

**Stanley George Knee**  
**1894-1916**



Stanley George Knee was born in 1894 in Melksham, second son of Albert John and Mary Annie Knee. His father Albert was a sign-writer and the business was in Union Street, Melksham. The 1901 Census records Stanley having one brother and five sisters, Gertrude Alice Knee (born 1888); Charles Albert Knee (born 1889); Gladys Edith Knee (born 1891); Margaret Caroline Knee (born 1896); Dorothy Kate Knee (born 1898); and Ella Mary Knee (born 1900). The 1911 census shows the Knee family still living at 6, Union Street with one addition to the family, John Cecil Knee (born 1903). Stanley by then is 17 years old, single and working as a Cycle Makers Assistant for Mr. F. Venton and his elder brother Charles is 22 and working as a clerk.

**Knee, Private S. Regimental Number's 1736 & 200317, Wiltshire Regiment 1/4<sup>th</sup> (Territorial Force) Battalion and The Dorsetshire Regiment 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion.**



**Wiltshire Regiment 1/4th Battalion**

*August 1914: at Trowbridge. Part of the South-Western Brigade, in the Wessex Division, moved to Salisbury Plain. 9 October 1914: sailed from Southampton, landing at Bombay 9 November 1914. The Division (later renamed 43rd) was broken up on arrival in India. They moved to Dehra Dun Brigade; in the 7th (Meerut) Divisional Area, and then in March 1917 to Poona Brigade, in 6th (Poona) Divisional Area.*

*September 1917: moved to Egypt, where it then remained. 25 September 1917: attached to 233rd Brigade in 75th Division.*

*3 May 1918: transferred to 232nd Brigade in same*

*Division.*

**Dorsetshire Regiment 2nd Battalion**

*August 1914: in Poona, India and part of the 16th Indian Brigade in the Poona Division.*

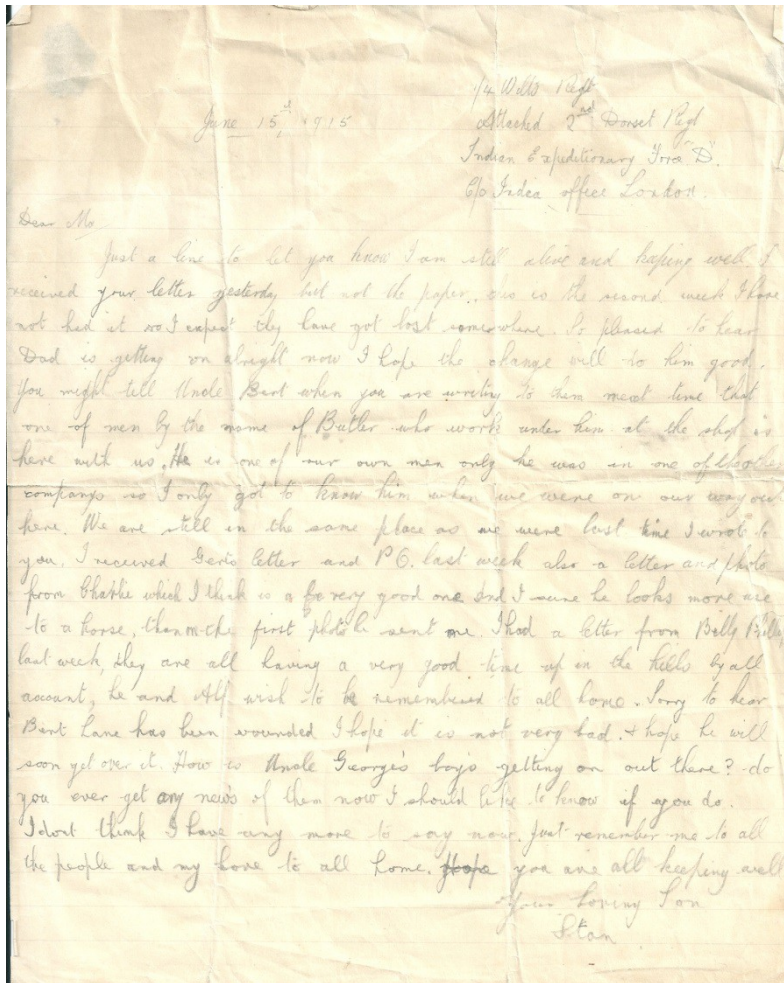
*6 November 1914: landed in Fao, Persian Gulf, for campaign in Mesopotamia, part of Indian Expeditionary Force 'D'.*

