

LIEUTENANT CHARLES LEONARD DAVEY

18th Battalion, Machine Gun Corps (Infantry)

Died aged 39 on 17 October 1918

Buried with honour at *Honnechy British Cemetery, Cambrai, France*; I B 65

Commemorated in Tewkesbury at the Cross and in the Abbey



Honnechy British Cemetery



C.L. Davey [C. Burd]



Machine Gun Corps

CHARLES LEONARD DAVEY was born in 1879 at Worcester, the son of Harry Davey, a Newspaper Editor, and Sarah (formerly Maddock). Harry died in February 1911 and Probate was granted to Charles and his brother Harry Godfrey. Charles's school record is not known but he may have been at school with John Alfred Healing (son of miller W. G. Healing), who won the *Military Cross* as a Major in 1917. In 1901 Charles was a Bank Clerk living at home, and in 1911 he was working in Godalming, Surrey. His obituary records that he had been an employee of Capital & Counties Bank at 19 High Street (taken over later by Lloyds Bank and still there in 2014). His obituary also claimed that he was a 'good cricketer, footballer and hockey captain'.

There is evidence of his association with Tewkesbury in 1904 when he was captain of the Hockey team (the photograph is taken from a team photo of 1907) and there is a humorous report in 1908 when the Hockey team played the Thursday Football team: *'It was a rare game – plenty of comic element in it. Three parts of the hockey men turned out for the first time for ages, and of course were a bit slow. I wonder if their bones and muscles ache and hands, for the devotees of the sticks, were not at all unemployed, and frequent incursions were made into the territory of the Thursdays, and their goal escaped after some very near 'goes'.'*

Charles appears to have enlisted in 1914 in the Royal Fusiliers. The *Tewkesbury Record* indicated that he joined the Public Schools Brigade, whilst the Godalming Roll of Honour states that he enlisted in 1915 in one of the Public Schools Battalions in the Royal Fusiliers;

there were four such battalions (numbered 18 to 21), all raised in Epsom, Surrey, in September 1914. These reports are confirmed by a notice in the *London Gazette* dated 5 May 1915 announcing his appointment to Temporary Second Lieutenant in the 19th Battalion. In his Will published in 1919 Charles was recorded as a Second Lieutenant in the 28th Battalion but there is no indication of when the Will was made. For some years this battalion was an 'Officer Training' unit. At some stage Charles was transferred to the Machine Gun Corps (Infantry) where his casualty records show that he held the rank of Lieutenant, although the *Tewkesbury Record* intimated that he was a 'Captain' (but this would have been an acting Captain).

At the time of his death Charles, an Acting Captain, was serving with the 18th Battalion, Machine Gun Corps, formed on 16 February 1918 and part of the 18th (Eastern) Division, one of the divisions in the Fourth Army. It was in the forefront of *'The Last Hundred Days'* campaign, which saw the Allies inflict a series of crushing defeats on the German Army, culminating in the Armistice. In October the Fourth Army was involved in the *Battle of the Selle* (17-25 October 1918), when the British ejected the Germans from a new defensive line they had established, after being forced out of the Hindenburg Line.

Lieutenant Charles Leonard Davey was killed in action on 17 October 1918, the opening day of the *Battle of the Selle*. His body was recovered and he is buried at *Honnechy British Cemetery* near Le Cateau. As well as in Tewkesbury, he is commemorated in Busbridge Church and on the War Memorial in Godalming, Surrey.