

Name, Regiment & Rank of Soldier:

Arthur Ernest Williams
Army Veterinary Corps
 Private
 Service no. **SE/21081**



Date of birth	Date died	Age
c1882	17 October 1917(consumption)	35

Background: Arthur E Williams

Arthur was born in Stragglethorpe, Lincolnshire, but by 1884 the family had settled in Doddington. The 1891 census for Doddington in Lincolnshire shows the Williams family as:

John Williams	44yrs	Foreman	b Brant Broughton
Phoebe.	41yrs	b.	Skellingthorpe
William J.	13yrs	Labourer	b. Skellingthorpe
Lucy.	10yrs	b	Bracebridge
Arthur E.	8yrs	b.	Stragglethorpe
Edith A.	6yrs	b.	Doddington
Emily.	4yrs	b.	Doddington
John F.	3yrs	b.	Doddington
Phoebe F.	1yr	b.	Doddington

1911 Census for Eakring records:

John Williams	64yrs	Farmer
Phoebe	60yrs	Wife
Arthur	28yrs	Single. Farmer's Son Working on Farm
John	22yrs	Single Son Thrashing Machinist.

Arthur married a Maplebeck woman, Ada Louise White, on 3 June 1914 at Maplebeck Parish Church, St. Radegund's. His burial is also recorded in the parish burial register there. His link with Collingham is his employment -he worked as a carrier (*taking goods and people between Lincoln and Newark*) and is remembered on the North Collingham War Memorial. His tenure as a carrier appears to have been brief – he only gets one listing in Kelly's trade directories– in 1916 - '*Carriers to Lincoln Williams – Friday, returning same day. To Newark – Weds and Saturdays returning same days.*'¹

¹ Kelly's 1916 trade directory page 54

Military History: Private A E Williams

Arthur Williams was conscripted in Newark after being ordered to enlist by Newark Rural tribunals on June 6th 1916.² This coincides with the Military Service Bill 1916 extending its powers on May 25th to conscript married men as well as single men. No doubt Arthur's experience with horses, both as a farmer's son and a carrier, would have stood him in good stead with the Army Veterinary Corps (later the Royal Army Veterinary Corps).

The Army Veterinary Corps was in charge of animal welfare. They were reformed as 'mobile AVC' during WW1 & were attached to various divisions (predominantly Cavalry).

A number of Base Veterinary Hospitals were established in the theatres of war:

- No 1 at La Chapelle-aux-Pots until November 1917 when it moved to Italy
- No 2 at Le Havre
- No 6 at Rouen
- No 9 at Abbeville
- No 22 at Abbeville

Indian Veterinary Hospital at Rouen (formerly 7, 19 and 20 Sections AVC).

In late 1918 the "Royal" prefix was added to the Corps' title.³



Above: Surgeon, helped by the AVC troops, performing an operation on horse under chloroform at No. 5 Veterinary Hospital; Abbeville, 3 March 1916. Photo by Lt E Brooks Ref IWMQ560 (permissions granted for non-commercial use)

It is not known where Private Williams was based when he died of TB. TB (tuberculosis) was one of the leading causes of discharge (13.5% of all cases)⁴ from the forces during

² Frecknall research

³ Source: <http://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/army/regiments-and-corps/army-veterinary-corps-in-the-first-world-war/>

⁴ Source: BBC World War One at home programme about Papworth Hospital

World War 1. The condition, which had been on the decrease before the war owing to better X-Ray screening, increased rapidly throughout Europe 1915-18 owing to the poor conditions on the Front.

Obituary

'Saturday 20 October 1917: It was Maplebeck's turn to have a military funeral. Arthur Ernest Williams, 35, joined the Army Veterinary Corps 12 months earlier, was sent to France within a fortnight and was invalided back to England three weeks ago suffering from consumption. He expired on Wednesday 17 October in the Manchester Royal Infirmary, leaving a widow, Ada (née White) whom he wed in 1914. She headed the mourners at the service, conducted in St Radekund's by the Reverend W Eastman; and was joined by vast numbers of Arthur's friends from Eakring, where he was reared, and Collingham, where he ran a carrier's business.¹⁵ Ada's address was given as Ollerton on the Commonwealth War Grave Commission grave details.

Private AE Williams is remembered: All Saints Cross, N Collingham & Parishioners' Roll of Honour Buried: Maplebeck, St Radekund's Churchyard, North East part near Chancel.

Article on A E Williams and Maplebeck as a 'thankful village'

On July 31st 2014 an article appeared in the Newark Advertiser regarding Maplebeck being a 'thankful village' – in other words, no resident was lost in action during WW1. It










goes on to say that although Arthur E Williams is buried there, because his only connection to the village was that he married a woman from the village, Maplebeck can still count itself as a 'thankful village'. Given that criteria, many of the Collingham War memorials would not have been included.

Left : Article in the Newark Advertiser. The picture shows researcher Gary Tranter next to Arthur Williams' grave in Maplebeck

With thanks to Jeremy Lodge for his initial research on A E Williams in 2014

Sources Used in 2018 updates (HP):

Ancestry.co.uk

-  Nottinghamshire in the Great War Roll of Honour database
-  Trevor Frecknall 'Collingham and district in The Great War' (book)
-  Thanks to Dan at British Military Badges. co.uk for use of the AVC cap badge image
-  The Newark Advertiser July 31 2014 via HP
-  The Long, Long Trail website
-  Imperial War Memorials database
-  Kelly's trade directories (held in Newark Library Local Studies section)



HP 2/2/2018