

W. A. S. Edwards, Major 2nd N. Staff Reg. ¹ Note: Forces War Records has an entry for **William Augustus Spencer Edwards** - North Staffordshire Regiment giving d.o.d. correctly as 30/4/1916 and parents also correct. However, it also records him as Acting Lt Col, but source not given, so may be incorrect. ²

Memorial in St Helen's Church Isle of Wight: TO THE LOVED MEMORY OF WILLIAM AUGUSTUS SPENCER EDWARDS MAJOR NORTH STAFFORD REGT ONLY SON OF THE LATE LT COLONEL S H H EDWARDS BORN AT FRESHFORD SOMERSET, OCT 26TH 1874 DIED AT AMARA MESOPOTAMIA, APRIL 30TH 1916 OF WOUNDS RECEIVED AT SANNA-I-YAT, APRIL 9TH.

“DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY”

Further Information: son of Lt Col. Spencer H H Edwards and Flora Spencer Edwards.

Family Background

He was the only son of Spencer Henry Hutchins Edwards, Lieutenant Colonel 98th Regiment of Foot, and his second wife Flora Campbell Edwards, née Bowie. The Colonel had been serving in Umballa in India, where he was posted with his first wife Laura Grose Edwards née Smith ³ and eldest daughter Laura Elizabeth Spencer Edwards. His wife died there in 1865 at Mussoorie. ⁴ His subsequent marriage to Flora was registered in Bath in 1869, ⁵ after his return to England. His second daughter Mary Augusta Spencer Edwards was born on 22 October 1870, and she was baptised at Saint Peter's Church in Freshford on the 21st of November of that year. ⁶ Col Edwards had purchased land in Sharpstone in the 1830s, and he now built a house there, and named it Abbotsleigh. The house was not mentioned in the Freshford return of the 1871 census, the family being recorded as staying with a Mary Oats at No. 6 Sion Hill, Bath, ⁷ so the family may have taken up residence in Abbotsleigh somewhat later in the 1870s.

1874 Birth of **William Augustus S Edwards** registered Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire. ⁸

1874 Bap of **William Augustus Spencer Edwards** at St Peter, Freshford on 1 Dec 1874 father Thomes Henry Hutchins mother Flora Campbell, father's occupation Lieut Colonel late the [. . .]. ⁹

1881 Spencer H H Edwards age 58 Lt Colonel b. Bath, Somerset living at Abbotsleigh, Freshford, Somerset with wife Flora C age 45 b. Bath Somerset, children Louisa ¹⁰ E S [sic incorrect in original is Laura] age 16 b. Umballa, East Indies ¹¹, Mary A S age 10, Helen S age 9, Flora L S age 7, **William A S** age 6, Lucy M S age 2 all b. Freshford, Somerset with servants Ellen Maslin unkm age 28 Nurse Dom Serv b. Reading Berkshire, Ellen L Mustey unkm age 19 Nurse Dom Serv b. Freshford Somerset, Elizabeth Goddard unkm age 37 Cook b. Little Barwick Standon Herts., and Elizabeth Edwards unkm age 22 Housemaid b. Bluck's Bridge Somerset. ¹²

1889-90. Sherborne School. **William Augustus Spencer Edwards** (1874-1916), son of Lieutenant-Colonel **Spencer Henry Hutchins Edwards** and **Flora Campbell Edwards** (nee Bowie), Freshford, Bath. Attended Rev. W.G. Luckman's preparatory school, Bath. ¹³ Attended Sherborne School (Price's house) 1889-1890. Subs. at Haileybury. Joined North Staffordshire Regiment, 1897; Major 1915. WW1, Major in the North Staffordshire Regiment. Died in Mesopotamia on 30 April 1916 of wounds received at Sanna-I-Yat on 9 April 1916. Commemorated at Amara War Cemetery, Iraq. ¹⁴

1890-92 Haileybury College. The Great War 1916 Old Haileyburians who died in the service of their country: **William Augustus Spencer Edwards** Trevelyan ¹⁵ 1890-1892 born 26 October 1874 Died of wounds. ¹⁶

1891 **William Augustus Spencer Edwards** age 16 b. Freshford, Somerset was pupil at Haileybury College, Great Amwell, Nr. Hertford. ^{17, 18}

1897 Service Record. **William Augustus Spencer Edwards**. Church of England; North Staffordshire Regiment; Passed from Militia: Yes 1896 3rd Gloster Regiment; ¹⁹ Passed for promotion to Lieutenant: yes 1897 District Orders Bedford Aug. 1897. Born Oct 26th 1874 Freshford, Somerset. Foreign Language:

French; Single; Nearest relative: father Lt Col S H H Edwards, Freshford, Somerset. Period of employment: at home from 24.3.97 to 10.8.98 abroad: East Indies 11.8.98. Signed *W A Spencer Edwards 2 Lt.* ²⁰

1904 The Prince of Wales's (North Staffordshire Regiment), **Lieutenant William A S Edwards** to be Captain vice Brevet Major M H Knaggs, seconded Dated 16th February 1904. ²¹

Lieutenant Colonel Spencer H H Edwards & Family

1861 Census shows **Edwards S H H** Capt 98 Regt. ²² Unm age 38 b. Bath, Somerset serving in St Mary's North Gate, Canterbury, Kent. ²³

1871 Census shows *Spencer H H Edwards* age 48 Lt Colonel Unattached b. Bath, Somerset his wife Flora C Edwards age 37 b. Bath, Somerset ²⁴ and daughters Laura E S age 6 ²⁵ b. Umball, East Indies, and Mary A age 6 moths b. Somerset visiting Mary J Oates head unm. age 37 b. Jamaica at 6 Sion Hill, Lansdown, Bath (with 5 servants). ²⁶

The Spencer Edwards bought Abbotsleigh sometime around 1870 as Mary Augusta Spencer was born on 22 Oct in Freshford and baptised on 21 Nov in that year at St Peters. ^{27,28}

1881 See William Augustus above.

1891 *Spencer H H Edwards* age 68 Lt Col. Retd HM Army b. Bath, Somerset living at Abbotsleigh, Freshford, Somt with wife Flora C age 57 b. Bath Somt, children Laura E S ²⁹ age 26 b. Spencer, Mary A S age 20, Helen S age 19, Lucy M G H age 17, Lacey M H age 12 all s b. Freshford, Somerset with servants Ellen Maslen s age 38 Cook (Domestic) b. Reading Berkshire, Emma Smith s age 21 House Maid (Domestic) b. Oxford Rotherield Greys and Agnes Maslen s age 17 Kitchen Maid b. Reading Berkshire. ³⁰

1911 Census shows *Flora Spencer Edwards* age 69 widow Private Means b. Bath, Somerset living at Abbotsleigh, Freshford, Bath (fifteen rooms) with daughters Laura age 40 single Private Means, b. Umballa, India (British), Helen age 31 single Private Means b. Freshford, Somerset and servants Florence Dymott age 24 single House Maid (Domestic) b. Poole, Dorset, and Mary Austin age 23 single Cook (Domestic) b. Vobster, Somerset. ³¹

Photo of painting set in Abbotsleigh orchard of Sue Leech: my Grandmother Mary Augusta Spencer McEvoy ne Edwards, and her son Michael William Ambrose McEvoy who was born in Bourton, Berkshire in 1904, whereas my Mother was born in the district of St. George's, Hanover Sq, London. Mary was born in Freshford in 1871 [actually 1870], so they owned Abbotsleigh then, I think. Frustratingly, it is difficult to know when they actually bought Abbotsleigh as there is too large a gap in the census. ³²

When my mother brought her children back from Canada, on the Manchester Shipper after the war, on 6th September 1945, the address given in the UK was Abbotsleigh Cottage, Freshford, Somerset. They returned to Liverpool from Montreal when my brothers were 9 and 6 respectively.

Helen Spencer Edwards

EDWARDS Helen Spencer of Abbotsleigh Cottage iFreshford Somersetshire died 15 May 1945 at Freshford Cottage Hospital Freshford Probate Llandudno 29 November to Lloyds Bank Ltd. Effects £13452 9s 5d. ³³

First World War

Edwards William Augustus S . N Staffs Regiment, Major, Died 30-4-16 DofW. Medals - Victory N.Staffs.R OFF.155 Page 15, British OFF.155 Page 15, 1915 Star OFF.155 Page 3. Theatre of War served in: Gallipoli; Date of entry therein 13/7/15. ³⁴

1914 The Prince of Wales's (North Staffordshire Regiment), 7th Battalion - **Captain William A S Edwards** to be temporary Major. Dated 22nd October 1914. ³⁵

1915 On the 7th June, 1915 the 13th Division received orders to prepare to move to the Mediterranean theatre

of war. . . . On the 10th June embarkation orders were received and the first transports sailed on the 13th. On the 16th June a message to the 13th Division was received from H.M. the King. Alexandria was reached on the 28th Between the 6th and 16th July the infantry of the Division crossed to Helles and relieved the 29th Division on the left of the line. The infantry returned to Mudros at the end of the month, and between 3rd to 5th August the 13th Division landed at Anzac.