*29 April 1916: Battalion captured at Kut-el-Amara. During the siege at Kut, a composite battalion, composed of returned wounded and other details from the 2nd Dorsets and the 2nd Norfolks, was formed at El Orah. It was called the "English Composite Battalion" or the "Norsets" and was under command of the 21st Indian Brigade, 7th Indian Division. It was broken up on 21 July 1916 and the 2nd Dorsets re-established. It transferred to 9th Indian Brigade, 3rd Indian Division in January 1917 and moved to Egypt in April 1918.*



The 1/4<sup>th</sup> Territorial Battalion was under canvas on Salisbury Plain, when war broke out in August 1914. The battalion immediately mobilised and embarked for India in September, as part of the Wessex Territorial Division, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Lord Radnor. The role of the battalion was to relieve the regular battalions in India.

Whilst Stanley was stationed in India, he sent home the following letter to his family in June 1915:



November 1915, Albert and Annie Knee would have received this Army Form A2042 (Communication).

Army Form A2042.

Nothing is to be written on this except the date and signature of the sender.

Sentences not required may be erased.

If anything else is added the post card will be destroyed.

I am quite well.

I have been admitted into hospital.

Sick  and am going on well and hope to be discharged soon.

Wounded  discharged soon.

I am being sent down to the base.

letter.

I have received your telegram.

parcel.

Letter follows at first opportunity.

I have received no letter from you lately.

for a long time.

Date Oct 12<sup>th</sup> 1915  
G. S. & Sons, Calcutta. Pte S. Knee

Signature.

POST CARD  
INDIA  
FIELD SERVICE  
ADD RESS ONLY.

14 Wells St  
Alstead  
Dorset Regt  
England

NO 26  
1300 15

Prisoner of War Communication Letter, sent to the family 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 1916 from Basra.

**TERRITORIAL FORCE RECORD OFFICE  
EXETER.  
3 JUN. 1916  
No.**

From :- The Officer in Charge of,  
Territorial Force Records,  
EXETER.

To :- Mrs. Kuce  
6. Union St. Exeter

Sir,

In accordance with a telegram received from Basra,  
dated 26.5.16., the following is presumed to be a Prisoner  
of War.

1726 Pte Kuce S.

I am,  
Sir,  
Your obedient Servant,

*P. B. Vaughan-Mann*  
for Colonel,

EXETER.  
26/1916. Officer i/c Territorial Force Records, Exeter.

Army Form B. 104-82B (Notice of death)

No. \_\_\_\_\_

(If replying, please quote above No.)

ARMY FORM B. 104-82B.

TERRITORIAL FORCE  
 RECORD OFFICE,  
 EXETER.

No. 8855/2/3 191  
 DATE 21/4/17

*Madam*

It is my painful duty to inform you that a report has been received from the War Office notifying the death of:—

(No.) 1736 (Rank) Pte.  
 (Name) Stanley Kree  
 (Regiment) 1/4 Batta Wilts Regt. attchd 2<sup>nd</sup> Divsion  
 which occurred at Baghtche Turkey  
 on the 18<sup>th</sup> August. 1916

The report is to the effect that he Died of Disease  
(Enteritis) whilst Prisoner of War.

By His Majesty's command I am to forward the enclosed message of sympathy from Their Gracious Majesties the King and Queen. I am at the same time to express the regret of the Army Council at the soldier's death in his Country's service.

