

Sergeant Charles Austin

1893 - 1916

One of the eight Marlow men killed at Fromelles and commemorated on the war memorial in All Saints' Church was Sergeant Charles Austin.

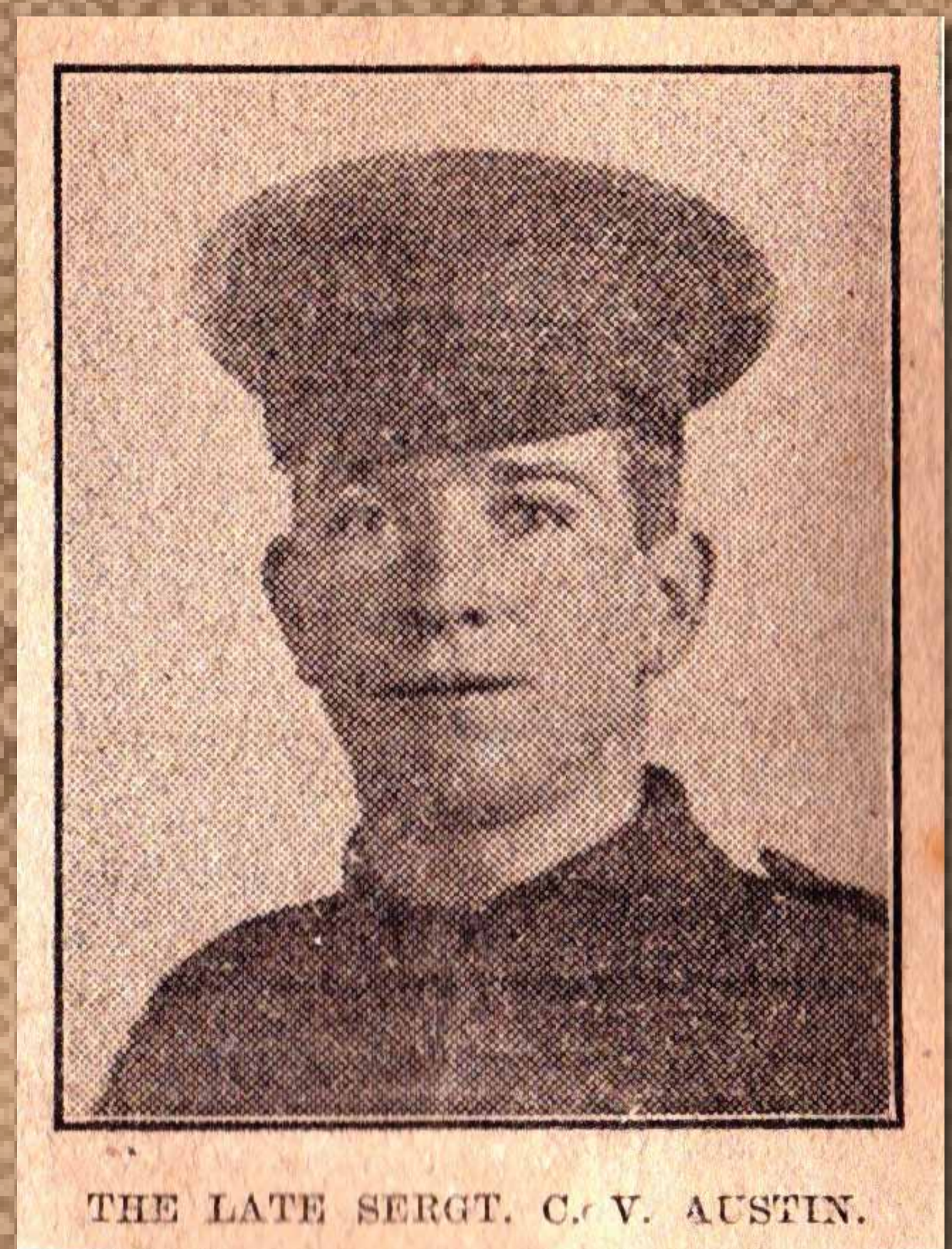
Before the War

Charles Valentine Austin was born in Marlow in 1893. His father was a labourer and the family settled in Berwick Road. Charles had a brother Albert, a sister Mary and six half-siblings. He worked for the construction company Messrs W & T Sellman before the War and had joined the Bucks Territorials when he was 17. He was a key footballer and often acted as linesman for Bisham Football Club. He was described as 'a lad of excellent moral character who was highly esteemed and thoroughly trusted by his employers'.

'Marlow may well be proud of him'

Charles was wounded and taken prisoner in the assault by the 2nd Bucks Battalion at the Battle of Fromelles, dying three days later. Although he was known to be missing after the battle, the news of his death was only confirmed in October 1916. He was last seen tending to Captain Ivor Stewart-Liberty who commanded the Company in which Charles served and who had himself been wounded. The Captain later wrote to Charles' family: 'I had been badly hit. Sergeant Austin (who was already wounded) crawled to me and, on his knees, began to bind up my wounds; no sooner had he started than he was hit again in the back...He lay close to my side for some time and eventually managed to get into a shell hole...He was one of the bravest and most willing men I knew and he gave his life for a fellow soldier. Marlow may well be proud of him'.

Charles' brother Albert was badly wounded two days later in further fighting involving the Battalion. One of his half brothers, also called Albert, died while serving in Mesopotamia in 1918. Charles' body was never recovered but he is commemorated on the Loos Memorial.



THE LATE SERGT. C. V. AUSTIN.

Charles Austin, 1893-1916



*Loos Memorial, France, where Charles Austin is commemorated.
Photo courtesy of Commonwealth War Graves Commission.*