

# Adolphus LARK

Driver 20599, 54th Field Company Royal Engineers

Died October 30<sup>th</sup> 1918, aged 30

Memorial at Staglieno Cemetery, Genoa, Italy

Adolphus Lark was born in 1888. In the 1891 census, he is living with his grandparents John (62), Mary Ann (60) and his 10 year old brother John in Church Hill, Port Isaac. In 1901 Adolphus, now 13, was still living with his grandmother Mary Ann, now a widow, together with 30 year old Hannah Lobb Lark, Mary's daughter and presumably Adolphus' aunt. Hannah's occupation is recorded as a cook and domestic. By 1911, Adolphus had left Port Isaac and joined the army. He was stationed in Chatham at the Royal Engineer Barracks, Brompton, now the headquarters of the Royal School of Military Engineering. His rank was given as Driver (type of driver not given), and his trade or occupation (presumably in civilian life) is shown as Bus Driver, a very early date for such an occupation.

Return of all Commissioned Officers, Warrant Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers, Trumpeters or Drummers, and Rank and File, who passed the night of Sunday, April 2nd, 1911, in these Barracks or Quarters, or arrived on the morning of Monday, April 3rd, not having been enumerated elsewhere. [See Instructions 2 and 3 on page ii]						
NAME IN FULL	RANK	AGE (last birthday)	CONDITION as to MARRIAGE	UNIT, or ARM OF SERVICE	TRADE or OCCUPATION (if any)	BIRTHPLACE
William Tollington	Driver	28	Single	Royal Engineers	Team Leader	Kat Ashford
Henry Hill	Driver	19	Single	do	Butcher	London Bedford
William Brooks	Driver	19	Single	do	Stahmonget	Kat Sillingbourne
Adolphus Lark	Driver	23	Single	do	Bus Driver	Genoa
George Mepham	Driver	19	Single	do	Groom	Genoa

