

DOP/01/023

Mr. Arthur James Parker
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026 Lived in 16 North Street New Bradwell. There were 10 brothers, sisters. Arthur was oldest survivor. Living at home at outbreak of War. Worked at Black Horse. What was job? Hard work – shovelling – take granite from station – loading it on to carts – worked for Mr. Mudway “best bloke I worked for – he’d swear at you one minute and treat you the next.”

060 Was sent forms for Kitchener’s army. Mr. Mudway (or father) volunteered as a baker – too old – AF said he could put his name forward – end of 1914.

080 Had Christmas Day at home – papers came before to report in 7 days. Father was going up to sister’s just outside Oxford – went together to sisters’ Stopped there afternoon. Then went to Cowley Barracks. Sergeant came out of guard room and said, What lot you want to join. I said, Oxford and Bucks, straight out. Went to doctor, examined him and out of hut passed fit.

103 Nearly didn’t go at all – Black Horse classed as farm – could have got out of it.

119 Mother never said anything about joining up. Doesn’t know why he joined up. At Cowley for two months. Then put in 9th Battalion – never went in gym while there. Came round one morning – wanted somebody for Sergeant’s Mess – he volunteered – missed parades, did washing up and peeling potatoes. Had breakfast with the fellows – then went to Sergeant’s Mess and had another one.

156 Had a wooden rifle where – others had old fashioned one. Didn’t get proper one till at Bobbinton Camp. Went Oxford to Portsmouth, A lousy blooming home, in old arracks, then to Gosport OK there then to Bobbinton Camp – 12 months training there – never did many parades – there was an officers’ servant. Cleaning buttons, cleaning straps.

196 One day busy darning his socks. He said How did you learn to do that. I said I watched it done at home. Officers friendly – had some good uns. I don’t know much about them. Two above them had risen from ranks, said they were some devils. Taken from camp, sat down till nearly dinner and then walked back to camp all platoon.

218 Went to France latter end of 1915. Went to Dover, shoved into hold of boat. Lot seasick. That was the first time I’d been on a boat and it never made a bit of difference to me, I was as right as rain.

237 Went to Le Havre on Tuesday evening. Went out for drink beforehand – one man fell and hurt leg – didn’t go to Doctor, landed went sick there, and that was it, he came home for his ticket He never see much of it.

252 Went on to base – fitted out with rifles, etc. Then 2nd Battalion Ox and Bucks – doesn’t know where. Straight up line – Ypres perhaps. All that some of them seen that went out with

me, going up in the front line, and they went up sky high – got blown up with a nurse, up they went, that's all they seen of France.

295 First time was battlefield It never made no difference to me, not a bit. From Ypres went to Delville Wood used to call it Devils Wood – worse place he went to. Brigade drove Germans out. There were dead Germans all over the place. The trenches were built up like that with dead bodies. First time saw dead body. Well, that cured me of one thing. I didn't like going in the bedroom where there was anybody laying in bed bad. And after that, that cured me, after I saw all that lot.

312 Went over top once. Bombardment first. Before went over top waited until British lifted it. We got tangled up in our bombardment and the blinking Germans We got in between the two.

330 Officers said "Advance" Then off you went. went over first thing in morning, could see. You had to run. Walked through the barbed wire. Did you know where you were going. Oh yeah straight forward.

358 Up on Somme when went in communication trench, up to thigh in water. Had thigh boots on, when lifted up and put down, just as if floating. Somme was worst place. Sections of trench half full of water.

386 At Menin was Hellfire Corner, Sergeant couldn't get anybody to fetch rations as AP volunteered. Had two petrol tins of water. Got to HQ, put them down, went to get up and was hit – never broke skin – it didn't half give me a clout though.

410 Got one little scratch on neck in whole of war, can't remember where – no trenches there. At a station, on a machine gun. Laid flat, only steel helmet showing. Fellows on right saw bullet strike his haversack – never touched him – went through tin of bully beef. They said afterwards, they said, Hello Parkers' got it I didn't. Another chap wounded – went with him back home. Went back up line and rejoined them. Had on leave – had been out for 12 months. Didn't feel like a hero. When it was time for me to go back my sister started kicking up a blooming fuss course I don't like a lot of fuss you see, like that. I put me equipment on, when she started kicking up this blooming fuss and crying. I went out the back door and I were gone. I can't stick a lot of fuss like that.

502 Never told them anything of France – they didn't want to know didn't ask him. You hear some fellows moan about the Army, well, the Army's all right. It's what you make of it, isn't it. It never used to worry me when we were going up the front line, it never used to worry me a bit. You'd see some chaps when they, knowed hey were going up the line they used to give, their blinking rations away. They said, somebody's going to get killed. I never went up like that. Now when you were going up the front line for over the top mind you, if you lost your head, you'd had it and wised you'd got killed if you lost your head. If you started worrying I bet it you'd cop one, you'd get wounded or something.

554 Never had tot of rum, didn't want it before going over. Had it in Dixie lid. gave his ration and so did somebody else to a mate – he proper got it – proper drunk after going over.

587 Bravest thing he saw was man in a tank with his head off. Tank got stuck in German dugout shell went inside.

623 Sent gas over – AP didn't put gas helmet on, I never got none.

635 Disappointed after demob? No I'd been out there and done me bit and that was it. Glad it was over, Yeh Why? Well you'd had enough, you had about enough of it.

658 Out of work when he came back but wouldn't have liked to stay on in Army with the blinking lot we got transferred to. The Berks. Used to shine buttons in the front line. What's a better target than that, your buttons shining. Different bayonet fixing technique to Ox and Bucks he was left man that day supposed to lead the rest.

739 When out on rest if you were smart you were collared for guards – so he started slowing down. Sent with recruits to do drill. He chucked rifle about all over the place.

Side 2

Sergeant sent him off and don't let me see you here again.

012 Battalion split up because of losses. AP not there, he was on details.

048 Not in with Hawtin Mundy – was brother Stand in Territorials with him.

070 When he came home on leave it wasn't no different. Got to Wolverton as they were going into the Works at 6.00 a.m. Oh I never used to hang about, I'd got too much money to hang about. About 300 francs to change had changed it at Waterloo.

120 When went home they were surprised to see him. Nothing particular to say. Just walked about on first day at home. Changed as result of war? Never changed me at all. I were just the same then as I am now. Had rest tried to get job – eventually got series of labouring jobs on roadworks.

203 Didn't think he should have any special treatment after war.

215 Father Guest – (he) AP told him off one morning when working at Black Horse – at field nearby, Man he worked for (Mr.Wylie) had this field. One cow went in his garden, AP Chased it all round. Father Guest came out and said I'll make Wylie pay for this. I said if you'd had your gate shut that cow wouldn't have come in. He said Oh I can't do that. He couldn't shut his gate.

275 Outside Menin Gate, brother Stand heard he was nearby, came to see him, but he was gone. Were camped, laying on groundsheet in water.

296 First Christmas dinner was bully beef stew, next one they had port and I don't know what they didn't have. Christmas when he was coming on leave, I didn't care what they were having for dinner, I was coming away.

319 Never had parcel from family – not enough money to do it.

359 Officers servants in France – most of war – walked about in trenches with them. That's all I done.

386 Doesn't think officers lived any differently, doesn't think they got better food.