



Albert Edward Pritchard was born in Isleworth in 1898. He was one of 13 children born to Thomas and Mary Pritchard. Thomas was born in Buckinghamshire. The 1881 Census shows that he was an agricultural labourer by trade and was boarding at The Crown Public House in Harmondsworth, which still stands today. In 1887 Thomas married Mary Jane Barker in Heston Church and by 1901 they were living at 13 North Street, Downton Place in the 'village of Isleworth' with their growing family of three daughters and four sons. By 1911 the family moved to 19 Lower Square Isleworth and four more children had arrived. The elder boys were now contributing to the family income, one as a tinker's labourer and another as an errand boy. Daughter Emily is a laundry maid. Money must have been very tight so it is hardly surprising that son, Albert, would choose to join the army.

Albert would only have been 16 in 1914 so it is unlikely that he joined up at the beginning of the war. On 20 November 1915, a Middlesex Chronicle article reported that Albert Pritchard had run to his brother's aid when he had heard that little George had fallen in the river. He pulled the three year old out of the water, but he was dead. At some point, after this incident, Albert enlisted at Hounslow joining the 9th Battalion East Surrey Regiment. In 1918 - so close to the end of the war - Albert's story unfolds:

On the 24th March, *whilst dinner was being served*, Albert's Battalion received orders to immediately man the defences at Hattoncourt *where an uneventful night was spent*. The next day the Battalion moved forward and came into contact with the enemy. That night the enemy shell fire was *'terrific and many casualties were sustained'*. Then, at 7.45am on 26th March, Albert's Battalion received a message that their *'right flank had given and had withdrawn, and at 8am another messenger reported that the trench 30 yards immediately in front of the Bn was full of enemy. There was a good deal of machine gun firing on both sides. At 8.30am the enemy launched a violent attack all along the front. The Bn....beat off the enemy again and again causing very heavy casualties in the enemy ranks. The Bn was determined to hold on at all costs and would not withdraw.....even...against overwhelming numbers, every officer & man fighting to the last, until 9.30am when the Bn was completely surrounded. Major C A Clark kept on fighting and is believed to be a prisoner of war'*. Unfortunately records from the Red Cross tell us that Albert was also 'aus dem felde' – 'taken from the field' that morning, and held in a POW Camp at Giessen until he died August 1st 1918 aged 20 from meningitis.



Geissen P of W Camp by Rapael Drouart 1894-1972
Courtesy of The National Army Museum