

Family Studies 3

# Sidney Walter Clarke

## 1899 - 1987



Richard Clarke



### **Family Studies, 3 - Sidney Walter Clarke, 1899 – 1987.**

(Apology – From my point of view this was a very important research project, unfortunately, because of a series of changes over time such as laptop, Windows programme etc. it has proven difficult for me to present the article in as proper a manner as I would have liked)

Sidney, usually called Walter by farm workers of his generation (unlike most others he seemed to have no nickname), is first recorded on the Census Enumerator Returns of the 1901 national census. These can be viewed on microfilm at Kings Lynn Library – they are subject to the ‘100 year rule’.

In 1901 Sidney was recorded as a child of two years, the youngest of seven children to Walter (then 40 years of age) and Mary (then 35). The two eldest brothers, then in their teens, were described as ‘agricultural labourers’, the remaining four as ‘scholars’ (presumably at the village school just west of the pond and opened as a Board School by the terms of the 1870 Education Act). Census Enumerator Returns did not record addresses but oral history has the family living in a cottage on Mill Hill Road. A study of these Census Enumerator Returns shows that this household was one of 47 in Boughton in 1901, of which 24 families lived in houses with less than five rooms.

What of the 1891 Census? Walter and Mary were living in Boughton with two sons, ‘scholars’, and an infant daughter. The two sons are recorded as having been born in Barton Bendish<sup>1</sup> so the family must have moved to Boughton in the late 1880s. Walter (the father) is recorded as having been born in Swaffham. Mary is recorded as having been born at Eastmoor (a hamlet between Boughton Fen and Beachamwell). Walter died in the early 1930s and was buried in the churchyard at Boughton, as was Mary in 1942, but I know of no headstones or evidence as to where exactly they were

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<sup>1</sup> Barton Bendish is four miles north-east of Boughton.

interred. Mary had been the village midwife and 'layer out of the dead'. In the 1901 Census Enumerator Returns Walter is intriguingly identified as a 'Groom and Gardener', and 'Working at home'. Grand-daughters Doris and Greta were mystified by this, their recollection being of him as a smallholder who had once sold samphire around the villages from a pony and trap, having previously collected it from the shoreline of the Wash. For a further consideration of the family history see *Family Studies*, 4.

Sidney attended the village school until the age of 12 (1911/ 1912), being allowed to leave early having passed the leaver's test (or so he claimed!). He may well figure in one or two of the early 20th century photos revealed in Doris's collection (*Family Studies*, 1), and on the three photographs I have of a fete like event on a field beside Mill Hill Road c1905. It seems that after leaving school he worked as an errand boy for a chemist in Stoke Ferry (which I remember as still being there in the early 1960s in a corner house/ shop half way between the church and the corner of Oxborough Road, the house is now called 'Old Chemist's House'). At some point, presumably early in the Great War, he moved to London, almost certainly lodging with either an elder brother William or elder sister Eva both of whom already lived in London. Eva was in service and later lived in the Shepherds Bush. Sidney's war records show him as living at 26, Oxbridge St., Notting Hill Gate at the time of his conscription.

Having now referred to Sidney's 'war records' I need to clarify what happened. When I was concentrating on my initial research I paid a researcher recommended by the National Archives to do some initial research so as my time in London could be more efficiently spent. This was fine except that he claimed that Sidney's war records had, like hundreds of thousands of others, been destroyed in the Blitz in the early 1940s. So I continued over some years on this premise. However in 2014 I employed the services of Carol Kerry-Green CKG Genealogy (Hull), a most excellent researcher, to undertake some family history research in the process of which she discovered the war records which I can now post in the Appendix.



**Figure 1 Whiteley's store building today with external features much as they would have been during and after the Great War. Imagine Sidney on his delivery cycle setting out along Bayswater Road.**

At some point he gained employment as an errand boy/ person for Whiteley's store on the Bayswater Road, near Hyde Park. Whiteley's was one of the early general stores and perceived as very high class. The original exterior remains, the inside being a modern shopping mall. One of its most famous features was an elegant, flowing central staircase leading to the first and second floors and below a glass roof dome, both of which survive. The current owners have no staff records going back to 1914.

As Sidney saw service in the last 18 months of the Great War he was presumably conscripted by the terms of the Defence of the Realm Act (DORA), 1916, by which the minimum age was reduced in 1917 to 18 (Sidney's then age).

A few artifacts from Sidney's War service survive (see Fig. 2). On the left the British War Medal, described in official documentation as awarded to, 'Eligible service personnel and civilians' .... 'rendered approved service', .... 'up to 11<sup>th</sup> November 1918'. At the bottom right the Victory Medal, awarded to, 'Eligible personel who served on the establishment of a unit in an operational theatre'. Top right a New Testament issued to soldiers and

centre top the medal box, the most informative item. The final item is a French cap or lapel badge – so far I have been unable to discover its origin.



**Fig. 2 Items retained in the kitchen sideboard.**

The national records of Great War military personnel were much damaged during the Blitz of the Second World War. However the clear evidence that Sidney was deployed and trained to the 9th Tank Battalion meant that it was possible to research the primary evidence relating to the experiences of this section of the Tank Corps late in the Great War, on the assumption that Sidney was there also. This was later confirmed when his war records did come to light. Furthermore as a young parent (before my time) he used to speak of being in the Occupation of the Rhineland, billeted at Aachen, after hostilities and the survivors of the 9th Tank Battalion were so deployed 1919-1920.

