

S/15836 Corporal James Andrew Wishart



James was born in Victoria Street, Kirkwall on 15th January 1892, the first son of joiner James Wishart and Annie Wishart (née Wilson). The family had moved to Daisy Cottage on Bignold Park Road and James had two sisters and a brother, when the 1901 Census was taken.

After finishing school, Jim took up an apprenticeship as a bank accountant in the Union Bank in Kirkwall. He moved in 1909 to the bank's branch in Blairgowrie, Perthshire. Jim took an active role in the social life of his new home, becoming secretary and treasurer of the tennis club, where he was an enthusiastic player.

Jim had lived five years in Blairgowrie, when he enlisted in November 1914 into the Cameron Highlanders. He moved to Aldershot to join the 7th Battalion, training there as part of 15th (Scottish) Division in Kitchener's Second New Army.

Jim landed in France with his battalion on 8th July 1915. He was promoted to Corporal, while working hard to learn battlefield skills in the difficult environment of trench warfare.

Less than three months after landing in France, 15th Division took a key role in the first of a long series of major wartime offensives. 7th Camerons had a hard fight taking part in capturing the village of Loos and lost heavy casualties, which included Jim among the wounded.

Jim followed the hospital trail and returned to the UK, spending six months in treatment and recovery. Jim crossed back to France to re-join 7th Camerons at the end of April 1916. He was probably surprised to find the Camerons still on the Loos battlefield, only a few miles further north than where he had left them on a stretcher. Apart from a few weeks resting, training and absorbing recruits to replace its heavy losses, 15th Division had wintered on the battlefield that had seen it start a proud war record.

Most of the British Army's casualties on the Western Front were sustained in the major battles, both offensive and defensive. However, just holding the many miles of trench lines and lying close behind in support and reserve lead to a steady daily toll of deaths and wounds to artillery and trench mortar fire, with more while making and repulsing trench raids.

Jim's family had received a telegram from the War Office notifying them of his death from wounds, before a letter arrived from his chum John Ross. It included the following:

Jim came out again, just the same dear lad, and some eight days ago he and I had our usual feed at night, and a talk of all that happened during his absence. It then came our turn to do the trenches, and after the fifth day, in the afternoon, a shell or trench mortar burst on the top of a shelter where Jim and a sergeant were having a rest. Both were seriously wounded, and were carried down post haste to the nearest dressing station. However, it was God's will Jim died a hero's death a few hours afterwards.

7th Camerons' War Diary for May 1916 states that they were holding the left sub-sector of the Quarry section on 5th May and "it was a quiet afternoon.... During the evening the enemy fired a few trench mortars & rifle grenades into our front trenches.

Casualties: Officers Nil Other Ranks Killed C Coy 1 Wounded C Coy 2 B Coy 1"

James Wishart and the sergeant were presumably the two C Company soldiers wounded that evening. Jim died from his wounds next day. He is buried in Grave III.H.4 in Vermelles British Cemetery, near Loos. Jim is remembered on the Kirkwall and Blairgowrie War Memorials, also on church panels in both of the towns in which he lived during a short life that ended while he was aged only 24.



Blairgowrie War Memorial