

ST JAMES CHURCH TAUNTON
WORLD WAR 1 MEMORIAL PROJECT

Albert Adams



The town of Ypres showing the devastation caused during heavy fighting throughout the war, including the Battle of Lys (1918) in which Albert Adams was killed

Name: Albert Adams

Rank: Private

Service Number: 17726

Regiment: Somerset Light Infantry

Battalion/Unit number: 1st Battalion

Date/year of Birth: c. 1895

Place of Birth: Taunton

Place of Residence: Union Gate, Taunton

Date of Death: 15th April 1918

Place of Death: Battle of Lys, near Ypres, Belgium

Burial/Memorial: Lappugnay

According to the CWGC Scroll A. Adams was the 22 year old son of Mrs. M. Adams of Union Gate, Taunton. The Taunton Deane roll of Enlistment records two men from Union Gate Albert and Alfred; Albert is recorded as enlisting in 1st Battalion and Alfred in the 6th; The Ancestry list of casualties states that it is an A Adams 17726 that he died of wounds on 15th April 1918. The medal card for the soldier bearing that number is for an Albert Adams.

It seems reasonably conclusive that Albert is the son of Alfred and Mary Ann although there are some anomalies when looking at the information available especial when checking earlier censuses. In 1901 there is a Mary A living with her husband Albert, a bricklayer and son Albert E behind 17 North Town but in 1911 a more likely Mary Ann is living in Union Gate with her husband Alfred of 15 years, a gas works employee. It would appear from looking at the St. Mary Magdalene parish records that Alfred of No 2 Court High St married Mary Ann Yard on 15th December 1895, they had sons called Albert Edward baptised in 1895 and Alfred Reginald baptised in 1898. Although Alfred and Mary had 8 children only five were surviving by the 1911 census when they had four of their five living children at home (Sidney, Wilfred, Rose and Beatrice), Albert is not there. But an Albert Edward Adams born in Taunton aged 15 is at the National Nautical School at Portishead. This school based on the Training Ship Formidable and the Trust established to run it aimed to: "relieve and assist young people under the age of 25 who suffer deprivation, poverty, financial hardship or difficulty, parental neglect, lack of control or other misfortune.". Many of the boys who went there were sent by the courts or from orphanages. It is not clear whether this is Alfred and Mary Anne's son. A family source has informed me that there were three brothers called Alfred, Sydney and Wilfred and one died in the war however it seems more likely that it was Albert who died in the war, and Alfred who died earlier in childhood.

There are other Albert Adams (2 of whom enlisted) born in Taunton but none have a mother with an initial, address or the right birth range. So it seems reasonably probable but not absolutely conclusive that Albert is the person commemorated on the memorial and that he was connected to the Mary living at Union Gate. It also seems probable that Mary's husband Alfred also joined up as the enlistment record indicates Alfred of Union Gate joined the 6th Battalion Somerset Light Infantry.

We know from his medal card that Albert joined the SLI by 21st July 1915 and was in the 1st Battalion which had been in France from August 1914. We know that he fought, was wounded and finally died in the earlier stages of the Battle of Lys fought between 7th and 29th April 1918. It marked a final offensive on the part of the German 6th and 4th Army; the result was a stalemate but it marked the failure of the German offensive. The losses on both side were estimated at approximately 120,000 men each.