Hand written regimental diaries, maps and associated documents can be studied at the Public Record Office, Kew, west London.

Father was unwilling to talk freely about wartime experiences but I grew up being told that he had been a 'tank driver', perhaps curiously as in my recollection he took no interest in things mechanical and never drove a tractor or car. Tanks (so named to disguise the initial weapon's research) were a new weapon from 1916 onwards, invested in more vigorously by the

British than German forces. Pioneering work on tanks was done by William Foster & Co., agricultural engineers of Lincoln. All Great War tanks were made at Lincoln using steel produced at Scunthorpe. Improved stages in the development of tanks were known as 'Marks', Mk. 1 being made in 1915 and by 1917 Sidney would be trained to drive a Mk.4. New tanks were taken by rail to Wool station in Dorset where they were tested on Bovington Heath where tank personnel were also trained. Since 1924 Bovington has housed the British Tank Museum. When ready for service tanks and personnel were taken by rail to Southampton Docks and by ship to north-east France. Once in France they were moved by rail where possible and the Battalion diaries often refer to 'entraining' and 'detraining'.

I am sure that when I was a child father made occasional references to the Battle of Cambrai, I didn't then know of its significance. The battle was the first in which the British deployed large numbers of tanks and as it took place in late November 1917, this presumably being his first big engagement. The battle plan was to use 378 tanks to spearhead the advance followed by the infantry in an advance that would breach the Hindenburg Line of German Western Front defences and capture back the French industrial city of Cambrai. My research initially involved visits to Kew to gain a detailed knowledge of what the 9th Tank Battalion did, this followed by a trip to north-east France to explore the specific locations.



**Figure 3 View west along the Bapaume Rd., Bourlon Wood to the right, Graincourt to the left, Fontaine notre Dame behind the camera. This is part of the land across which tanks of the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion travelled.**

By 19th November the 9th Tank Battalion had been entrained to Havrincourt Wood where the tanks laid in wait under cover. At 6-30a.m. on Tuesday 20th November the engines were fired up and by 9a.m. most had crossed two miles of undulating farmland towards Bourslon village in the direction of the Hindenburg defences. By evening 199 tanks had made it back to Havrincourt Wood, the Hindenburg Line having been breached but not broken. The following day the government back in London ordered church bells to be rung throughout the land, a premature celebration. There were no further frontal attacks on the Line but on 23rd November, in snow and rain, the sub battle of Bourslon Ridge began.



**Figure 4 Havrincourt village in the middle distance with Havrincourt wood just beyond. View south-west from the Flequires – Havrincourt road.**

Twelve tanks from the 9th Battalion entered Fontaine village but had then to retreat.

The following day 12 tanks from the 9<sup>th</sup> entered Bourslon village but were forced to retreat under heavy enemy fire.





**Fig. 5 A colleague of the Tank Corps who didn't make it.**

On 29<sup>th</sup> November General Elles inspected the surviving British tanks drawn up in Havrincourt village; across the preceding week 188 officers and 965 other ranks had been killed from the nine Tank Battalions.



**Fig. 6 The centre of Bourlon village – 'Place de les Combatants Ancients'. The local church is sited just off the picture to the right.**



**Fig. 7 The main street of Fontaine notre Dame.**

The definitive study of the Battle of Cambrai is Bryan Cooper's, 'The Ironclads of Cambrai, the First Great Tank Battle', published 1967 by Cassell (Cassell Military Paperbacks). He used many different sources of evidence to build up a complete overview, whereas I have just used the Battalion diaries of the 9<sup>th</sup> Tank.



**Fig.8 Bourlon church.**



**Fig.9 Louveral Military Cemetery, commemorating the 7000 soldiers who died at the Battle of Cambrai 'Without mortal remains'.**

In early December 1917 the Germans mounted a counter offensive along the salient in blizzard conditions and across ruined villages, scared woods, wrecked tanks and trenches.

In early 1918 the 9<sup>th</sup> are reported to be at a 'Tankerdrome', taking delivery of and training in the new Mk. 5 tanks. The location is unclear but presumably they had been entrained west, perhaps the Arras area.

The overview of the War on the Western Front in 1918 was a see-saw action across N. Picardy. On 21<sup>st</sup> March a huge German offensive began to push the Allies back to Paris and the Channel ports. Allied forces were pushed back over 50 Km. But by July the advance was halted, German supply lines overstretched, and the counter offensive began which pushed the German armies back 100Km. to the Belgian border. The German Army surrendered in November 1918. But what of the 9<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion?

On 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of March some men of the 9<sup>th</sup> were deployed as 'Lewis gunners on lorries' (a sort of reserve option for tank crew) in the La Boisselle, Cantalmaison region, and to the Albert district by late on 25<sup>th</sup>. Little detail was given for the following month although clearly there was alarm at the German advance. Tanks were perceived more for attack than

retreat and so, for example, on 15<sup>th</sup> April the 9<sup>th</sup> were at Soutrecourt , well beyond the enemy advance, ‘for training with the Mk.5’. For May and June the phrase is often repeated, “Training, driving, firing”.

