

All Saints Alive

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT



A true friend

Dear Friends,

It was a special and moving moment when the Hertfordshire Regiment Standard was given to All Saints' Church last month and we held their last parade. Amazing memories of daring were recalled in the readings and we gave thanks for all their dedication and service.



In September a paving stone was dedicated, in front of the Castle gates, to Alfred Alexander Burt. Albert, a resident of Port Vale, was a gas fitter for the Hertford Gas Company, who had joined the Hertfordshire Regiment and was called up on the 4th August 1914.

Alfie Burt joined the troops on the Western Front in November 1914. He endured, as did all the regiment, a terrible winter in the trenches. During the Battle of Loos in September 1915, Alfred Burt, by then a Corporal, won the Victoria Cross.

While they were waiting, lined up in their trenches, to go 'over the top' near Cunchy, their section of the line came under heavy machine gun fire, forcing even more men into their already crowded trenches. Just at that time, a German Trench Mortar barrage hit them and an incredibly powerful 'minenwerfer' shell landed in their midst. It did not explode immediately so, without thought, Alfred ran to it, held it firm with one foot, pulled the fuse out and threw it over the parapet before it could explode. Alfie

Burt's selfless actions saved the lives of 20 or more of his comrades.



He was awarded the Victoria Cross, now on show in Hertford Museum in the WW1 special exhibition. An ordinary man who did an extraordinary heroic act!

This season of Remembering draws us together as a community, remembering those who made huge sacrifices and lost lives, and enables us to think about the freedom that we have and the responsibilities that go with such hard won freedom.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends". This phrase is often used at Remembrance services as it reminds us that Jesus gave his life for us all. Winning freedom from death and sin for us.

We are called to follow his example of love, which is costly, in our own lives. We are challenged to use our freedom and the peace that has been fought for by those in the past responsibly and mindfully.

We may not find ourselves in Alfie Burt's situation in a mortar attack but we can rise to the challenge of being of service to others, putting others first, living up to the title of Jesus' "friends".

Love, Jo