

# Connected to Codford



*Lest we Forget*

## World War I



9790 PRIVATE

**W. PRETTY**

**WILTSHIRE REGIMENT**

**10TH AUGUST, 1915**

## William PRETTY

William Pretty was born at Stockton, Wiltshire in 1895 to parents Charles & Elizabeth Pretty (nee Nash). His birth was registered in the September quarter, 1895 in the district of Warminster. William's parents had married in 1886 at St. John the Baptist Church, Stockton, Wiltshire.

The 1901 Census recorded William Pretty as a 5 year old, living with his family at Stockton, in a four roomed dwelling. His parents were listed as Charles Pretty (Gardener & Labourer, aged 39, born Isle of Wight) & Elizabeth Pretty (aged 41, born Stockton). William was the youngest of 4 children listed on this Census, all born at Stockton – Violet (aged 10), Rosalie (aged 9), George (aged 7) & William.

A death for Elizabeth Pretty, aged 50, was registered in the March quarter, 1910 in the district of Warminster.

The 1911 Census recorded William Pretty as a 15 year old Shepherd boy on a Farm, living with his family in a 3 roomed dwelling at Stockton, Codford St. Mary. His father was listed as Charles Pretty (Widower, aged 49, Shepherd on a Farm). Charles listed that he & his deceased wife Elizabeth had a total of 8 children, 3 having since died. William was the youngest of 3 children listed on this Census – Emily Edith Pretty (aged 24), George Pretty (Under Carter of Farm, aged 17) & William.

William Pretty enlisted at Salisbury with the Wiltshire Regiment. According to UK Soldiers Died in the Great War, his residence at the time of enlisting was Codford St. Mary. This may have been correct although it is also possible that his address was Stockton, Codford St. Mary & only the "Codford St. Mary" was recorded. William Pretty was given the rank of Private & a service number of 9790.

The Medal Index Card for Private William Pretty records that he first entered a Theatre War on 30<sup>th</sup> June, 1915 at the Balkans.

Private William Pretty was killed in action at Gallipoli on 10<sup>th</sup> August, 1915. He was attached to 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Wiltshire Regiment at the time of his death. The UK Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects records William Pretty as "Presumed Dead".

Private William Pretty is remembered on the Helles Memorial, Turkey – Panel 156 to 158 as he has no known grave. His death is acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private William Pretty, 9790, 5<sup>th</sup> Bn., Wiltshire Regiment, as the son of Charles and Elizabeth Pretty, of 31, Stockton, Codford, Wilts.

### **5<sup>th</sup> 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.

#### **1915**

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.

