

PRIVATE CHARLES WILLIAM RICE

R/385315, Remounts Depot (Shirehampton), Army Service Corps

Died aged 21 on 16 November 1918

Buried with honour in *Bristol (Arnos Vale) Cemetery*; Screenwall 3, 722

Commemorated in Tewkesbury at the Cross and in the Abbey



Bristol (Arnos Vale) Cemetery, Screenwall



Army Service Corps

CHARLES WILLIAM RICE was born in 1897 at Pirton, near Pershore in Worcestershire, to Alfred Rice, an Agricultural Labourer, and Mary Jane (formerly Preston). Alfred was born in Defford, whilst Mary came from Pirton. Alfred and Mary had a total of five children, all of whom were still alive in 1911 when the family was still living near Pershore. At that time Alfred's occupation was described as 'Waggoner on Farm' and Charles was a 'Waggoner's Boy', suggesting that he was probably working with his father. Alfred died in 1914 at the age of 51 and his death was registered in Pershore. After Alfred's death, Mary brought the family to Tewkesbury and was living at 85 Church Street when Charles died. Mary was still living there in 1919 but is not buried in Tewkesbury; it seems likely that she moved to Cheltenham where her death, at the age of 88, was registered in 1955.

Charles enlisted or was conscripted into the Army Service Corps and was posted to the Remounts Depot at Shirehampton, near Bristol, a logical assignment given his peace-time work. The ASC Remounts Service was responsible for the provisioning of horses and mules to all other Army units. A Remount Squadron consisted of

approximately 200 soldiers, who obtained and trained 500 horses; they were generally older, experienced soldiers.

The Shirehampton Remount Depot was opened early in the war, in September 1914, and operated until October 1919. It was established to receive horses and mules which landed at Avonmouth from Canada, America and other countries, and had a capacity for around 5,000 animals. Over the five years, 347,045 horses and mules passed through the Depot and were supplied to British forces in this country and abroad. There is no trace of any medal records for Charles, implying that his military service during the war was based solely in the UK, apparently at Shirehampton.

Private Charles William Rice died of pneumonia during the '*Spanish Flu*' pandemic on 16 November 1918 and is buried in *Arnos Vale Cemetery*, Bristol. During the war the cemetery was used mainly for cases from local hospitals, especially the 2nd Southern General Hospital and the Beaufort Hospital. Charles Rice is one of the casualties who, for some reason, do not have a headstone and he is commemorated instead on the Screen Wall Memorial.