*(Mother)*  
*Mrs. A. Kree*  
*6 Union Street*  
*Melksham*  
*Wilts*

I am,

*Madam*

Your obedient Servant,

*C. Stewart. Dixon*

Major For  
Officer in charge of Records.

**Memorial Plaque**, issued after WWI to the next-of-kin of all British and Empire personnel who were killed as a result of the war. They were made of bronze & popularly known as the “Dead Man’s Penny.”



*“Death Penny” with original packaging*



This letter from King George, accompanied the Memorial Plaque.



BUCKINGHAM PALACE.

I join with my grateful people  
in sending you this memorial  
of a brave life given for others  
in the Great War.

*George R.I.*



**H**E whom this scroll commemorates  
was numbered among those who,  
at the call of King and Country, left all  
that was dear to them, endured hardness,  
faced danger, and finally passed out of  
the sight of men by the path of duty  
and self-sacrifice, giving up their own  
lives that others might live in freedom.  
Let those who come after see to it  
that his name be not forgotten.

*Pte. Stanley Knee  
Wiltshire Regt.*

Medal Roles Index Card 1914-1920

Campaign :— **1914-15.** (A) Where decoration was earned. (B) Present situation.

Name	Corps	Rank	Reg. No.	Roll on which included (if any)
(A) <i>KNEE</i>	<i>* Wilbur (D)</i>	<i>Pte</i>	<i>1736 (7)</i>	<i>VICTORY</i> # <i>C/1/102</i> <i>5/6</i> <i>1937</i>
(B)	<i>Stanley</i>	<i>---</i>	<i>200317</i>	<i>BRITISH</i> <i>C/1/38</i> <i>2</i>
Action taken	<i>Died 18/8/16</i>			
<b>THEATRE OF WAR.</b> <i>(5A) Asiatic</i>				
<b>QUALIFYING DATE.</b> <i>20.5.15</i>				

(6 34 46) W234—HP5590 500,000 4/19 HWV(P240) K608 [OVER.]

**Correspondence.**

**Address.**



Stanley Knee's Medals – British War Medal, Victory Medal & 1914-15 Star – “Pip, Squeak & Wilfred”.



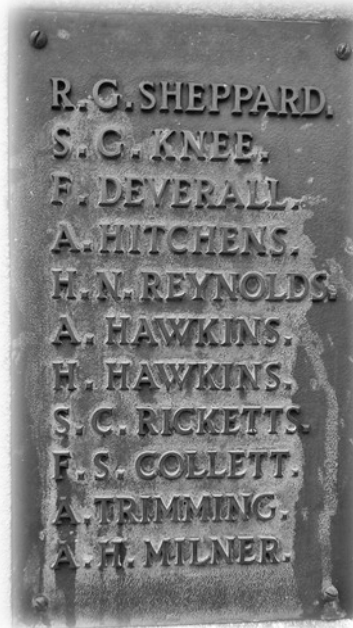
Envelope one of medals was sent in.



Brass memorial plaque in the choir stalls at St. Michael's & All Angels Parish Church, Melksham, where Stanley Knee was a chorister.