Adolphus Lark's entry on the 1911 Census page from Royal Engineer Barracks



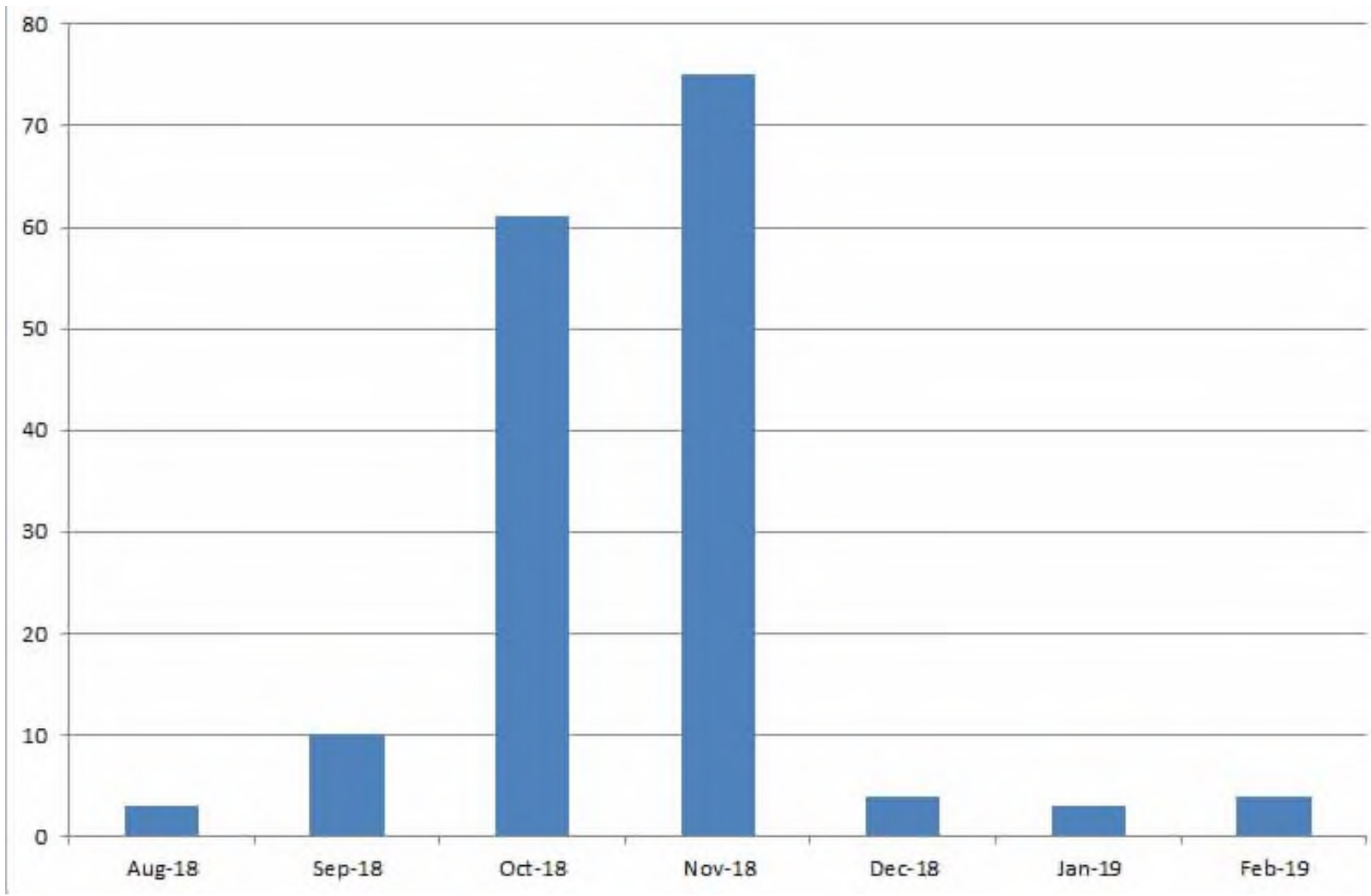
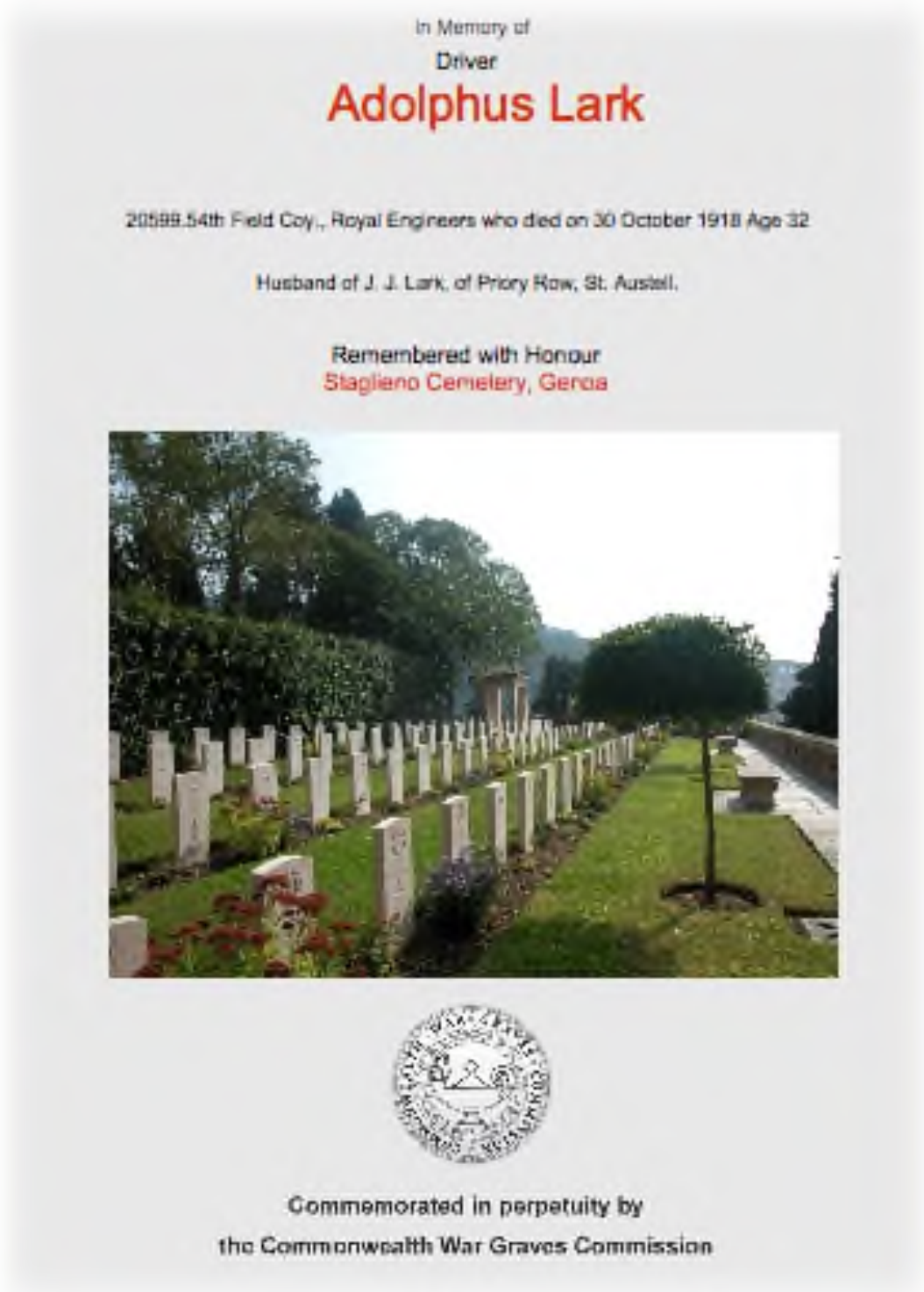
First World War recruits at Brompton Barracks