BATTLES OF SUVLA 06 to 10 August Battle of Sari Bair [Godley's Force]. 07 August Russell's Top (8/Ches. and 8/R.W.F.). 27 and 28 August Hill 60, Anzac (4/S.W.B.) [Cox's Force]. After the evacuation of Suvla the 13th Division concentrated at Mudros, and between 27 and 31 December Divisional Headquarters and the infantry of the Division (less 38th Inf. Bde.) moved from Mudros to Helles and took over the Left Section of VIII Corps Front Line. 1916 07 January Last Turkish Attacks at Helles [VIII Corps]. Night, 08/09 January Evacuation of Helles [VIII Corps]. After leaving Helles the 13th Division went to Mudros until 18 January 1916' on this day the Division began to embark for Egypt, and by 31 January 1916 the whole Division concentrated at Port Said. - See more at: <http://www.vickersmachinegun.org.uk/units-nstaffs.htm#sthash.WOdn7tkd.dpuf>

See more at: <http://www.vickersmachinegun.org.uk/units-nstaffs.htm#sthash.WOdn7tkd.dpuf>

1915 **Major W A S Edwards** was severely wounded in Gallipoli in July 1915, but subsequently rejoined his regiment. ³⁶

1916 [The Division] disembarked at Basra on the 27th February. On the 2nd March they began to move by river up the Tigris, on the 13th March divisional headquarters reached Shaikh Saad, and by the 27th March the whole Division had arrived at Shaikh Saad. On 02 April 1916, 13th Division took over a portion of Tigris Corps Front and became engaged in the third attempt to relieve Kut al Imara. Third attempt to relieve Kut Al Imra 5th April Capture of Hanna and Fallahiya [Tigris Corps]. 09 April Second Attack on Sanniyat [Tigris Corps]. ³⁷

1916 **Edwards Major W A S** North Staffordshire Regiment. Died of Wounds. MID [Mentioned in Despatches] Lg 19.10.16 Page 10052. [London Gazette] ³⁸ North Staffordshire Regiment (Service Battalion). Edwards, Maj. W. A. S., N. Staff. R. (died of wounds). ³⁹

1916 **EDWARDS, WILLIAM AUGUSTUS SPENCER** Rank: Major Date of Death: 30/04/1916 Regiment/Service: North Staffordshire Regiment 7th Bn. ⁴⁰ Grave Reference VI. D. 1. Cemetery AMARA WAR CEMETERY ^{41, 42, 43} Additional Information: Son of the late Lt. Col. Spencer H. H. Edwards and Flora Spencer Edwards, of Abbotsleigh, Freshford, Somerset. ⁴⁴

1916 **Major William Augustus Spencer Edwards** the only son of the late Lieut-Col Spencer Edwards, late 98th Regiment of Abbotsleigh, Freshford, Somerset, was educated at Sherborne and Haileybury. He entered the Army from the Militia in 1897 and was promoted major in September 1915. He was wounded in Gallipoli last July and subsequently rejoined his regiment. he died of wounds on April 30. ^{45, 46}

1916 An officer who had many friends in Bath has to be added to the victims of the war. **Major William Augustus Spencer Edwards**, of the North Staffordshire Regiment, died of wounds on April 30th. Born in 1874, he was the only son of Lieut.-Colonel Spencer Edwards late 98th Regiment, of Abbotsleigh, Freshford, and received his first appointment in the North Staffordshire Regiment from the Militia in 1897. In 1904 he was gazetted captain, and was promoted temporary major in October, 1914. ⁴⁷

¹ Plaque on Freshford Village war memorial sited on the village Tynning.

² <https://www.forces-war-records.co.uk/1613130>.

³ Ancestry.com. England & Wales Marriages, 1538-1940 [database on-line]. St Helens Hampshire, 9 July 1863 Film Number: 1470890.

⁴ England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1861-1941 Ancestry.com 1865.

⁵ England and Wales, FreeBMD, Marriage Index: 1837-1983 for Bath for 1869 Oct-Nov-Dec Vol 5c Page 1128.

⁶ FreeREG <http://www.freereg.org.uk/> © 1998-2013 copyright by the Trustees of FreeBMD, Charity No.: 1096940. Register of St. Peter Freshford for 1870 File No.: 14536.

⁷ 1871 England Census RG10/2495 Bath, Lansdown 17 Folio 52 Page 9 Schedule 38.

⁸ England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index: 1837-1983 for Bradford on Avon for Oct-Nov-Dec 1874 Vol 5a Page 130.