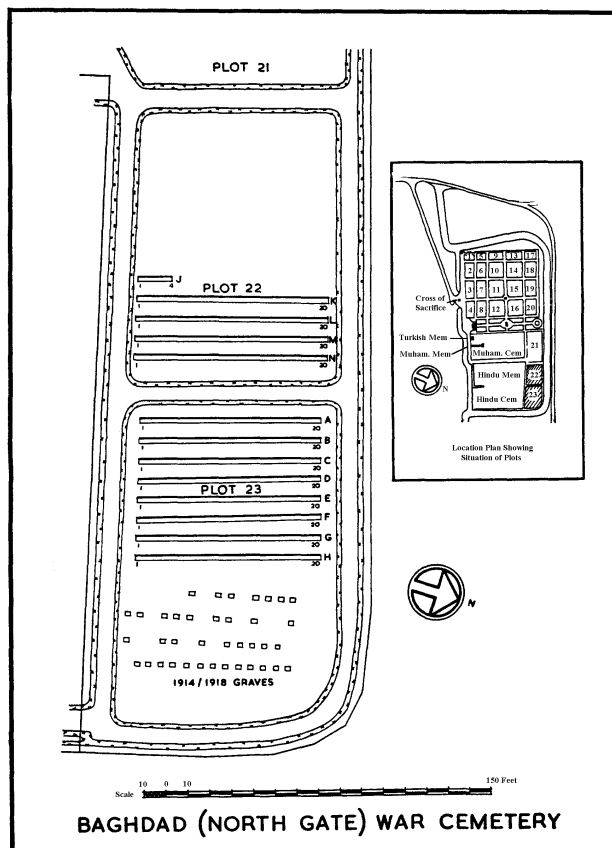


**Stanley George Knee** is commemorated on the Canon Square War Memorial.



# Remembered with Honour

## Baghdad (North Gate) War Cemetery – Reference: XXI. D. 47.



## Meddling in Mesopotamia was always Risky

David Blair on Britain's adventures in Iraq and a tortuous relationship.

"I hate Iraq. I wish we had never gone to the place" said Winston Churchill in 1926 when, as Chancellor, he was asked to sink yet more millions into Britain's "Mesopotamian Entanglement".

Churchill had always advocated withdrawing from Iraq, a country that he, more than anyone else, created. He lamented that its "ferocious" people had a habit of rising against British rule and rendering the country an "ungrateful volcano".

Iraq may have been a British creation, from the ruins of the Ottoman Empire, but Churchill remembered all too well how Britain's involvement had begun with a disaster.

Over the 43 years of British influence, from that first invasion in 1915 to the revolution of 1958, a remarkable array of Britons had a hand in running the country.

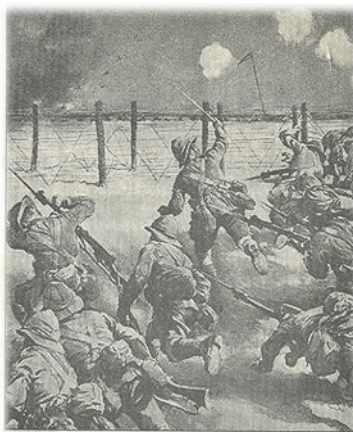
Churchill installed the first King of Iraq and his advisers drew up its borders. Gertrude Bell, the archaeologist and traveller, who founded the country's antiquities department, became known as the "Uncrowned Queen of Iraq".

T.E. Lawrence took part in the invasion and advised Churchill on Iraq policy, whilst Arthur "Bomber" Harris tried out his theories of aerial bombardment. Agatha Christie spent a year in Baghdad, where she met her second husband and set two novels.

Britain's involvement in the region began during the First World War when Turkey was allied to Germany. Britain invaded the Ottoman provinces of Mesopotamia in 1915 to wrest the port of Basra from Turkish control.

In order to strike Turkey, Britain then invaded the rest of Mesopotamia. The initial offensive ended in humiliation in July 1916, in the squalid town of Kut when a column of British and Indian troops was forced to abandon the graves of thousands of comrades and march into Turkish captivity.

Putting the disaster at Kut behind it, the British Army recovered and marched into Baghdad in March 1917. By the close of 1918, Britain had occupied all three Mesopotamian provinces – Basra in the south, Mosul in the north and Baghdad in between. Churchill, then War Secretary, believed this expansion was pointless. "Why are we so compelled to go on pouring armies and treasures into these thankless deserts?" he asked in 1919. Churchill was overruled and the British stayed.



Engraving of the 2nd Dorset's charge at the Battle of Kut

**Part of article from the Daily Telegraph, Tuesday 18th March, 2003.**

With thanks to Stan Knee (nephew of Stanley George Knee), for very kindly loaning me the medals, army forms etc, to help me write this article and his time talking to myself – knowledge both ways. Forces war Records for regiment information and John Knowles for loaning me his Wiltshire Regiment cap badges to enhance the article illustrations, CWGC for grave and memorial information.