

THIS IS AN EXAMPLE PAGE FROM "PLAIN SACRIFICE"



BLEWDEN Frank Smith

Private, 5th Bn. The Wiltshire Regiment (Duke of Edinburgh's)

Died of wounds in Mesopotamia: **26th April 1916**, aged 39

Buried: Amara War Cemetery, Iraq

Memorial: Shrewton

Frank Smith Blewden was born in Shrewton in 1877 to Frank Smith and Martha Blewden. Frank and Martha married in Southampton in 1879 after Martha was 21 and allowed to wed without parental permission. They returned to Shrewton and Frank and his brother Fred were brought up in Jessamine Cottage in the High Street. Frank is known as Smith on some documents and Blewden on others.

In 1905 Frank married Fanny Adlem from Winterbourne Stoke. Their first daughter Hilda was born in Shrewton, followed in 1908 by a second daughter Vera. Tragically, Fanny died several months later. By 1911, Frank's two children lived with their grandparents, Frank and Martha Smith in Backway, Shrewton.

War broke out in August 1914. By early 1915 Frank had enlisted in the Wiltshire Regiment in Devizes. In December he joined the 5th Bn. The Wiltshire Regiment for the final month of the Gallipoli campaign. In January, when the campaign came to an end, the Wiltshires sailed for Port Said, Egypt. In February the Battalion went by sea to Basra (in modern day Iraq) at the top of the Persian Gulf. In March they sailed in barges up the River Tigris and moved into the line against the Turks. Early in April the battalion was part of the 13th Division attempt to break through and relieve the British garrison that was besieged in Kut, south of Baghdad.

Their battle began on 5th April with initial success and the advance continued the next day but was eventually halted by the Turks, after an advance of seven miles, the battalion having suffered 228 casualties. A further attempt to reach Kut was made a few days later, on the opposite bank of the Tigris and the 5th Battalion incurred a further 65 casualties in beating off a heavy counter attack. Kut was not relieved and the garrison was eventually forced to surrender. Frank was probably one of the casualties. He would have been evacuated to a hospital at Amara. He died of his wounds on 26th April and is buried in the nearby Amara British Cemetery. The cemetery was badly damaged during more recent fighting in Iraq. Once the political climate improves, major repairs are planned.

Frank's daughter, Hilda, went on to marry Reginald Sainsbury. His son, Frank's grandson, Terry Sainsbury still lives in Shrewton as this book is printed.



Amara War Cemetery, Iraq