By April 1918 the great German push west which threatened to overwhelm allied forces had fizzled out and the Allied counter push begun. This was to eventually result in the Armistice of November as allied forces stood poised on the German border – including the 9<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion (I Battalion).

In mid July 1918 many tanks were detrained to Canty, in the Somme valley region. On 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> 38 tanks of the 9<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion were in action in support of French infantry. Tanks were now being used in a way pioneered at the Battle of Cambrai – after a minimal preliminary artillery bombardment the tanks would fan out to target previously identified enemy machine gun nests, then regroup at an agreed point, now followed by the advancing infantry. When the infantry encountered further machine gun emplacements tank commanders, informed by field telephone, would fan out and lead a second assault. As a result of this co-operation across late July the 9<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion was collectively awarded the Croix de Guerre by the French government. Does this explain Sidney’s French badge? (see Fig. 2), I cannot say for sure.

The driver of a MK. IV tank was one of a crew of eight; driver and commander sitting at the front, two gears-men (the differential being locked to turn) and four gunners. Unless the commander opened the entrance hatch he and the driver’s field of vision was confined to that given by a narrow opening in the forward bulkhead. Each crewman was issued with; a gas mask, goggles (machine gun fire hitting the bulkhead caused slivers of metal to fly across the inside), a leather anti-bruise helmet, revolver, field dressing kit, water bottle and iron rations. As these tanks had a potential range of 50 Km., and as the crew might be trapped inside, each tank carried; 30 tins of food, 16 loaves, cheese, tea, milk and sugar. As well as explosive shells for the ‘male’ tanks all went into action with 33,000 machine gun bullets and a basket of carrier pigeons. Conditions inside the moving tanks; 120 degrees F., slivers, noise (the crew communicated by signs), exhaust fumes and dark, resulted in the crew suffering extreme

nausea if the action went on for any length of time. Burning was the most common cause of death for the tank battalions if their machine took a direct hit from enemy field guns (even by the Battle of Cambrai the Germans had invented armour piercing shells).

During August to November 1918 the 9<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion was periodically entrained east to chase the German retreat. On 7<sup>th</sup> September 1918 the 9<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion was again in Havrincourt Wood and by mid-month Bourslon Wood, Bourslon village having been re-captured. So Sidney was re-crossing the same land as when less than a year before he had first seen action at the Battle of Cambrai. By October 1918 Cambrai itself had been re-taken. By 1<sup>st</sup> November the 9<sup>th</sup> were in sight of the Belgian border, on 11<sup>th</sup> November the Battalion diary simply records, "Hostilities cease".

Doris confirmed that as a young man Sidney spoke of being billeted to a German family in Aachen (Aix la Chapelle) during what became known as the post war Occupation of the Rhineland. He said the resident family were good to him.

I have been unable to find primary evidence about the British Occupation of the Rhineland and very little secondary. However the 9<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion diary records that they moved into Germany in August 1919, this following the signing of the peace treaty (Treaty of Versailles) in June 1919. Between November 1918 and August 1919 the Diary records little except; 'improvement of billets' (at a base camp between Albert and Arras), 'lectures, education classes and games'. There was piecemeal demobilisation from the 9<sup>th</sup> but clearly not for Sidney. On 17<sup>th</sup> September 1919 the 9<sup>th</sup> took part in the British Army of the Rhine sports-day and on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1919 the 9<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion was disbanded, the event marked by a concert and regimental dinner.

Sidney was not demobilised until March 1920, having since November 1919 served in the 'Tank Stores' (see Appendix documents). Whether he returned to London first or whether he returned direct to Boughton I do not know but on 20<sup>th</sup> September 1924 he married Annie Rix in Boughton parish church (see Family Studies, 4). Annie already had a young child, Greta,

and soon Doris was to join the young family who now lived with Sidney's parents in a small cottage at the western end of the village (see Appendix documents, address then known as Cornwall Gardens – a term I had not encountered until the war records were discovered).

The marriage certificate described Sidney's rank as "Husbandman" seeing as farm labourers were usually described as such. I have a vague recollection of Sidney talking about plots of land once owned. I seem to think this referred to a small field north of the church and the small field immediately south of the bungalow on the last bend in the village before Canham (Cavenham) corner. The latter may have been granted as ex-serviceman's land by the terms of the Land Settlement (Facilities) Act, 1919 but Norfolk County Council has no record of these allocations. Anyway at some point these lands were sold and for the rest of his working life Sidney was a farm worker in Boughton – in my lifetime working for R.G. Robinson.

Sidney died in 1987 aged 88. His remains were interred in Annie's grave in All Saints churchyard. He died in Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Kings Lynn at 2a.m. on 11th November!

