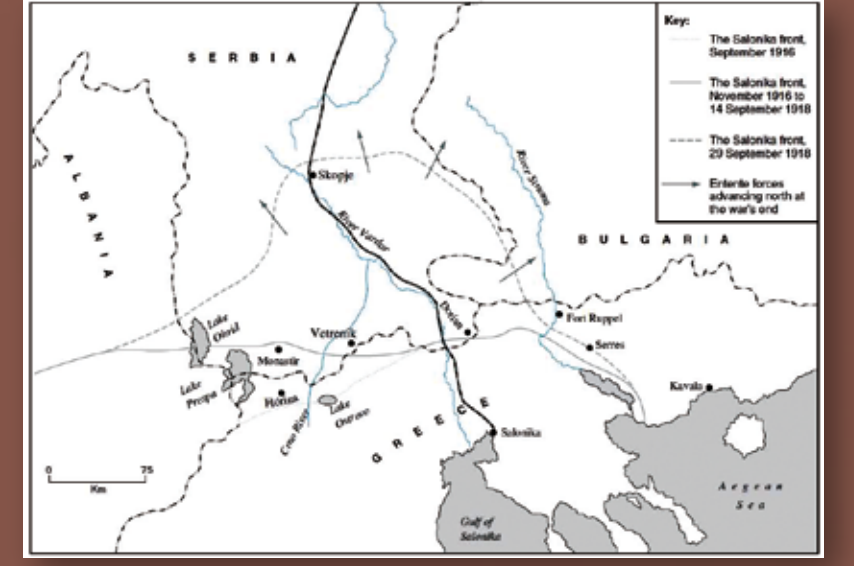


The Salonika Front

1915-1918: THE FIGHTING IN EUROPE

The Fighting in Europe and beyond

The First World War involved fighting all over Europe and in many regions of the world. Some of the campaigns are not well-known today, but many of them involved men from Marlow who fought and died a long way from home. The Salonika Front was one such campaign.



Map of the Salonika Front, 1915-1918

The Salonika Front

Salonika (now called Thessaloniki) is a city in modern-day Greece. In October 1915, the British and French governments sent troops to the port. Their objective was to provide military assistance to the Serbs who had recently been attacked by combined German, Austro-Hungarian and Bulgarian armies. The intervention came too late to save Serbia and, after a brief winter campaign in severe weather conditions, the Anglo-French forces found themselves back at Salonika.

It was decided to keep the troops at Salonika, although Greece was officially neutral. In 1916, they were reinforced and launched attacks against the Bulgarians. The front line remained more or less static until September 1918, when a successful offensive was launched, resulting in the surrender of Bulgaria on 30 September.

Marlow men at Salonika

Two battalions of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, which included many men from Marlow, served in the campaign. Many suffered from malaria, but four Marlow men with the regiment were also killed in action during the campaign. They included Sergeant Albert Higgs and Private Sidney Steele who enlisted on the same day in September 1914 and were both killed on 9 May 1917 in fighting against Bulgarian forces at Lake Doiran.



Doiran Memorial, Greece, where Sergeant Albert Higgs is commemorated

Albert Higgs was 23 years old when he was killed. Before the war, he had worked as a grocer's assistant in Market Square, Marlow. He was a keen footballer who had played with Marlow Wednesday FC. He is commemorated on the Doiran Memorial in Greece.

Before the war, Sidney Steele had lived with his mother in Wycombe Road. He was born in Marlow in 1887 and educated at Bovington Green School, before working at the paper mills in Wooburn. He is buried at the Sarigol Military Cemetery in Greece.

Commemorations

Plaque at the Soho Industrial Estate, Wooburn, commemorating the employees of Soho Mills, including Sidney Steele, who were killed during the First World War.



Sergeant Albert Higgs