

# ***Cecil Andrews Clarke MM, died 24 April 1917, aged 26; Eric Burton Clarke, died 25 March 1918, aged 29***

The Clarke family lived in Crouch End and Kentish Town before moving to 49 Hertford Road. The parents were George and Kate, and in the 1911 census Kate is shown as the head of the household; George may have been an invalid as his occupation is given as 'formerly a black lead manufacturer'. By this time their four sons were all adult: Harold (27) was a motor mechanic, Kenneth (24) was a schoolmaster, Eric (22) was an insurance clerk and 20 year old Cecil was a tea blender's clerk. On 9 April that year Cecil was confirmed at Christ Church North Finchley, and although his home address was Hertford Road his parish is given as St Luke's Finchley (the church was in Mountfield Road until the 1980s). Kate's 83 year old aunt Ann lived with the family too. At some time before 1917 the family moved to 95 Durham Road.

Cecil was a territorial and enlisted at the outbreak of war in 1/7 Middlesex Regiment, and was deployed to France in March 1915. He was commissioned as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant attached to the Heavy Artillery Group on 22 September 1916. He had a distinguished career, being mentioned in despatches twice as well as being awarded the Military Medal. The Military Medal (see pictures opposite) was only initiated in March 1916 and could only be awarded to NCOs and other ranks, and thus he must have been one of the first recipients.

Cecil died on 24 April 1917 'killed by piece of shell while rescuing a wounded British airman' according to the cemetery records, and was buried in Maroeuil British Cemetery just six miles NW of Arras. His tombstone bears the engraving '*Greater Love Hath No Man Than This St John XV.VIII*'.

Eric enlisted at Wood Green as a private in the 21<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment, and his death is recorded as taking place on 25 March 1918. He has no grave, but Eric's name is recorded on Bay 7 of the Arras Memorial. This commemorates almost 35,000 servicemen from the United Kingdom, South Africa and New Zealand who died in and around Arras between the spring of 1916 and August 1918, and have no known grave. The significant events of this period were the Battle of Arras in April-May 1917, and the Ludendorff Offensive (the last major attack by the German army) which began on 21 March 1918.

Both Cecil and Eric are commemorated on the All Saints' War Memorial. Mr and Mrs Clarke and their two elder sons moved to Oxhey near Watford in the 1920s, and neither Harold nor Kenneth married. The family remained in Oxhey until Kenneth's death in 1959, the end of the Clarke family.