

Pte. L. Robinson – The Gloucestershire Regiment

Leonard Robinson was born in Westcott in 1890, the son of Stephen and Rhoda Robinson. The 1911 census shows Stephen, a wheelwright, and Rhoda, who was employed as a laundress, living in Bailey Road. Leonard had by that time left the family home and was living at Dale Cottage, Rudgwick with George and Mary Standing, who were cab proprietors who employed him as a cab driver.

Leonard enlisted in Portsmouth and joined the 7th (Service) Bn. The Gloucestershire Regiment which had formed at Bristol in August 1914 as part of the 13th (Western) Division. After training at Tidworth and Aldershot, the Division sailed from Avonmouth on 17th June 1915 to reinforce the Gallipoli campaign against the Turks which had reached stalemate. On 6th August 1915, the Division took part in the landing at Suvla Bay in a new offensive designed to achieve a breakthrough, but this also failed. Leonard sailed from the UK on 16th August, presumably as one of many reinforcements needed by the Regiment to replace losses in action and those invalided through illness. The Gallipoli campaign ended in December 1916 when the Allied evacuated their forces.

The 13th (Western) Division moved initially to Egypt and was then to Mesopotamia where it took part in the campaign to relieve the 6th (Poona) Division at Kut which was surrounded and under siege by the Turkish Army. Together with the 3rd (Lahore) and 7th (Meerut) Divisions, the 13th (Western) Division was ordered to advance north along the River Tigris to relieve the besieged force. The Battle of Kut opened on 5th April 1916 with some initial success for the relief force but it then ran into very stout resistance and progress became extremely slow.

A series of attacks were then mounted on both sides of the Tigris towards Sannaiyat and Bait Asia but failed with heavy casualties. Further reinforcements were on the way, but General Gorringe, the British Commander, decided to launch a further attack on 22nd April against Sannaiyat. However the attack was weakly composed and was repulsed by the Turks. A further 1,300 casualties were suffered in the attack, including Leonard Robinson who was killed in action on 25th April 1916. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Basra Memorial in Iraq which records the names of 40,500 members of the Commonwealth Forces

**who died in operations in Mesopotamia from autumn 1914 to August 1921
and who have no known grave.**