

FRED W BROCKLEBANK

Fred William Brocklebank was born in 1883 in Mablethorpe. His father John was an agricultural labourer. In 1891 the family were living in Langton-by-Wragby. Fred had moved by 1901 to Great Carlton in Lincolnshire and was working as a horseman on a farm. By 1911 he was employed as a servant to the Stones family of Theddlethorpe.

Fred enlisted as a Private in the Territorial Force for the duration of the War on 13th May 1915. He served in the Lincolnshire Yeomanry, Regimental Number 2448, and the Machine Gun Corps, Regimental Number 165921.

At the outbreak of war in August 1914 the tactical use of machine guns was unappreciated by the British Military. Consequently, the Army went to war with its infantry battalions and cavalry regiments each having a machine gun section of only two guns each. This was added to in November by the forming of the Motor Machine Gun Service, administered by the Royal Artillery, consisting of motor cycle mounted machine gun batteries. A machine gun school was also opened in France.

A year of warfare on the Western Front proved that to be fully effective, machine guns must be used in larger units and crewed by specially trained men. To fulfil this need, the formation of the Machine Gun Corps was authorized in October 1915 with infantry, cavalry, motor and in early 1916 a heavy branch. A depot and training centre was established at Belton Park in Grantham, Lincolnshire and a base depot at Camiers in France.

According to Fred's Medal Card he was first sent for service in Egypt on 21st November 1915.

On 1st January 1918 he was made Acting Corporal and then on 3rd April 1918, Acting Lance Corporal. His appointment as Lance Corporal was confirmed on 24th May 1918.

He was demobilized on 14th February 1919 to his home address 2 Haven Villas, Haven Bank, Boston, Lincolnshire.

Fred was awarded the British War Medal, the Victory Medal and the 1915 Star. The latter was awarded to all soldiers who saw service during 1915 but not earlier.

The combination of a Star, Victory Medal and War Medal was fairly commonplace (more than 2.5m trios were issued). This combination earned for itself the common nickname, "Pip, Squeak and Wilfred".