

My Family's Story

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Family member and relationship to contributor: Private Isaac Batt, Great Grandfather

My Family's Story:

My great grandfather Isaac Batt was born in 1877 in St George, Bristol. His childhood was spent in Bristol with his father Jacob (a labourer), his mother Sarah, two sisters and two brothers. Isaac married at St Luke's in Bedminster in 1897. He and his wife Alice lived in Easton, Bristol with their two daughters.

In December 1915 Isaac took the oath of allegiance, signing up for a short service enlistment for the duration of the war with the colours and general reserve. He was mobilised on 19th June 1916 and posted to the Royal Berkshire Regiment.

At the time of his enlistment Isaac was described as being 39 years and 1 month old, 5 feet 3 ½ inches tall, weighing 156lbs (just over 11 stone) and possessing flat feet. Although he was free from disease and had average eyesight and hearing, his fitness was classed as B2. This meant he could only be posted overseas in a support role rather than as a front line soldier. His trade on enlistment was given as "gas fitter" or "labourer" in the plumbing sector.

His behaviour as a soldier is recorded as being "good" and there are no misdemeanours listed in his service record. What he actually did during the First World War is much more of a mystery - many of the documents are incomplete or frustratingly illegible! He was awarded the War and Victory medals which are inscribed with his name and service number. However an accompanying "Mons" Star, which we thought belonged to him, was only awarded for combatants who fought in France during 1914 -1915. This predates Isaac's enlistment and on closer examination is engraved with the surname 'Searle'.

To be eligible for the medals he received Isaac must have been in France or Belgium for at least 28 days of his service. It seems that he was in France from 19th August to 27th September 1916. Between the 28th September and the 17th November 1916 Isaac was in an Infantry Hospital in Cardiff where he underwent a successful operation for an unknown ailment. Following his discharge from hospital Isaac was transferred to the 3rd Suffolk Regiment, sailing to Boulogne in March 1917. From May to June 1918 he was at the 3rd Army Rest Camp and had his only leave between 26th July and 9th August 1918.

It appears Isaac was stationed with various regiments throughout the course of the War. Records indicate that on returning from leave in August 1918 he transferred to the Northamptonshire Regiment before ending his service with the 4th Infantry 67 Labour Corps! As a consequence of this frequent change of units Isaac's records do not seem to have kept up with him.

Isaac was demobilised from service on 10th February 1919. On demobilisation he signed to say that he was not claiming any disability pension, suggesting that he survived the war relatively unscathed.

After the war it seems Isaac returned to a quiet family life. Apparently he was a very practical man and my father was very fond of him - spending time in his company learning practical skills. Isaac Batt died on August 1st 1938 in the Bristol General Hospital.

In 1911 Isaac's younger brother Abraham, or '*Uncle Abe*' as he was known to Dad, was working as an electric tramcar driver in Bristol. During WW1 Abraham served with the Royal Warwickshire Regiment and was also awarded the War and Victory medals. He served overseas until 25th October 1917. Unfortunately I am unable to find out more about him - it may be that his records are among those that were destroyed in the Blitz.

Image: Private Isaac Batt, Royal Berkshire Regiment, 1916



Image: Isaac's wife, Alice Batt, née Newman, 1916



Image: Isaac Batt's entry in 1911 census

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.
1	Isaac Batt	Head	34		Married					General Labourer	Plumbing
2	Alice Nellie Batt	Wife		35	Married	14	2	2			
3	Elsie Alice Batt	Daughter		13						School	390
4	Ada Lydia Batt	Daughter		11						School	
5											

Image: 'Pip, Squeak & Wilfred' – The War Medal, Victory Medal and "Mons" Star

