



Coroners Inquest Report

Thomas William Anderson

Misadventure in the Darkness

A Soldier Drowned

The body of a soldier was found in the River Nadder at Dinton on Thursday last, by a dairyman living at Fovant. The spot is some distance from either road or footpaths, and the body, identified as that of Rifleman Thomas William Anderson, of the Post Office Rifles, is supposed to have been washed down from where a narrow bridge crosses the river higher up. The man had been absent from camp for twelve days, and had been posted as missing.

Mr. F. H. Trethowan (Coroner for South Wilts) held an inquest on the body at Fovant Military Hospital on Friday afternoon.

Company Sergeant-Major James Dunne, of the Post Office Rifles, stationed at West Farm Camp at Fovant, said deceased was in his Company, and had always been of a quiet but cheerful disposition. He was last seen alive on October 7th, on his way to the dining hall. He paid great attention to his duties as a soldier, and never made any complaint or took intoxicants in any quantity.

The Coroner: He was making a good soldier?

Witness: Yes, and he was very interested in his work.

There is nothing else you can tell which would be of use to the jury?

No.

Charles William Brasher, dairyman, in the employ of Mr. C. M. Green, and living at Fovant, said he was walking near the Nadder at nine o'clock on Thursday morning, and saw something in the water. He could not get at it, and retraced his steps. He crossed the hatches, and on approaching the spot again saw the object was a man, dressed in khaki. The man was dead, and it was apparent to witness that he had been in the water some time. Witness fetched Police-Sergeant Crouch, and helped him to remove the body. It lay about a yard from the bank, and in four or five feet of water. There was a footpath leading from Fovant to Teffont, which crossed the river by a barrow bridge, four feet in width, near Teffont Mill. The bridge was about 300 yards from where witness found the body. Witness could not say whether there were railings by the sides of the bridge.

Captain J. T. Murphy, of the R.A.M.C., stationed at Fovant Military Hospital, said deceased was brought in at 13.45 on Thursday. Death was evidently due to drowning. There were no marks of violence on the body, which had been in the water for some days.

Summing up, The Coroner said he had been informed by the parents that deceased had no trouble, and that it would have been the last thing in the world for him to have taken his life. He (the Coroner) did not think there was any necessity for them to give evidence. Inquiries had been made, and if they had been able to find there was any trouble or anything of that sort, the jury would have been told about it. Apparently deceased was not strange in his manner, and there seemed not the slightest reason for his committing suicide. There was always the possibility of a man coming back after dark and falling into the water. That might have happened in this case.

The jury returned a verdict of "death by misadventure", and through the Coroner expressed sympathy with the deceased's relatives.

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OPC Note

The news report records the deceased as Anderson - extensive research shows that the correct surname is Sanderson. Probate records the date of death as the 19th October the date the body was found which was standard legal practice when a death of this nature occurred. The casualty is buried in St. Giles Churchyard, Fovant