

Connected to Codford



Lest we Forget

World War I



10734 PRIVATE

R. DAVIS

WILTSHIRE REGIMENT

25TH JANUARY, 1917

Reginald DAVIS

Reginald Davis was born at Codford St. Mary, Wiltshire in 1896 to parents John & Emily Davis (nee Nash). His birth was registered in the September quarter, 1896 in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire. Reginald's parents had married in 1889 at St. John the Baptist Church, Stockton, Wiltshire.

The 1901 Census recorded Reginald Davis as a 4 year old, living with his family at Wilsford, in a 4 roomed dwelling. His parents were listed as John Davis (Gardener, aged 34, born Sherrington) & Emily Davis (aged 35, born Stockton). Reginald was one of six children listed in this Census – Caroline (aged 10, born Codford St. Mary), Emily (aged 9, born Codford St. Mary), William (aged 8, born Codford St. Mary), Arthur (aged 5, born Codford St. Mary), then Reginald & Ernest (aged 3, born Stockton).

The 1911 Census recorded Reginald Davis as a 14 year old, Under Gardener, living with his family at Spring Bottom, Wilsford, Salisbury in a 3 roomed dwelling. His parents were listed as John Davis (Gardener, aged 43) & Emily Davis (aged 45). John & Emily Davis had been married for 21 years, having had 6 children. The 6 children were all still living at home for this Census – Caroline (aged 20, General Servant), Emily (aged 19, General Servant), William (aged 18, Under Gardener), Arthur (aged 16, Under Gardener) then Reginald & Ernest (aged 13, at School).

Reginald Davis enlisted at Salisbury. He was living at Salisbury at the time of his enlistment.

According to his Medal Index Card, Private Reginald Davis first entered a Theatre of War – the Balkans on 4th December, 1915.

Private Reginald Davis was killed in action on 25th January, 1917 at Mesopotamia. He was attached to 5th Battalion, Wiltshire Regiment at the time of his death.

Private Reginald Davis was buried in Amara War Cemetery, Iraq - Plot XVII. A. 2. His death is acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private R. Davis, 10734, 5th Battalion, Wiltshire Regiment, as the son of John and Emily Davis, of Lake, Salisbury, Wilts. Native of Codford St. Mary, Wilts.

5th Battalion, Wiltshire Regiment

The 5th (Service) Battalion was raised at Assaye Barracks in Tidworth, August 1914. The numbers raised were too large so the 6th (Service) battalion was also raised from the 5th Battalion overspill of manpower.

In July 1915 the 5th (Service) Battalion set sail for the Dardanelles and by the 17th were all ashore at Cape Helles, on the Gallipoli Peninsula. Two days later they were in the trenches facing the Turkish Army. On the 6th August they took part in a night attack to capture a ridge of hills to assist the British landing at Suvla bay. The following day they took part in the attack at Sari Bair. This was a successful attack, but the response was fast and very violent. They were attacked by a Turkish Division led by Mustapha Kemal. The battalion was overrun with half the battalion never being seen again. The battalion was reorganised, returning to trench warfare with the main enemy being dysentery and jaundice. On the 18th December they embarked for Mudros returning ten days later in a blizzard, here they saw in 1916.

The 5th (Service) Battalion evacuated from Cape Helles in January going to Port Said where they were reinforced with 750 men. In February they went to Kuwait and in March to Amara via the Tigris River. They then relieved the Lahore Division south of Kut. In April they took part in the attempt to relieve Kut and attacked the Turkish Trenches at Hannah, followed by an attack on Sanna-I-Yat. All the efforts to relive Kut failed and eventually the garrison was forced to surrender. *(Many men who had been transferred from the 1st and 2nd/4th Regiments in India were captured with units besieged in Kut)* May was spent in defensive positions after which they returned to the Amara area where they remained until the end of December when they crossed the Hai River ready to move North to Kut.

The 5th (Service) battalion were in action on the 25th January 1917 when they assaulted the Turkish front line, one flank of which rested on the Hai River which they had crossed only a month before. They took heavy casualties in this action.

War Diary – 5th Battalion 25th January, 1917

Location – Mesopotamia, Trenches

At 9.42a.m under cover of intense bombardment we attacked the Turkish first line in four waves on a front of about 800 yards for the Brigade. We assaulted with the Royal Welsh Fusiliers on our right each taking 400 yards front. Our objective was to capture the Turkish first line and consolidate it and to take the strong point P10 N if possible. The enemy trench was strongly held but assisted by our artillery and all ranks working with great energy and determination, we successfully dislodged the enemy and firmly established ourselves under considerable enemy shellfire. Our bombing parties worked along their communication trench to P10 N driving the Turkish Bombers before them. Later our bombers withdrew a short distance for the Artillery to bombard P10 N after which they rushed in and captured it working along trench P10 N, P15 C to the West, and P10 N, P10 Q to the North and consolidating. Our captures included nearly 100 prisoners, 1 Austrian Machine Gun, practically new, two Trench Mortars 1 Minenwerfer less breach block, many rifles, much S.A.A and stores. Casualties, Officers, Capt A.P. Bosanquet and 2/Lt W.M. McInnes, killed and 2/Lt R.E.C. Spencer, 2/Lt E.M. Trott and Lt J.H. Moore (slight) being wounded. Consolidation continued throughout day. This work being greatly assisted by Sappers from the 88th Field Coy, Royal Engineers. During the night of 25/26th the Turks counter attacked but were easily repulsed with loss. Messages of congratulation received from Army Corps. Divisional and Brigade Commanders. Lt J.M. Dodington took over command of D Coy. 234 Turkish dead were counted in the section of the Trench assaulted and captured by the Regiment. The Regiment during the assault displayed great dash and conducted itself in a most gallant manner. This was the more praiseworthy in view of the fact that only eleven officers of the Battalion were allowed to go into action the remainder being held in reserve. Several cases of gallantry were specially noted for reward and in two cases immediate rewards have been granted by the Army Commander - No. 25978 Pte Cook H. Distinguished Conduct Medal and No. 9255 L/Cpl Barclay S.G. Military Medal. It is hoped that the Minenwerfer captured will eventually be sent to the Regimental Depot. Total Casualties 25th/26th Jany. Officers 2 killed and 4 wounded. O.R's 33 killed and 110 wounded.

(Information from [The Wardrobe](#) – Home of the Infantry Regiments of Berkshire and Wiltshire)

Private Reginald Davis was entitled to 1915 Star, British War Medal & Victory Medal.



1915 Star, British War Medal & Victory Medal

R. Davis is remembered on the Casualties of WW1 from the Diocese of Salisbury Memorial Book for the parish of Woodford & Wilsford.

Amara War Cemetery, Iraq

Amara is a town on the left bank of the Tigris some 520 kilometres from the sea. The War Cemetery is a little east of the town between the left bank of the river and the Chahaila Canal.

Amara was occupied by the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force on 3 June 1915 and it immediately became a hospital centre. The accommodation for medical units on both banks of the Tigris was greatly increased during 1916 and in April 1917, seven general hospitals and some smaller units were stationed there.

Amara War Cemetery contains 4,621 burials of the First World War, more than 3,000 of which were brought into the cemetery after the Armistice. 925 of the graves are unidentified. In 1933, all of the headstones were removed from this cemetery when it was discovered that salts in the soil were causing them to deteriorate. Instead a screen wall was erected with the names of those buried in the cemetery engraved upon it. Plot XXV is a Collective Grave, the individual burial places within this are not known. There are also seven non-war graves in the cemetery.

(Information & photo from CWGC)





Panel where Pte R. Davis's name is recorded

(Photo from International Wargraves Photography Project)



