



The Indian cavalry prepare for battle in a First World War campaign

An alarming technique for slicing bread!

MORE INCLUSIVE

I HAVE frequently bought *Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine* and have read with great interest the many varied articles and profiles featured in the magazine. As a fellow family historian and present chairperson of the Black and Asian Studies Association my colleagues and I have been surprised by the 90th Anniversary Armistice Special edition. I am struck by two elements:

Firstly, the only Black representation in the issue is that rather stereotypical photo (page 8)

of West Indians arriving on the *Windrush*. Black people have been in Britain for far longer and perhaps an image representative of immigration could have been of European Jews fleeing to Britain to escape persecution.

Secondly, there is absolutely no mention of the thousands of Black and Asian servicemen in the First World War. These include 1.5 million volunteers from India, 100,000 Gurkhas from Nepal, 54,000 Chinese, 16,000 men of the West Indian Regiment, 30,658 Africans and numerous other peoples. These men fought in all

forces and on all fronts. My own great grandfather, who was from Portuguese Goa, was in the British Royal Navy at the first naval engagement of the war in Zanzibar.

The lack of inclusion of these people in your Armistice Special is truly shocking in today's Britain where school children are urged to look at family history.

I'm looking forward to a more inclusive representation of British history in future editions.

Cliff Pereira, Kent

I am sorry about this omission, and I assure you we take

inclusion very seriously here. We have brought Black and Asian ancestry into our practical section but I can see that we need to rethink some of our historical features.

A SLICE OF HISTORY

I WAS intrigued by the picture of the farm workers on page 40 of December's *WDYT YA? Magazine* [see above]. The chap on the left appears to be trying to cut a loaf of bread with an axe! Didn't they have bread knives in 1900?

Peter Jones, by email

EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT

I HAVE BEEN fascinated by the Eyewitness section on your letters page and thought I would share my own piece of family history. Spurred on by your article in Issue 3 about tragedy in the Tank Corps, I have my own piece of tragedy.

My great uncle, 2nd Lieutenant Arthur Lakeman, was in the 15th Battalion Tank Corps in August 1918 and was leading his tank up to the front line when he tripped on some wire in the dark and was run over by his own tank. His father wrote to Arthur's brother, Harold, to tell him the news. The letter was returned because by the time it was delivered, Harold had been killed by a sniper during an attack.

My two grandparents never got over losing two sons in two weeks.

Ewan Armstrong, Sheffield

Thank you Ewan, we will send you a magazine binder for your contribution.

*THE BIRCHES, CRIEFF
20th August 1918*

My dear Harold,

Yesterday brought me a letter dated 13th August of which the following is a copy:

*"Dear Mr Lakeman,
I am writing to tell you about the death of your son, I am the second in command of his company.*

We were trekking by night and your son was leading his tank and tripped over some barbed wire, his fall was unseen by his driver who missed him a second or so after, during this time the tank had passed over the body of your son, they were travelling fast at the time and Lakeman could have known very little of anything of what was happening. He was killed instantly. I was present at his burial next day, he was buried by Capt W K Roberts, the Padre attached to HQ 5th Tank Brigade. His grave is in St Pierre Cemetery, Amiens Map reference 62D G.32 d5.8 Row D, Plot 14 Grave No 1. I and his brother officers want to express our sympathy in our loss as well as yours. I shall be only too pleased to answer any enquiries you would like.

*Yours sincerely
Shirley H Spreat"*

If by any chance you happen ever to be in Amiens, I am sure you will visit the grave and send your Mother any photos and written details you can.

Your Mother is rather a wreck, but all are very kind to her, and as I said in my last note to you it is fortunate she has the children to occupy her attention, and it is a good thing that exact details arrived so speedily to prevent her brooding.

We here are all well and we have good news of the Twins. We hope soon to have further good tidings of you.

With much and best love I remain

Your affectionate Father

Fred S Lakeman

1st W.R. Regiment 6th Division



Fred S Lakeman