

James Phillips

Born Motcombe, Dorset 1886

Killed in Action France 21 October 1914

James Phillips enlisted as a Private soldier in the 1st Battalion Wiltshire Regiment in 1903, at their Depot in Devizes, most likely for 7 years 'under the colours' followed by 5 years as a Reservist. As a Reservist, he was mobilised immediately on the outbreak of war on 4 August 1914, but appears not to have gone to France with the main body of the Battalion on 13/14 August, following a week later.

James arrived in France a couple of days before the 1st Wiltshires took part in the Battle of Mons, followed by the 'Retreat from Mons'. This was a fighting withdrawal with a number of significant actions along a route which ended on the outskirts of Paris. James was killed (just two months after arriving in France) in the area around Neuve Chappelle, when the Battalion was involved in attacks and counter-attacks, with heavy shelling at times.

Edwin Ford of North Bradley was also with the 1st Wiltshires – he was killed 10 days later.

James Phillips has no known grave, but is commemorated on Le Touret Memorial and also the North Bradley Memorial plaques. He is also remembered on the church and village memorials in Tisbury.

See James Phillips' Life Story at: <https://livesofthefirstworldwar.org/lifestory/3501170>

Father: Edward Phillips

Born in Tonerspuddle in Dorset, brought up there and close by. He was the youngest son of 5 children. A Shoemaker at the time of his marriage, latterly an Agricultural Labourer, as his father and grandfathers had been.

Mother: Edith White

Born and brought up in (Sixpenny) Handley, Dorset, one of at least 8 children. Her father and grandfathers had been Agricultural Labourers.

Edward and Edith married in Enmore Green, Motcombe, Dorset in 1875.

Living in Enmore Green at the 1891 Census, by then they had 8 children.

James was the sixth child, then about 5 years old.

Around 1898, the family moved to Wardour, near Tisbury in Wiltshire, when James was about 12.

The 1901 Census shows a family again with 8 children, the oldest having moved out and 4 under 10 years old.

By 1911, Edward had apparently given up shoemaking and was an Agricultural Labourer. The couple had had 16 babies, 12 of whom were still living. The 2 youngest, still at school, and a son of 25 were living with them.

G/father

Daniel Phillips
b. Tonerspuddle,
Dorset
Agricultural Labourer

G/mother

Jane Toop
b. Holton, Dorset

G/father

Joseph White
b. (Sixpenny) Handley,
Dorset
Agricultural Labourer

G/mother

Maria Adams
b. (Sixpenny)
Handley, Dorset

James Phillips

Still living with his parents at 15/16, in 1901 James was Under Carter on a farm. Enlisted in the Wiltshire Regiment in 1903, probably on active service until 1910. In 1911, he was 'living in' and working as 'Boots' at the Arundell Arms Hotel in Tisbury.

Wife: Kate Wicks

Born in Pewsey District, into a family of 10. Her father was a Farm Carter – the family moved frequently, around the Rushall area of Wiltshire. Kate was working in the Unicorn Inn in Devizes in 1911. Kate married Samuel Tanner in 1916, but died shortly after giving birth to their son (Eric S.G. Tanner) in 1918.

No record of James' marriage to Kate Wicks was found.

Their son, William James Phillips, was born in December 1913 and baptised in St Nicholas Church, North Bradley in July 1915. He was later fostered in Trowbridge and was sent to Australia at the age of 15. In the Australian Army in WWII, he was sent to Malaya, where he suffered a time as a PoW. He died in New South Wales at the age of 84.