

# Willoughby Emil Reiss

Hermitage Hall, Holmes Chapel

Died of Wounds 8<sup>th</sup> August 1915



*(Left) Willoughby Reiss in uniform at Holmes Chapel – perhaps taken on embarkation leave before going to Gallipoli*



*(above) 6th Manchester's in Gallipoli*

## His Story

Willoughby Emil Reiss was born 24 June 1890, son of Henry and Constance Reiss, of "The Hermitage," Holmes Chapel, Cheshire and christened at Church Hulme. He was named after his grandmother's family, as the Victorians often re-used surnames in this way.

The family moved from the outskirts of Manchester to Holmes Chapel about 1900, but Willoughby spent term time away from home at boarding school. In 1901 he was at Bilton School, Rugby, and then went to Charterhouse School in Surrey.

By 1911 he was back at the Hermitage aged 20, and working as an assistant shipping merchant for the family firm Reiss Bros who specialised in importing cotton from China.

His career was cut short by the war; he never came home, having been killed in action at Gallipoli in Turkey. He is buried there and the grave is cared for by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Letters from colleagues still survive, describing his last days in great detail.

## His War Record

Willoughby joined the Territorials in 1910 and the Public School Corps in October 1914. He was in the 6th Battalion of the Manchester Regiment in December of that year. The poet Wilfred Owen would later become an officer in this unit (June 1916.)

The 6<sup>th</sup> Manchesters were sent to Gallipoli and attacked Turkish trenches on 7<sup>th</sup> August. The attack became known as the Battle of the Vineyard. The troops were in position by 7 a.m. The Turkish Army was obviously prepared for the assault and shelled the British position. At 9.40, they left the trench and reached the Turkish front line, but the Turkish positions were strongly held and were being reinforced still further and by 11.15 the troops were driven out of the trenches they had captured. After a further attempt it was quickly realised that it was an impossible task and the orders were cancelled.

Over 140 men of the 6th Manchester's were dead, wounded or missing (later records confirm that over 75 had been killed). Willoughby was one of these. He was hit and died next morning at base hospital. He had only been on active service for a few weeks.