

ST JAMES CHURCH TAUNTON
WORLD WAR 1 MEMORIAL PROJECT

Arthur Ralph Rendell



Name: Arthur Ralph Rendell

Rank: Corporal

Service Number: 3/26855

Regiment: South Wales Borderers

Battalion/Unit number: 4th Battalion

Date/year of Birth: 21st December 1882

Place of Birth: Haselbury Plucknett, Somerset

Place of Residence: 10 Palmerston Avenue

Date of Death: 10th May 1916

Place of Death: Iraq

Burial/Memorial: Amara War Cemetery

(Arthur) Ralph Rendell was born in Haselbury Plucknett, Somerset, the son of Henry and Mercy Rendell. In the 1881 his father's occupation is described as a groom but by the 1891 census, the family is in East Coker and Henry is a foreman in a webbing and twine factory. Other members of the community also seem to be working in the same industry so there may have been a factory of this nature there. In 1891 Henry and Mercy have at least six children aged between 3 and 17, (Arthur) who appears to be known as Ralph being 8. Ten years later the family are still in East Coker and Ralph is an apprentice fitter in a brass foundry. (Note: Henry and Mercy had a child also called Arthur Ralph who died aged 4 in 1882, so presumably transferred the name to their baby born in that year)

In 1902 Arthur married, Lily Giles and by 1911, three children had been born, Winifred, Albert and Dorothy, aged 8, 7 and 4 respectively. A third daughter, Irene, was born in 1912. The family were living in East Coker but soon after the family moved to Taunton. At the outbreak of war they were living in Palmerston Road, and it would seem attended St. James Church where Ralph had joined the choir.

A report in the local paper following his death gives a poignant snapshot of this family man who enlisted in the early stages of the war

On Saturday last Mrs. Rendell of 10 Palmerston Road received an intimation from the war office that her husband Corporal A R Rendell had been killed in action. Corporal Rendell who has four young children, formerly resided in Yeovil where for 15 years he was employed by Messers Petters. He was removed to Taunton about 4 years ago and entered the employ of Messers Rudman, Lancey and Craven, where he remained until he enlisted in the Somerset Light Infantry in January 1915. For several months he was stationed at Devonport, but ultimately was transferred to the South Wales Borderers and sailed for Mesopotamia on March 7th (1916) landing there a month later. He died on May 10th. The late Corporal Rendell was a member of the St. James Church Choir, and while residing in Taunton made a large circle of friends. Of a cheery disposition, he was very popular among his work mates and associates, all of whom deeply deplore his death.

There is no conclusive evidence of where exactly Arthur Rendell died, but he would have just taken part in the 13th Division's failed attempt to relieve General Townshend in Kut. He died two weeks after the siege of Kut ended, a humiliating defeat for the British.

Lily continued to live in Palmerston Road until her death in 1969. She remarried in 1918 to Charlie Coombes; together they had 3 further children.

(Some of this biographical information has been supplied by Ralph's great granddaughter and is included here with her permission)

Article below from the Wartimes memory project:

<https://www.wartimememoriesproject.com/greatwar/allied/battalion.php?pid=7>

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4th Battalion, South Wales Borderers

4th (Service) Battalion, South Wales Borderers was raised at Brecon in August 1914 as part of Kitchener's Third New Army and joined 40th Brigade, 13th (Western) Division which assembled on Salisbury Plain. 40th Brigade moved to Chiseldon and Cirencester in September 1914. Near the end of February the Division concentrated at Blackdown in Hampshire. They moved to the Mediterranean from the 13th of June 1915 landing at Alexandria then moving to Mudros, by the 4th of July to prepare for a landing at Gallipoli. The infantry landed on Cape Helles between the 6th and 16th of July to relieve 29th Division. They returned to Mudros at the end of the month, and the entire Division landed at ANZAC Cove between the 3rd and 5th of August. They were in action in The Battle of Sari Bair, The Battle of Russell's Top and The Battle of Hill 60, at ANZAC. Soon afterwards they transferred from ANZAC to Suvla Bay. They were evacuated from Suvla on the 19th and 20th of December 1915, and after a weeks rest they moved to the Helles bridgehead. They were in action during The last Turkish attacks at Helles on the 7th of January 1916 and were evacuated from Helles on the 8th and 9th. The Division concentrated at Port Said, holding forward posts in the Suez Canal defences. On the 12th of February 1916 they moved to Mesopotamia, to join the force being assembled near Sheikh Sa'ad for the relief of the besieged garrison at Kut al Amara. They joined the Tigris Corps on the 27th of March and were in action in the unsuccessful attempts to relieve Kut. They were in action in The Battle of Kut al Amara, The capture of the Hai Salient, the capture of Dahra Bend and The passage of the Diyala, in the pursuit of the enemy towards Baghdad. Units of the Division were the first troops to enter Baghdad, when it fell on the 11 March 1917. The Division then joined "Marshall's Column" and pushed north across Iraq, fighting at Delli 'Abbas, Duqma, Nahr Kalis, crossing the 'Adhaim on the 18 April and fighting at Shatt al 'Adhaim. Later in the year they were in action in the Second and Third Actions of Jabal Hamrin and fought at Tuz Khurmatli the following April. By the 28th of May 1918, Divisional HQ had moved to Dawalib and remained there until the end of the war, enduring extreme summer temperatures.