

## 2ND CORPORAL ARTHUR CHARLES DAY

141603, 203rd Field Company, Royal Engineers

Died aged 42 on 16 July 1918

Buried with honour at *Godewaersvelde British Cemetery, Ypres*; I S 19

Commemorated in Tewkesbury at the Cross and in the Abbey



*Godewaersvelde British Cemetery*



*Royal Engineers*

**ARTHUR CHARLES DAY** was born in Tewkesbury in 1876, the second son and one of nine children of George Thomas Day and Eliza Emma (formerly Newman). There was a report in 1888 of a boy named Arthur Day (possibly the same person) being rescued from drowning in the River Severn, with fatal consequences for two of the rescuers. In 1901 Eliza and four of the children were living in Rope Walk Lane/Chance Street. At that time father and son were working as Bricklayers in Worthing, Sussex, where Arthur met Emily Mary Ellen, a Domestic Servant. They married later that year in Emily's home town of Littlehampton. They moved back to Tewkesbury the following year as evidenced by the birth of their first child (Marjorie Clare) which was registered in Tewkesbury in December 1902; two other daughters followed in 1906 and 1910. In 1911 Arthur and Emily, along with the three girls, were living at Homedowns in Fiddington, Ashchurch.

Arthur did not volunteer initially as he was in a reserved occupation; at the start of the war he was a Foreman with Collins & Godfrey, the leading local building firm. He did eventually enlist in Tewkesbury on 12 November 1915 at the age of 39, probably as part of the 'Derby Scheme'. He was appointed as a Sapper in the Royal Engineers, his skills as a Bricklayer making this a natural move.

Initially Arthur was allocated to the Royal Engineers 1st Reserve Battalion and he was promoted to 2nd Corporal in May 1916, a rank

he held until his death. On 9 September 1917 he was posted overseas and transferred for just two months to the East Yorkshire Regiment. On 15 November he returned to the Royal Engineers and was allocated to the 203rd (Cambridge) Field Company, part of the 35th Division.

The Division was formed originally in April 1915 and largely comprised locally raised units known as 'Bantams', manned by troops who were below the regulation minimum height of 5 feet 3 inches. The 203rd Field Company, Royal Engineers, was raised initially in January 1915 and was based in Cambridge, eventually becoming part of the 35th Division in July 1915.

On 28 January 1916 the Division began to cross the English Channel and by 6 February all units were concentrated east of St. Omer. The Division then remained on the Western Front for the remainder of the war.

On 5 July 1918 the Division took over the line near Westoutre, in the area between Ypres in Belgium and Bailleul in France; the 203rd Field Company, with Arthur as part of No.3 Section in the unit, spent the next month improving the front line defences.

**2nd Corporal Arthur Charles Day** died on 16 July 1918, killed by a stray shell while working with a Trench Mortar Battery, and is buried a few miles behind the front line in *Godewaersvelde British Cemetery*, near Ypres.

After her husband's death, Emily Mary Day moved back to her native town of Littlehampton in Sussex.