



William Alfred G Wilkins
Private 24136, 1st Battalion Wiltshire Regiment

William Alfred Wilkins was born in North Bradley in the January Quarter of 1892 and was registered in the Westbury Registration District. He was the son of William George and Elizabeth Wilkins (Nee May).

The 1901 census shows the Wilkins family residing at Studley Fields, Trowbridge and are recorded as follows:-

William, Head, 36, Engine Driver (Stationary), Born in Trowbridge; Elizabeth, Wife, 35, Born Bisley, Gloucestershire; May, Daughter, 12; Laura, Daughter 10; William, Son, 9; Francis, Son, 7; Annie, Daughter, 7; Lily, Daughter, 6; Elizabeth, Daughter, 4; Emily, Daughter, 2; Louisa, Daughter, 1. The first three children were recorded as being born in North Bradley and the remainder of the children born in Trowbridge.

The 1911 Census records the family as resident of Woodmarsh, North Bradley and included the following:-

Elizabeth, Head, Widow, 35, Glover Hand Sewer, Born in Bisley, Gloucestershire; May, Daughter, 22, Machinist; Laura, Daughter, 20, Glover Hand Sewer; William, Son, 19, Butchers Assistant; Francis, Son, 17, Carpenter; Lily, Daughter, 14, Help Domestic; Elizabeth, Daughter, 13, Scholar; Emily, Daughter, 12, Scholar; Vida, Daughter, 11, Scholar; Fred, Son, 9, Scholar. Again the first three children are recorded as North Bradley born and the rest as being born in Trowbridge.

William George Wilkins died aged 39 in 1904 leaving his widow Elizabeth to raise the family.

Elizabeth died in 1914 aged 48 in North Bradley.

William Alfred married Lucy Florence Billet on 5th April 1915 in the Baptist Church at North Bradley. After their marriage they lived in Mortimer Street, Trowbridge. He was employed by Bowyer, Philpott and Payne of Trowbridge.

William (known as Willie) enlisted under the Derby Scheme in November 1915 at Trowbridge Town Hall and was called up in April 1916, with the first call up of married men. After 3 months initial training he joined the 1st Battalion Wiltshire Regiment in France. On 21st October 1916 the Wiltshires were North of Mouguff Farm near Thiepval, supporting a successful attack during the Battle of Ancre Heights.



It was during this action that Willie was killed probably as a result of shell fire.

He is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France. His name is carved on Pier and Face 13A. William has no known grave.

He is also remembered on the North Bradley War Memorials and also on the Trowbridge Memorial in the Park.



William was the first member of North Bradley Baptist Church to be killed in the war. A memorial service was held for Willie at the Baptist Church and one of his sisters who could not attend wrote the following:

"We did not realise what a dreadful thing war was until it had ruthlessly robbed us of a loved one."

William and Lucy had no children and in 1924 Lucy remarried her new husband being Frederick Smith.