

# Compton Chamberlayne Men

## That Served Their Country & Returned Home



### World War I

#### Alexander CLAPP

Alexander Clapp was born at Compton Chamberlayne in 1881, to parents William & Mary Clapp (nee Dean). His birth was registered in the June quarter of 1881 in the district of Wilton, Wiltshire.

The 1871 Census, before Alexander's birth, shows Alexander's parents – William Clapp, a Farm Bailiff, aged 25 & Mary Clapp, aged 26. William & Mary's marriage had been registered in the district of Wellington, Somerset in the March quarter of 1871. Also living with them at the time of the census at Huish Chamflower, Somerset was Mary's nephew – 12 year old Charles Dean whose occupation was recorded as a servant.

The 1881 Census, before Alexander's birth, shows the Clapp family living at Compton Chamberlayne. Parents William (a Farm Bailiff, aged 35) & Mary (aged 37) had 5 children – William (aged 6), Annie (aged 4) Francis (aged 3) Beatrice (aged 1) & James (aged 1 month). Also included in the household was Martha Read, a visitor, aged 21, who was born in Compton Chamberlayne & whose occupation was listed as servant.

Alexander would have been around one year old when his mother, Mary Clapp, aged 38 died. Her death was registered in the June quarter of 1882, in the district of Wilton. The Burial Register transcript from 2008 by Sid Adcock (then Chairman of the Parish Meeting) shows that Mary Clapp was the wife of William Clapp & she was buried on 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1882 in grave 141 in Compton Chamberlayne Cemetery on High St.

The 1891 Census records Alexander Clapp as a 10 year old living at Compton Chamberlayne with his father William (a Farm Bailiff, aged 45) & 3 siblings – William J (aged 16), Francis (aged 13),

Alexander & Beatrice (aged 11). Also included in the household was Annie Bailey, niece, aged 25 & a housekeeper.

Alexander Clapp married Lilian Sargant on 26<sup>th</sup> December, 1905. Their marriage was registered in the December quarter of 1905, in the district of Reigate, in the county of Surrey.

Alexander & Lily's first son – William was born on 30<sup>th</sup> June, 1906. Their second child – Edith was born on 20<sup>th</sup> February, 1908. Dorothy, their third child was born on 1<sup>st</sup> July, 1909.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 1910, at the age of 28 years & 10 months, Alexander Clapp joined the Territorial Force for a period of 4 years, with the 5<sup>th</sup> Batt "The Queens" Royal West Surrey Regiment. His address on the Attestation papers was 3 Avenue Cottages, Albury Rd, Merstham, Surrey & his occupation was listed as Blacksmith. He stated that he had previous military experience with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Batt Wiltshire Regiment & was discharged due to Time served.

Alexander & Lily's fourth child - Walter was born on 20<sup>th</sup> December, 1910.

The 1911 Census records Alexander Clapp as a 30 year old Blacksmith (Striker), living with his wife Lilian, aged 26. They had been married 5 years & had 4 children, all living – William Alec (aged 4), Edith Muriel (aged 3), Dorothy Lilian (aged 1<sup>9/12</sup> years ) & Walter Gordon (aged 4 months). The family are recorded as living at 3 Avenue Villa's, Albury Rd, Merstham, Surrey.

Alexander & Lily's fifth child - Arthur was born on 18<sup>th</sup> July, 1912.

Pte Alexander Clapp, service number 1156, attended the annual Territorial Force training in 1910, 1911, 1912 & 1913.

He re-engaged his service on 14<sup>th</sup> January, 1914 for a period of one year, at the age of 32 & again on 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 1915 for a further year.

As part of the Territorial Force –Pte Alexander Clapp was a "Part-time" soldier & the role of the Territorial soldier was home defence. These Territorial soldiers were not obliged to serve overseas but with World War 1 in progress Territorial soldiers were asked if they would be prepared to serve their country overseas. On 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1914, Pte Alexander Clapp signed his approval to serve outside of the UK in the event of a national emergency.

Pte Alexander Clapp was promoted to Temp L/Corporal on 27<sup>th</sup> November, 1914 & then appointed a/Corporal on 28<sup>th</sup> January, 1915. He was promoted to A/L/Sgt on 27<sup>th</sup> November, 1915 then to Acting Sgt on 12<sup>th</sup> September, 1916. Alexander Clapp was again promoted on 8<sup>th</sup> February, 1917 to Sergeant & his Service number was renumbered to 240083.

During his service with the Royal West Surrey Regiment, Alexander Clapp served in India for 13 months, he was also part of the Exp. Force in Mesopotamia, in the Middle East for 3 years.

Sergeant Clapp was mentioned in dispatches by Lt General W. R. Marshall K.C.B., KCSI, as deserving of Special Mention ( Authority 7<sup>th</sup> Suppl to London Gazette 23/8/1918).

Sergeant Alexander Clapp was formerly discharged from Service on 27<sup>th</sup> March, 1919 due to the end of World War 1. He was aged 38 & was entitled to Territorial Force Efficiency Medal, 1914-15 Star, British War medal & the Victory Medal. His address in 1919 & 1920, for receiving his medals, was 173 Albury Rd, Merstham, Surrey.

Alexander Clapp was entitled to receive a partial pension upon discharge from the Army due to myalgia on right side & hip problems. He had a 30% degree of disability.

A death was registered for an Alexander Clapp, aged 78, in the March quarter of 1960, in the district of North Bucks, Buckinghamshire.