



Private John Robert Bleasdale
Kings Liverpool Regiment
No.64184

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Here is a [link](#) to my webpage

In early November, 1876, at a small terraced house in Guardian street, Salford, a Gilder (someone who applies gold leaf) by the name of John Bleasdale and his wife, Mary Bleasdale (nee Clarke) awaited their third born. Named after both his grand fathers, John Clarke and Robert Bleasdale, John Robert Bleasdale came into this world on the 7th November and was John and Mary's first and only son.

1876 Birth in the Sub-district of <u>Greengate Salford</u> in the County of <u>Lancaster</u>										
Columns: 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
No.	When and where born	Name, if any	Sex	Name and surname of father	Name, surname and maiden surname of mother	Occupation of father	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of registrar	Notes entered after registration
81	Seventh November 1876 9 Guardian Street	John Robert	Boy	John Bleasdale	Mary Ann Bleasdale formerly Clarke	Gilder	M. A. Bleasdale mother 9 Guardian Street Salford	Eighteenth December 1876	GT	/

By the time John Robert was 4, in 1881, his mother had died and his father took him and his two sisters to live with his Mother at 1 Paradise, located in the Greengate area of Salford. Also present at the census were John Robert's two uncles Richard and Robert. There were now three generations of the family living under one roof.

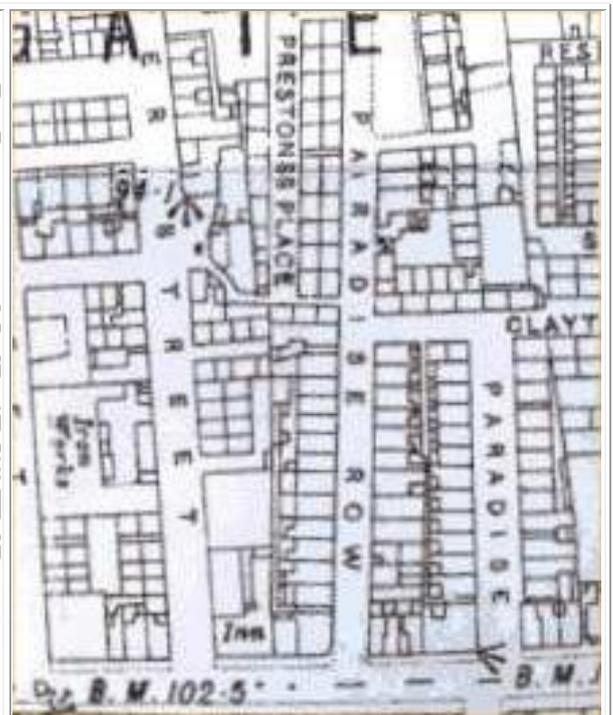
Dwelling: 1 Paradise
 Census Place: Salford, Lancashire, England
 Source: FHL Film 1341946 PRO Ref RG11 Piece 3963 Folio 80 Page 24

Name	Rel	Marr	Age	Sex	Occupation	Birthplace
Esther Bleasdale	H	W	39 (59)	F		Lancaster, Lancashire
John Bleasdale	S	W	34	M	Gilder	Preston, Lancashire
Esther Bleasdale	GD	U	7	F	Scholar	Salford, Lancashire
Ellen Bleasdale	GD	U	6	F	Scholar	Salford, Lancashire
John R Bleasdale	GS	U	4	M		Salford, Lancashire
Richard Bleasdale	S	U	31	M	Gilder	Bradford, W Yorkshire
Robert Bleasdale	S	U	29	M	Maker up in warehouse	Preston, Lancashire

Paradise was built before 1848 and lasted until after the second World War. You can see from below that they were small terraced houses, with out-houses. This type of housing typically consisted of two or three floors, and a cellar.



Paradise, 1848



Paradise, 1950's

Their grandmother died, and the uncles had also moved on, but John Robert's family remained at the same property for over ten years as the 1891 census shows below. This census also indicates that John Robert had a younger

sister, Annie, who was curiously missing from the 1881 census (she would have been aged 2). Young John Robert had a job as a post/errand boy and his father had also become a carver in addition to gilding.

