

# ***Wilfred Richard Davies, died 16 August 1917, aged 24***

Wilfred was the only son of William and Martha Davies. They brought up their four children (Wilfred born 1893, Ethel born 1890, Doris born 1905 and Ivy born 1908) in Islington, possibly in Tufnell Park – their road no longer exists. Mr Davies was a clothing salesman, and Mrs Davies augmented the family budget by taking in lodgers.

Wilfred is recorded in the 1911 census as being a junior clerk, although in what type of business is not shown. The only other record we have for him is the entry in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's records, showing that when he died on 16 August 1917 he was a Sergeant in the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment and that his mother (presumably now a widow) lived at 74 Bedford Road East Finchley. It is reasonable to assume that as the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion was a territorial battalion based in Hornsey before the war Wilfred may have been a member, and that he probably enlisted early in the war to have worked his way up to Sergeant by 1917. In that summer the Middlesex Regiment was part of General Haig's campaign to force the Germans out of Ypres, and the offensive had begun with encouraging gains but terrible weather soon bogged it down. By August the offensive was clearly failing in its objectives and had descended into attritional fighting. From 16 to 18 August Wilfred's battalion was involved in an action called the Battle of Langemarck.. The overwhelming and immediate response of the German forces to the Allied attack was unexpected, and it was later believed to be due to a clerk named Phillips from GHQ defecting to the Germans, taking the campaign plans with him. Wilfred Davies died on the first day of the action, and his body was lost – he has no recorded grave but his name is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial near Ypres.

*Front line after Battle of Langemarck, 16–18 August 1917*

