

Wilfred Henry Brinkworth

Second Lieutenant, Royal Air Force. Joined the Army in 1910. Before the war served on the clerical staff of the A.S.C.; was three years in Mauritius; returning, was sent to Ireland, where he was when war broke out in 1914. Was sent at once to France, where he served at G.H.Q. under General French, and afterwards on the secretarial staff of Sir Douglas Haig. Given a commission in the Royal Fusiliers, he went through the Battle of Messines; transferred to the R.A.F., he was killed in action, August 4th, 1918. Was three times mentioned in despatches. Mons Medal and British War Medals.



WILFRED BRINKWORTH, born in 1888, was the son of farmer Henry Brinkworth, recorded in 1891 as living on Stowell Farm, and his wife Augusta. Wilfred had two younger brothers, Aubrey and Stanley, and three sisters, Dorothy, Ethel and Margery.

Wilfred went to school in Chippenham and joined the Post Office Savings Bank in London as a boy clerk in 1905. In 1908 he enlisted in the Army Service Corps as a Clerk and saw service in Exeter, Mauritius and Ireland before being deployed at the outbreak of war to France as part of the British Expeditionary Force, serving as a Corporal on the staff of Sir Douglas Haig. He was promoted to acting Sergeant in January 1916, by which time he had married Lily Mary Hunt in Exeter.

His records show that he was an excellent clerk, a fair typist, a teetotaler, had a good knowledge of French, that he was 'mentioned in dispatches' in *The London Gazette* in June

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1916 and that he was promoted to Sergeant on 5th March 1917 before being reappointed for Officer Cadet Training.

In September 1917 Wilfred received a commission in the Royal Fusiliers and transferred to the Royal Flying Corps in December 1917. He qualified as an Observer and was posted to 215 Squadron. He is mentioned several times in *Diary of a Night Bomber Pilot in World War One* by Clive Semple:

March 19th 1918 Have an observer – 2/Lt Brinkworth appointed to me. He is quite old but I think he knows his job.
April 5th 1918 With 2/Lt Brinkworth as my observer I took an FE2b to Oxford on a cross country flight. We were in the air for two hours and it was most interesting as the landmarks were fairly easily distinguished ... This afternoon I took Brinkworth to his home near Chippenham and he took a snapshot from the air.

Wilfred's death is recorded as 4th August 1918 – his third wedding anniversary – when his flight failed to return after a bombing raid. He was posted as missing but not declared dead until 19 December 1919.

On the night of 3 August ... Wilfred Brinkworth, who had been Leslie's observer in training at Stonehenge, together with Lt Hammond and Sergeant Gunlayer Pheby were part of the Squadron sent to bomb railway sidings at Metz. They never returned. After the war it was confirmed that they were shot down at Fives, seven miles north west of Metz, and killed.

Second Lieutenant Wilfred Brinkworth is commemorated on the Arras Flying Services Memorial and named on the Chippenham Secondary School Memorial.