Codford St. Mary

Roll of Honour

Lest we Forget

World War I

456041   CORPORAL

WILLIAM JOHN ARTHUR DAVIS

ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS

31ST OCTOBER, 1918

William Arthur John DAVIS

William Arthur John Davis was born at Westbury, Wiltshire to parents John & Harriet Davis (nee Webb). His birth was registered in the district of Westbury, Wiltshire in the September quarter of 1891. William was christened on 24th August, 1891 at Westbury, Wiltshire.

A death for Harriet Davis, William's mother, was registered in the March quarter of 1899 in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire. William's would have been 7 years of age.

A marriage was registered between John Davis, William's father, & Sarah Barrett in the December quarter of 1899 in the district of Swindon, Wiltshire.

The 1901 Census records William Davis as a 9 year old living with his family at Warminster Rd, Beckington, Frome, Somerset. His father is listed as John Davis (Coachman – Domestic, aged 33, born Westbury, Wilts) & his stepmother is listed as Sarah Davis (aged 31). William is listed with an older & younger sister – Elsie (aged 12, born Westbury, Wiltshire) & Dora (aged 5, born Westbury). Also included in the household is William Maidment (a 23 year old boarder, born Warminster, Wiltshire).

The 1911 Census records William Davis as a 19 year old Gardener at Royal Nursery Gardens, living at Rudge Lane, Beckington, Bath Somerset. Also included in the household is William's father – John Alfred Davis (Coachman, aged 43), John's mother-in-law – Mary Richardson (aged 70) & William's younger sister – Dora (aged 15). William's step-mother – Sarah Davis is recorded as a servant (aged 41, married for 12 years with no children in the current marriage) working in the household of the Johnson Family. Gordon Johnson, head of that household was a retired Tea Planter living in an 18 roomed house called Chatley House, Norton St. Philip, Bath, Somerset.

William Arthur John Davis's Attestation Papers show that he was a 23 year old, single, Salesman, living at Warminster Rd, Beckington, Somerset when enlisted on 7th August, 1914 at Frome, Wiltshire with the 2nd South Western Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance. He was given the service number of 1826 & the rank of Private & stated that he had previously served 4 years (Time expired) with the South Western Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance. His service number was later renumbered to 456041.

William Arthur John Davis's Military History sheet with the 231st Field Ambulance shows that he enlisted on 7th August, 1914 & served at Home until 22nd September, 1915. On 21st September, 1915, Pte William Davis was written up on the Conduct Sheet whilst at Bentley with the offence of defacing NCO's equipment. His punishment was 4 days - Confined to Barracks.

From 23rd September, 1915 to 28th April, 1918 he was part of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force of Royal Army Medical Corps. His next of kin was listed as his father – John Alfred Davis of French Horn Cottage, Codford St. Peter.

Details from William Davis' Active Service Sheet shows that he was evacuated from Mudros on 20th January, 1916 & disembarked at Alexandria, Egypt.

Pte William Davis was appointed Acting Corporal (with Pay) on 1st March, 1916 while at Sidi Bishr. Acting Cpl. Davis was admitted to Hospital at Minia, Egypt with cellulitis from 9th March, 1916 & discharged to duty on 11th March, 1916.

Acting Cpl. Davis was promoted to Corporal on 27th April, 1916.

Cpl. Davis was admitted to Hospital at Minia, Egypt (cause not stated) on 5th October, 1916 & discharged on 8th October, 1916.

Cpl. Davis attended Military School at El Ferdan from 10th January, 1917 & rejoined his unit on 25th January, 1917.

Cpl. Davis embarked from Alexandria, Egypt on 29th April, 1918 & disembarked at Marseilles, France on 7th May, 1918.

Cpl. Davis was granted leave for 5 days to 19th July, 1918.

Corporal William John Arthur Davis died of wounds received in action on 31st October, 1918, aged 27 years - just eleven days before the Armistice.

Corporal W. J. A. Davis is buried in Tournai Communal Cemetery Allied Extension, Belgium – position V. H. 7. His death is acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission & as such has a CWGC Headstone.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Corporal W. J. A. Davis as the son of Mr J. A & Mrs H. Davis of 32 Chitterne Rd, Codford Wiltshire. Born at Westbury, Wiltshire.
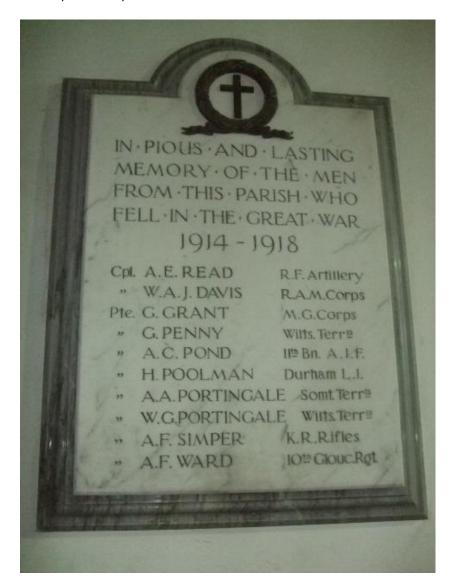
Cpl. William J. Davis was entitled to the 1914-15 Star, British War & Victory Medals. His Medal Index Card does not show a date he had entered a Theatre of War.

The following items belonging to Cpl. William Davis were returned back to England to Mrs S. A Davis (stepmother)of 32 Chitterne Rd, Codford St. Mary - disc, letter, photos, 9ct gold ring, 3 coins, crucifix, key & black cat charm, watch & chain, 2 wallets, diary, fountain pen & filler, note book, cards , 1 receipt.

The relatives form, completed by Cpl Davis' father, dated 19th November, 1919 has the following information: Father – John Alfred Davis, Mother – deceased, Widow & children – None, Brothers – None, Sisters – Elsie Amy Harriet Mitchell of 8 Upper Wolvery Ter, Winchester, aged 30 & Dora Helen Knapp of 32 Chitterne Rd, Codford St. Mary, aged 23.

W. A. J. Davis is remembered as a Casualty of WW1 in the Diocese of Salisbury Memorial Book for Codford St. Mary.

Cpl. W. A. J. Davis of Royal Army Medical Corps is remembered on the World War 1 Memorial plaque in St. Mary's Church, Codford, Wiltshire.

IN·PIOUS·AND·LASTING
MEMORY·OF·THE·MEN
FROM·THIS·PARISH·WHO
FELL·IN·THE·GREAT·WAR
1914 - 1918

Cpl.	A.E. READ	R.F. Artillery
"	W.A.J. DAVIS	R.A.M.Corps
Pte.	G. GRANT	M.G.Corps
"	G. PENNY	Wilts.Terrs
"	A.C. POND	11th Bn. A.I.F.
"	H. POOLMAN	Durham L.I.
"	A.A. PORTINGALE	Somt.Terrs
"	W.G. PORTINGALE	Wilts.Terrs
"	A.F. SIMPER	K.R.Rifles
"	A.F. WARD	10th Glouc.Rgt

(Photo courtesy of Romy Wyeth)

Tournai Communal Cemetery Allied Extension, Belgium

The town of Tournai in Belgium was captured by the Germans on 23rd August, 1914 & remained in German hands until 8th November, 1918.

The Allied extension now contains 689 Commonwealth burials of the First World War, 34 of the unidentified. There are also 117 Russian burials, all of men died as prisoners of war, and two Belgian war Graves. Almost all of the 52 Second World War burials in the extension date from May, 1940.

(Photographs courtesy of In Memory by Pierre Vandervelden)

TOURNAI COMMUNAL CEMETERY ALLIED EXTENSION

SCALE OF FEET