



SERJEANT WILLIAM ALBERT WRIGHT

SERVICE NO. G/818

2ND BATTALION ROYAL FUSILIERS

DIED 3RD DECEMBER 1917 AGED 35

William Albert Wright was the second son of Henry John, a railway porter, and Ann. William was one of five brothers, all of whom went on to serve with His Majesty's Forces during the War. The family lived at Winchfield, where William and his brothers were born.¹

On 19 October 1899 William signed a Short Service, i.e. 7 years with the Colours and 5 years in Reserve, attestation form in Hounslow to join the Royal Fusiliers.² He was 18 years 4 months old and had been employed as a clerk. In 1901 he was posted to South Africa on 16 March 1901 and returned home on 6 February 1902. By the time of the 1911 census William and his wife, Annie Eliza Wooldridge were living with their two children, William and Cecil, in Chatter Alley, Dogmersfield. William was employed as a General Post Office worker. In October 1911 William was re-engaged by the Royal Fusiliers. However, a month later he was "In confinement – Civil power." He had been "Tried at Hants Assizes (Winchester) and convicted of Larceny and Embezzlement as a servant of the Post Office and sentenced to 6 months H.L." He was in prison from 30 November 1911 and released on 6 February 1912. He was discharged from the Army with effect from that date.³

In August 1914 the family were living at Colt Hill, Odiham when William "re-enlisted into his old regiment, the Royal Fusiliers, City of London Regiment (and) has been promoted to the rank of full corporal to date from day of re-enlistment, with employment as clerk in the Regimental Orderly Room." This announcement in the Hants & Berks Gazette of 17 October 1914 continues with – "Corporal W. A. Wright served with his Regiment throughout the Boer War, being present at the relief of Ladysmith and other engagements along the Tugela River."

When war broke out in August 1914 the 2nd Battalion was in Calcutta in India, but returned to England in December, when it came under the command of the 85th Brigade, 28th Division.⁴ William would have joined them at this stage, leaving England in March 1915 and arriving in Gallipoli on 25 April 1915. Whilst "in Gallipoli William's wife received notification that "Sergt. (sic) W. A. Wright had died at the front".

¹ Source - 1891 Census, Winchfield, ref: Class: RG12; Piece: 956; Folio: 56; Page: 6; GSU roll: 6096066 He was given service no. 7878

² Source – www.findmypast.co.uk British Army service records – Short Service attestation form for William Albert Wright

³ Source - ibid

⁴ Source - The Long Long Trail – The Royal Fusiliers



However, the next day this notification was corrected and it was confirmed that William had been wounded, not killed.⁵

In January 1916 the Battalion was evacuated from Gallipoli to Egypt. And sailed shortly afterwards to arrive in Marseilles in March 1916 ready for action on the Western Front. During 1916 the Battalion was involved in the Battles of Albert and Transloy Ridges. On In 1917 the 29th Division fought at the three Battles of the Scarpe; the Battle of Langemarck; the Battle of Broodseinde; and the Battle of Poelcapelle. During this time William had been wounded - on 14 April 1916 and on 6 October 1917.⁶ Finally, on 20 November 1917 they began fighting at the Battle of Cambrai where the British attacked, employing new artillery techniques and massed tanks. Although initially successful with large gains of ground being made, a counter attack by German reserves regained much of that ground - a costly outcome for the British.⁷ On December 3rd 1917 William was reported missing. It was not until later in 1918 that he was reported as having been killed in action on 3 December 1917.⁸

William was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal 1914-20 and the Victory Medal 1914-1919.⁹ The obituary in the Hants and Berks Gazette, 12 October 1918, also states that after being wounded on the 6th October 1916 ... "he was mentioned in despatches for services rendered to his regiment."¹⁰ He is commemorated on the Cambrai Memorial, Louverval.

⁵ Source – Hants & Berks Gazette, 26 June 1915.

⁶ Hants & Berks Gazette 12 October 1918 -- Obituary

⁷ Source – The Long Long Trail - Battles

⁸ Hants & Berks Gazette 12 October 1918 -- Obituary

⁹ Ancestry.co.uk – WW1 Service Medal and Awards Rolls, 1914-1920

¹⁰ Hants & Berks Gazette 12 October 1918 -- Obituary