

William Charles M Elford

William Charles M Elford was born in Tuckton, which at that time was in Hampshire. His parents were Elizabeth and George Elford; in 1905 they were living in Tuckton, in the ecclesiastical parish of St Katherine's, Southbourne and George was working as a blacksmith and farmer. By 1911, the family had moved to South Sway Farm, in the New Forest, where George was still farming. William was working as a farmhand.

William enlisted at Southbourne, on the 30th March 1916, when he was aged 19 years and 10 months; his papers show he was unmarried, willing to be vaccinated and lists his employment as either carman or barman (the original is damaged). If he completed and signed the form himself, he has beautiful handwriting. He was living at Spencer's Farm, Nursling, at the time, where his family had moved. He was posted to France.

He served in the Royal Engineering Corps, and is listed variously as being with the 11th Forestry Company and the 317th Foreway Company. Foreway companies were involved with constructing trams and railways, forestry with felling and managing timber, so the two jobs are quite different. The Royal engineers museum war diaries list 371 Forestry company (as being previously 11th Forestry Company, so maybe this is yet another transcription error.

On 1st November William was admitted to No. 10 General Hospital with severe abdominal pains. He died a day later. His commanding officer described him as competent, trustworthy and a loss to the company. He is buried at Rouen.

Ann Laird - Rownhams December 2014