



PRIVATE ALBERT GEORGE SAINSBURY

SERVIVE NO. 200404

2ND / 4th BATTALION, HAMPSHIRE REGIMENT

DIED 4TH DECEMBER 1917 AGED 21

Albert was born in Odiham on 12 June 1897.¹ He was the sixth child of William, a labourer, and Eliza Sainsbury who lived in The Bury, Odiham. In all Albert had two sisters and five brothers². Albert started school at Buryfields on 20 May 1901 and remained there until 12 June 1904.³ He then moved to the London Road Board School, starting on 1 March 1904.⁴ Albert's younger brother, Arthur Lewis, had been a casualty of the Battle of the Somme the previous year.

Little is known about Albert's life after leaving school. What is known is that he was in 1917 he was in B Coy., 2nd/4th Battalion, Hampshire Regiment, which was in had embarked for Egypt on 29 April 1917 and landed at Suez. On 15 May 1917 the Battalion was attached to the 233rd Brigade in the newly formed 75th Division. On 21 May further instructions were given that the three infantry brigades should incorporate Indian battalions; this was augmented on 11 June by instructions that each brigade should have three Indian battalions and one British. It was, strictly, a Division of the Territorial Force but "indianised" to a great extent.⁵ Division HQ came into existence at El Arish on 25 June 1917. The complete Division was a long time in formation, the artillery not being full to establishment until October 1917.

This Division then fought at The Third Battle of Gaza (27 October – 7 November 1917); the Capture of Junction Station (13 – 14 November 1917) and the Battle of Nabi Samwell (20 – 2 November 1917).

"The Palestine theatre became the second largest in terms of forces deployed, after the Western Front. Allenby launched an attack when he was ready in October 1917. It broke the Ottoman position at Beersheba and Gaza, then swept successfully north and east, capturing the notable prize of Jerusalem 'as a Christmas present for the British people' (David Lloyd George) before later moving into Syria."⁶

¹ Source - London Road Board School Admission Register

² Source - 1891. 1901 and 1911 Census Returns for Odiham, Hampshire

³ Source - Buryfields School Admission Register, HRO Archives ref: 130M87/A5

⁴ Source – London Road Board School Admissions Register

⁵ Source – The Long Long Trail

⁶ Quote from the Long Long Trail





Albert died of wounds on 4 December 1917. Having studied the Battalion War Diary for November and December 1917 it seems likely that his wounds were inflicted on either 22nd November 1917 –

"Attached to 234th Brigade. Battalion moved into the line in aid of 3 / 4 GURKHAS. Maintained position until relieved at 2400 by 7th SCOTTISH RIFLES. Casualties :

KILLED – Capt F.W. SIMMONS and 13 ORs. WOUNDED – Capt. A.C. ASHMORE, Capt. B.R. GODDARD, 2 Lts; R. H. GOTELEE, H.A.G. PHILLIMORE, E.W.BEAUCHAMP and F.W. BROOKS, And 80 ORs . MISSING – 5 ORs. Moved into Wadi in support."

Or the 1st December –

"Small enemy patrol attacked right post at 0200 – patrol driven off. Attack by 200-300 enemy at 0630 on post at SHEIK EL GHARBVY. Post reinforced by Coy 3/3 Ghurka Rifles. Attack beaten off. Our casualties: Killed OR9, wounded OR 13. Our right posts taken over by 2 Coy 3/3 Ghurka Rifles during afternoon. Battn. continued to hold SHEIK EL GHARBAWY (sic)."⁷

Albert was awarded the British War Medal 1914-20 and the Victory Medal 1914-1919. ⁸ His grave is in the Gaza War Cemetery.

⁷ Battalion War Diary information for November and December 1917 kindly provided by Lt. Col. Colin Bulleid of the Royal Hampshire Regiment Museum

⁸ Ancestry.co.uk – WW1 Service Medal and Awards Rolls, 1914-1920