## Appendix – Fifteen war service documents for Walter Sidney Clarke with added notes.

### 1) Casualty Form – Active Service

**Z** Army Form B. 103. **F** 4336 WEST LONDON. Regimental Number 4336

**Casualty Form Active Service.**

Trade group 38 (Provision) S  
 Rank *Private* Surname *Clarke* Christian Name *Walter Sidney*  
 Religion *Anglican* Age on Enlistment *18* years *1* months  
 Date of enlistment *9.3.17* Terms of Service (a) *2 1/2 yrs* Service reckons from (a) *9.3.17*  
 Date of promotion to present rank ..... Date of appointment to lance rank .....  
 Extended ..... Re-engaged ..... Qualification (b) .....  
 Occupation *Delivery Porter* Signature of Officer *[Signature]*

| Report        | Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, etc., during active service, as reported on Army Form B. 103, Army Form A. 35, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case. | Place of Casualty  | Date of Casualty | Remarks<br>Taken from Army Form B. 103, Army Form A. 35, or other official documents. |
|---------------|--|--|------------------|---|
| Date          | From whom received   |  |                  |   |
|               |  | Embarked .....   |                  | <i>9.3.17</i>   |
|               |  | Disembarked..  |                  |   |
| <i>9.3.17</i> |  | <i>Posted 18th BATTN. TRAINING RESERVE. N. Hampton</i><br><i>Transf. to machine gun corps. do</i><br><i>Authority: E.C. 4/7/1750 (A2) 3.6.17</i> |                  |   |
| <i>6.6.17</i> |  | <i>18th. S. R. E. Posted to Depot. B. C. Bovington Camp 9.6.17</i><br><i>Occupational Card dispatched 27.11.17</i>                               |                  |   |

*Mother*  
*Boughton, Stoke Ferry, Norfolk*

(a) In the case of a man who has re-engaged for, or enlisted into Section D, Army Reserve, particulars of such re-engagement or enlistment will be entered.  
 (b) Signatures, Shoenig-Smith, & Co.  
 W. 12/14-12/15 12/16 12/17 12/18 12/19 12/20 12/21 12/22 12/23 12/24 12/25 12/26 12/27 12/28 12/29 12/30 12/31 12/32 12/33 12/34 12/35 12/36 12/37 12/38 12/39 12/40 12/41 12/42 12/43 12/44 12/45 12/46 12/47 12/48 12/49 12/50 12/51 12/52 12/53 12/54 12/55 12/56 12/57 12/58 12/59 12/60 12/61 12/62 12/63 12/64 12/65 12/66 12/67 12/68 12/69 12/70 12/71 12/72 12/73 12/74 12/75 12/76 12/77 12/78 12/79 12/80 12/81 12/82 12/83 12/84 12/85 12/86 12/87 12/88 12/89 12/90 12/91 12/92 12/93 12/94 12/95 12/96 12/97 12/98 12/99 12/100 12/101 12/102 12/103 12/104 12/105 12/106 12/107 12/108 12/109 12/110 12/111 12/112 12/113 12/114 12/115 12/116 12/117 12/118 12/119 12/120 12/121 12/122 12/123 12/124 12/125 12/126 12/127 12/128 12/129 12/130 12/131 12/132 12/133 12/134 12/135 12/136 12/137 12/138 12/139 12/140 12/141 12/142 12/143 12/144 12/145 12/146 12/147 12/148 12/149 12/150 12/151 12/152 12/153 12/154 12/155 12/156 12/157 12/158 12/159 12/160 12/161 12/162 12/163 12/164 12/165 12/166 12/167 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13/169 13/170 13/171 13/172 13/173 13/174 13/175 13/176 13/177 13/178 13/179 13/180 13/181 13/182 13/183 13/184 13/185 13/186 13/187 13/188 13/189 13/190 13/191 13/192 13/193 13/194 13/195 13/196 13/197 13/198 13/199 13/200 13/201 13/202 13/203 13/204 13/205 13/206 13/207 13/208 13/209 13/210 13/211 13/212 13/213 13/214 13/215 13/216 13/217 13/218 13/219 13/220 13/221 13/222 13/223 13/224 13/225 13/226 13/227 13/228 13/229 13/230 13/231 13/232 13/233 13/234 13/235 13/236 13/237 13/238 13/239 13/240 13/241 13/242 13/243 13/244 13/245 13/246 13/247 13/248 13/249 13/250 13/251 13/252 13/253 13/254 13/255 13/256 13/257 13/258 13/259 13/260 13/261 13/262 13/263 13/264 13/265 13/266 13/267 13/268 13/269 13/270 13/271 13/272 13/273 13/274 13/275 13/276 13/277 13/278 13/279 13/280 13/281 13/282 13/283 13/284 13/285 13/286 13/287 13/288 13/289 13/290 13/291 13/292 13/293 13/294 13/295 13/296 13/297 13/298 13/299 13/300 13/301 13/302 13/303 13/304 13/305 13/306 13/307 13/308 13/309 13/310 13/311 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## 2) Descriptive Report on Joining.

