Herbert Lunnon, 1896-1918

Herbert Lunnon was one of the first volunteers from Marlow to join up after the outbreak of War in summer 1914, at the age of 18. He served with distinction on the Western Front and was killed during the 'big push' against the German forces in summer 1918. He was posthumously awarded the Military Medal.

Marlow born and bred

Herbert Lunnon was born in Marlow in 1896. His father, George, was a carpenter who had also been born in Marlow. His mother Rose was originally from London. Herbert had an elder sister and brother and one younger brother, all of whom were born in Marlow. The family lived at 35 Chapel Street. Herbert was educated at the Marlow Church of England Schools before working as a grocery apprentice in the Marlow branch of the International Stores.
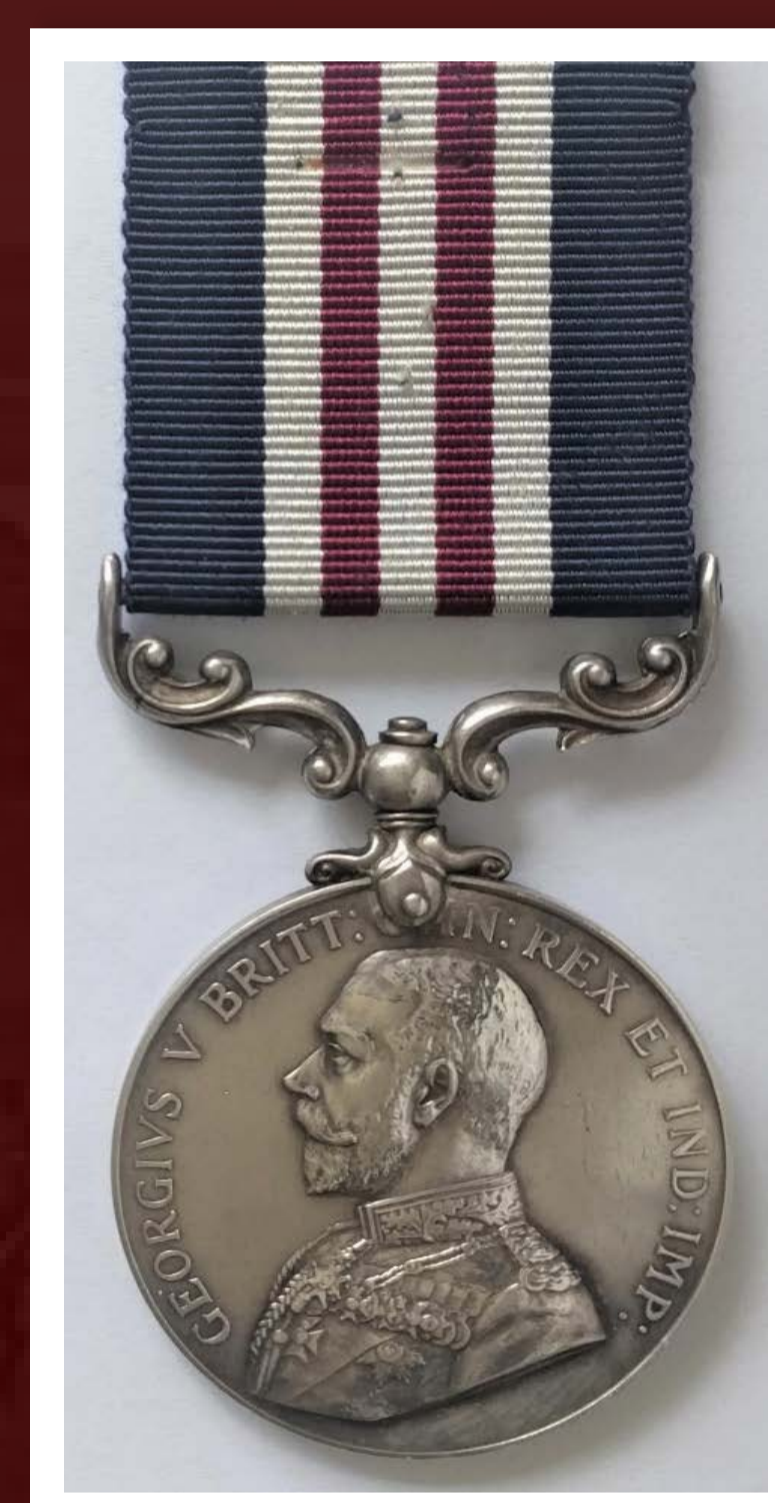
A keen volunteer

Herbert, aged 18, was one of the first young men from Marlow to volunteer for service after the start of the War in the summer of 1914 and was recruited as a private in the 6th Battalion, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. After training in England, the battalion was sent to serve on the Western Front in July 1915. It was soon involved in intensive fighting and, on 25 September, Herbert was wounded in the face by shrapnel during the Battle of Loos. He was sent back to England and recovered at a hospital in Torquay before becoming a gas instructor.

