

## Private George Pratt

325718

Queen's Own Worcestershire Hussars (Worcester Yeomanry)  
1<sup>st</sup> South Midland Mounted Brigade, 2<sup>nd</sup> Mounted Division  
died 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1916



George Pratt was born in summer of 1890 in Stone. He was the son of Thomas William Pratt, born around 1861 in Lighthorne, south of Leamington Spa in Warwickshire and Ellen, born around 1861 in Hartlebury. George had four siblings, Thomas born in 1887, William (1888), Jesse (1889) and Gertrude (1892). Another sibling died in childhood.

Unlike some of the families, the Pratts did not move from Stone throughout their marriage. They may have lived in different properties but by 1911 they were residents of Holly Cottage, Shenstone. Thomas worked for himself as a market gardener while William was a wheelwright and carpenter, Jesse and George were gardeners and Gertrude was a school teacher.<sup>2</sup> She worked in the Infants Department of Stone School for many years.<sup>3</sup>

In 1915, George joined Worcestershire County Police for a short time<sup>4</sup> and then, probably in the summer, he enlisted in the Queen's Own Worcestershire Hussars (Worcester Yeomanry). Sadly, George's service record did not survive, but we know from his medal index card that he was posted to Egypt on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1915.<sup>5</sup>



Map of Egypt and Israel showing location of Katia<sup>6</sup>

George's regiment arrived in Egypt in January 1916 after previously being involved in the fighting at Gallipoli; George would have been part of a draft of new recruits to replace men lost in that battle. The Regiment was given the task of protecting the eastern side of the Suez Canal and tasks included digging wells and reconnaissance patrols for the whole of the Katia water area.<sup>7</sup>

Various skirmishes took place throughout this time; we know from a letter by Fred Millward, quoted in the Kidderminster Shuttle, that George was unwell and unable to participate in one of these which took place on 9<sup>th</sup> April.<sup>8</sup> However, by 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1916, men from the Queen's Own Worcestershire Hussars were holding a small isolated garrison at Oghratina. They had been ordered to protect engineers who were on a well-digging expedition but, at dawn on that day, they were attacked by 3000 Turkish troops, including a machine gun battery of 12 guns. The defending troops repulsed the first attack but were soon forced back by the Turks. Their only machine gun was put out of action in the early stages of the Battle and all the gunners were killed or wounded.<sup>7</sup>



**More detailed map of Katia area<sup>9</sup>**

The Turkish troops then advanced towards Katia which fell with the loss of all but one of the Yeomanry's officers. The remaining officer, Major W.H. Wiggin, was wounded but managed to withdraw with about half the squadron. Anzac troops, who occupied both Katia and Oghradine four days later, testified to the ferocity of the battle and praised the valour and tenacity of the defenders.

In these actions 9 officers and 102 NCOs and men of the Regiment were killed and many other wounded.



**Katia<sup>7</sup>**

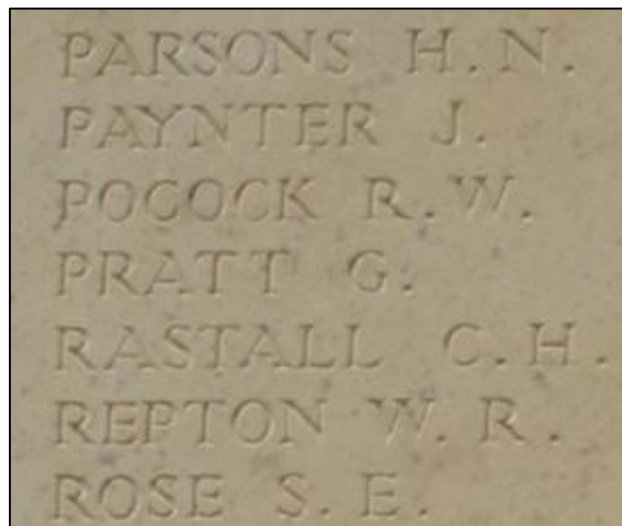
Our first evidence of George during this time is when a letter from one of his friends, Fred Millward appeared in the Chaddesley News section of the Kidderminster Shuttle on 6<sup>th</sup> May.<sup>10</sup> This makes it clear that no news had been heard from George since the Battle on 23<sup>rd</sup> April and two weeks later, on 20<sup>th</sup> May, the Shuttle reported him officially as missing.<sup>11</sup> Even in August 1916 when the obituary for George's brother Jesse was published in the Kidderminster Shuttle, the family had received no definite news about George.<sup>12</sup>

It is very likely that George was amongst the men wounded in the attack on Katia but his body was never found. As a result, it took several years before his father received the final balance of his pay, which amounted to £6 13s 10d, in February 1918. This was followed by a war gratuity of £3 in 1919.<sup>13</sup>

George Pratt is commemorated on the Jerusalem Memorial which is in Jerusalem War Cemetery, 4.5 kilometres north of the city. It is situated on the neck of land at the north end of the Mount of Olives, to the west of Mount Scopus. The Memorial commemorates 3,300 Commonwealth servicemen who died during the First World War in operations in Egypt or Palestine and who have no known grave. It was designed by Sir John Burnet and was unveiled 7 May 1927.



**Jerusalem Memorial<sup>14</sup>**



**Close up of panel from Jerusalem Memorial with George Pratt's name<sup>15</sup>**

## References

Please note that these references refer to all information in the preceding paragraphs since the previous reference, not just to the immediate sentence in which the reference number appears.

1. Photo from The Kidderminster Shuttle, 5<sup>th</sup> August 1916
2. census documents: <http://home.ancestry.co.uk/>
3. The Kidderminster Shuttle, 16<sup>th</sup> January 1937
4. <http://www.worcestershirepolicehistory.co.uk/>
5. medal index cards: <http://home.ancestry.co.uk/>
6. [http://www.geographic.org/geographic\\_names/](http://www.geographic.org/geographic_names/)
7. <http://www.qowwy.org.uk/History/QOWH.aspx>
8. The Kidderminster Shuttle, 6<sup>th</sup> May 1916
9. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_Katia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Katia)
10. The Kidderminster Shuttle, 6<sup>th</sup> May 1916
11. The Kidderminster Shuttle, 20<sup>th</sup> May 1916
12. The Kidderminster Shuttle, 5<sup>th</sup> August 1916
13. Register of soldiers effects: <http://home.ancestry.co.uk/>
14. <http://www.cwgc.org/>
15. Panel photo from: <http://www.britishwargraves.co.uk/>