

Private Rhys Davies

Regimental number: 33009

1st Battalion, South Wales Borderers

born: about 1898/9 - died: 23 July 1918

Private Rhys Davies, born about 1898 or 1899,¹ was the son of John and Mary Davies, of Penffos, Rhydlewys, Cardiganshire in Wales.² John and Mary had married in about 1894 and had at least eight children (of whom one died before 1911).³ Rhys was the eldest son. His siblings included Sarah (born about 1896), Thomas (born about 1900), Johnny (born about 1902), Evan Edward (born about 1903), James (born about 1905) and David Josua (born about 1908). Rhys' father, John, was a farmer. In 1911, Rhys was at school and, unlike his parents, he was able to speak both Welsh and English.

Rhys enlisted in the South Welsh Borders in Colwyn Bay, Wales. At some point he attended the 1st Division Bomb School,⁴ but he later joined his Battalion on the Western Front. The 1st Battalion served on the Western Front throughout the war.⁵

On 15 July 1918, the diaries of the 1st Battalion noted that hostile artillery was a little more active on the Support Area.⁶ Whether or not his affected Rhys is not known, but he was admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 15 July with gunshot wounds to his buttock, which penetrated his abdomen, and his left arm and foot.⁷ He survived for over a week, before succumbing to his wounds on 23 July. He was buried the following day in the Pernes British Military Cemetery (Plot 5, Row F, Grave 28) with the chaplain A. D. Reid presiding. Captain Reid had just arrived at the 1st CCCS three days before.⁸

Rhys was one of 159 admissions to the 1st CCCS that day and one of 39 to die at that CCCS in July.⁹ Most of the over 1,000 First World War soldiers buried in the Pernes British Military Cemetery died at one of the nearby clearing stations.¹⁰ This cemetery was only set up in April 1918 when the 1st and 4th Canadian Casualty Clearing Stations came to Pernes, driven back by the German advance.

His mother was identified as his next-of-kin and she was notified of his death. His effects were sent by the army to his mother and four of his siblings – Evan, Tom, John and Sarah.¹¹ Possibly his two younger brothers, did not receive anything because they were still minors.

Rhys was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).¹²

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¹ "1901 Wales Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 3 June 2015), entry for Rees Davies, Registration district: Newcastle in Emlyn, Sub-registration district: Penbryn, ED, institution, or vessel: 8, Household schedule number: 16, Piece: 5140, Folio: 68, Page Number: 3; "1911 Wales Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 3 June 2015), entry for Rhys Davies, Registration district: Newcastle in Emlyn, Registration District Number: 604, Sub-registration district: Penbryn, ED, institution, or vessel: 09, Household schedule number: 42, Piece: 33314

² "Commonwealth War Graves Commission," (www.cwgc.org; accessed 3 December 2015), entry for Davies, Rhys, Service No: 33009

³ "1911 Wales Census," entry for Rhys Davies

⁴ "UK, WWI Service Medal and Award Rolls, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 21 May 2015), entry for Rhys Davies

⁵ "South Wales Borderers 1st Btn," *The Wartime Memories Project* (<http://www.wartimememoriesproject.com/greatwar/allied/alliedarmy-view.php?pid=7034>; accessed 3 June 2015)

⁶ "UK, WWI War Diaries (France, Belgium and Germany), 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 22 May 2015), entry for Regiment or Unit: South Wales Borderers, Sub Unit: 1st Battalion, Division: 1st Division, Diary Dates: 1914 Aug - 1919 Jun, Piece Description: Piece 1280/3: 1 Battalion South Wales Borderers (1914 Aug - 1919 Jun), Piece Number: 1280

⁷ "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," *Library and Archives Canada*, (records accessed 2013 & 2015), Record Group 9, series IIC10, volume 4556, Record number 630

⁸ "War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13-1919/03/31," *Library and Archives Canada* (http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FIN&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G)

⁹ "War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13-1919/03/31," *Library and Archives Canada* (http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FIN&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G)

¹⁰ "Pernes British Military Cemetery" *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/11600/PERNES%20BRITISH%20CEMETERY>; accessed 13 January 2015)

¹¹ "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 21 May 2015), entry for Rhys Davies

¹² "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 21 May 2015), entry for Rhys Davies