

St John the Baptist, Letton Stories

Arthur Davies was a private in the 29th Battalion Machine Gun Corps. He was born in 1897 in Letton, Herefordshire. He was the son of James and Mary Davies. His father was born in Little Marcle, Herefordshire and his mother was born in Cradley.

In 1901 Arthur was living with his parents, brothers Thomas and Albert and sisters Edith and Nelly in Letton. His father was a general agricultural labourer.

In 1911 Arthur was living with his parents and niece Harriett in Letton. His father was a general labourer.

On the 13th and 14th of April 1918 part of the 29th Battalion of the Machine Gun Corps, which included Arthur Davies, took part in the Battle of Bailleul. This was an attempt by the Germans to punch a hole in, what they considered was, the weakest part of the Allied front line and to head for the Channel. On 13th April the Battalion was actively engaged in heavy defensive operations during the Battles of the Lys, specifically participating in the Battle of Hazebrouck and the Battle of Bailleul on the Western Front in France. Arthur was reported missing presumed killed in action between the 13th and 14th April 1918. His body was eventually found on 9th January 1920 in a makeshift grave, and he was buried in Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension.

Arthur Jones was a Gunner in the 217th Siege Battery Royal Garrison Artillery. He was born in 1877. He was the son of John and Ann Jones

He married Agnes East in 1901 in Weobley, Herefordshire and they had two children, only one, Robert, survived.

In 1911 Arthur was living at Dewkins Moor

During World War One he enlisted in the 217th Siege Battery of the Royal Garrison Artillery and went to France 20th. January 1917. A Siege Battery was a section of the Royal Artillery that deployed the huge artillery pieces well behind the allied infantry trenches. As British artillery tactics developed, the Siege Batteries were most often employed in destroying or neutralising the enemy artillery, as well as putting destructive fire down on strongpoints, dumps, stores, roads and railways behind enemy lines. They became prime targets for enemy counter-fire. Such an event happened on 29th August 1917 when Arthur Jones's position was destroyed by enemy fire. He is buried in Vlamertinghe New Military Cemetery, Belgium.



Patrick J Keane was a Corporal in the 2nd Battalion Prince of Wales Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians). During World War One Patrick enlisted in the 2nd Battalion Leinster Regiment. The battalion landed in France at St. Nazaire on 12th September 1914, as part of the 17th Brigade in the 6th Division. Soon they were involved in a heavy frontline holding operation and localised engagements against advancing German forces. On 20th October 1914, the 2nd Battalion of the Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians) was actively engaged on the Western Front during the Battle of Armentières in France. Patrick was killed in action on 20th October 1914 and is remembered on the Ploegsteert Memorial.

Percy James Hopley was a Lance Corporal in the 1st/8th Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment. He was born in 1894 in Norton Canon, Herefordshire. He was the son of George and Agnes Hopley, of Duckins Moor, Kinnersley, Hereford. His father was born in Letton, Herefordshire and his mother was born in Whitney, Herefordshire.

In 1901 Percy was living with his parents, brothers William, Edwin and Ernest and sister Mabel. His father was a timber/woodman.

Percy enlisted in Aston, Birmingham in the Royal Warwickshire Regiment.

On 9th February 1917, the 1/8th Battalion, Royal Warwickshire Regiment was serving on the Western Front in France and Flanders, attached to the 143rd (Warwickshire) Brigade, 48th (South Midland) Division, actively engaged in winter trench routines and preparations for the pursuit of the German withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line. Percy died of wounds On 9th February 1917 and is buried in Bray Military Cemetery.

Thomas Charles Gummer was a private in the 1st Battalion Herefordshire Regiment.



Thomas was born in Walton, Radnorshire in 1872. He was the son of Thomas and Eliza Gummer. His father was born in Kington, Herefordshire and his mother was born Walton.

In 1881 Thomas was living with his parents and brother Edward in Kingswood, Kington. His father was a farmer of forty acres.

In 1901 Thomas was living with his wife Louisa and son Thomas in Sharran Grove, Smethwick. Thomas was a carter on a farm.

In 1911 Thomas was living with his wife Louisa, sons John, Ernest and Harold and daughter Lillian. Thomas was a labourer.

He married Louisa Jane Withington in January 1898 in King's Norton, Worcestershire. Louisa was born in Warwick.

Due to his age Thomas volunteered in 1915 in the 1st Herefordshire Regiment. On 16th July 1915, the Regiment of 29 officers and 969 other Ranks, embarked from Devonport and headed for Gallipoli. They arrived there on 9th August at 7.20 in the morning. The Herefordshires had a tough time on the peninsula, but Thomas survived the heat, the freezing cold (so many froze to death) and the slaughter. On the 12th of December that year they were withdrawn to Egypt to guard the Suez Canal. The Turkish army, under German command, was intent on positioning heavy artillery to the east of Suez and to bombard the canal. The Allies took up a horseshoe shaped deployment on the western edge of the Sinai, hoping the enemy army would walk into the pincers. It obliged. The Battle of Romani lasted from the 3rd to the 5th of August 1916 and resulted in the Turkish army being totally defeated with losses of 16,000. The Allied losses were 1,130, one being Thomas who was killed in action on 4th of August. He is buried at the Kantara War Memorial Cemetery in Egypt.

Louisa Jane, and the family, moved away from Letton. She died, still as Mrs Gummer, in July 1949 in Walsall, Staffordshire.