1	4	John Bleasdale	Head	17	17	Widow	39 Clarence Street	John Bleasdale	Carver
		Mary E	Wife	14	14	Spinster	39 Clarence Street	John Shirley	Moulder
		Robert	Son	1	1	Boy			
		Annie	Daughter	2	2	Girl			

Nine years later, on the 8th June, 1900 at St. Clements Church, Broughton, John married Eliza(beth) Shirley, the youngest (aged 20) daughter of John Shirley and Mary Shirley (nee Marsden). Witnesses at the marriage were James Shirley (brother of the bride) and Esther Bleasdale (sister of the groom). On the marriage certificate, the bride and groom both listed their address as 39 Clarence Street, in Broughton, Salford.

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname	Age	Condition	Rank or Profession	Address of Marriage	Father's Name and Occupation	of Father
5	June 8th 1900	John Robert Bleasdale	23	Bachelor	Wirer	39 Clarence Street	John Bleasdale	Carver
		Eliza Shirley	20	Spinster		39 Clarence Street	John Shirley	Moulder

Married in the **Parish Church**, according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the **Established Church** by *Preston Haigh*

This Marriage was solemnised between us John Robert Bleasdale and Eliza Shirley In the presence of us, James Shirley and Esther Bleasdale

John Robert listed his occupation as a wirer at the time of his marriage - though uncertain, this was probably the same occupation as a wire drawer - a person who made wire from metal by drawing the metal through various size holes in a template.

[John Robert Bleasdale has not been found in the census of 1901 - perhaps he joined the Army and went to fight in the Boer War ?]

[A check of the 1910 census has not been made yet]

A family photo shows John Robert in an Army Uniform, in France.

Due to the horrendous loss of life in the early years of the First world War, conscription was introduced in February 1916. At first only single men and childless widowers aged 18 to 41 were called up, but by 25th May this expanded to include married men. This means that John Robert probably joined the army after May 1916, aged 39. At this time the British Army began to form Infantry Labour Companies to carry out duties originally in the UK, and then in France. These companies were made up of men who were medically not fit enough for service in a front line unit, generally this included the older men.

In the NW England these companies were formed as part of the King's Liverpool Regiment (KLR) (the Manchester's did not have any Infantry Labour Companies). John Robert's roll number (41449) indicates that he was one of the early members of the Labour Corps formed in early 1917, and more

precisely, that he was in the 70th Company of the Labour Corps. This also indicates that he previously served in the 5th Infantry Battalion, Labour Company of the KLR (Roll No. 64184).

The Labour Corps was formed in January 1917 and absorbed several Infantry Battalions in April 1917.

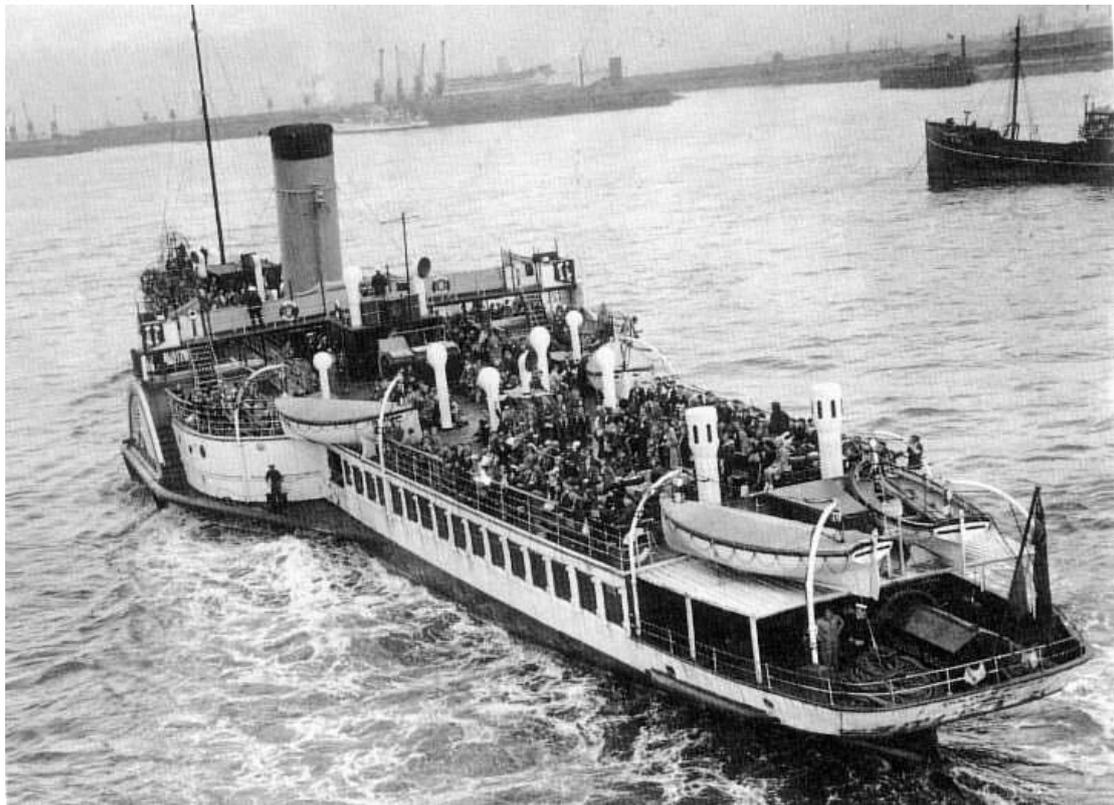
Here is John in his 5th KLR uniform taken somewhere in France (this was taken prior to August 1917- which is when 70 Company received their new General Service Badges).



