

Personal Stories



from World War I



Edmund Annetts 2nd Wiltshire Regiment

In October 1897 Henry Annetts married Tytherley parishioner Maria Green in All Saints Church in Winterslow. Having settled in Witt Road (formally Lower Road) going on to have five girls and five boys over the years from 1876 to 1898, the eighth child being Edmund who was born in 1892. At the outbreak of the war we find that Frank, the eldest brother, had moved to London which resulted in Edmund along with his brothers John and Christopher also moving into the capital.

At the outbreak of war there was a national call for volunteers to which Edmund 22 and his two brothers John 24 and Christopher 20 responded, enlisting in the army in Kingston on Thames. Because of their connection with Winterslow they were drafted into the Wiltshire Regiment. Having completed their basic training they quickly found themselves, as part of the 2nd Wiltshire Regiment, involved in the fighting whilst occupying the trenches in Ypres, in the region of Flanders, and taking part in the first British offensive in March 1915.

The battle lasted from 10th to 13th March, but failed to make much impact, with the military records identifying 13,000 killed, wounded or missing, including from the Wiltshire Regiment 58 men and 6 officers killed, 162 men and 11 officers wounded, with 56 registered as missing. Having survived this engagement, the three brothers then settled into the routine of trench duty and periods of recuperation in the reserves.

On 15th April at 8pm whilst occupying trenches very close to the German ones the 2nd Wiltshire came under motor fire, resulting in 2 soldiers losing their lives and 4 being wounded. The regimental War Diary records no other deaths that day. On that basis it is believed that, as Edmund's death was recorded as being "killed in action" on that date, he was one of those who lost their lives; which made him the fourth Winterslow Parishioner to make the ultimate sacrifice up to that date. He lies buried a short distance from where he fell in the Rue du Bois Cemetery.



The Rue-du-Bois Commonwealth Military Cemetery is a World War I cemetery located in the commune of Fleurbaix, in the Pas-de-Calais department of France, about 3 kilometres southwest of the village of Fleurbaix, just before the hamlet of Pétillon. Of the 845 graves, 395 are of unknown soldiers.

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