

ALFRED, JAMES AND EDWARD LUKER

ALFRED LUKER

7714 Acting Sergeant Alfred Luker, 1st Royal Berkshire Regiment KIA: 28 Sept 1915

Alfred Luker was born in 1887, in Crowmarsh Gifford, the third son of Charles and Sarah Luker. Charles was a general farm labourer, and with some fourteen children to support it must have been a hard life. By 1901 Alfred, just fourteen years old, had left home and was working as a plough boy on the farm in Eyres Lane, Ewelme. Ten years later, the 1911 Census shows him sharing a cottage in Clacks Lane, Ewelme with his elder brother George and younger brother James.

The Lukers were a widespread local family, with common roots in Crowmarsh. Two of Alfred's cousins, John Thomas and Sidney Luker, are recorded as working in Guernsey in 1911 with Harry Green (see the Harry Green story).

When war broke out, Alfred joined the Royal Berkshire Regiment and the early war losses found him sent to France on 4th January 1915 as an Acting Sergeant. He was killed in action on 28th September 1915, during the ill-fated Battle of Loos (see the Loos story), when his brigade took 288 casualties in a failed attack. Another Benson soldier in the same battalion, Pte Ernest Brown, was also killed that day.

JAMES LUKER

15179 Private James Luker, Royal Machine Gun Corps KIA 15th Sept 1916

James Luker was a younger brother of Alfred, born in Crowmarsh in 1893. Before the war he worked as a farm labourer, sharing a cottage with two of his brothers in Clacks Lane in Ewelme. James enlisted in the Royal Berkshire Regiment initially (nr 195552) but was later transferred to the newly created Machine Gun Corps. He was serving with the 71st Battalion of the MGC on the Somme, when he was killed in action on 15th September 1916. This was the 77th day of the Battle of the Somme.

James was buried in Guillemont Cemetery and was posthumously awarded the Victory & British War Medals.

EDWARD LUKER

116368 Gunner Luker, Royal Garrison Artillery

Edward was a cousin of Alfred and James, born in Crowmarsh in 1889. He was still living there in 1911, working as a farm labourer and helping his two brothers to support their widowed mother Louisa. When he enlisted in 1916 at the age of 25, he was described as being 5ft 11 inches, weighed 146lb and had a chest of 38 inches. He was assessed as medically fit – subject to dental treatment!

Edward served in Italy, Egypt and Salonika for two years, but sadly picked up a serious case of dysentery along the way. He was discharged from the Army in Feb 1919 as suffering from

dysentery, anaemia and severe deafness – the latter a common fate of gunners through the ages.