The Regimental Medal Roll shows that John was awarded the British War Medal and the British Victory Medal. John was not awarded the 1914-1915 Star which indicates that he did not serve in a field of conflict prior to 1916.



So, it was that on the 27th February 1917 John Robert Bleasdale found himself with the rest of 70th Company, Labour Corps, upon the the Golden Eagle Paddle steamer heading out of Folkstone, destined for his first taste of the conflict in France. He was heading straight into a war that had lasted 2 years, and already cost millions of lives.



(P.S. "Golden Eagle" on the Thames in 1939 this steamer also took part in Operation Dynamo - the rescue of the B.E.F. from Dunkirk)

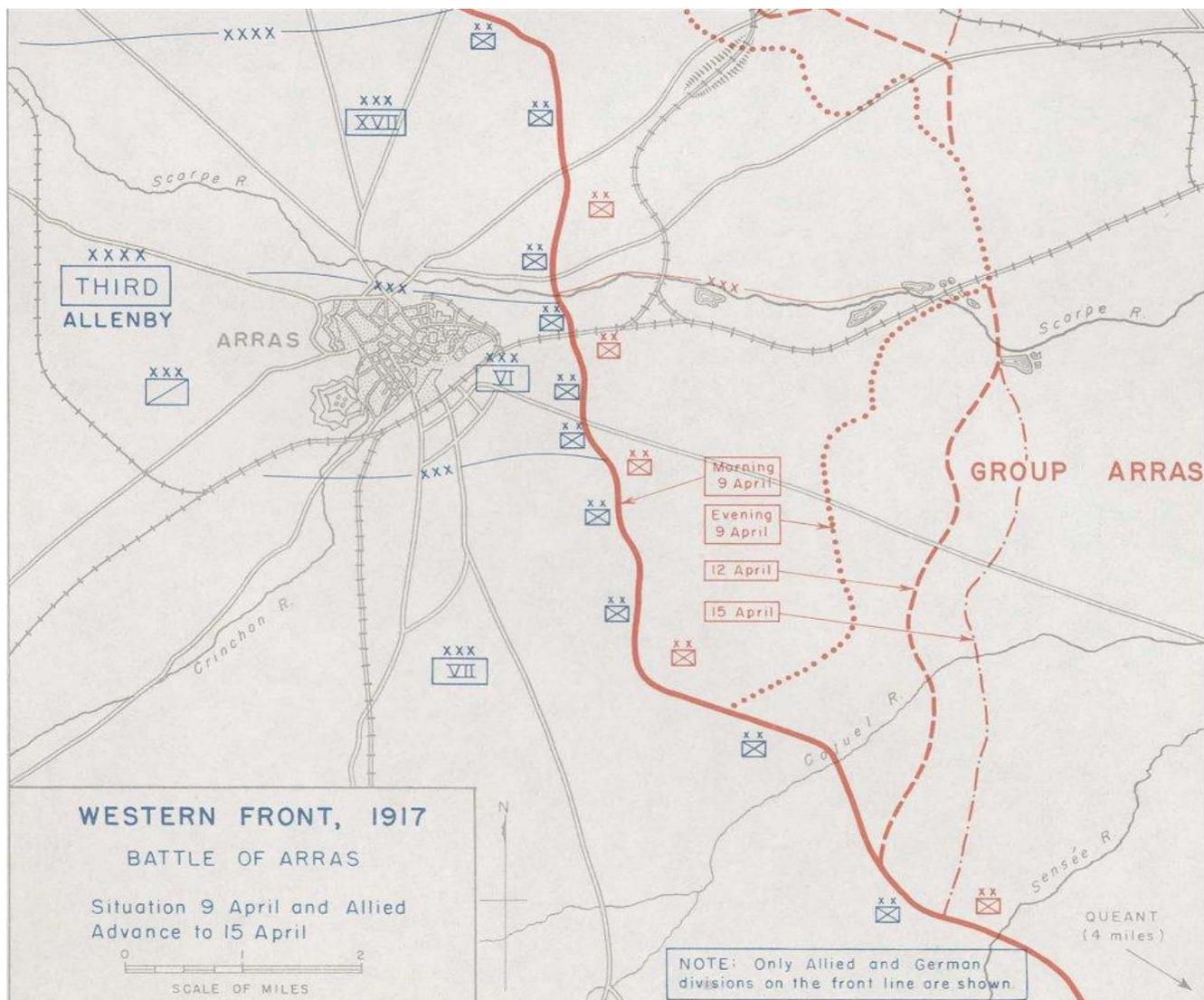
5th Infantry Labour Company of the King's Liverpool Regiment landed at Bologne and headed to No.3 rest camp at Ostrohove. During March they were attached to the 3rd Army, billeted in an old Hospital in the town of Albert , but within weeks had received orders to move up to the town of Arras to support the Allied offensive towards the end of March.