| DESCRIPTIVE REPORT ON JOINING.   |  |                      |  |
|--|--|----------------------|--|
| (To correspond with Entries on the Medical History Sheet.)<br>Applicable to all ranks.                                     |  |                      |  |
| Christian Names  | Walter Soney   |                      | Surname                                  |
| Apparent age   | 10 years . 2 months.   | Height               | 5 feet 8 1/4 inches                      |
| Chest Measurement  | Girth when fully expanded  | 35                   | inches.                                  |
|  | Range of expansion   | 2 1/2                | inches.                                  |
| Distinctive marks  |  |                      |  |
| INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY RECRUIT.   |  |                      |  |
| Name and Address of next-of-kin  | Walter Benjamin Clarke<br>Boughton Stoke Ferry Norfolk                           |                      |  |
|  | Relationship   | Father               |  |
| Particulars as to Marriage.  |  |                      |  |
| (a) Christian and Surname of Woman to whom married, and whether spinster or widow.   | (b) Place and date of marriage.  | (c) Present address. | (d) Initials of Officer verifying entry. |
| (a)  | (b)  | (c)                  | (d)                                      |
| Particulars as to Children.  |  |                      |  |
| Christian Names.   | Date and Place of Birth.   |                      |  |
|  |  |                      |  |
| MILITARY HISTORY SHEET.  |  |                      |  |
| 1. Passed classes of Instruction?<br>+ This includes any authorized class of instruction, e.g., in swimming, shrapnel, &c. |  |                      |  |
| 2. Campaigns ... (including Actions)   |  |                      |  |
| 3. Wounded ...   |  |                      |  |
| 4. Special instances of gallant conduct and mentions in public despatches  |  |                      |  |
| 5. Medals, decorations and annuities   | <div> <div> BRITISH WAR MEDAL<br/>VICTORY MEDAL </div> <div> Clasp </div> </div> |                      |  |
| 6. Injuries in or by the service   |  |                      |  |

Height 5' - 8 1/4", girth of chest when expanded 35" range of expansion 2 1/2". Next of kin Walter Benjamin Clarke, father, Boughton, Stoke Ferry, Norfolk.



### 3) Record of Service Paper.

47<sup>p</sup> Army Form B. 2512.

96728

## RECORD OF SERVICE PAPER

43C/141

For men deemed to be enlisted in H.M. Regular Forces for General Service with the Colours or in the Reserve for the period of the War, or Ex-Soldiers recalled for Service with the Colours, under the provisions of the Military Service Acts, 1916.

No. \_\_\_\_\_ Christian Names Walter Sidney Surname Clark

GR 13/51204 Corps 18<sup>th</sup> Training Reserve Battalion

### Questions to be put to the Reservist on Joining.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. What is your Name? ...  | 1. Christian Name <u>Walter Sidney</u>           |
| 2. What is your full Address? ...  | Surname <u>Clark</u>                             |
| 3. Are you a British Subject? ...  | 2. <u>26, Oxbridge St. Notting Hill Gate, W.</u> |
| 4. What is your Age? ...   | 3. <u>Yes</u>                                    |
| 5. What is your Trade or Calling? ...  | 4. <u>18</u> Years <u>2</u> Months               |
| 6. Are you Married? ...  | 5. <u>Delivering Porbs</u>                       |
| 7. Have you ever served in any branch of His Majesty's Forces, naval or military? If so*, which? | 6. <u>No</u>                                     |
| 8. Have you any preference for any particular branch of the service, if so, which?               | 7. <u>No</u>                                     |
| 9. Are you desirous of serving in the Royal Navy, if so, state your qualifications.              | 8. _____   |
|  | 9. _____   |

I, Walter Sidney Clark do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true.

Christian Name Sidney Walter Surname Clark SIGNATURE OF RECRUIT.

Date 9.3.17 19 \_\_\_\_\_

Place West London H. J. Shattock Signature of Witness.

### EXEMPTION FROM COMBATANT SERVICE ON CONSCIENTIOUS GROUNDS.

If the Recruit has been exempted by a Tribunal on conscientious grounds from serving as a combatant it should be so stated here \_\_\_\_\_

### MEDICAL CLASSIFICATION AS TO FITNESS FOR SERVICE ON JOINING.

Classification Category A1x

\* To be filled in by the Recruiting Officer after Classification by the Medical Board.

### † Certificate of Approving Officer.

I approve the acceptance of the above-named man, and appoint him to the 18<sup>th</sup> Training Reserve Battalion

Date 9 MAR 1917 19 \_\_\_\_\_

Place WEST LONDON \_\_\_\_\_ Approving Officer.

† The signature of the Approving Officer is to be affixed in the presence of the Recruit.  
‡ Here insert the "Corps" to which the Recruit has been appointed.

\* If so, the Recruit is to be asked the particulars of his former service, and to produce, if possible, his Certificate of Discharge and Certificate of Character which should be returned to him conspicuously endorsed in red ink, as follows, viz. (Name) \_\_\_\_\_ on the (Date) \_\_\_\_\_

18<sup>th</sup> Training Reserve Battalion. Address = 26, Oxbridge St. Notting Hill Gate. Medical category A1x. 9/03/1917, West London.

#### 4) Medical History.

[illegible]

Dated 9/03/1917. Vaccinated 'infancy'. 'Two slight defects not sufficient to cause rejection'. Stamped on discharge 31/03/1920. 'Vac.'  
23/03/1917.

5)

Handwritten military conduct sheet for a soldier named Clarke W.S. The sheet is filled with various entries, including dates, ranks, and signatures. It is stamped 'O.C. 2' and 'TANK CORPS'.

Much illegible. Some 'offence' on 5/04/1918. Stamped C company, 9<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion. Phrase 'certified no entry' occurs twice.

6) Regimental Conduct sheet.

REGIMENTAL CONDUCT SHEET. Army Form B. 120.

Regimental Number and Name: 96728 Clarke W.S.

Attested: 9 3 1917. Joined: 9 2 1917.

