

Private William Arthur Davies

Regimental Number: 4639

1st Canadian Divisional Mechanical Transport Company, Canadian Army Service Corps

born: 29 February 1892 - died: 16 November 1918

Private William Arthur Davies was born on 29 February 1892 in Penge, Surrey, and baptised on 29 May.¹ He was the son of William James, born about 1862 in Severn Stoke in Worcestershire and Alice Lydia Davies, born about 1868 in Bethnal Green, London.² After William, William and Alice had four more children: Alice Lilian (born in 1893),³ Constance (born in 1895), Alfred Thomas (born in 1903), and Kathleen (born in 1904).⁴

In 1901, the family was living at 8 Church Lane, Edmonton, London where William was a stone mason's labourer. Three or four year later the family immigrated to Canada and settled in the Prairies.⁵ They first lived near Humbolt, Saskatchewan⁶ but, by 1911, had moved to Winnipeg, Manitoba.⁷ They were living at 55 Disraeli Street and William was a labourer in a warehouse. Their son, William, was a telephone operator. In 1916, they were living at 623 Windsor Avenue and William was still working as a warehouseman for a wholesale grocer.⁸ Their son, William, was a billing clerk, also for a wholesale grocer.

William enlisted in the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force on 18 October 1915. He was 23 years and 9 months old and measured 5' 7½". He was described as having a ruddy complexion, grey eyes and sandy hair and was considered fit for the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force. He appears to have re-enlisted on 14 February 1916. He was then working as a cook and was described as 5'7¼" tall, fair complexion, blue eyes and brown hair. Although he was registered as still living in the family home at 623 Windsor Avenue, he was married and his wife was living at Suite 7, Talbot Block, Winnipeg. William had married Beatrice Christie Norquest on 1 November 1915.

William had previously served for six months in the 10th Overseas C. M. Reg.⁹ when he joined the 1st Canadian Divisional Mechanical Transport Company, of the Canadian Army Service Corps. The Company was formed in April 1918 through the amalgamation of the No. 1 Canadian Divisional Supply Column and the No. 1 Canadian Divisional Ammunition Sub-Park. The Company was stationed in Arras, in northern France. On 12 November, the Company moved from Somain to Valenciennes.¹⁰

The war diaries note for 13 November 1918, that "1 Other Rank admitted to Hospital." That soldier may have been William. He was admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 13 November.¹¹ He died three days later of influenza and was buried the same day in the British Military Cemetery in Auberchicourt (Plot 1, Row A, Grave 17), with the Canadian chaplain, W O'Neill Fisher presiding. His wife, Beatrice, who was then living at 623 Windsor Av, Elmwood, Winnipeg, was notified of his death.

The day he was admitted, the 1st CCCS war diaries noted ""A few isolated cases of wounded still and some wounded and gassed civilians."¹² Sixty-seven people (soldiers and civilians) died at the 1st CCCS in November 1918. The work of the Centre had shifted from being primarily surgical to medical, to deal with the influenza pandemic.¹³ Influenza accounted for most deaths at the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station after the Armistice. In spite of the horrific number of soldiers

[3A%2F%2Fwww.collectionscanada.ca%2Farchivianet%2F02015202_e.html&r=0&f=S](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=0&f=S); accessed 22 March 2015)

¹¹ "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 717

¹² "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=FINDD&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G)

¹³ "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=FINDD&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G; accessed 15 December 2014)

¹⁴ "The Influenza Pandemic of 1918," (<https://virus.stanford.edu/uda/>; accessed 3 February 2015)

¹⁵ "Auberchicourt British Cemetery," Commonwealth War Graves Commission (<http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/59509/AUBERCHICOURT%20BRITISH%20CEMETERY>; accessed 3 February 2015)

¹⁶ "1921 Census of Canada," entry for William James Davies