## War Diary – 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion

Date – 10/8/1915

Location – Gallipoli, Anzac

1 a.m (01.00) Battalion moves away in single file less D company and part of B company (The history of this party will be given separately as far as possible. H B L B) Order of march C - Machine guns - A - B companies "Move by a steep and winding course to a cup-shaped deformation at the head of the Gully to the right and some distance in front of our salient." (Words of 2 Lieut R.W.M. Dewhurst one of the few officers on the march who subsequently survived.) The Battalion was guided, as far as I am able to ascertain by a New Zealand Officer. Here they arrived two hours before sunrise (circa 0.300) and the men were told to dig into dugouts and make themselves comfortable as the position was quite safe. Men therefore removed equipment and rifles. This position I take it to be just N. of the H in Chunuk Bair and the march to it from the Aghyl Dere must have been via the APEX (Ref. Gallipoli Map 1.20,000 Koya Dere) (Circa) 4.30 a.m. As soon as it was light machine guns opened on the men lying in their dug outs. About 1/4 of an hour later there was a rush of Turks from both sides of the depression which drove the men, unarmed and unequipped down the gully (SALZLI BEIT). The bottom of the gully commanded by machine guns and so escape was cut off. Three courses were possible:- 1. To rush past the machine guns down the Sazli Beit, this was tried but in nearly all cases proved fatal. 2. To climb the northern slope of the ravine under fire and try to escape over the top. This was done in a few cases with success. 3. Hide in Gully till night, this also was done with more success. (A party of 5 men was rescued from the Gully having been there 16 days - ie:- from Aug 10 - Aug 26th. They reported numbers of men who were wounded, were unable to get away and died of exhaustion and starvation. H.B.L.B ) Parties arrived on the Beach in fours, fives, and some carried bodies during the 11th, 12th and 13th unarmed, unequipped and demoralised. The Battalion when mustered on the Beach mustered roughly 420 (This includes 76 men lately arrived as Details from Lemnos.) Officer casualties:- Lt Col. J Carden (missing) 2nd Lieut J.E.R Firmin (killed) 2nd Lt G Gamman (missing) Maj. F Ricketts (killed) 2nd Lieut W.Y. Radcliffe (killed) Lieut A.J Hinxman (missing) Maj. W.S Hern (killed) 2nd Lieut C.G.C Fisher-Brown (missing) Capt & ADJ A.C Belcher (killed) Lieut A.W. Hockett (missing) Lieut F.E Hill (wounded) Lieut Brown (wounded - attached) 1a.m (0100) After the Battalion had marched off (A. C and part of B). D company under Major Hern relieved the Gurkhas with the Royal Irish Rifles in reserve. The position was attacked at dawn on Tuesday (10th) morning and through the retirement of the regiments on right and left. D company are left 'in the air'. Major Hern and Lieut J.E.R Firmin killed but remainder hold on until surrounded and are forced to retire into Gully. Here reorganised and sent up to a counter attack - unsuccessfully and with large loss. Lieut Gamman killed - several wanton attacks attempted with handfuls of men. At night men retire from Gully, some taking refuge with 38th Bde. Tuesday August 10th - Sunday August 15th Reorganisation of Regiment Officers Lt J.C Bush Lt R.W.M Dewhurst Lt H.B.L Braund Lt J.C McDonnell Lt J.H Moore Lt W.R Wrigley (sic) [Wrigley] Joined as M.O. Capt C.V Single (A.A.M.C)

(Source: 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion & The War Diaries of 5th Bn Wiltshire Regiment – [The Wardrobe](#))

Private William Pretty was entitled to 1915 Star, British War Medal & Victory Medal. His Medal Index card does not state killed in action, etc just the word "Died".



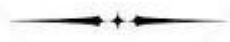
1915 Star, British War Medal & Victory Medal

W. Pretty is remembered in Casualties of WW1 from the Diocese of Salisbury Memorial book for the parish of Stockton, Wiltshire

William Pretty is also named on the Stockton War Memorial, Wiltshire.



**Stockton War Memorial** (Photo by Michael Day 2015)



### **Helles Memorial, Turkey**

The Helles Memorial stands at the tip of the Peninsula and is in the form of an obelisk, over 30 metres high, that can be seen by ships passing through the Dardanelles. The Helles Memorial is a Commonwealth War Graves Commission Memorial that contains over 21,000 names. There are 4 other Memorials to the Missing at Gallipoli.

The eight month campaign in Gallipoli was fought by Commonwealth and French forces in an attempt to force Turkey out of the war, to relieve the deadlock of the Western Front in France and Belgium, and to open a supply route to Russia through the Dardanelles and the Black Sea.

The Allies landed on the peninsula on 25-26 April 1915; the 29th Division at Cape Helles in the south and the Australian and New Zealand Corps north of Gaba Tepe on the west coast, an area soon known as Anzac. On 6 August, further landings were made at Suvla, just north of Anzac, and the climax of the campaign came in early August when simultaneous assaults were launched on all three fronts. However, the difficult terrain and stiff Turkish resistance soon led to the stalemate of trench warfare. From the end of August, no further serious action was fought and the lines remained unchanged. The peninsula was successfully evacuated in December and early January 1916.

The Helles Memorial serves the dual function of Commonwealth battle memorial for the whole Gallipoli campaign and place of commemoration for many of those Commonwealth servicemen who died there and have no known grave.

The United Kingdom and Indian forces named on the memorial died in operations throughout the peninsula, the Australians at Helles. There are also panels for those who died or were buried at sea in Gallipoli waters. The memorial bears more than 21,000 names.

There are four other Memorials to the Missing at Gallipoli. The Lone Pine, Hill 60, and Chunuk Bair Memorials commemorate Australian and New Zealanders at Anzac. The Twelve Tree Copse Memorial commemorates the New Zealanders at Helles. Naval casualties of the United Kingdom lost or buried at sea are recorded on their respective Memorials at Portsmouth, Plymouth and Chatham, in the United Kingdom.

*(Information from CWGC)*