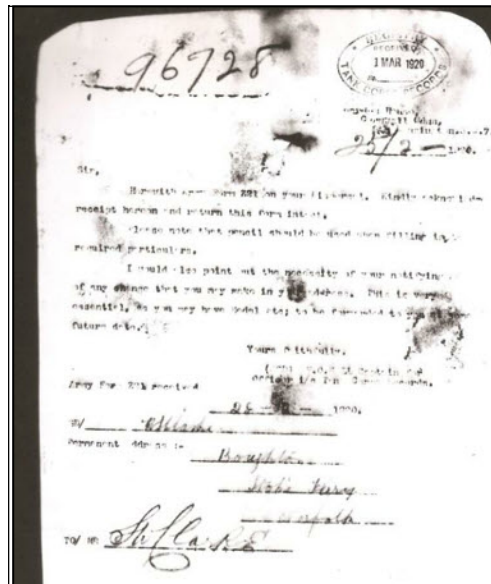
| Place   | Date of Offence | Rank | Offence                                     | Names of Witnesses | PUNISHMENT awarded                                 | By whom         | Date of Commencement | Date of Expiration | REMARKS                  |
|---|-----------------|------|---|--------------------|--|-----------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| San Agnello   | 5.12.19         | Pvt. | Improperly dressed not wearing a waste belt | 10 Days C.B.       | 11.12.19   | Sgt. J. M. Dora | Capt.                |                    | certified from 27.3.1919 |
| Transferred to Class 'C' 2nd Reserve on Demobilization. |                 |      |   |                    | DISCHARGED under para 502 (XXV) KING'S REGULATIONS |                 |                      |                    |                          |
| Signature: [Signature]                                  |                 |      |   |                    | Lieut-Colonel, The Tank Corps records.             |                 |                      |                    |                          |

To be carried over

'Offence' dated 5/12/1919 'Improperly dressed not wearing a waste belt'. Punishment 10 days C.B. (confined to barracks?) dated 11/12/1919. Stamped at time of discharge by Lieutenant-Colonel, Tank Corps records.



7)



Pro-forma dated 25/2/1920, stamped 1/3/1920, relating to 'your dispersal' and signed by S.W. Clarke.

7) Protection Cert. And Cert. Of Identity.

ARMY FORM E. 11.

NOTICE - This document is Government property. It is no security when severed from the body and any person being in possession of it, either as a pledge or security for debt, or without lawful authority or excuse, is liable under Section 116 (2) of the Army Act to a fine of twenty pounds (£20) or imprisonment for six months, or to both fine and imprisonment.

**PROTECTION CERTIFICATE AND CERTIFICATE OF IDENTITY**  
(SOLDIER NOT REMAINING WITH THE COLOURS)

Dispersal Unit Stamp and date of dispersal

Surname (Block letters) CLARKE

Christian Names William J.

Regt. No. 96728 Rank Private Record Office London

Unit 1st Tank Battalion Regt. or Corps 1st Tank Battalion Pay Office London

I have received an advance of £5

(Signature of Soldier) W. J. Clarke Address for Pay 1st Tank Battalion

The above-named soldier is granted 28 days furlough from the date stamped below pending\* (as far as can be ascertained) which will date from the last day of furlough after which date uniform will not be worn except upon occasions authorized by Army Orders.

\* If for Force (transfer) return to 1. (transfer) return to 2. (transfer) return to 3.

Theatre of War or Command 1st Tank Battalion

Born in the Year 1891

Medical Category None

Place of rejoining in case of emergency None

Special Military Qualification None

This Certificate must be produced when applying for an Unemployed Soldier's and Soldier's Donation Policy or, if demanded, whenever applying for Unemployment benefit.

Date 25/2/20 Office of Issue 1st Tank Battalion Policy issued by 1st Tank Battalion

STIRFLEET. (3)

Stamped 25/02/1920, Unit = Tank Stores. 'The above-named soldier is granted 28 days furlough ...'

### 8) Statement of Disability.

**STATEMENT AS TO DISABILITY.**

(This form is not applicable to Officers and Soldiers in Hospital or on leave, or to those who will be brought before a Medical Board.)

On Demobilization every Officer and Soldier, whether remaining with the Colours or not, will be given an opportunity of filling in this Form. Should he not wish to put forward any claim in respect of a Disability due to Military Service he must sign the Statement hereunder to this effect, in the presence of an Officer of the Unit with which he is serving, who will witness the Signature. Whether a Claim is made or not, this Form will be forwarded by the Unit Commander, in the case of every Officer, direct to the Secretary, War Office and in the case of every Soldier, to the Medical Officer of his Unit.

**TANK STORES,**  
**ARMY OF THE CHINEE.**

Unit \_\_\_\_\_  
Regiment \_\_\_\_\_  
Regt. No. 96th North Front  
Surname CLARKE  
(Block letters.)  
Christian Name WALTER  
in full SYDNEY  
Permanent address Bygones  
Stoke Newington, Kent  
Age last birthday 21  
First joined for duty 9.3.17 at (Place) Stoke Newington  
Medical Category or Grade in which joined H

If the Officer or Soldier has previously been discharged from the Army, Royal Navy or the Royal Air Force, he will state—  
(a) Former Regiments or Corps with Regimental Numbers—  
(b) Dates of discharge—  
(c) Causes of discharge—  
(d) Particulars of Pension or Gratuity received (if any)—

I do not claim to be suffering from a disability due to my military service.  
Place of Examination Reckers  
Date 20.2.20  
Signature of Officer or Soldier W. Clarke  
Signature of Officer witnessing John W. Clarke

Before the chemical service questions 1—8 the following should be read by, or to, him—  
"Your statement will be checked by Official Records. In answering question 2, any special matters which in your opinion caused or aggravated any suffering from which you are suffering must be clearly stated."  
The claimant will answer the questions in his own words and after completing the form will sign it. The Officer will witness the signature. If the claimant cannot write, he will affix his mark, such as a cross or initials.

