

## **Private John Lancaster Clark**

**Regimental Number: 235874**

**9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Prince of Wales's Own (West Yorkshire) Regiment**

**born: 1895 - died: 21 May 1918**

John Lancaster Clark came from a Yorkshire agricultural family. His father, also John, worked on farms all his life<sup>1</sup> until, in 1911, he was a woodsman on a private estate in Snape, near Bedale.<sup>2</sup> Before him, his father, Simpson Clark, was a shepherd in Barmby Moor, Yorkshire.<sup>3</sup>

John Lancaster was born in 1895.<sup>4</sup> He was the youngest of seven children. He had six older sisters – Annie Elizabeth (born 1882),<sup>5</sup> Alice (born 1885),<sup>6</sup> Eleanor (born 1886),<sup>7</sup> Lucy (born 1889)<sup>8</sup> and Jane (born 1891)<sup>9</sup> – and one older brother, Miles Notliff (born 1883).<sup>10</sup>

John left school in 1910 and worked on the castle grounds in Snape, Yorkshire.<sup>11</sup> In 1911, he was a groom<sup>12</sup> and, according to his family, probably worked on the nearby Thorp Perrow estate.<sup>13</sup>

John's brother, Miles, enlisted at the beginning of the war when he was 31<sup>14</sup> and John was 19. John enlisted later, like his brother, as a Private in the 1/1 Yorkshire Hussars (Regimental number: 2351). Also like his brother, he later transferred to the 9th West Yorkshire Regiment.<sup>15</sup> However, unlike his brother, John did not survive the war. Miles was demobilized, with no disability, in April 1919,<sup>16</sup> but John died in May 1918 in France.<sup>17</sup>

John first entered the theatre of war in France on 18 February 1915.<sup>18</sup> On 19 May, the "enemy projected 400 gas cylinders at 11.55 p.m. using British captured projectiles and cylinders. "C" Coy had 24 casualties – 8 killed – 16 wounded."<sup>19</sup> Perhaps John was one of those casualties. He was gassed and admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 20 May 1918. He died the following day and was buried on 22 May in Pernes British Military Cemetery (Plot 1, Row F, Grave 33). He was a member of the Church of England and the chaplain, J. K. Tibbits, oversaw his burial.<sup>20</sup>



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On 20 May, 370 soldiers were admitted to the 1st CCCS – by far the highest number of admissions in one day in that month.<sup>22</sup> This brought the total of number patients to 522. There were 115 deaths at this CCCS in the month – more than in any of the other three and a half months that the 1<sup>st</sup> CCCS was in Pernes. The Pernes British Military Cemetery was only set up in April 1918 when the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Canadian Casualty Clearing Stations came to Pernes, driven back by the German advance.<sup>23</sup>

The 1<sup>st</sup> CCCS chaplain notified John's mother of his death.<sup>24</sup> According to the family, she was so shocked by the news of his death that she suffered a stroke.<sup>25</sup> She died in 1926 after never recovering her health. His father received the monies the army owed John after his death.<sup>26</sup>

John was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).<sup>27</sup>

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- <sup>1</sup> "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 16 December 2014), entry for John Clark, Registration district: Bedale, Sub-registration district: Masham, ED, institution, or vessel: 6, Piece: 4601, Folio: 14, Page Number: 8, Household schedule number: 54. "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 16 December 2014), entry for John Clark, Registration district: Bedale, Sub-registration district: Masham, ED, institution, or vessel: 6, Piece: 4029, Folio: 57, Page Number: 11. "1881 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 16 December 2014), entry for Simpson Clark, Registration district: Bedale, Sub-registration district: Masham, ED, institution, or vessel: 6, Piece: 4872, Folio: 58, Page Number: 9
- <sup>2</sup> "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 16 December 2014), entry for John Clark, Registration district: Bedale, Registration District Number: 538, Sub-registration district: Masham, ED, institution, or vessel: 6, Piece: 29402
- <sup>3</sup> "1861 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 16 December 2014), entry for Simpson Clark, Registration district: Pocklington, Sub-registration district: Pocklington, ED, institution, or vessel: 5, Piece: 3559, Folio: 51, Page Number: 9
- <sup>4</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 16 December 2014), entry for John Lancaster Clark, Registration district: Bedale, Inferred County: Yorkshire-North Riding, Volume: 9d, Page: 675
- <sup>5</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 December 2014), entry for Annie Elizabeth Clark, Registration district: Bedale, Inferred County: Yorkshire-North Riding, Volume: 9d, Page: 641
- <sup>6</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 December 2014), entry for Alice Clark, Registration district: Bedale, Inferred County: Yorkshire-North Riding, Volume: 9d, Page: 655
- <sup>7</sup> "England & Wales births 1837-2006," *Findmypast* ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk): accessed 17 December 2014), entry for Eleanor Clark, District: Bedale, County: Yorkshire, Volume: 9D, Page: 645
- <sup>8</sup> "England & Wales births 1837-2006," *Findmypast* ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk): accessed 17 December 2014), entry for Lucy Clark, District: Bedale, County: Yorkshire, Volume: 9D, Page: 674
- <sup>9</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 December 2014), entry for Jane Clark, Registration district: Bedale, Inferred County: Yorkshire-North Riding, Volume: 9d, Page: 649
- <sup>10</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 December 2014), entry for Miles Notliff Clark, Registration district: Bedale, Inferred County: Yorkshire-North Riding, Volume: 9d, Page: 691
- <sup>11</sup> Information from Emily Horner, family member, December 2014
- <sup>12</sup> "1911 England Census," entry for John Clark
- <sup>13</sup> Information from Emily Horner, family member, December 2014
- <sup>14</sup> "British Army WWI Service Records, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 December 2014), entry for Miles Clark
- <sup>15</sup> "UK, WWI Service Medal and Award Rolls, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 16 December 2014), entry for John Clark
- <sup>16</sup> "British Army WWI Service Records, 1914-1920," entry for Miles Clark
- <sup>17</sup> "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 16 December 2014), entry for John Clark
- <sup>18</sup> "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 16 December 2014), entry for John Clark
- <sup>19</sup> "9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, West Yorkshire Regiment War Diary" provided by family source
- <sup>20</sup> "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," Library and Archives Canada, (records accessed 2013 & 2014), Record Group 9, series IIC10, volume 4556, Record number 512
- <sup>21</sup> Photograph from Emily Horner, family member, December 2014
- <sup>22</sup> "War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13-1919/03/31," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9->

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<sup>23</sup> "Pernes British Military Cemetery" *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/11600/PERNES%20BRITISH%20CEMETERY>: accessed 13 January 2015)

<sup>24</sup> "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," Record number 512

<sup>25</sup> Information from Emily Horner, family member, December 2014

<sup>26</sup> "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk); accessed 19 January 2015), entry for John Clark

<sup>27</sup> "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," entry for John Clark