

DAVID LOGAN RICKARDS



19th December 1915

1883-1915 Aged 32

Second Lieutenant 1/4th King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry (Territorial Force).

David Rickards was born in Wakefield on 8th December 1883, the third of five children born to Arthur and Elizabeth Mary (nee Logan) Rickards, from Berwick upon Tweed. Arthur, who was from Armley, became Chief Mechanical Engineer with the Monk Bridge Iron & Steel Foundry of Leeds. In 1891, David and his elder brother were pupils at Chevin Dell Boarding School, Otley. David moved on to the Bradford Grammar School in 1896, which he attended until March 1901. He came top in German and Greek in November 1900 and represented the 2nd XV against Woodhouse Grove. In 1901 in Form V. Modern (for boys who were not intended for university) he achieved one first class pass in the Lower Certificate. His younger brothers, Clement and Alfred were also at BGS, and played together in the Cricket XI, in the same team as Kershaw.

David followed his elder brother and father into engineering. He served an apprenticeship with Messrs. Hathorn, Davey & Co. of Hunslet, and then he took up a position as Draughtsman in the Drawing Office at the Britannia Iron Works of Messrs. Marshall Brothers at Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, where he lived alone at 36 Nelson Street. He was an active man: he served in the Nottinghamshire Sherwood Rangers Yeomanry (Territorials) for several years from 1908, although he had left before 1914; he was involved in the Boy Scouts movement; played Golf; was a leading member of the Gainsborough Operatic Society; and he sang in Morton Church choir.

As the European crisis deepened in 1914, Rickards presented himself to his old unit and he was appointed to his old rank of Lance Corporal. He was promoted to Corporal and agreed to serve overseas. But the Army needed officers and his application for a commission was successful—in March 1915 he was gazetted Second Lieutenant in the 1/4th K.O.Y.L.I., a Territorial battalion which recruited around his birth town of Wakefield, part of 148th Brigade, 49th West Riding Division. They landed in France on 12th April 1915. The experience of his battalion was closely linked to that of the 6th West Yorkshires in the same division. In October 1915, C.H. Broadbent, a master at the Grammar School, also joined the 1/4th as a Second Lieutenant, alt-



though Rickards not known him at School. The battalion spent its first weeks in a quiet sector, before moving north to the Ypres Salient, where it endured months of heavy rain and liquid mud north-east of Ypres. In October the battalion carried out a great deal of useful work to improve the division's front-line positions—unfortunately this was undone by shortage of building materials, continuous rain and German shelling.


Relief from their ordeal in the mud and cold was in sight when on 19th December the Germans launched a major attack supported by releasing a cloud of chlorine and phosgene gases, accompanied by a heavy bombardment with high explosive and gas shells. Rickards died of gas poisoning, which suggests that his battalion were not alert to the danger and did not put on their gas masks in time. They suffered 300 casualties. Phosgene gas (Carbonyl Chloride) was a more refined colourless form of chlorine, which meant it could be inhaled for a considerable time without being noticed. The resulting inflammation of the lungs caused the victims to literally drown in their own bodily fluids—Rickards must have inhaled a catastrophic quantity of gas. His body was taken to nearby 'Bard Cottage', a house a little set back from the line, close to a bridge across the canal called Bard's Causeway, where a cemetery was made sheltered position by the canal bank. His grave is in Plot I, Row M, number 43, in the centre of the cemetery.



Acknowledgements:

In preparing this biography I acknowledge the research done by Michael Sharpe, Peter Bradshaw of Gainsborough, and Janet Hay, who is a descendant of Rickards' great-grandmother. Most of the biographical material used here was unearthed by them, with the exception of material from The Bradfordian. Peter supplied the cutting from the Gainsborough ??? and Janet that from the Yorkshire Evening Post. They both sent me photos of his grave. Chevin Dell is now called Chevin Hall, West Chevin Road, Otley.

**GAINSBOROUGH
OFFICER'S DEATH.**



Lieut. D. L. RICKARDS,
4th K.O.Y.L.I.

Lieut. David Logan Rickards was well-known in Gainsborough where he resided for some years previous to the war, being engaged in Messrs. Marshall's Drawing Office. He identified himself with several local institutions, being enthusiastic over the Boy Scout movement and in rifle shooting. Fond of outdoor pursuits he was a member of the Golf Club. When war broke out he rejoined the Sherwood Rangers Yeomanry, but received a commission last March and went out to France with the 4th K.O.Y.L.I.'s who were billeted at Gainsborough in the winter. His death took place from gas poisoning on December 19th. Only three weeks before Lieut. Rickards was at Gainsborough on a short furlough, and also visited his mother at Leeds.



LEEDS OFFICER'S DEATH FROM WOUNDS.

Another Yorkshire officer to fall in the war is Second-Lieut. David Logan Rickards, who died from wounds received in action, on Sunday. In 1908, Second-Lieut. Rickards joined the Sherwood Rangers (Yeomanry), but subsequently left the colours with the rank of lance-corporal. When the war broke out he rejoined Sherwood Rangers, but in March he received a commission in the 4th K.O.Y.L.I., and left for the front with his regiment a week later. He was educated at the Bradford Grammar School and after serving his apprenticeship with Messrs. Hathorn, Davey, and Co., engineers, Hunslet, took up a position at Gainsborough at the engineering works of Messrs. Marshall Bros. He was a son of the late Mr. Arthur Rickards, for 12 years engineer at the Monkbridge Iron and Steel Foundry, Whitehall Road, Leeds, and who at the time of his death resided with his family at Woodlesford. Three weeks ago the dead officer came to Leeds on a seven days' furlough and stayed with his mother, who lives at 30, Hyde Park Terrace. He was a single man and 33 years of age.



SEC.-LIEUT. RICKARDS.