**THIS PORTION IS NOT TO BE COMPLETED IF A CLAIM IS NOT MADE.**

- In what country have you served during this war, and for what periods?
- In what capacity?
- If you are suffering from any disease, wound or injury, state what it is, the date upon which it started, and what in your opinion was the cause of it.  
(If more space is required a sheet of Endpaper should be used and attached freely to this form.)
- Give the names of any Hospitals in which you have been treated for the above disability during this war.
- Did you suffer from the disease or injury mentioned in above answer to Question 3, or anything like it, before joining the Army? If so, give details and dates.
- Give the names and addresses (if you know them) of any Hospitals you were in or Doctors who attended you before you joined the Army.
- Give the name of your National Health Approved Society and, if possible, your membership number.

Examined at Roetgan on 20/02/1920 and signed as 'not claiming to be suffering from a disability due to my military service'.

9) Nominal Roll (all ranks).

[illegible]

Regiment = Tank Stores Rhine Army

STATEMENT of the SERVICES of No. 1000 Waller, Henry Blake  
 Christian Names Waller, Henry Blake Surname Blake

| Charge  | Duty or Depot    | Promotions, Reductions, Casualties, &c. | Army Rank | Dates    | Service not allowed to reckon for fixing the rate of Pension |      | Signature of Officers certifying correctness of Entries |
|---|------------------|---|-----------|----------|--|------|---|
|   |                  |   |           |          | years  | days |   |
| General Service   |                  | Deemed to have been enlisted            | PLC       | 17.5.17  |  |      | <i>[Signature]</i>                                      |
|   | 15 <sup>th</sup> | Called up for Service                   |           | 9.6.17   |  |      | <i>[Signature]</i>                                      |
|   |                  | Transferred to Machine Gun Corps        |           | 6.6.17   |  |      |   |
|   |                  | Transferred to Tanks                    |           | 8.4.18   |  |      |   |
|   | 10 <sup>th</sup> | Posted                                  | PLC       | 3.7.18   |  |      | <i>[Signature]</i>                                      |
|   | 9                | Posted                                  | PLC       | 21.3.19  |  |      | <i>[Signature]</i>                                      |
|   | Rhine Army, 9    | Posted                                  | PLC       | 19.5.19  |  |      | <i>[Signature]</i>                                      |
|   | Tank Stores      | Posted                                  | PLC       | 17.11.19 |  |      | <i>[Signature]</i>                                      |
|   |                  | To U.K.                                 | PLC       | 22.2.20  |  |      | <i>[Signature]</i>                                      |
| Transferred to Class "Z" Army Reserve on Demobilization.        |                  |   |           |          |  |      |   |
| Date 24 MAR 1920  |                  |   |           |          |  |      |   |
| Signature <i>[Signature]</i>                                    |                  |   |           | CAPTAIN. |  |      |   |
| Place <i>[Signature]</i>  |                  |   |           |          |  |      |   |
| Home Address <i>[Signature]</i>                                 |                  |   |           |          |  |      |   |
| DISCHARGE 31.3.20   |                  |   |           |          |  |      |   |
| under para 122 (XXVIII) KING'S REGULATIONS                      |                  |   |           |          |  |      |   |
| Total Service forfeited as above                                |                  |   |           |          |  | 26   |   |
| Total Service towards Engagement to 21.3.20 (date of discharge) |                  |   |           |          | 3  | 47   |   |
| Pension   |                  |   |           |          |  |      |   |

(Partly obliterated and some items illegible). Seems to be a record of service. Rank remained 'private'. Called-up 1917. Transferred to Machine Gun Corps 6/06/1917. 'Posted' 9/06/1917. Tanks 'posted' 8/04/1918 (?). Tanks 'posted' 10<sup>th</sup> battalion 3/07/1918. Rhine Army 9<sup>th</sup> battalion 19/05/1919. Tank Stores 17/11/1919. To U.K. 22/02/1920. Demobilisation stamp 24/03/1920. Discharged 31/03/1920. Character 'good'. 'Total service towards Engagement' = 3 years and 47 days.



