

**ST JAMES CHURCH TAUNTON**  
**WORLD WAR 1 MEMORIAL PROJECT**

# Arthur Adams

**Name:** Arthur Adams

**Rank:** Private

**Service Number:** 240155

**Regiment:** Somerset Light Infantry

**Battalion/Unit number:** 2/5th Battalion

**Date/year of Birth:** circa 1873

**Place of Birth:** Taunton

**Place of Residence:** Rhondda, Glamorgan

**Date of Death:** 26th October 1917

**Place of Death:** Mesopotamia

**Burial/Memorial:** Basra

Arthur was born in Taunton, the son of John and Louisa Adams, then living in Florence Street Taunton. His father John, was a boatman, and had at that time five, siblings Elizabeth, John, William, Edwin and Baden. His mother must have died before 1911, as in that year his father remarried Sophie Vickery in Langport.

In 1911 Arthur appears to have been in Rhondda, Glamorgan, living in the household of Mr and Mrs. Jenkins Glamorganshire working as a coal hewer. In the same household is William Adams, quite possibly his younger brother. Arthur is not the only Somerset man who found his way to Wales.

It seems that that Both Arthur and his brother John, enlisted in the army and died during the conflict. John on the Somme in 1916 and Arthur in Mesopotamia in 1917.

While much emphasis falls to the Western Front during the First World War, there were significant operations proceeding elsewhere, Mesopotamia being one. The area, then as now, was vital for preserving the supply of oil to service the ships of the Royal Navy. The Germans allied with the Turks sought to deny the British control over the oilfields of the area. The year 1917 saw renewed offensive against the Turkish forces, and this continued into 1918.

Like Gallipoli, conditions in Mesopotamia defy description. Extremes of temperature (120 degrees Fahrenheit was common); arid desert and regular flooding; flies, mosquitoes and other vermin: all led to appalling levels of sickness and death through disease. Under these incredible conditions, units fell short of officers and men, and all too often the reinforcements were half-trained and ill-equipped. Medical arrangements were quite shocking, with wounded men spending up to two weeks on boats before reaching any kind of hospital. These factors, plus of course the unexpectedly determined Turkish resistance, contributed to high casualty rates.

- 11012 killed
- 3985 died of wounds and 12678 died of sickness
- 13492 missing and prisoners (9000 at Kut)
- 51836 wounded

(Data from "Statistics of the Military Effort of the British Empire, London: HMSO, 1920).