



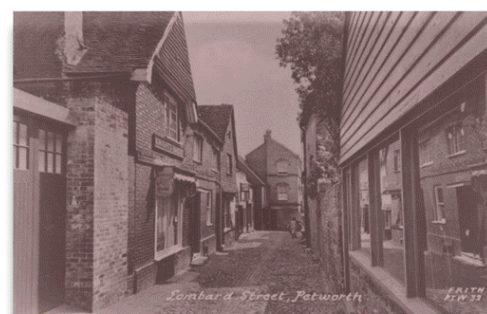
BAPTISMS solemnized in the Parish of <i>Tillington</i>					
in the County of <i>Nottingham</i>			in the Year 18 <i>91</i>		
When Baptized.	Child's Christian Name.	Parent's Name.	Abode.	Quality, Trade, or Profession.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
1891 May 31 No. 35	<i>Arthur James</i>	<i>James Bridger</i>	<i>River</i>	<i>Labourer</i>	<i>John R.</i>

Baptism entry in All Hallows' Church Records

In 1911, Arthur was 20 years old and, with his friend Horace Lucas, was lodging with William Knight the local baker and confectioner in Lombard Street, Petworth. Both boys were employed as 'Baker's Assistants'.

92115	Pte.	BRIDGER	Arthur	S4/093362	
			James	R. A. S.C.	
				DRVR.	
				92115 11th Bn.	

Medal Roll showing service numbers and Regiments



Kitchener's Fourth Army was formed in late 1914 and in addition to fighting soldiers, it also needed men to keep them supplied with the essentials of life. This was the role of the Army Service Corps and hence recruiting sergeants were on the look out for cooks, bakers, caterers, etc. Using horse-drawn and motor vehicles, railways and waterways, these unsung heroes performed prodigious feats of logistics to keep the army supplied.

No doubt encouraged by his embryonic baking skills, Arthur enlisted in the Service Corps and left the recruiting office as Private A J Bridger S4/093362 (S stood for 'Supply' and 4 for Kitchener's Fourth Army). It would be comforting to believe that he spent his war baking bread, but we know that he became a driver supplying the front line troops. Arthur qualified for the 1914-15 Star and hence was serving overseas from August 30th 1915. The next record of Driver Bridger shows that he left the Service Corps and joined the 11th Battalion Nottingham and Derbyshire Regiment (Sherwood Foresters), becoming Private 92115. The circumstances of this change are not clear, but if he was wounded and returned to England for a period of recuperation, on his return he would pass through a base depot from which he would be transferred to the regiment with the greatest need. The 11th Battalion suffered heavy losses during the Summer and Autumn of 1916 and were in continual need of reinforcements.



Cambrai and the ruins of the Grand Palace after the battle - 1918

During October 1918 the 11th Battalion in the 25th Division fought in the Battles of Beaurevoir and Cambrai, the latter being very costly with casualties reaching 140,000. The Battle of Selle began on October 17th with the British Fourth Army attacking on a ten mile front south of Le Cateau with the aim of reaching the Sambre and Oise Canal. The First and Third Armies joined the advance and on October 23rd/24th they advanced six miles. During this advance the 25th Division captured the village of Pommereuil, cleared the Bois L'Eveque and halted only when they reached the outskirts of Le Cateau.

The Battalion War Diary reads:

At 4.30 on the 24th the advance continued but almost immediately the 11th Battalion came under heavy machine gun fire and later came upon a belt of barbed wire, that had been uncut. It was negotiating this, under fire of snipers and machine guns that most of the casualties on the day occurred. This opposition was eventually silenced by a Lewis gun sent on to the road leading to Fontane au Bois.

The casualties on October 24th were killed 15, wounded 59, missing 8. Private Arthur Bridger 92115 was one of those killed.

He is buried in the British Cemetery at Pommereuil which lies three kilometres east of Le Cateau, contains 173 WW1 burials and was built by the 25th Division after the capture of the village.

Arthur's friend Horace Lucas enlisted in Norwich in 1914 and served in the Norfolk Regiment. He was wounded sometime in September 1915 and returned to England where at the age of 21 years he died on December 15th of the same year. He is buried in the Horsham Road Cemetery, Petworth.

Campaign — 1914-15				(A) Where decoration was earned.
Name	Corps	Rank	Reg. No.	(B) Present situation.
(A) <i>BRIDGER</i>	<i>A.S.C.</i>	<i>Driver</i>	<i>S4/093362</i>	<i>Victory Medal</i>
(B) <i>A.J. Bridger</i>	<i>Not in Ranks</i>	<i>1915</i>	<i>92115</i>	<i>1914-15 Star</i>
Action taken				
<i>THEATRE OF WAR (1) France</i>				
QUALIFYING DATE: <i>30/1/15</i>				



*We climb the trench, and cross the wire and start,
We'll stumble through the shell-bursts with good heart
Like boys who race through meadows in the sun*

Before the Battle - Martin Armstrong