5th Coy movements March 1917

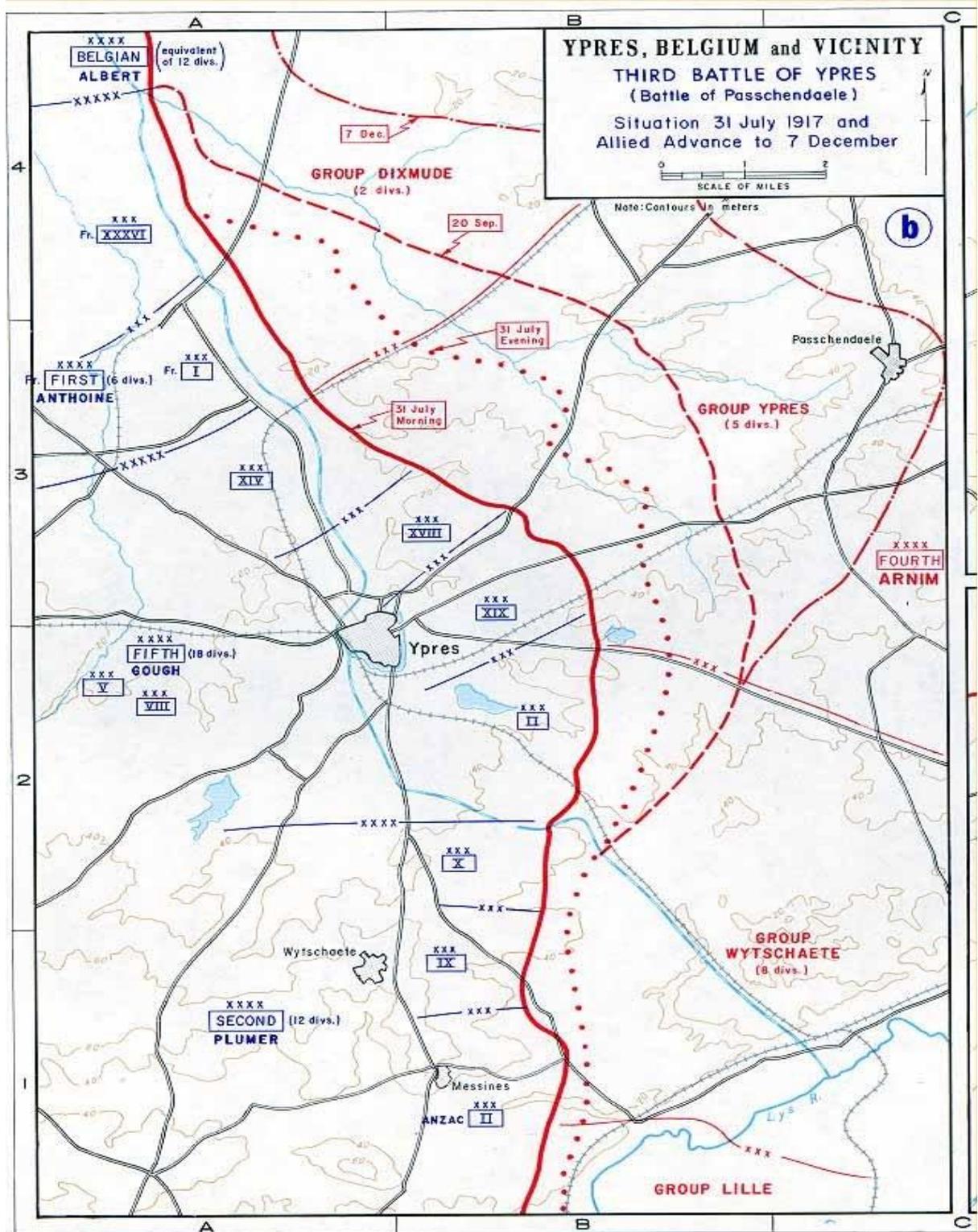
The company were now attached to the 30th Division of the VII Corps, this Division were then involved in the second battle of the Scarpe, 23rd-24th March, and 5th Coy suffered losses to enemy fire on the 29th March (possibly supporting XVII Corps during the Battle of Arleux 28th-29th March). During April, the company were at work on the Roads to the South and East of Arras with the XVIII Corps and suffered further casualties. The Company were attached to the VI Corps immediately after the Corps' involvement in the third Battle of the Scarpe on the 4th May. The VI Corps were also involved in the capture of Roeux 13th-14th May. The Arras Offensive had pushed East about 5Km by the end of May. On the 14th May the Company were formed into the 70th Company of the Labour Corps.

