

# STOKE ASH

## TM 11535 70391

WW1 - 1  
 WW2 - 0



WW1	Casualties	Awards	Rank	Number	Service	Unit	Age	Parish	Conflict	Date	Notes
Joseph Archer	MOSS	Military Medal	Private	250441	Durham Light Infantry	1st/6th Bn.	20	Stoke Ash	WW1	19/07/1917	On his birth registration he is recorded as Joseph Archer and was commonly called Archie

### WW2 Casualties

None recorded



PRIVATE MOSS MW

In the churchyard at Stoke Ash stands an obelisk, the inscription on which has been almost obliterated. Few people realise that this is a memorial to the only soldier from the village who died in the First World War.

250441 Private Joseph Archie Moss (known as Archie) enlisted at Bishop Auckland in the 6th Battalion of the Durham Light Infantry, probably not at the beginning of the war as he did not have the 1914 Star. He may have been a sniper. There is no known citation for his Military Medal but it was gazetted on 18 July 1917. The next day he was killed.

The battalion diary says: "About 4am a heavy barrage started on the Brigade front and on our right growing in intensity. Communication trenches bombarded with shrapnel. Trench mortars bombarded our trenches about 4.30am. Barrage ceased about 5.15am." Of the Private who had just died after winning the Military Medal there is no mention. He was 24.

Archie's family background can be summarised thus. His mother, who may have been an Abbott, married a Moss, was widowed and married a Lock. She had four daughters (Sarah, Lizzie, Jessie and Folly) and two sons (Archie and Tom). Mr Lock had four sons (Bob, Henry, Fred and George). They lived in a cottage in The Carnser, the alley-lane off The Street. Sarah and Bob were killed in separate road accidents on the A146.

I have been in touch with several descendants, including Gerald Lock, Archie Lock (named after his medal-winning uncle) and Tom Moss's son Geoffrey and daughter Daphne Banham. Geoffrey Moss, who lives at Stutton south of Ipswich, has Archie's medals and let me photograph them. As well as the Military Medal he gained the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

I still do not know what Archie did to win the MM; do not know for sure where and how he was killed (although the diary mentions the Tapest Valley two days previously); and I have no picture of him.

Of the 44 men of Stoke Ash who served in the Great War, Moss was the only one who did not return. The village was lucky when you consider the death toll from the surrounding area: Thwaite 3, Wickham Heath 9, Yaxley 8, Thoruham 11, Mellis 12, Gillingham 17, Thorndon 18 and Wetheringsett 21. When you think of that tiny cluster of villages in one county losing 97 men, plucked from rural England to run with bayonets at machine guns, you realise what a tragedy the war was.

Ragil Abbott