



Arthur William Watson

Rank: Sapper

Service No.: 2534

Regiment: 1st/3rd (Kent) Field Company, Royal Engineers

Residence: Silver Hill Villas, Elham

Before Service:

Arthur was born in Forest Hill London 1879 the son of George William and Sarah Ann Watson born Battersea, London. In 1904 he was married to Emily Watson nee Webb in Camberwell. His occupation was bricklayer. The 1911 Census shows he was living in Walleth's Court Cottages, Dover with Emily and two sons, Stanley Arthur (born East Dulwich London 1904) and William George Watson 1909-2009 (born St Margaret's Dover). In 1914 they moved to Silverhill Villas, Elham.



Before the First World War Arthur served in the army in the Boer War, he is shown here seated, 3rd row, 1st from the left.

Unfortunately we know little about Arthur's activities during the war as his Service Record cannot be found; a lot of Service Records were destroyed during bombing in the Second World War. The Elham Historical Society has previously obtained the following information from his son Bill Watson "My father joined up for the Army in 1914 but before he was called up he managed to get us part of a house in Elham, at Silver Hill Villas, next to Denmark House. That was lovely! No more walking all that way in the rain and snow! My father went in the Royal Engineers Regiment with several local lads in the village and it wasn't long before they were sent abroad. Unfortunately he went with the officers and men in one boat, while the main troops went round the base in another. Just as the troops on my father's ship were getting ready to land with all their packs on, another of our ships collided with them and hundreds of men went down with the ship. I was too young to understand the tragedy of it but I remember we had some very hard times in the years to come." The Press Bureau records: Saturday. The Secretary of the Admiralty makes the following announcement: During the night of 28th-29th inst. H.M.S Hythe, auxiliary sweeper (Lieutenant-Comander Arthur H. Bird, R.N.R.) was sunk after being in collision with another of H.M. ships off the Gallipoli Peninsula.

Another Elham resident, Fred Palmer was one of the lucky ones, as his section of the Royal Engineers had landed safely at Suvla Bay, Gallipoli, on 25-Oct-1915. He and Arthur had previously met in Malta.

Died Aged: 36

Date of Death: Thursday, 28-Oct-1915

Grave Location: No Known Grave, commemorated on Helles Memorial, Turkey. Panel 23 to 25 or 325 to 328 and the Elham War Memorial