5th Coy movements April-June 1917

During June and July the company performed further vital work on Road and rail supply links to the front line troops of the XVIII Corps, Third Army, and suffered further casualties (1 Killed, 4 wounded, 2 shell shocked) from enemy shelling.



During July 1917 the company moved into the Belgian sector under the XVIII Corps of the 5th Army, and supported the 3rd Battle of Ypres (31st July- 7 December). The company supported the drive made by the XVIII Corps NE of Ypres during the next few months and suffered several casualties to enemy fire during September, including Sam Slinger.



The Company was relieved by 155 Company during September, and took some well-earned rest, before moving back towards Arras.

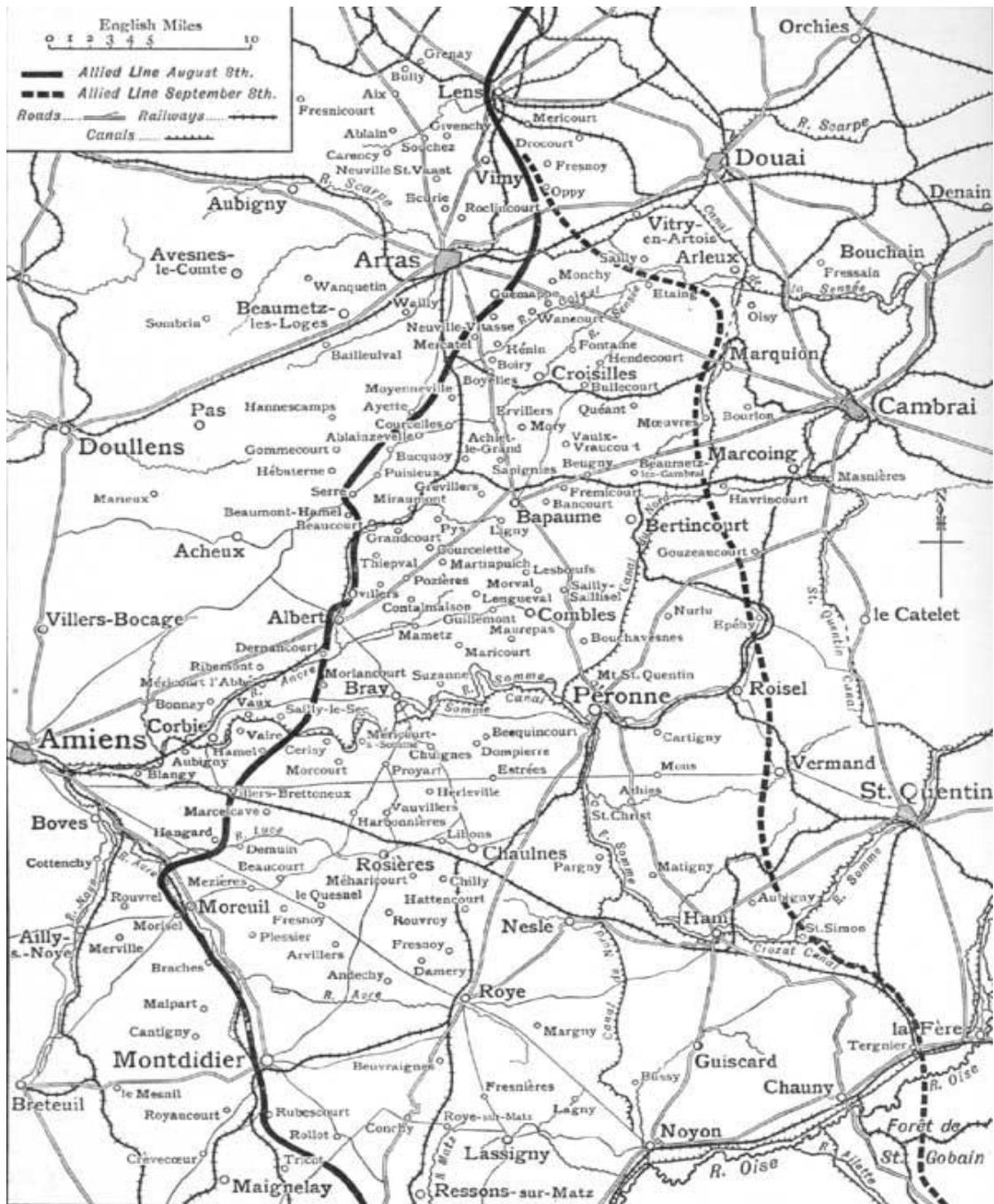
Movements of 70 Coy Aug-Oct 1917

By March 1918, 70 Company were supporting II Corps (Anzacs), Second Army, working on Duck walks (in the Wytschaete area to the SE of Arras?), and were building defensive positions for the VIII Corps later that same month.



[duck walks]

In June 70 company were back helping the II Corps build up their defences, and in July they had switched to working with X corps, and suffering further casualties during their advance in Flanders (18th August - 6th September). 70 Company continued to support X Corps as they pushed SE towards Cambrai in the Battle of Ypres (28th September - 2nd October), Battle of Courtrai (14th - 19th October), and action at Ooteghem ~ 25th October.



