



Alfred Alick Richards

Rank: Private

Service No.: 4364

Regiment: Duke of Wellington's West Riding Reg.

Residence: Cottages, The Square, Elham (now demolished)

Before Service:

The 1881 Census shows Alfred as a scholar, subsequently in 1884 he was elected to Elham Charity School. Whilst there he had a problem with "Truancy & Laziness" and was dismissed in 1888 after repeated warnings.

The 1891 Census shows he worked as a general labourer

During Service:

Alfred enlisted on 30-Nov-1894 at Dover. Unfortunately he was "absent... when under orders for embarkation for foreign service" on the 26-Dec-1895 which resulted in him receiving 10 days Confined to Barracks (CB). On the 24-Dec-1898 and the 13-Nov-1899 he was "drunk returning to barracks", both occasions he was CB for 8 days. Whilst serving in the mounted infantry in Bangalore in June 1899 he fell from a ladder; the Court of Enquiry found "This was an accident whilst on duty" and that his sprained ankle "will not interfere with his future efficiency as a soldier".

After nearly 7 years of good service he applied to extend his service to 12 years, for which his Service Record shows he received "150 Rupees, together with 247.8.0 Rupees in lieu of furlough to England". His "Employment Sheet" dated 23-Sept-1913 shows "A civil, obliging man & Willing worker". 19-Sep-1906 Signed Re-engagement papers to complete 21 years service. On the 24-Aug-1914 Alfred was Wounded in Action at Wasmes. The Parish Magazine, The Lantern shows Alfred was a Prisoner Of War (POW) Died a POW on the 21-Mar-1915. His typed German certificate of death shows he died at the POW labour camp, Jarplund. No cause of death is recorded. His personal effects were to be sent to Mrs Amy Cotter (his sister, see below) 2, Barton Cottages, Wilberforce Rd, Sandgate and his medals to Mr. William R Richards (his brother) Rhodes Minnis, Elham.

Date of Death: 21-Mar-1915

Age: 41

Grave Location: Originally buried in Oversee Churchyard, 6 miles south of Hamburg, Germany., now Hamburg Cemetery
Grave Reference I. F. 13.

Family Story:

Alfred's parents were John & Emma Elizabeth Richards (nee' Reynolds). John was born in Barham and worked as a bricklayer, Emma was born in Godmersham and they were married in Bridge in 1851. The Elham Historical Society database records that, in total, they had 8 sons and 5 daughters. The children were born in Littlebourne, Barham and Elham. John died in 1895 and the 1901 Census shows Emma aged 70 living in Capel le Ferne with their daughter Sarah and her family. Emma died in 1905; both John and Emma are buried in Elham.

John and Emma's daughter Amy went on to marry Richard Cotter born Cork, Ireland, who was a plasterers labourer. They had a son William Richard Cotter (1882-1916) who was the recipient of the **Victoria Cross**, the highest and most prestigious award for gallantry in the face of the enemy that can be awarded to British and Commonwealth forces. On 6-Mar-1916 near Hohenzollern Redoubt, France, Corporal Cotter's leg was blown off at the knee and he was also wounded in both arms. He nevertheless made his way unaided for 50 yards to a crater, steadied the men who were holding it, controlled their fire, issued orders and altered their dispositions to meet a fresh counter-attack. For two hours he held his position and only allowed his wounds to be roughly dressed when the attack had quietened down. He could not be moved back for 14 hours and during all this time he had a cheery word for everyone.