

Upton Lovell Men That Served Their Country & Returned Home



World War I



19599

ERNEST JOHN HARDING

ROYAL REGIMENT OF ARTILLERY

Ernest John HARDING

Ernest John Harding was born at Upton Lovell on 15th September, 1885 to parents Frank & Rhoda Ann Harding (nee Wise). His birth was registered in the December quarter, 1885 in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire. Frank & Rhoda had married in 1876 at St. Nicholas's Church, North Bradley.

The 1891 England Census recorded Ernest J. Harding as a 6 year old living with his family at No. 21 Upton Lovell, Wiltshire in a four roomed dwelling. His parents were listed as Frank R. Harding (Wool Millman, aged 33, born North Bradley) & Rhoda A. Harding (aged 35, born Frome, Somerset). Ernest was one of 6 children listed on this Census – Arthur E. (aged 14, Wool Gig Runner, born North Bradley), James W. (aged 12, Agricultural Labourer, born Telsford, Somerset), Frank H. (Scholar, aged 10, born Upton Lovell), then Ernest, Ellen L. (Scholar, aged 3, born Upton Lovell) & William F. (aged 1, born Upton Lovell). Also living with the family was Frank Harding's widower father – William Harding (aged 66, born North Bradley).

The 1901 England Census recorded Ernest J. Harding as a 15 year old, Grocer's Apprentice living with his family at 11 Albany Terrace, Wilton, Wiltshire. His parents were listed as Frank R. Harding (Felt Worker, aged 43) & Rhoda A. Harding (aged 45). Ernest was one of 9 children listed on this Census – Arthur E. (aged 24, Felt Worker), James W. (aged 22, Engine Cleaner Railway), Frank H. (aged 20, Assistant __ shop), Alice E. (aged 17, Kitchen Maid) then Ernest, Ellen L. (aged 13, Dressmaker), William F. (aged 11), Sidney N. (aged 6, born Wilton) & Charles N. (aged 3, born Wilton).

Ernest John Harding enlisted with the Royal Field Artillery at Ponypool on 7th September, 1914, with a service number of 19599. He was aged 28 years & 11 months & a Grocer's Manager. His religion was Wesleyan & his next of kin was listed as his father – Frank Harding of 5 Wiley Terrace, Wilton, Wilts.

Gunner Ernest John Harding was posted to No. 2 Depot R.F.A. on 7th September, 1914. He was then posted to 27 Res. Bty on 9th December, 1914. On 16th February he was appointed Acting Bombardier & appointed to Full Bombardier on 13th April, 1915. Bdr Harding was then appointed to Acting Corporal on 11th May, 1915 & promoted to Corporal on 5th July, 1915 on which day he was also appointed as Acting Sergeant. He was promoted as Sergeant on 8th December, 1915.

From the Military History Sheet for Ernest John Harding had served At Home from 7th September, 1914 until 28th May, 1917 a period of 2 years & 204 days. He was then posted to 5 C Res. Bde for India on 18th May, 1917 & served in the North West Frontier Force until 1919. On 1st May, 1919 Ernest John Harding was noted as being "Present with Unit at Amritsar" (India). An entry dated 17th May, 1919 states "Performs the duties of Act/ B.S.M. with effect from 10th April, 1919." (B.S.M. – Battery Serjeant Major)

Ernest John Harding was last attached to No. 12 Ammunition Column, R.F.A. as an Acting B.S.M.

Ernest John Harding embarked for the U.K. per H.T. *Prince Hurbertus* on 22nd October, 1919 & was discharged on 18 November, 1919, aged 34.

Ernest John Harding was entitled to British War & Victory Medals & India General Service Medal with bar marked Afghanistan N.W.F. (North West Frontier) 1919.



British War Medal, Victory Medal & India General Service Medal

Ernest John Harding had married Violet May Matthews.

A death for Ernest J. Harding, aged 76 was registered in March, 1962 in the district of Bournemouth, Dorset.

Probate details: Harding, Ernest John of 42 Oswald Road, Winton, Bournemouth died 24 February 1962 at 84 Southbourne Road, Bournemouth. Probate Winchester 30 March to Violet May Harding, widow. Effects £3,175 2s. 5d.