

## Ernest Price

### Royal Engineers

1891 - 1917



Ernest Price, also known as Jim, was born in early 1891, and was baptised at St Swithuns on 19<sup>th</sup> April 1891. His parents were William and Alice Price (nee Spacey), who ran the Boot pub in Duck End, Swanbourne (now 4, Smithfield End).

He was the youngest of six children. His siblings were: Eleanor Mary (1881); William Thomas (1881); Elizabeth Alice (1884); John (1887) and Kate (1889). All of the children were born in Swanbourne.

By the time of the 1911 census, he was a farm worker, still living with his parents at The Boot. His father died in the December of that year, aged just 46 years, leaving his mother to run the pub. Ernest was 20 years old.



Ernest Price



Ernest and John Price

He enlisted for war service at Aylesbury on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1915, when he was aged 24 years and 10 months. His occupation was given as dairyman. He was 5ft 6½ ins in height, and weighed 131 lbs (9 stone 5 lbs). He was considered as being fit for service at home or abroad. Initially, he was put into the reserves.

He joined No 3 Depot of the Regiment of Field Artillery on 9<sup>th</sup> February 1916, and on 11<sup>th</sup> February, he was posted as a Driver in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Company Reserve Brigade.

On 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> April 1916, whilst at Swanage, he passed a course of instruction for Battery Signallers, including semaphore, with enough points to qualify 1<sup>st</sup> Class.

On 14<sup>th</sup> June 1916, whilst at Woolwich, he had broken away from the C.O.'s parade 'whilst on active service', and the next day, was given 7 days confined to barracks and docked 7 days pay. But the following day, 16<sup>th</sup> June, he embarked from Dover to join the British Expeditionary Force in France.



On 4<sup>th</sup> July 1917, he was transferred to the Royal Engineers, 4<sup>th</sup> Division Signals Company, still as a Driver. He was at Rouen on 21<sup>st</sup> July. He had a period of leave in the UK from 16<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> September, but just over a month later, on 30<sup>th</sup> October 1917, he was killed in action. As yet, we have no further details of how his death occurred, but it seems that his body was never found. His memorial is at Arras Memorial, Pas de Calais in France.



The Arras Memorial commemorates 34,795 servicemen from the United Kingdom, South Africa and New Zealand who died between the spring of 1916 and 7<sup>th</sup> August 1918, and who have no known grave.

Most of the casualties commemorated here were killed during the Allied offensive during the Battles of Arras in April and May 1917 and during the German attack on the Allied Front from 21<sup>st</sup> March 1918.

At a memorial service held at St. Swithuns Church at the end of November 1917, the bell ringers rang a muffled peal of bells in his honour, and he had himself been an enthusiastic ringer for three years. He had also been a member of the Church of England Missionary Society and of the church choir.