

G HENRY COOLING

George Henry Cooling was born in 1888 in Wellingore, Lincolnshire. His father, John, was a shepherd.

In 1891 the family were living in Branston, Lincolnshire. George Henry had moved out of the family home by 1901 and was working as an agricultural labourer and living in Pipewell Road, Rushton, Northants.

On 31st March 1909 he married Fanny Sophia Stainton in St Nicholas Church, Partney. He was now a labourer living in Dalby.

George enlisted on 24th February 1917. He was aged 32 years and 100 days and was working as a gardener. He was 5'5" tall and weighed 123lbs. His chest measured 34". At the time of enlisting he was living at 8 Knowles Lane, Wyke Common, Bradford. His brother Jesse, who had emigrated to Canada and served with the Edmonton Fusiliers, had been killed on 9th July 1916.

George was appointed to the 406 Agricultural Company of the Labour Corps. His regimental number was 24124. These Companies were manned by soldiers of low medical grade (most having been downgraded after wound, sickness or injury) and employed on farms. George had suffered from a bout of pneumonia in 1916 and his medical category was assessed as CII, a category whereby the soldier could only serve at home.

Despite this, he left Folkestone on 12th March 1917 for Boulogne. On 7th November 1917 George was transferred to the hospital at Aubergne where he stayed until 14th January 1918. On 10th June 1918 George was promoted to acting Corporal. On 6th July 1918 he was granted leave and returned home where on 20th August 1918 he was promoted to Corporal. He was transferred to the 474 Agricultural Company in York before his demobilisation.

As more and more agricultural workers had been called up the Army had had to find a way to allow more soldiers to work on the land. In February 1917 the Army created Agricultural Companies comprising men of lower medical categories, many of who had no agricultural experience. These companies were to become part of the Labour Corps in June 1917. By the end of the war there were over 75,000 soldiers in Labour Corps agricultural companies working on farms in the U.K.

George was demobilized on 12th January 1919, now living at 71 Fairfax Street, Hall Lane, Wakefield Road, Bradford.

He was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.