

ST JAMES CHURCH TAUNTON
WORLD WAR 1 MEMORIAL PROJECT

John Adams

Name: John Adams (jnr)

Rank: Corporal

Service Number: 240155

Regiment: Bedfordshire Regiment (Formerly 241020, Somerset Light Infantry)

Battalion/Unit number: 3rd Garrison Battalion

Date/year of Birth: circa 1890

Place of Birth: Taunton

Place of Residence: Taunton

Date of Death: 23rd August 1917

Place of Death: India

Burial/Memorial: Rangoon

John was born in Taunton, the son of John and Louisa Adams, then living in Florence Street Taunton. His father John, had various occupations including stonemason, boatman and wood merchants' labourer. John had six siblings Elizabeth, Arthur, William, Edwin, Baden and Bert. When the war started the family address had changed to 9 North Town Crescent.

In 1911 John was living at home with his parents and three younger brothers. He is employed as is his father, John, as a labourer in Penney's Timber Yard.

It seems that five men of the Adams family from 9, North Town Crescent, enlisted, father and four sons, Arthur, John, Baden and Edwin, and all appear on the St. James Roll of Honour. All served in different units and Edwin was the only one who choose the navy rather than the army. John (jnr) died in the conflict it would appear in Rangoon in 1917. Arthur also died in Mesopotamia in 1917.

There is some uncertainty about where John served. On the TDBC enlistment list he is recorded as being a corporal in the Somerset Light Infantry, and there is only one other John Adams on that list, whose address is also 9 North Town Crescent and who served in the Army Service Corps. Presumably this is John (jnr's) 56 year old father. The only Corporal John Adams on the CWGC Roll of Honour with a Taunton connection is recorded as being in the 3rd Garrison Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment. Ancestry records that he was formerly in the SLI and gives his alternative service number). The Bath and Wells Roll of remembrance also records him as being a corporal in the Bedfordshire regiment. The scroll records family details as son of the late John Adams of Taunton, which does create an uncertainty as his brother Arthur's roll gives both parents. However overall, with some uncertainties, it seems reasonable to assume he is the same John Adams from North Town Crescent.

If John was indeed in the 3rd Garrison Battalion, he would have seen service in India and Burma. There were three Bedfordshire Garrison Battalions, formed respectively from 1915 for service in India. What we don't know is where John had served previously. However in January 1917 the 3rd Brigade was deployed to India and thence to Burma. Came under command of the Burma Division and under the Rangoon Brigade of the same Division in November 1917. John may have died in India or Burma but his burial is recorded on the Rangoon memorial. His original burial place would have been elsewhere but in 1948, the graves of 36 Commonwealth servicemen who died in Rangoon during the First World War were moved into this cemetery, 35 of them from Rangoon Cantonment Cemetery and one from Rangoon (Pazundaung) Town Cemetery. The citation on the roll of honour reads:

ADAMS, Corporal, JOHN, 205183. 3rd Garrison Bn. Bedfordshire Regiment. Died of wounds 23rd August 1917. Age 27. Son of the late John Adams, of Taunton, Somerset.

Why and when he transferred to the Bedfordshires we do not know. There were units of Somerset Light Infantry in India and Burma e.g. 2/5th Battalion, so it may be that John was already out in India / Burma on garrison duty and transferred to the Bedfordshires for some reason.