Adolphus Lark died on October 30<sup>th</sup>, and is buried in Staglieno Cemetery in Genoa. This is about 300 miles from Vittorio Veneto, and soldiers killed in battle are normally buried close to where they fell. Genoa is the site of the 51st Stationary Hospital, which arrived there in January 1918. One part was for the local sick, and the other for dealing with infectious diseases. There was an online report of a soldier at 51st Stationary Hospital whose death certificate confirmed he died there from influenza in November 1918. Analysis of the number of military deaths in Staglieno cemetery shows a massive spike in October and November 1918. There were no less than seven who died on the same day as Adolphus, and eight members of 54th Field Company died between October 22<sup>nd</sup> and November 22<sup>nd</sup>. This evidence points to Adolphus and his comrades being yet more casualties of the 1918 Flu Pandemic.

Adolphus was in the 54th Field Company, Royal Engineers, a unit of 7th Battalion. They served in France, with battle honours from the First Battle of Ypres in October/November 1914, to the Battles of Passchendaele in October/November 1917, when they were transferred to help in the Italian Campaign. With the exit of Russia from war in 1917, the Austro Hungarian Empire was able to divert considerable resources to the Italian Front in the Alps of north east Italy. The Italian soldiers lived in poor conditions and by June 1918 were pushed back to defensive lines near Venice, on the Piave River, at which time their total casualties numbered 600,000. The 54th was active in the Battle of Piave River in June 1918 and the Battle of Vittorio Veneto from October 24<sup>th</sup> to November 3<sup>rd</sup>.



British and Italian troops at a railway siding on the Italian front 1918. The British soldiers are Royal Engineers and may well be from the Railway Operating Division supported the British forces here.



Military Deaths by month in Staglieno Cemetery

**Sources**  
Brompton Barracks: <http://www.bromptonhistory.org.uk/buildings/archive/brompton-barracks>  
54th Field Company Battle Honours: <http://www.reubique.com/54fc.htm>  
Italian Front: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian\\_Front\\_\(World\\_War\\_I\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_Front_(World_War_I))  
Influenza in 51st Stationary Hospital, Genoa, November 1918: <http://1914-1918.invisionzone.com/forums/index.php?showtopic=166514>  
Military deaths at Staglieno Cemetery from analysis of casualty data from <http://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead.aspx>

Driver Adolphus Lark is commemorated in the Staglieno Cemetery in Genoa, Italy