10) 'Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties etc during active service.'

| Date     | Report             | From whom received | Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, etc., during active service, as reported on Army Form 8-21, Army Form A, 30, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case. | Place of Casualty | Date of Casualty | Remarks Taken from Army Form 8-21, Army Form A-30, or other official documents. |
|----------|--------------------|--------------------|--|-------------------|------------------|---|
|          | Depot              |                    | To 10 Bn   | DIS - TONE        | 8/1/19           | 018   |
| 11/9/18  | do                 |                    | Joined 10th Bn   | JOINED DEPOT      | 8/1/19           |   |
| 4/10/18  | do                 |                    | During school  |                   |                  |   |
| 8/2/19   | do                 |                    | Rejoined Unit.   |                   |                  |   |
| 1-3-19   | - do -             |                    | Granted leave sick from  |                   |                  |   |
| 2/3-19   | - do -             |                    | Rejoined from leave  |                   |                  |   |
| 2/5/19   | B. Lin A. H. H. C. |                    | Posted to 1st Bn   |                   |                  |   |
| 7/15/19  | O. C. 1st Bn       |                    | Posted to Rhine Army   |                   |                  |   |
| 21/11/19 | Gr. 9th Bn         |                    | Granted leave to U.S.  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Rejoined for ex leave  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Added to 1st Bn  |                   |                  |   |
|          | Tank Group P       |                    | Posted to 1st Bn   |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | To No. 1. Con Camp for dispersal.  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Adjutant Tank Stores Army of the Rhine   |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Transferred to Class 2   |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Reserve on Demobilization  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Date   |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Signature  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Officer  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Date   |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Address  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | State  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | City   |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Country  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Post Office  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Telephone  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Telex  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Radio  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Mail   |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Other  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Remarks  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Signature  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Date   |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Address  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | State  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | City   |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Country  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Post Office  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Telephone  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Telex  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Radio  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Mail   |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Other  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Remarks  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Signature  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Date   |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Address  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | State  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | City   |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Country  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Post Office  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Telephone  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Telex  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Radio  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Mail   |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Other  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Remarks  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Signature  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Date   |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Address  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | State  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | City   |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Country  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Post Office  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Telephone  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Telex  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Radio  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Mail   |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Other  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Remarks  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Signature  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Date   |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Address  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | State  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | City   |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Country  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Post Office  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Telephone  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Telex  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Radio  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Mail   |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Other  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Remarks  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Signature  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Date   |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Address  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | State  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | City   |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Country  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Post Office  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Telephone  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Telex  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Radio  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Mail   |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Other  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Remarks  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Signature  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Date   |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Address  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | State  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | City   |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Country  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Post Office  |                   |                  |   |
|          |                    |                    | Telephone  |                   |                  |   |

This is very significant as it seems to show that I made a fundamental error, although understandable in the circumstances. Because of the information on the medal box I assumed Sidney had been in the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion from 1917 and in the then absence of his war records I had no reason to assume otherwise. In 1919 and when he received his medals he was in the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, however my belated acquaintance with these records, particularly this one, seem to state that he was initially in the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion. So does this invalidate most of what has gone before? Obviously I hope not, but as I'm not going to have the time to research the 10<sup>th</sup> for some while, if an expert can help out in the meantime I would be grateful.

11/09/1918 to 15/09/1918 'to driving school'. 4/10/1918 'rejoined unit'. 8/02/1919 granted leave back home for two weeks. 29/03/1919 posted



to 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion (!) 29/05/1919 'Posted to Rhine Army'. Butgenbach ?  
 14/05/1919 granted two weeks leave to the UK. 21/11/1919 'posted to  
 Tank Stores', Roetgan. 24/03/1920 demobilised to Cornwall Gardens,  
 Boughton, Stoke Ferry, Norfolk. Discharged 31/03/1920.

11)

| Place | Date of offence | Rank | Command | Offence  | Names of Witnesses | Punishment awarded | Date of award or of order discharging with trial | By whom awarded  | Remarks |
|-------|-----------------|------|---------|--|--------------------|--------------------|--|------------------|---------|
|       | 27/11/19        | Plt  |         | Absent from Roll Call 21:30 hours till 21:40 hours | Sgt. H. H. H. H.   | 5 days CB          | 28/11/19   | Sgt. H. H. H. H. |         |
|       |                 |      |         |  |                    |                    |  |                  |         |

Records two offences, second illegible, other = 'Absent from roll call 21:30 hours 'till 21:40 hours'. Punishment 5 days CB.

12)

Army Form B. 5112.  
 1150 B

I hereby acknowledge the receipt of the  
 British War Medal.  
 Victory Medal.

I am directed to forward the accompanying British War Medal, Victory Medal, which has been awarded to you in respect of your services with the Tank Corps.

Please complete receipt and return this card. No stamp is required.

Regtl. No. 96728  
 Rank Plt  
 Signature Sgt. H. H. H. H.  
 Unit TANK CORPS  
 Date 22-6-1921.

Ed. for i/c Lt. Col.  
 [745] W 3505, P 1071, 2000, 11/20v 345, G & S 663  
 1/c Tank Corps Records.

Signed receipt for British War Medal, Victory Medal, dated 22/06/1921.

13)

*Tanks 96728/334* ..... (R. Records).

Name ..... *Beane D. W.*

Corps ..... *Tank Corps*

Colour Service from ..... *9.3.17* ..... to ..... *24.3.20* .....

Overseas ..... *1 yr 10 months* .....

Regimental Entries ..... *one (B. 122)* .....

Company Entries ..... *one (B. 122)* .....

Character from A.B. 358 .....

Mr. Bovenizer.

I suggest *J. G. I.*  
*in 11/2/36*

Appears to be dated 11/02/1936. Tanks 96728/334. 'Colour service from 9/03/1917 to 24/03/1920'. 'Overseas 1 year, 10 months'.



