

PRIVATE WILLIAM ABEL ATTWOOD

2290, 1st Battalion, Herefordshire Regiment

Died aged 21 on 6 December 1915

Buried with honour in *Addolorata Cemetery, Malta*; E EA A682

Commemorated in Tewkesbury on the Congregational Memorial in the Methodist Church and on Ashchurch War Memorial



*Addolorata Cemetery,
Malta* [Author 2013]



Pte. W. A. Attwood
[Record-Snarey]



*Herefordshire
Regiment*

WILLIAM ABEL ATTWOOD was born in Tewkesbury in 1894, the only surviving son of Abel Attwood and Louisa Jane (formerly Bateman). Abel was born at Conderton and worked as a gardener for N. Milne of Ashchurch House; the family lived at No.1 Marconi Cottages, Ashchurch Road. Abel and Louisa had a total of eight children of whom only four were still alive in 1911. Although technically living in Ashchurch, William attended the Council School in Tewkesbury and the Congregational Church in Barton Street. On leaving school, he worked for the International Store (148-9 High Street) and then Hunters (Tea and Provision Merchants of 11a High Street); Hunters then transferred him to work at their Hereford branch which explains his connection to that city.

William Attwood enlisted at Hereford in the Herefordshire Regiment whose battalions were all Territorial Force units. He joined the 1st/1st Battalion, the only local battalion to serve overseas. Mobilised in August 1914, it became part of the 53rd (Welsh) Division. On 16 July 1915 the battalion embarked on *SS Euripides* but, by the time the battalion reached Egypt, its strength had reduced to 25 officers and 750 other ranks. The depleted battalion went on to land at 'C' beach at Suvla Bay on Gallipoli on 9 August

1915. It was an amphibious landing made as part of the August Offensive, the final British attempt to break the deadlock of the campaign. However, the landing was mismanaged and quickly reached the original stalemate conditions. Nevertheless, the battalion was specifically mentioned in despatches by General Ian Hamilton: it *'attacked with impetuosity and courage'*.

In early November 1915 the *Record* reported that William had received a gunshot wound, presumably during the endemic trench warfare. He was successfully evacuated to the hospital base on Malta. His surgeon wrote: *'he is still doing very well indeed, but is lying between life and death. He was hit in the head with shrapnel [note: his wound was therefore caused by artillery fire and not a gunshot], and has a very bad fractured skull, but has no paralysis however. You will be glad to know I had the advice of two of the very best London consultants ... your son has gone on splendidly – he's such a good chap, so brave and uncomplaining'*.

Private William Abel Attwood died of his wounds on 6 December 1915 and he was buried in *Addolorata Cemetery* near Valletta in Malta. He was awarded the *'1914-15 Star'* medal.



*Photographs
J. Dixon 2013*