



Joseph Wymant

Joseph Wymant was born in Gretton in 1876. His father, David Wymant from Gretton was an ironstone labourer. His mother, Mary Wymant was originally from Harringworth.

The Family

In the 1891 Census, David & Mary and their children (including Joseph) were living in Gretton. By the 1901 Census, Joseph had moved out.

Joseph's father David Wymant died in 1915.

Military Service

Sergeant Joseph Wymant was a professional soldier who had first enlisted in the Royal Field Artillery (20008) c. 1899.

In 1905, Joseph married Frances Jinks.

In the 1911 Census, Joseph & Frances were in India. Joseph was stationed with the 89th Battery, rank Corporal.

Sergeant Wymant was part of the British force (including the 6th Poona Indian Division) that was besieged by Turkish troops in the town of Kut (in modern day Iraq). The British force under General Townsend had retreated to Kut after the Battle of Ctesiphon. Turkish attacks on Kut were ferocious and the British forces struggled with dwindling supplies, particularly of ammunition and fresh water. Sergeant Wymant, now serving with the 1/5th Hampshire Battery, died of wounds following one of these attacks by the Turks.

The defenders of Kut suffered heavy casualties and the British were eventually forced to surrender the town in April 1916. The Turks, though victorious, had also suffered heavy losses. The majority of the survivors from the siege were to suffer appalling conditions whilst prisoners of war.

It is recorded that Sergeant Joseph Wymant of the 91st Battery attached to the 1/5th (Hampshire Battery) Royal Field Artillery died of wounds on 26th December 1915.

An extract from the Northampton Mercury dated 11th February 1916 records:-



News has been received in Gretton that Sgt Wymant, the son of the late Mr D Wymant and Mrs Wymant, was killed in action in Mesopotamia on December 26. The news was received from his wife, who is at Nowshera, India. Sgt Wymant has been in the Army 17 years, and for six years prior to the war he was in India.

The Grantham Journal on the following day, 12th February 1916, reported:-

Intelligence reached Gretton last week of the death of Sgt J Wymant, who was the eldest son of the late Mr D Wymant, and was aged forty years. His wife, who is at Nowshera, India has written that he was killed in Mesopotamia on December 26th. Sgt Wymant who enlisted in the Royal Field Artillery seventeen years ago, was for six years preceding the war stationed in India. Mrs Wymant has another son, Private D Wymant, serving in the RFA in France. In Gretton Baptist Church, the Rev. M Winnard conducted a memorial service on Sunday afternoon, and Mr J Spendlove JP, the organist, played the "Dead March" in "Saul".

Sergeant Joseph Wymant is commemorated on the Gretton War Memorial and at the Kut War Cemetery.

In April 1915, the Indian Expeditionary Force 'D', which had landed at Fao the previous November, began its advance inland with the intention of clearing Turkish forces out of south-west Iraq. Amara was occupied in early June and the advance continued along the line of the Euphrates to Nasiriya, and along the Tigris to Kut, which was taken on 29 September.

The advance to Baghdad was resumed on 11 November, but was brought to a standstill against the strong Turkish defences at Ctesiphon on 22-24 November.

By 3 December, the force, comprising chiefly the 6th (Poona) Division of the Indian Army, was back in its entrenched camp at Kut, where they were besieged by Turkish forces. Heavy casualties were suffered in desperate but unsuccessful attempts to reach the town and raise the siege in January, March and April.

The garrison was forced to capitulate on 29 April 1916 and nearly 12,000 men were taken prisoner, many of whom later died in captivity.

The town was reoccupied by Commonwealth forces in February 1917 and at the end of June it became an administrative, railway and hospital centre.



Kut War Cemetery was made by the 6th (Poona) Division between October 1915 and May 1916 and was increased in size when graves were brought in from other sites after the Armistice.

The cemetery now contains 420 First World War burials.

Joseph's brother David Wymant also served in the Royal Field Artillery during the War. Another brother Samuel was to serve in the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Air Force.

Reference

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Gretton Local History Group

Northampton Mercury

Grantham Journal

Lest We Forget

Joseph Wymant
Of the Royal Field Artillery

d. 26th December 1915

Updated copy November 2015