



PRIVATE ALFRED JAMES CLARK

SERVE NO. 142483

ARMY SERVICE CORPS, LABOUR CORPS

DIED 19TH MAY 1918 AGED 35

Alfred James Clark was born in Odiham in the last quarter of 1892. He was the son of Joseph, a fish hawker, and Elizabeth Clark and in 1901 the family was living at Bartley Heath. At that time Alfred was employed as a farm labourer.¹ In the third quarter of 1904 Alfred married Ellen Appleford, who had been born in Steventon. At the time they were living in Up Nateley with their four children, Nellie (5), Kathleen (4), Alfred (3) and John (2). The children had all been born in Newnham. Alfred was employed as a general labourer working for the London & South Western Railway.²

Alfred enlisted for the duration of the War (Short Service) at Hartley Wintney on 22 November 1915. His Attestation shows that he was given two service numbers, 142483 (crossed out) and 298931. He was to join the Army Service Corps and was earmarked to be a packer and loader. The form was certified by the Approving Officer on 3 January 1916. Alfred's service record also includes family details and we learn that by this time he had two more children, a daughter, Dora, and a son, Herbert Frank, and the family were living at The Rookery in Up Nateley.³

The Army Service Corps ensured that soldiers on the front lines had all the support they needed to carry out their roles, be it food, equipment, ammunition and all the other essentials needed by those fighting at the front. Providing transport through the supply and care of horses and vehicles was an essential part of the ASC's role. Hence the notes on Alfred's Attestation form - 'packer and loader'. The Labour Corps came into being in January 1917, but prior to this date the ASC had Labour Companies which initially were formed to provide manpower to unload British ships and operate the docks in France, but developed into greater logistical operations. When Alfred transferred to the 197th Area Employment Company Labour Corps his second service number, 298931, was used.⁴ These Companies were formed for salvage work, which meant working on the Western Front near the front line. Furthermore, in March and April 1918 during the manpower crisis when the Army came close to defeat, they were used as emergency infantry.

Alfred was awarded the Victory Medal and the British War Medal. He is commemorated in Blargies Communal Cemetery Extension, Oise, France.

¹ Source – Ref: Class: RG13; Piece: 1102; Folio: 10; Page:11 – 1891 Census, Odiham

² Source – Ref: Class: RG14; Piece: 6285; Schedule Number: 62 – 1911 Census, Up Nateley

³ Source – British Army WW1 Service Records, 1914-1920, www.ancestry.co.uk

⁴ Source – Commonwealth War Graves Commission record

