

ALBERT F. CLEAVER, Corporal 4469886, Leicestershire Regiment, 16th Jan 1944

Albert was another casualty where I originally found no obvious connection to Brompton-on-Swale. However, I was subsequently given information from Shaun and Sharon Catterick of the village, who kindly explained that Albert was originally married to Margaret Harrison Snowdon (daughter of George and Alice Snowdon, who lived at Croydon House on Richmond Road). They married in 1942 at Easby church and also lived at Croydon House until Albert was deployed, sadly never to return. Margaret went on to marry Jim Catterick in 1955.

Albert Frederick Cleaver himself was the son of Frederick and Maud Ethel Cleaver, of Stapleford, Nottinghamshire.

Albert served with the 2/5th battalion, Leicestershire Regiment and after serving on home-defence and anti-invasion duties they left for North Africa in early 1943, fighting in the Tunisian Campaign, including the [Battle of Kasserine Pass](#), until the campaign ended in mid-May 1943. After resting for the next three months, the battalion's next action was in the [Allied invasion of Italy](#), where, holding off against numerous German counterattacks, heavy casualties were sustained. After a brief rest the battalion breached the [Volturno Line](#) in October before taking part in the battles around the [Winter Line](#) in the middle of Italy.

Remarkably, thanks to fellow researchers on the web site [WW2 Talk](#) the actual report on the action that led to Albert's death has been found.

Albert's unit were near a small village called [Vandra](#) (about 30km North East of Monte Cassino). The fighting in the area had been intense and the Durham Light Infantry had put an observation post in the village where they could observe German guns nearby. However, on the 13th January, the observation post was overrun and strong patrols near the now battered village were met by heavy fire. The area was also strewn with defensive minefields, and patrols lost many men killed and wounded.

On the 16th January it seems that the Albert was leading a patrol near the small village of [Vandra](#).

The report reads as follows:

This Cpl was last seen at approx 0100 hrs on 16 Jan 44, near VANDRA at 898118. Sheet 160 I Cassino

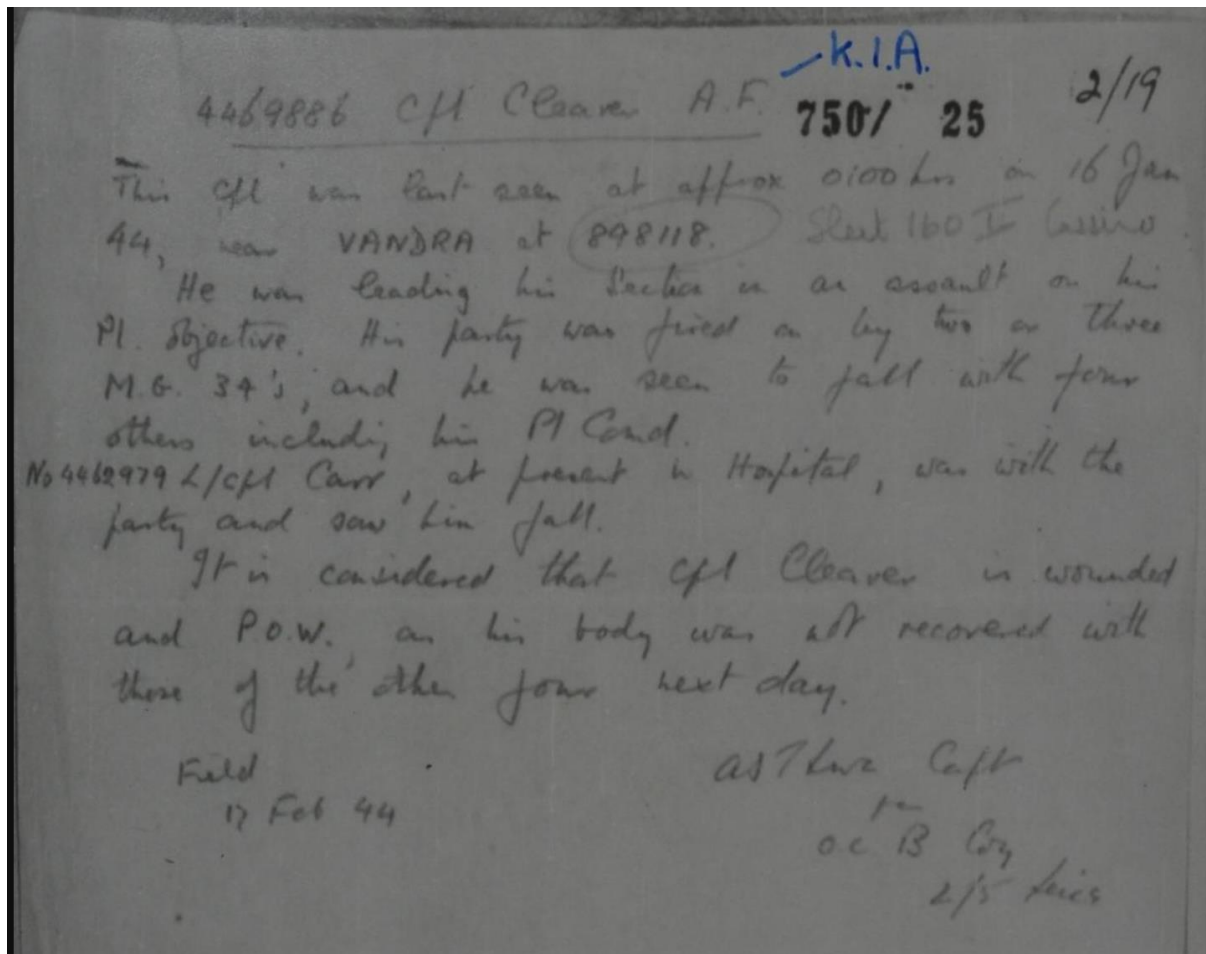
He was leading his section in an assault on his PI objective. His party was fired on by two or three M.G. 34's and he was seen to fall with four others including his PI Comd. No.4462979 L/Cpl Carr, at present in Hospital, was with the party and saw him fall.

