

Corporal Albert Watts

8053 1st Battalion, Dorsetshire Regiment



Albert Watts was born in 1889, one of nine children of Edward and Elizabeth Watts. At the 1911 census, Albert was already a private in the 1st Dorsetshire Regiment and was at Alma Barracks, Farnborough and was single, aged 22.

At the outbreak of war, he was listed as a reservist. The Dorsetshires were sent to France with the BEF in September 1914. It is not known when he re-joined the Regiment or whether Albert was in the many actions they fought that year. He was in France for the Second Battle of Ypres.

The War Diary for the 1st Dorsetshires: Saturday 1st May 1915: Ypres – Hill 60.

Bn remained in trenches on Hill 60 with Devons in close support.

7 p.m. Enemy commenced bombardment of supporting area of Hill 60.

7.15 p.m. Enemy turned on asphyxiating gas from 3 nozzles in front of 38 trench and from 2 in front of 43 to 45 trenches. And also probably from others in front of 60. The direction of the wind saved the garrison of 38, but the garrisons of 60, 43, 45 and 46 got the full benefit of the gas. The situation became critical, but was saved by the prompt action of Captain Batten – senior officer on the spot, and by the equally prompt despatch of reinforcements for O.C. 1st Devons.

The telephones were not working well, but on receipt of a message that an attack on 60 was taking place, Major Cowie Cmdg. Dorsets went into trenches, and took up his position on hill 60 as being the key of the position. Trenches 43, 45, & 46 were suffering severely from the gas. The enemy in addition to using gas and shelling supporting area heavily with different types of guns, opened heavy rifle and machine gun fire on hill 60 and endeavoured to bomb the flanks of this trench. Beyond sending some bomb throwers up a communication trench the enemy apparently made no attempt to cross the open.

10 pm – The situation had now become practically normal and the firing had much abated. Casualties – one killed, one wounded. Killed by gas poisoning – Lieut C G Butcher. 52 other ranks.

Admitted to Fd Ambulance suffering from gas poisoning Capt. A E HAWKINS, 2/Lt J H C Roberts (since died) 2/Lt J Hodgeson, 2/Lt J Sampson, 3rd Dorsets, 2/Lt S R Weston-Stevens, 3rd Dorsets, and 200 other ranks. Missing – 32 other ranks.

Albert Watts

Sunday 2nd May 1915: Ypres – Hill 60

5.00 a.m. B & C Coys relieved on Hill 60 by Devons, and withdrawn to 39 and 40 trenches.

4.30 p.m. Dorsets relieved in trenches by Devons. Dorsets withdrawn to dugouts.

The list the casualties for that day included 8053 WATTS Albert A/Cpl.

<http://www.stoke-sub-hamdon.co.uk/centenary-great-war/albert-minchinton/>

Hill 60 was a spoil heap 750 feet (230 m) long and 150 feet (46 m) high, made from the diggings of a cutting for the Ypres–Comines railway SW of Ypres Town. It afforded good views over the whole of the Ypres salient and was fought over several times. It was taken by the British on 19th April 1915. On 1st May, the hill was being defended by the 1st Dorsetshires when they were attacked with chlorine gas, losing 55 men immediately. It was only the second time the Germans had used gas and their only defence was cotton masks soaked in urine. Despite this they held the hill. Albert Watts died the next day from the effects of the gas along with 66 others from the same regiment. The Germans re-took Hill 60 on 5th May after further gas attacks.



Hill 60 after the war

15th May 1915 Hants & Berks Gazette

News was received late last week of the death by poisonous gas of Private Albert Watts, 1st Dorsets, who had been at the front since the war commenced, and two days later his father and mother had the additional sorrow of hearing that Private Edward Watts, 3rd Hants, had been severely wounded in the Dardanelles..... and offer sincerest sympathy to the family of Private Watts, a victim of the Huns' diabolical mode of warfare. He gave his life like so many others have done for those who remain at home, and long may his name be cherished in the nation's role of honour.'

19/05/2107

Albert Watts

Albert Watts was buried in Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, grave reference I F 22. Mrs. E Watts paid for the inscription 'IN LOVING MEMORY TO DEAR ALBERT FROM MOTHER BROTHERS & SISTERS'.



Cpl. Watts was awarded the Victory, British and 14 Star medals.

Name.	Corps.	Rank.	Regtl. No.
WATTS	Dorset R	Pte	8053
Albert		*A/cpl	
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
VICTORY	* C/21018/4	902	
BRITISH	C/2/5	137	
14 STAR			Died 2-5-15
Theatre of War first served in	16-8-14		
Date of entry therein			

K. 1980.

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