

# WAR MEMORIAL IN STAINED GLASS



Continuing our series on WW1 memorials in the Balsall Heath area, we now come to a lovely memorial window in the church of St. John & St. Martin (left) on George Street. This Catholic church does not have any other war memorial so this one is unique. It is also unique in being, as far as I know, the only military memorial window in the area.

This type of memorial is something you will often see in churches around the country, but obviously came at a price most could not afford. The man whom it commemorates is Corporal Edward V. Parker, who, it says, fell in battle on July 1st 1916. It is presumably a good likeness of him, but who was he?

Edward Parker served with the Royal Warwickshire Regiment 1st/ 6th Battalion (no. 2585) and was 26 years old when he was killed in action on the Somme; he has no grave. It is notable that Parker had been awarded the Military Medal for bravery under fire.

His parents were George and Mary Parker of 74 George Street. On the 1911 Census the family were a little further along the street at number 40. George Parker is already deceased and the house is occupied by his widow Mary and five of their nine children. The children are all of probable local interest - Elizabeth and Catherine, the oldest two, are both assistant schoolmistresses. The oldest boy, John Joseph, is a Railway Clerk with the Midland Railway Company. Next one down, Walter Frederick, is a cycle packer at the Co-Op Wholesale Society. The youngest is Edward Vincent, just 20, who is a Newspaper Clerk at J. Feeney and Co.

We know a little more of Parker in the war from his Medal Index Card. A card survives for everyone who fought in the war, and his notes when he entered a "theatre of war" - in his case France on 22nd March 1915. Because he entered the war so early on he was entitled to the 1914/15 Star as well as the Victory Medal and British War Medal. These would have been received by his parents, along also with the so called "Death Penny" plaque, which all families dreaded receiving.



Detail of the memorial window (above) and the full window (right).

Parker's medal index card (below), which adds the remark that he was "K in A" - killed in action. His Service Records have been lost in the fire that destroyed around three in four of the records during a WW2 air raid—along with all the 1931 Census!



Name	Corps	Rank	Regt. No.
PARKER Edward	R War R	Pte	2585
Medal	Roll	Page	Remarks
VICTORY	* L/10415 25	5322	
BRITISH	do	do	
15 STAR	L/118	383	K in A
Theatre of War first served in	11 France		
Date of entry therein	22.3.15		