

Chapter 9

A Portrait of My Father

Dad was born in Deal, Kent on 7th May 1886 and christened Frederick William. I met



Fred Turner c. 1917

his father, Frederick, but not his mother, Ida Jane (nee Allen)¹, who died young. Ironically, she was reputed to be very strong and easily lifted her children with her teeth.

I know little of his boyhood except that his family was a poor one. He seemed to be reasonably well educated in as much as the three "R"s were concerned, but much of this came from his Army education, where he held the First Class Education Certificate. He was

very intelligent and had a strong sense of duty. Despite a little temper he was very patient; he also had courage and integrity. Nonetheless, he was very human with both virtues and weaknesses.

At the age of 15 or 16, with the Boer War in full flow, he tried to join the Army by pretending he was eighteen. Unfortunately for him, he was both short and slight so he was turned down. Not to be put off, at seventeen, he again applied and this time was accepted. Thus, his Army age was one year older than his real age. He joined the East Kent Regiment (The Buffs) and was quickly shipped off to South Africa to become involved in some Zulu uprising. He took part in a famous forced march, complete with rifle and kit, of fifty-six miles in twenty-four hours. He was one of the few to complete the march. He thought highly of the Zulu tribe; he was not colour prejudiced, just respected people for what they were. He served five years with the Colours and was then put on reserve. He then went to work at St. Edmund's School as a general porter where he met my Mother. They were married on 28th August 1913 and I was born eleven months later. On the outbreak of war in 1914, he was called up but turned down and discharged because of a heart defect. This was not helped by Chronic Bronchitis which affected him throughout his life.

¹ - Ida Jane Turner died 20 April 1914, aged 47

On his marriage, he had moved to Whitstable where I was born. Having been turned down by the Army, he worked as an Insurance Agent until 1918 when he was accepted by the Army in a noncombatant capacity in the Royal Army Pay Corps. By the time I could remember, he was a Sergeant.

Around 1920 he was posted overseas to Egypt but was invalided home after a few months. He was posted back to Egypt in 1924 and we joined him in 1926. By this time he was a Staff Sergeant and subsequently was promoted to Staff Quartermaster Sergeant.



***Mum & Dad
at Brighton***

On returning from Egypt, he was taken off the ship at Gibraltar with acute pneumonia. He finally returned to England in February 1930 and was posted first to Hounslow and then Chatham. During the war, he spent some time in Manchester, London and Brighton but his health became progressively worse. He was discharged in April 1941 and was made Barrack Warden at Canterbury Barracks. During this time he was recommended for the award of the MBE, but did not receive it.

to carry his rule book in his coat and beware the man who argued with him no matter what the man's rank might be.

During his last illness in early 1946, a little incident indicated the sort of man he was. A well-meaning lady came round and was quoting the Twenty Third Psalm to him; he knew that he was dying but his only remark to the lady was "Atta Girl".

He died on 22 March 1946 - May He Rest in Peace.

Despite his health problems, he played cricket into his late 40s and then took up umpiring. He used



Dad's grave in Canterbury