It is considered that Cpl Cleaver is wounded and P.O.W. , as his body was not recovered with those of the other four next day.

Field 17 Feb 44

?Name Unclear? for OC B Coy 2/5 Leics

Here is that original report:



Although the report mentions the possibility of capture – the letters KIA seem to have been added later, confirming Albert's death and his body was subsequently recovered. He was 26.

The others that were killed in the patrol were:

4445131 Serjeant Harry Charles Amos

<http://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/2607982/AMOS,%20HARRY%20CHARLES>

4867097, Private Alfred King

<http://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/2410424/KING,%20ALFRED>

14566856 Private Robert H Walker

<http://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/2613288/WALKER,%20ROBERT%20HENRY>

14508579 Private Philip Mallinson

<http://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/2609344/MALLINSON,%20PHILIP>

The next day, the allied assault on Monte Cassino began.

I was confused to see that the published casualty list showed that 4 of the casualties were from the Durham Light Infantry rather than the Leicestershire Regiment as shown in the Commonwealth War Graves records. Both units were present in the in the same area, so at first I just put it down to the confusion and the “fog of war”. However ... the photograph of Albert below clearly shows the DLI badge on his shoulder. I’m guessing he was a DLI man, but was transferred to 2/5 Leicester’s possible with other DLI men.

Casualty Report:

3389765	BOOTH	Pte.	A.		5. 1.44.
4804226	CHANDLER	Pte.	J.C.		5. 1.44.
14214431	DOHERTY	Pte.	T.		5. 1.44.
4037932	HARSTON	Pte.	C.S.C.		5. 1.44.
3389469	ROBINSON	Pte.	J.		5. 1.44.
<u>Leicestershire Regiment</u>					
4928867	FARMER	Pte.	C.	2/5 Bn.	13. 1.44.
4887097	KING	Pte.	A.		15. 1.44.
<u>Cameronians</u>					
3196539	ROSS	Rfn.	G.		Date not reported
<u>East Surrey Regiment</u>					
6145455	SMITH	Pte.	H.J.		4.12.43.
<u>10th Bn., Royal Berkshire Regiment</u>					
5341617	ROGERS	Pte.	R.D.		11. 1.44.
<u>Durham Light Infantry</u>					
6298975	ALLWOOD	Pte.	F.H.		13. 1.44.
4445131	AMOS	Sjt.	H.C.		15. 1.44.
14391404	BROADBENT	Pte.	F.		13. 1.44.
4469886	CLEAVER	Cpl.	A.F.		15. 1.44.
4696058	ELVIDGE	Cpl.	S.		12. 1.44.
4470579	LAWRENCE	Pte.	H.		5. 1.44.
14508579	MALLINSON	Pte.	P.		15. 1.44.
4456477	MARLOW	L/Opl.	D.		12. 1.44.
14566856	WALKER	Pte.	R.H.		15. 1.44.



Left: Men of 2/5th Leicestershire Regiment supported by Sherman tanks in Italy, 1944

Albert Cleaver (photograph kindly provided by Shaun Catterick), showing his Durham Light Infantry cap badge.



Albert's grave is number XIV.B.3 at the [CASSINO WAR CEMETERY](#), Italy



[Cassino Cemetery, Italy](#)

Sources

- (1) [CWGC https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/casualty-details/2608570](https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/casualty-details/2608570)
Grave Ref: XIV.B.3 [CASSINO WAR CEMETERY](#), Italy
- (2) <http://ww2talk.com/>