

John M Osborne

Private 848 Northumberland Fusiliers then L/17811 24th Battalion Royal Fusiliers.

According to the 1891 Census, John was born in 1885. His parents were Arthur, born 1858 and Sarah (nee Scott) born 1857. The couple married in 1878.(England and Wales Marriages 1837-2005). At the time of the census the family were living at Cradle Hall Cottages, Market Place, Burnham Westgate, Docking. Arthur's occupation is given as Shepherd.

By the 1901 Census, Sarah has been widowed. Arthur died in 1900 (England and Wales Deaths 1837 - 2007). The family were now living in High Road, Bircham Tofts and John, aged 17, was an Agricultural Labourer. There are three other children, Alice (12), Arthur (9) and Maude (6).

The 1911 Census lists the family address simply as Bircham Tofts. Sarah's occupation is given as Charwoman. John was not listed as living with the family but is recorded on a census return completed in a British Military Overseas Post at West Ridge, Rawalpindi, India. According to family information, he enlisted in this regiment in Hunstanton on January 6th, 1905. Information received from The Fusilier Museum in London confirms he was serving with the 1st/5th Northumberland Fusiliers and that the 1st Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers arrived in India in 1906. In 1911 they were in Rawalpindi, Punjab, India and that was where John was listed on the 1911 Census return. The regiment left India in October 1913 and returned to England.

The 1st Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers was part of the 9th Brigade, 3rd Division which arrived in France on 14th August 1914. The 1st Battalion fought in the Battle of Mons on August 23rd 1914 and regimental records show that John was sick/wounded from August 1914 to December 1916. As John's Medal Roll shows that he was awarded the 1914 Star (also known as the Mons Star) it is highly likely that he was wounded in that engagement. This is further confirmed by the fact that he was awarded the Clasp and Roses which was sewn into the ribbon of the Mons Star and was awarded to men who were in contact with the enemy between 5th August and 23rd November.

At some point, probably after his recovery in late 1916, John transferred from the Northumberland Fusiliers to 24th (2nd Sportsman's) Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers. During 1917/1918, the Battalion took part in the Battles of Arras, Cambrai, the retreat during the 1918 German Spring Offensive.

According to family history John Osborne fought with the Royal Fusiliers at the Battle of Havrincourt which began on September 12th, 1918. He was wounded in this engagement

and died of his wounds on September 15th, 1918 probably in one of the field hospitals in the Rouen area of France. He is buried in St Severs Cemetery Extension, Rouen. Ref R.11. K.5.

An Effects Register No 800831 shows that a £24 War Gratuity was paid on July 15th, 1919 to his legatee, Sarah, his mother.

I am deeply indebted to Mr Paul Treacy, Research Volunteer, The Royal Fusilier Museum, HM Tower of London for his invaluable help in piecing together all the military information on John Osborne. Without his time and patience I would have been unable to complete the research on this soldier in such detail.

I am also indebted to Professor Bruce Osborne of Dunlaoghaire, Co Dublin, Ireland for access to family documents. John M Osborne was his Great Uncle.