. At the end of April 1918, five divisions of Commonwealth forces were posted to this sector. Here they faced an overwhelming German attack and some 15,000 men died or were injured. Private Aldridge was killed in action age 29 on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1918.

He has no known grave but is recorded on the memorial at Soissons. The Burbage Memorial is incorrectly shown as I L Aldridge, but his correct name is J L Aldridge. His name is also on the Sharnford War Memorial and the roll of honour in The Methodist Chapel Sharnford

THE FALLEN



Figure 14 Soissons Memorial, Aisne, France