



Jasper George Fletcher

32 Wheeldon Avenue

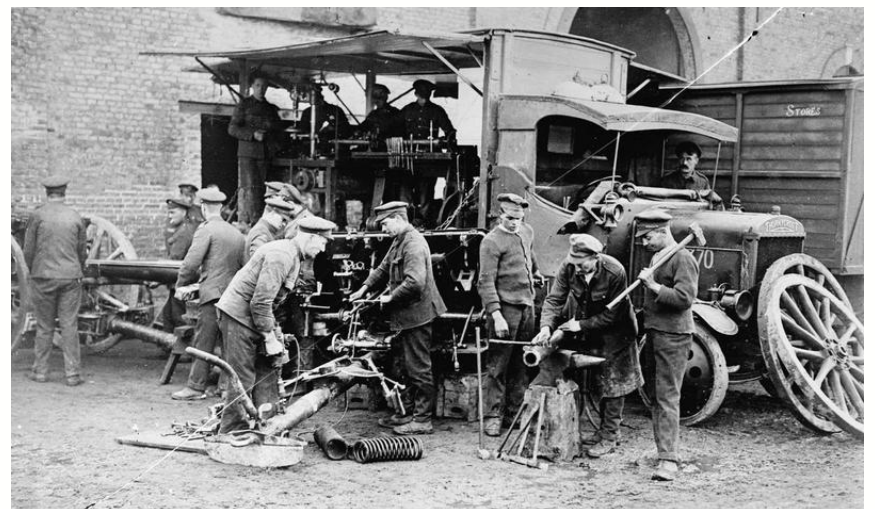
Jasper was born in 1885 in the Shardlow district of Derby. He was one of 6 children and his father was a Blacksmith, later becoming a more general ironsmith. Jasper followed his father into the trade - in the 1901 census, aged 16, his occupation is described as a shoeing blacksmith. At this date the family were living at 139 Kedleston Road. Ten years later the family had moved to Duffield Road and Jasper, now 25, was a Checker for a railway company (almost certainly the Midland Railway).

Although Jasper's full military record does not survive we know from his medal record card that he volunteered for military service and he first saw action in France, landing there on 21 November 1915, earning himself the 1914-1915 Star.



The 1914-15 Star (left) was awarded to officers and men of the British and Imperial forces who served against Germany and her allies during 1914 and 1915. The medal was always awarded alongside the British War Medal and Victory Medal. The award of this medal is an indication that a man volunteered for military service as men conscripted after 1916 would only receive the British War Medal and Victory Medal.

He served with the Army Ordnance Corps. The corps, which was organised into companies rather than regiments and battalions, had a role in both supply and repair. In the supply area it was responsible for weapons, ammunition, clothing, armoured vehicles and other military equipment, and also provided other services such as laundry, mobile baths and photography. The AOC also dealt with much of the repair of Army equipment and it may be that Jasper's experience as a blacksmith made his skills of use to the Corps.



Troops of the Army Ordnance Corps re-assembling and repairing guns at a mobile artillery repair workshop on the Beauval-Amiens road, during the German Spring Offensive, March to July 1918. © IWM (Q 347)

While on leave in the summer of 1916 he married Rose Louisa Cowan, an elementary school teacher, who lived at 32 Wheeldon Avenue, with her aunt, Mary Breach, who was a dressmaker. Rose and Mary originally came from London but are listed at 32 Wheeldon Avenue in the 1911 census.

Cont/-



Jasper George Fletcher

continued

On 17 June 1918 Jasper was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal. During the First World War the MSM was awarded to non-commissioned officers for “meritorious conduct” when in the field or for acts of non-combat gallantry. Outstanding acts of bravery in the face of the enemy were awarded with the Military Medal or the Victoria Cross.

War Office,
17th June, 1918.
His Majesty the KING has been graciously pleased to approve of the award of the Meritorious Service Medal to the undermentioned Warrant Officers, Non-commissioned Officers and Men, in recognition of valuable services rendered with the Forces in France during the present war:—

300500 Coy. Q.M. Sjt. J. B. Fletcher, Manch. R. (Reedley Hollows).
06735 2nd Cpl. (A./Sjt.) J. G. Fletcher, A.O.C. (Derby).
98621 L./C. J. T. Fletcher, R.E. (Whitby).
305066 Coy. S./M. W. Fletcher, Lan. Fus. (Salford).

Above: London Gazette for 14 June 1918. In the London Gazette military promotions and medal awards were announced.
Below: The Meritorious Service Medal (back and front, similar to that awarded to Jasper (Wikimedia Commons Image: Andre Kritzinger)



Starting out as Lance Corporal, Jasper was promoted to Acting Sergeant and later to Lieutenant and was finally commissioned as Acting Company Officer on 29 September 1918.

By the middle of 1919 Jasper was living back at 32 Wheeldon Avenue with Rose. They must have moved into their own home in about 1920 as they disappear from the Register of Electors for this area. Their son David was born in Derby on 28 May 1920.

The next glimpse of their lives is in 1934 when their daughter, Margaret was born in Trentham, Staffordshire and we know from telephone directories that the family continued to live in this area until about 1958. Jasper died in June 1965, aged 79, living in Bucklow Hill, Cheshire. Rose outlived him by 11 years – she died in Macclesfield in 1976.

Awarded the "Meritorious Service Medal." DEVOTION FRANCE

Surname Fletcher
Christian Name J. G.
Rank 2nd Cpl (A/Sjt)
Corps A.O.C.
Regimental Number 06735
Date of Gazette 14/6/18
Registered Paper 0137/5058

(M.S. S.) W6286/RP1211 8,000 2/18 (2x47c) V. & Co. H16/1244

Jasper's medal card. © The National Archive