

PRIVATE ARTHUR JOSEPH SALLIS

201514, 1/4th Welsh Regiment

Died aged 23 on 28 December 1917

Buried with honour at *Jerusalem War Cemetery, Israel*; WC R123

Commemorated in Tewkesbury at the Cross and in the Abbey



Jerusalem War Cemetery, Israel



Pte. A. J. Sallis (1915)



Welsh Regiment

ARTHUR JOSEPH SALLIS was born in Tewkesbury in 1894, the son of Thomas Sallis and Ann (formerly Godsall) of Fletchers Alley. Thomas, formerly a shepherd, by 1901 was an engineer's labourer. Arthur was educated at the Abbey Schools and served as a butcher with C. Chatham, High Street, possibly as a fellow apprentice of **Private A.H. Cornish** [†].

Arthur Sallis volunteered and enlisted at Tewkesbury and joined the 10th Glosters; he had fought at the Battle of Loos in September 1915, where the British Army used gas for the first time. The battalion suffered extensive casualties during the Loos offensive. As he was posted to a theatre of war before the end of 1915, Arthur qualified for the '1914-1915 Star' campaign medal. Possibly after injury, he was subsequently transferred to 1/4th Battalion of the Welsh Regiment whilst they were being re-equipped in Egypt after Gallipoli.

This was a Territorial Force battalion and, before the war, was based in Carmarthen as part of the South Wales Brigade. On 17 April 1915 the battalion came under the command of the 159th Infantry Brigade in the 53rd (Welsh) Division. This was a Territorial Force Division which had served in Gallipoli, Egypt and Palestine.

On 19 July 1915 the battalion sailed from Devonport for Gallipoli, landing at Suvla Bay on 9 August. The effects of the fighting, lack of reinforcements and winter blizzards meant that, by December, the division was reduced to about 15% of its full strength. On 11 December 1915

the division was evacuated from Gallipoli and moved to Alexandria in Egypt. No doubt Private Sallis joined the battalion there.

The 53rd (Welsh) Division was part of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF), involved in the Sinai and Palestine Campaign against the forces of the Ottoman Empire. By the second half of 1917 the Palestine theatre had become the second largest in terms of forces deployed, after the Western Front. Under their new commander General Edmund Allenby, the EEF launched an attack in October 1917 that swept successfully north and east.

By 21 November 1917 the EEF had gained a line about four miles west of Jerusalem, but the city was deliberately spared bombardment and direct attack. Very severe fighting followed, lasting until the evening of 8 December, when the Force had captured all the city's prepared defences. On 9 December the city of Jerusalem surrendered to the British forces; two days later General Allenby entered the Old City through the Jaffa Gate on foot, instead of on horse or vehicle, to show respect for the holy city. He was the first Christian in many centuries to control Jerusalem.

Private Arthur Joseph Sallis was killed in action on 28 December 1917 during the battle known as the 'Defence of Jerusalem' (26-30 December 1917), when the Ottoman Army launched an unsuccessful counter-attack to recapture lost ground. He is buried in *Jerusalem War Cemetery*, Israel. Arthur's death was not confirmed to his family until June 1918.