Military Medal, similar to that awarded to Sergeant Herbert Lunnon
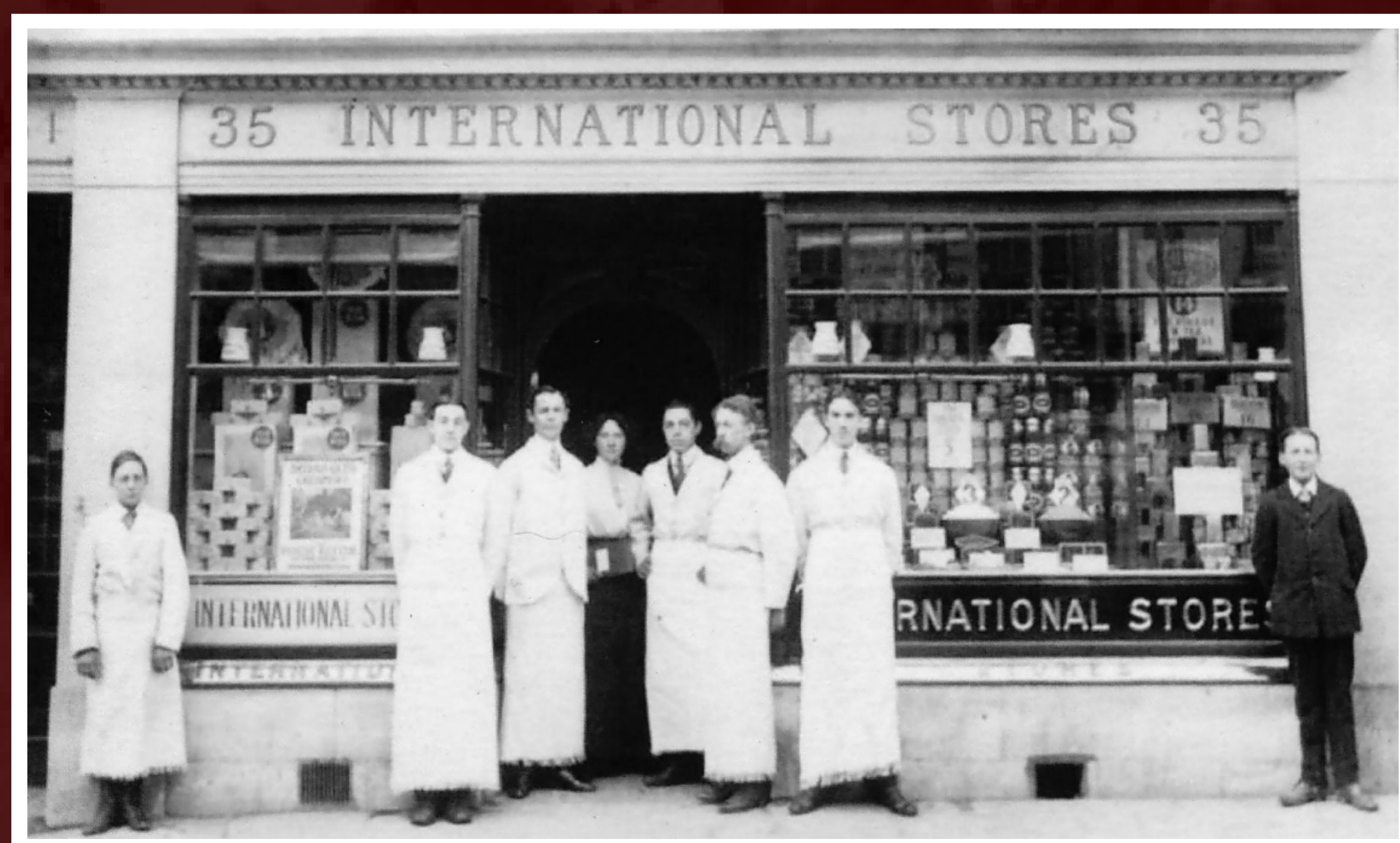
'Great gallantry'

Described as 'a very able young soldier' who was 'keen on his work', Herbert soon rose to the rank of sergeant. He was passed fit for active service and returned to France in August 1918, joining the 8th Battalion, Royal Berkshire Regiment. He had only been in France three weeks when he was killed on 28 August during a successful assault by the battalion on German positions. He was posthumously awarded the Military Medal for 'great gallantry' in the fighting shortly before his death. Herbert is buried in Longueval Road Cemetery, France.

Herbert's elder brother Jack had emigrated to Australia in 1912. He served as a Lieutenant in the 28th Battalion, Australian Infantry and also fought in France. He was awarded the Military Cross for conspicuous bravery shortly before Herbert's death. He returned to Australia after the War.

The Marlow branch of International Stores. This photo was taken in the 1920s. Photo courtesy of Michael Eagleton.

Longueval Road Cemetery, France, where Herbert Lunnon is buried

Marlow

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