

# Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Bushell VC, DSO



## Biography



**Lieutenant Colonel Christopher BUSHELL VC DSO. 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment).** Killed in Action 8<sup>th</sup> August 1918 aged 30 years. Born 31<sup>st</sup> October 1888 at "Hinderton Lodge", Neston, Cheshire. Son of Reginald and Caroline Bushell of Hinderton Lodge, Neston, Cheshire. Husband of Rachell Bushell (nee Lambert). Christopher's wife Rachel lived at The Vicarage, Wye for a short while before the outbreak of war. Rachel's father Revd Edgar Lambert was a former Rector of Wye church. Buried in the Querrieu British Cemetery, Somme, France. Grave reference E.6. Christopher's name appears on the Neston war memorial in The Wirral, Cheshire (his true home). His name is also on the St Margaret's-at-Cliffe parish church war memorial near Dover, Kent. Christopher's mother owned a property in the village before the outbreak of war. Christopher's name also appears on a plaque inside Bishopsbourne Parish Church near Canterbury alongside his wives name – Rachel Bushell MBE.

Christopher and Rachel Bushell were married at the Church of St Gregory and St Martin at Wye on 24 August 1915. The Revd D.W Hobson, brother-in-law of the Groom and Chaplain Superintendent of the Mersey Mission to Seaman, officiated. A year later, the couples daughter was christened, Elizabeth Hope Bushell at Wye.

Christopher's grandfather Christopher Bushell (Senior) was a self made millionaire having made his money in the Port of Liverpool importing wine in the mid 1800's. Reginald (father of Christopher Bushell VC) was made a partner in the family business – Bushell Brothers and Co, Wine Merchants and Shippers of Castle Street, Liverpool. Reginald was also a Justice of the Peace (JP). Reginald died 11 November 1904. A memorial to Reginald Bushell can be

found inside the Neston Parish Church in Cheshire (St Mary and St Helen). Reginald's widow Caroline (Christopher Bushell's mother) went to live at 59 Kensington Court, Knightsbridge, London. Around this time Caroline acquired a third property at St Margarets-at-Cliffe near Dover, Kent.

Christopher Bushell was educated at Moorland School, Heswall before going to Rugby School in 1900 at the age of 13. At Rugby Christopher became good friends with Rupert Brooke the famous soldier poet. In 1906 Christopher went to Corpus Christi College Oxford where he graduated in 1909 with a law degree. Christopher's name appears on the college Roll of Honour located in the College Chapel. After graduation Christopher took a post with a firm of solicitors in Liverpool before entering the Inner Temple, London as a student Barrister (5 November 1908). He was in chambers at 2 New Square, Lincoln's Inn, London and resided at his mother's dwelling in Knightsbridge. His name can be found on the Inner Temple's Roll of Honour. On 17 November 1911 Christopher was called to the bar and was finally a qualified Barrister. Life as a Barrister didn't suit Christopher. In 1912 he joined the British Army Special Reserve of Officers. Christopher was gazetted Second Lieutenant on 8 May 1912 and posted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment). Christopher was one of the very first officers to volunteer for war service in 1914.

After Christopher's untimely death on the battlefields of France, his wife Rachel left their residence in London and moved to The Firs, 114 Lower Bridge Street, Wye, Kent (the former home of the Viscount Ipswich a college man who was killed in action serving as a pilot in the Royal Flying Corps). In 1919 Rachel left Wye and moved to "Hinderton" Church Road, Boughton Aluph (now known as Downs Court). In 1931 Rachel again moved, this time to Hookers Green, Bishopsbourne near Canterbury. For 15 years Rachel acted as the Churchwarden there and became heavily involved in the Women's Voluntary Service. She was awarded an MBE in 1959 for services to the WVS. After her daughter's marriage (Elizabeth Hope Bushell) Rachel moved to Canterbury Cathedral Precincts. Rachel Bushell died 8 February 1965 and was buried in Bishopsbourne churchyard near Canterbury. Inside the church at Bishopsbourne is a plaque that celebrates the lives of Rachel Bushell MBE and her husband Lt Col Christopher Bushell VC, DSO.

In 2004 the Ashford Borough Council approved a road naming in Kennington as a tribute to Christopher. This was done despite the fact that Christopher had no connection to the Ashford area other than his name appearing on the Wye Church war memorial. The authors are aghast that this man's name was put **before** many local men who made the ultimate sacrifice and who were born in Ashford and resided in Ashford when they lost their lives. If the council wanted to celebrate a Victoria Cross holder with good local connections they should have chosen **Harry Wells VC** instead...

#### **Victoria Cross Citation (London Gazette no 30667) 30<sup>th</sup> April 1918**

*"On the 23<sup>d</sup> March 1918 when leading a company of his battalion in a combined Allied counter-attack, he received a severe head wound. Refusing all aid, he continued walking in front of both the English and Allied troops., encouraging them and visiting each portion of the lines in the face of heavy enemy rifle and machine gun fire. He was finally removed to a dressing station in a fainting condition".*

Christopher was killed in a later action (8<sup>th</sup> August 1918) leading an attack South of Morlencourt, Somme, France – "at 0700 hours Lt Col Bushell went forward himself with his runner to deal with the situation. Collecting all available men he led them forward from Croydon Trench to the assault, capturing Cloncurry Trench between Culgor and Cloud Support. He then proceeded along the trench to organise and encourage the men, and on his way to give orders to a tank crew, he was mortally wounded in the head by a sniper's bullet. His body was recovered by his runner under withering machine gun fire but when recovered he was found to be already dead".





LIEUTENANT COLONEL  
C. BUSHELL VC, DSO  
ROYAL WEST SURREY REGT  
8TH AUGUST 1918



THERE IS NO FEAR IN LOVE

INVICTA



In  
MEMORY OF THE MEN  
of  
ST MARGARET'S-AT-CLIFFE AND WEST CLIFFE  
WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR KING AND COUNTRY  
IN TWO WORLD WARS

1914 - 1918

JOHN ALLEN  
CHRISTOPHER BUSHELL, V.C., D.S.O.  
FREDERICK C. BARNES  
JOHN M. CASE  
CHARLES W. CHAPMAN  
GEORGE C. CLEEVE  
GEORGE H. COX  
WILLIAM R.A. DAWSON, D.S.O.  
CONRAD DINWIDDY  
ALBERT DIXON  
ARTHUR C. DOWNES  
REGINALD M. FINNIS  
STEPHEN FINNIS  
ERNEST FITALL  
STANLEY W. GOLDSACK  
THOMAS W. GRANT

WILLIAM A. GRANT  
GEORGE J. HEWLETT  
JOHN HEWLETT  
JOSEPH HEWLETT  
AUGUSTUS HENDRICKS  
IVAN HESS  
MAURICE HEYWARD  
BENJAMIN HOLMES  
FREDERICK C. HOLMES  
ERNEST C. JAMES  
ARTHUR JAMES  
RALPH LITTLE, D.S.O.  
ERNEST DE LOUVE  
MANFELDT, C. N. MILLS  
GEORGE T. POWELL  
MAURICE W. WELLARD

1939 - 1945

ERNEST ATTWOOD  
HOPE BRAINE  
RICHARD G. CLAWSHAW  
NORMAN FINNIS  
JOHN KENWAY

ALEXANDER KINNAIRD  
HENRY MATCHAM  
STANLEY PRICE  
GEOFFREY C. SMITH  
STANLEY WELLS

+ THEIR NAME LIVETH FOR EVERMORE +



1914 - 1918

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REGINALD M. FINNIS



*The Wye Church Tribute*