[There is also a reference that towards the end of the War, 70 Company were building highways for the V Corps as they traversed the Forêt de Mormal, East of Cambrai is the Arras sector]

After the Armistice, in November 1918, 70 Company transferred back to the 5th Army, assisting the XV Corps in REJET-MOULEUX, in Belgium.

The New Year found 70 Company still at work with the XV Corps in CELLES, and they were then transferred to perform dock work in Dunkirk, before returning to England.

John Robert Bleasdale managed to come out of the War unscathed after serving 2 years under trying conditions, and returned home to his wife and two children in Salford.

When his children married in 1935, he was a Store Keeper and resided at 2 Clement Street, Broughton, in Salford



John and Elizabeth had their first grandchild John Bevan Bleasdale (my Dad) in 1938. Here is a photo from about 1940 showing my Dad, Grandad and Great Grandad.

Fifteen years later John Robert had moved to Scott Street, Prestwich, Manchester to live closer to his children who had swapped the terraced housing of Salford, for the more healthy 30's housing developments further from the centre of the Manchester and Salford conurbation.

John Robert died 22/6/1957 aged 80, and his remains lie in the graveyard of St Mary's Church, Prestwich, Manchester.

His wife Betty, died just over two years later on the 7 Oct 1959, aged 79, and her remains were placed along side John. Subsequently, his two children John Shirley Bleasdale and Ruby Armstrong were also placed in the same plot.