⁹ FreeREG <http://www.freereg.org.uk/> © 1998-2013 copyright by the Trustees of FreeBMD, Charity No.: 1096940. File No. 14628.

¹⁰ Her memorial in St Helen's IoW names her as Laura Elizabeth Spencer Edwards born at Unballa August 3rd (? unclear) 1864 died at the Priory February 16th 1897 eldest daughter of the late Lt Colonel S H H Edwards grand daughter of the late Henley Smith of the Priory.

¹¹ Probably Ambala, a city and a municipal corporation in Ambala district in the state of Haryana, India, located on the border with the state of Punjab.

¹² 1881 England Census RG11/2050 Bradford on Avon, Bradford South Eastern 17 Folio 107 Page 3 Schedule 12.

¹³ U.K., City and County Directories, 1600s-1900s. 1830 Pigot's Directory, Somersetshire, Bath Etc. Page 682. Lists under Academies, Seminaries & Public Schools - Luckman, Edward (boarding & day) 8 James Street. His son, William J G of 9 Johnson Street, was in 1881 Master of St John's Hospital, Bath, and is recorded as having a number of boy scholars from around the country boarding with him in 1881 and (then age 61 as "Clerk in Holy Orders") in 1891. Ref: 1891 England Census RG12/1931 Bath, Bathwick 2 Folio 20 Page 2&3 Schedule 21.

¹⁴ Sherborne School Archives, Abbey Road, Sherborne, Dorset, UK, DT9 3AP. Contact: rhassall@sherborne.org.

¹⁵ Trevelyan is situated in the main quadrangle at the heart of Haileybury. Its history goes back 144 years, making it one of the oldest Houses at Haileybury. In 1862 there were only two Houses at Haileybury - the "Blue House" and the "Red House". In 1868 the Red House was renamed Trevelyan House after Sir Charles Trevelyan who was a pupil at the East India College from 1824 and later the Governor of Madras. Initially, Trevelyan consisted of a long dormitory with pupils' desks next to their beds. Ref: <http://www.haileybury.com/life-at-haileybury/boarding/boys/trevelyan>.

¹⁶ Haileybury Register 1862 -1911 <https://www.haileybury.com/honour/HAILEYBURY%201916.htm>

¹⁷ 1891 England Census RG12/1092 Ware, Hoddesdon Folio 150 Page 5.

¹⁸ Haileybury College came into existence in 1809 for training young men who were to work for the Honourable East India Company. The College closed in 1858, but was reopened as a public school in 1862. (<http://www.hertfordshire-genealogy.co.uk/data/education/haileybury-college.htm>)

¹⁹ 3rd (Militia) Battalion, Gloucester Regiment. In 1881 The 28th [Regiment of Foot] merged with the 61st (South Gloucestershire) Regiment of Foot as part of the Childers Reform, to form the Gloucestershire Regiment. The Childers Reforms restructured the British army infantry Regiments into a network of multi-battalion Regiments each having two regular and two militia battalions. Ref: <http://www.forces-war-records.co.uk/units/344/gloucestershire-regiment/>

²⁰ The National Archives - WO 76/112 North Staffordshire Regiment (64th & 98th) Record 38.

²¹ The London Gazette May 3 1904 p. 2842.

²² Note: 98 Regiment of Foot. In 1881 the eventual conclusion of the Childers Reforms took effect and the regiment amalgamated with the 64th Foot to become the Prince of Wales's (North Staffordshire) Regiment. As the junior regiment the 98th Foot became the 2nd Battalion of the new regiment. Ref: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/98th_\(Prince_of_Wales's\)_Regiment_of_Foot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/98th_(Prince_of_Wales's)_Regiment_of_Foot). This was the regiment that his son served with.

²³ 1861 England Census RG9/519 Canterbury, Canterbury Folio 198, Page 51 Line 1

²⁴ Flora Campbell Bowie was Colonel Edwards' second wife, the marriage took place in Bath in 1869 Ref: England and Wales, FreeBMD, Marriage Index: 1837-1983 for Bath for Oct-Nov-Dec 1869 Vol 5c Page 1128. He married firstly Laura Grose Smith in 1863 Ref: England and Wales, FreeBMD, Marriage Index: 1837-1983 for Isle of Wight 1863 Jul-Aug-Sep Vol 2b Page 817. Laura died at Mussoorie in the East Indies on 7 May 1865 Ref: England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1861-1941 Ancestry.com for 14 Jun 1870.

²⁵ Laura's mother would have been Laura Grose Edwards, Flora Campbell would have been her step mother.

