

Stories of the Great War

Edwin Trevor Ludlow 1890 - 1918



The Ludlow family lived in Hampton Fields and ran a smallholding. George and Amelia (née Curtis) had nine children in total, although two boys died in infancy before the Great War. Edwin, the oldest surviving child, is shown as a farm labourer on the 1911 Census. Perhaps it was this vital work, or the fact that he married Avis Maud Fisher in 1912 and had two young children, Ethel and Jack, that prevented him joining the first patriotic wave of volunteers. At least two of his near neighbours were photographed leaving Minchinhampton in 1914.

He joined the 2nd Battalion Royal Welsh Fusiliers at Caerphilly; why he chose this Regiment in preference to the Glosters is unclear. It was a Battalion of the Regular Army and he was offered a new form of "short service" introduced a year earlier, under which a man could serve for "*three years or the duration of the war, whichever the longer*". Edwin first entered the French Theatre of War in September 1915, as part of the 33rd Division in action near Albert on the Somme. In 1916, during a battle to clear Mametz Wood, the Battalion suffered severe casualties and did not return to action until over a year later. In 1918 the soldiers were fighting again on the Somme and then on the Hindenburg Line from early September. There were many Casualty Clearing Stations (CCS) for allied wounded soldiers near Cambrai after the territory had been recaptured on 10th October 1918. The cemetery at Caudry where Edwin is buried was attached to the CCS and completed after the Armistice; his military record states that he "*died from wounds*" on 4th November 1918 so it is likely these were inflicted either in the Hindenburg engagements or the final push through northern France.

His father George was working his market garden in Hampton Fields when the Armistice was declared on 11th November and threw his hat in the air in celebration; the following day the family received the telegram stating Edwin had died. This was the first of a double tragedy in late 1918 for the family; Edwin in France (the last casualty for Minchinhampton before the Armistice) and one of Edwin's sisters, Lily, aged only 24, died in the great 'flu epidemic.

Having joined the Army before conscription was introduced, Edwin was entitled to three medals – 1915 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal often nicknamed "*Pip, Squeak and Wilfred*" after a popular cartoon – and these were presumably sent to his widow, along with £31.13s.11d of owed back pay. After the Great War Maud continued to live in Minchinhampton, in Tetbury Street, and in 1929 she married Godfrey Aldridge of Chalford, and went to live there. However, with a large family like Ludlow, there are several descendants of George and Amelia still living in Minchinhampton.