



## Holt

# *World War I Casualty Biographies*

### **Arthur Usher**



Arthur Usher was born in Holt in 1894. His parents were Frederick (1865, Holt) and Elizabeth (nee Purnell, 1865, Staverton). They had married in 1887 and by the time Arthur was born there were already 3 children in the family.

Little is known about Arthur's early life, other than by the age of 16 he was working as a domestic gardener

**PRIVATE ARTHUR USHER**, third son of Mr and Mrs F Usher, was one of the first men in the village of Holt to join Kitchener's Army in August 1914, being one of a group of about a dozen that responded to Lord Kitchener's first appeal. After being trained he was sent to Gallipoli. When disaster overtook the Wilts Regiment on August 13th 1915, he was fortunate to escape with only a slight wound. He received treatment at Southampton and was later sent out to Mesopotamia. On April 15th 1916, he was again wounded on the advance on Kut and he died from a third wound, being shot in the head, on January 26th 1917. Pte Usher, who was 22 years of age and unmarried, was formerly under gardener at Arboyne, the residence of Mr E C Beaven and for a little while he worked for the Avon Rubber Co. Melksham. He

*acted for several years as organist at Staverton Wesleyan Chapel and was respected by all. Mr F Usher has two other sons in the army – Sgt. H Usher at Sutton Veny and Pte. Fred Usher, stationed at Whitstable*

*Mr and Mrs Frank Usher wish to express their sincere thanks for expressions of sympathy with them in the loss of their son Arthur, died of wounds.*

*Holt, February 12th 1917*

**Wiltshire Times 17 February 1917**

**FOR KING AND COUNTRY  
A Trio of Fallen Heroes**

*The sad news has just come to hand of the death of three Holt men at the front. Private Arthur Usher , third son of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Usher, was one of the first men in the village to join Kitchener's Army in August 1914 Holt to join Kitchener's Army in August 1914, being one of a group of about a dozen that responded to Lord Kitchener's first appeal. After being trained he was sent to Gallipoli. When disaster overtook the Wilt Regiment on August 13th 1915, he was fortunate to escape with only a slight wound. He received treatment at Southampton and was later sent out to Mesopotamia. On April 15th 1916, he was again wounded on the advance on Kut and he died from a third wound, being shot in the head, on January 26th 1917. Pte Usher, who was 22 years of age and unmarried, was formerly under gardener at Arboyne, the residence of Mr E C Beaven and for a little while he worked for the Avon Rubber Co. Melksham. He acted for several years as organist at Staverton Wesleyan Chapel and was respected by all. Mr F Usher has two other sons in the army – Sgt. H Usher at Sutton Veny and Pte. Fred Usher, stationed at Whitstable.*

*A second Holt man fell in the fighting before Kut in the person of Pte. F. Dean, who joined the Army about 12 months ago. He was gardener to Mr. E. C. Beaven and it is a curious coincidence that Ptes dean and Usher should fall together. Pte. Dean has only resided on the village for about ix years, but his pleasant manner and manly bearing had brought him a good share of popularity. He leaves a widow and one child.*

*Petty Officer George William was serving in the Navy on the outbreak of war. In April 1915 he was on one of the E boats in the Dardenelles when the submarine had the misfortune to be captured by the Turks, and Petty Officer Williams and his companions were sent as Prisoners of War to Constantinople. His friends fear that their treatment at the hands of their captors left much to be desired and it is thought that the attack of erysipelas from which he died may have been due to bad prison conditions. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Williams , The Walk, Holt are old residents in the village. Two other sons are serving with the Forces – Warrant Officer Charles Williams and Howard Williams, A.B. Petty Officer Williams was married and leaves a widow and two children who reside at Portsmouth. A brother-in-law is Lance Sergeant Thomas Harrison R.H.A.*

*In each of the above cases the sad news is received with deep regret by the villagers and much sympathy is felt with the relatives.*

**Wiltshire Times 10 February 1917**

Arthur Usher was awarded:

Victory medal C/1/102/B13 1493  
British medal C/1/102/B13 1493  
15 Star C/1/1B 22

He is buried at Amara War Cemetery, Iraq  
Grave Reference XXV

Arthur Usher, Private, 9663, 5th Battalion, Duke of Edinburgh's (Wiltshire) Regiment.

#### References

Ancstry  
FreeBMD  
Commonwealth War Graves Commission  
Wiltshire Times  
Holt Village Hall