



Arthur Thomas Beal

Arthur Thomas Beal (recorded as Beale on the Isleworth Memorial) was born in the Brentford area in 1890 and had seven brothers and sisters. The family lived at 275 High Street, Brentford. His father, John, was a pork butcher. In 1899, when Arthur was only 9 years old, his mother Ann, nee Fincher, died. Her death may possibly have been associated with the birth of his youngest sister Dorothy, who was born only a couple of months before her mother died. Ann was about 47 years old. By 1911, Arthur, now 21, was living and working with his older brother, John, who was a butcher like his father and they lived at 21/23 South Street Isleworth.

Although most of the service records for First World War soldiers were destroyed by fire during the Second World War, Arthur's burnt, and rather confusing records, did survive. There are two enlistment dates in his records – 25.11.15 and 8.2.16! It appears that Arthur was assigned to the Royal Fusiliers with a service number G/27790, but then he transferred to several different Labour Companies with the service number 180966, before finally serving with the 153rd Labour Corps.

At the start of the war, the British relied on French civilians and the Army Service Corps Labour Companies (ASCLC) to unload ships, maintain roads and railways, build sanitation facilities and organise camp stores et cetera. Pioneer Battalions, attached to Divisions, were also used for manual work. It was a monumental task and the organisation was haphazard. As well as fighting, many infantrymen were also expected to dig trenches, install barbed wire, and move supplies during their rest periods. From January 1917 the Labour Corps were formed (absorbing the 28 ASC Labour Companies). Men who were medically unfit for active service - wounded men, conscientious objectors and poor performers were deployed for work in these Corps.....often within range of enemy guns.

Researching men of the Labour Corps is difficult as there are very few documents or diaries relating to the daily activities of these Units. Today their roles are undertaken by the Royal Logistics Corps.

On the 20th November 1917, the British forces over-whelmed the Germans by launching a surprise attack using tanks and thousands of infantry soldiers. This was the beginning of the Battle of Cambrai. Ten days later on November 30th, the Germans mounted a massive and effective counter attack recapturing most of the ground it had previously lost. It was on this date that Arthur was 'killed in action'. As he is buried at Hermies Hill British Cemetery Pas de Calais, the nearest cemetery to Cambrai, it is very possible that he died doing his job during this terrifying day. Arthur was one of the 44,000 British and 45,000 Germans killed, wounded or lost in action in this battle. He was awarded the Victory and the British Medals.

From 1917 to the end of the war, 2,000 (1%) soldiers and civilians died from wounds or were killed whilst serving on the Western Front with the Labour Corps. Interestingly 1,612 of the dead were Chinese.

CONTINUATION OF GRAVES (Continuation and Re-burials)						
SERIAL NUMBER: 2442						
Name of Country of Re-burial: BELGIUM - WEST FLANDERS PROVINCE						
No.	Date	Sex	Reference where body found	Was grave in ground?	Regimental or service number	Name of individual (as recorded on Form 3)
1	20	M	K.33.A.0.7	Yes	47420.FUSILERS. 2442.153.LABOUR CORPS	Arthur Thomas Beal
2	20	M	K.33.A.0.7	Yes	47420.FUSILERS. 2442.153.LABOUR CORPS	Arthur Thomas Beal
3	20	M	K.33.A.0.7	Yes	47420.FUSILERS. 2442.153.LABOUR CORPS	Arthur Thomas Beal
4	20	M	K.33.A.0.7	Yes	47420.FUSILERS. 2442.153.LABOUR CORPS	Arthur Thomas Beal
5	20	M	K.33.A.0.7	Yes	47420.FUSILERS. 2442.153.LABOUR CORPS	Arthur Thomas Beal

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Arthur's name appears on this document. It is a list of individuals who have been exhumed from smaller or isolated cemeteries and reburied in the cemetery at Hermies Hill. It provides his basic details, in addition to a map reference of his original burial location – K.33.A.0.7. Arthur was also commemorated at All Saints Church, Isleworth.