- ²⁶ 1871 England Census RG10/2495 Bath, Lansdown 17 Folio 52 Page 9 Schedule 37.
- ²⁷ FreeREG <http://www.freereg.org.uk/> © 1998-2013 copyright by the Trustees of FreeBMD, Charity No.: 1096940. File No. 14536.
- ²⁸ England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index: 1837-1983 for Bradford on Avon for 1870 Oct-Nov-Dec Vol 5a Page 122.
- ²⁹ See 1881 for Laura/Louisa.
- ³⁰ 1891 England Census RG12/1930 Bath, Twerton 17 Folio 141 Page 2 Schedule 12.
- ³¹ 1911 England & Wales Census RG14/ Somerset, Freshford 18 Schedule 116.
- ³² Sue Leech email dated 7 Oct 2014.
- ³³ England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations),1861-1941 Ancestry.com
- ³⁴ The National Archives - Catalogue Reference:WO/372/6 Image Reference:25780 Medal Card - Edwards, William Augustus S.
- ³⁵ The London Gazette 5 December 1914 p. 10415.
- ³⁶ The Sphere 15th July 1916 including a picture of him.
- ³⁷ http://www.vickersmachinegun.org.uk/units_nstaffs.htm
- ³⁸ Ancestry.com. British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920. Original data: Army Medal Office. WWI Medal Index Cards. In the care of The Western Front Association website.
- ³⁹ Third Supplement to The London Gazette of Tuesday the 17th October 1916. Thursday 19 October, 1916. War Office 19th October 1916. The following Despatch from Lieutenant-General Sir Percy Lake, KCB has been forwarded by the Government of India for Publication:- General Head Quarters Indian Expeditionary Force "D". To the Chief of the General Staff, Army headquarters, India. Sir, - With reference to my despatch dated 12 August 1916, paragraph 78, I have the honour to submit a detailed list of Officers, Warrant Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers, and men whom I desire to bring to special notice. I have the honour to be, Sir, Your most obedient servant P LAKE Lieutenant-General Commanding, Indian Expeditionary force "D".
- ⁴⁰ North Staffordshire 7th (Service) Battalion. Formed at Lichfield on 29 August 1914 as part of K1 and came under orders of 39th Brigade in 13th (Western) Division. Moved to Tidworth but by January 1915 was in billets in Basingstoke. Moved to Blackdown (Aldershot) in February 1915. Sailed from Avonmouth in June 1915 and landed on Gallipoli next month. January 1916 : Division evacuated from Gallipoli and moved to Egypt. July 1918 (?1916 cf William Spencer's service) : Brigade transferred to North Persia Force. (The Long, Long Trail - The British Army in the Great War of 1914-1918. The Long, Long Trail is owned, designed, built and written by Chris Baker. <http://www.1914-1918.net/nstaffs.htm>)
- ⁴¹ Amara is a town on the left bank of the Tigris some 520 kilometres from the sea. The War Cemetery is a little east of the town between the left bank of the river and the Chahaila Canal. (CWGC note.)
- ⁴² For centuries before the Great War, Mesopotamia had been part of the Turkish Ottoman Empire. Lying along its eastern border was Persia, generally friendly to the British. The Arab Sheiks of nearby Kuwait and Muhammerah also supported Britain; the Arab tribes of coastal Mesopotamia often changed sides. Germany had for many years before the war assiduously developed Turkey as an ally, which it saw as an important part of the Drang nach Osten ("Thrust towards the East": Germany wanted new lands, new markets, "lebensraum"). The Turkish army was led by German 'advisors', as was much of its trade and commerce. Although this campaign began simply to secure oil supplies for the Royal Navy, victory over the Turks became believed by some - notably David Lloyd George and Winston Churchill - to be a less costly way towards defeat of Germany than the painful battering at the Western Front. Pushed by Germany - which also tried to encourage a Jihad (Muslim Holy War) against the British forces - Turkey was to strongly resist the British incursion. (<http://www.1914-1918.net/mespot.htm>). Note: see also John Buchan's *Greenmantle*.
- ⁴³ Amara was occupied by the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force on 3 June 1915 and it immediately became a hospital centre. The accommodation for medical units on both banks of the Tigris was greatly increased during 1916 and in April 1917, seven general hospitals and some smaller units were stationed there. (CWGC note.)
- ⁴⁴ Commonwealth War Graves Commission Casualty Details www.cwgc.org
- ⁴⁵ Western Daily Press, Bristol, Wednesday May 10, 1916 Items of Local News.

⁴⁶ Western Gazette 12 May 1916 Sherborne.

⁴⁷ Bath Chronicle Saturday May 13, 1916 Bath & County Notes.