

# The Baker family: tragedy of war

In 1914 the Baker family was running the Spa Inn in Oldends Lane, Stonehouse.



1898 - The Baker Family

Left-right: Frederick John, Eli (father), Albert Eli, Reginald Walter, Elizabeth Annie (mother) and Alexander William.

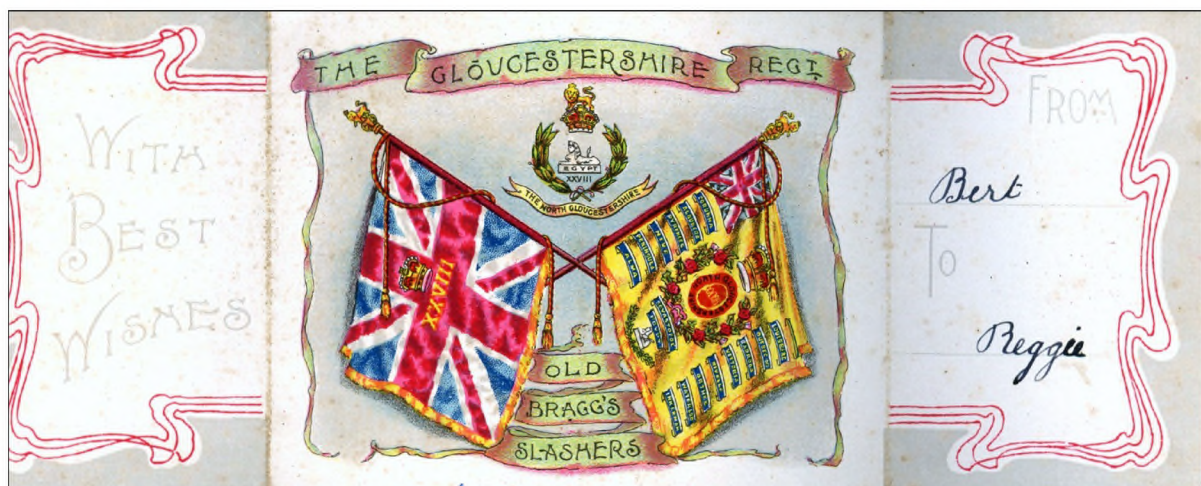


Albert Baker, a soldier serving in Malta

- **Albert Eli Baker**, born 1887, joined the Gloucestershire Regiment in 1906.
- **August 13th 1914** - his Brigade landed in France.
- **November 5th 1914** - Albert was killed by a shell at Ypres.
- His friend Private Albert Townsend of Minchinhampton wrote:

***"It was only my luck that I was not killed as well.  
I miss him every minute of the day. I wish it was me instead of him.  
I did the best I could for him.  
I buried him and it was the saddest thing I ever did.  
I have lost one of my truest friends and I cannot replace him."***

- **December 23rd 1914** - Lance Corporal Townsend was also killed.
- **March 29th 1915** - Stonehouse Parish Council proposed a book of condolence with the relatives of Private Baker and Rifleman Bullock, two gallant young soldiers who had fallen in the war. The resolution was carried. All present standing in silence.



Albert sent this card home to his brother Reginald in 1914

# The Baker family: loss and survival

- **Alexander William Baker**, born 1893, became a gunner in the Royal Garrison Artillery.
- **1916** he went to France with 129th Heavy Battery.
- **November 12th 1918**, on his way home, Alexander died from the effects of gas.
- The Baker family were so traumatised by the loss of two sons that their names were rarely mentioned .
- Alexander's widow Lottie never remarried and died in 1966.
- Alexander's "death penny" (sent to Lottie after the war) was given to a neighbour and kept until 2014.



Alexander Baker in uniform



Card sent home by Reginald in 1917



Reginald Baker in the Gloucestershire Yeomanry



Memorial plaque for Alexander Baker

- **Reginald Walter Baker**, born 1896, survived the war.
- **May 11th 1917 Stroud News** – Lance Corporal R.W. Baker, Hussars, of Oldends, Stonehouse described his rescue from the "Cameronia" which had been torpedoed in the Mediterranean. He praised the fine rescue work of British destroyers.

***"I owe my life to a Jack Tar. If it had not been for him I should have been under the destroyer. He flung a piece of rope to me and pulled me in ..... I think we ought to be proud of the Navy ..... The Captain of the destroyer deserves the DSO. He would not leave until nearly every available man was picked up."***



Card sent to Reg by his sister Victoria May

## Effects

- The lives of the Baker family were changed for ever. The parents never recovered from the loss of their two sons. The younger members of the family lost their two older brothers.
- Lottie Baker lost her husband after only a few years during which he was away at the front. She never remarried.
- Survivor Reginald returned determined to make a success of his life. He set up a successful haulage business in Stonehouse - R.W. Baker and Sons - which was carried on by his son. He died in 1974.
- Frederick Baker also fought in the War and was severely affected by gas. He took over the Spa Inn and ran it from 1931 to 1950.