

32) 37243 Private Frederick James **JACOB**  
(St Mary's Aldermaston)

**Kia** 30/08/17, **Age** 28  
14th Bn. Devonshire Regiment  
Later 154<sup>th</sup> Labour Corps

**Born** Aldermaston  
**Enlisted** Reading  
**Residence** Aldermaston

**Awarded:** British War Medal  
Victory Medal

**Date arrived in theatre of war:** not known

It has not proved possible to discover much about the service life of Frederick Jacob nor how he died. He initially was part of 14th (Labour) Battalion Devonshire Regiment who were formed in Plymouth in August 1916 and in October 1916 landed in France and joined to Third Army. In April 1917 this battalion was one of those transferred to Labour Corps as 154<sup>th</sup> and 155<sup>th</sup> Labour Companies.

The Labour Corps was actually formed in January 1917, the Corps grew to some 389,900 men (more than 10% of the total size of the Army) by the Armistice. Of this total, around 175,000 were working in the United Kingdom and the rest in the theatres of war. The Corps was manned by officers and other ranks who had been medically rated below the "A1" condition needed for front line service. Many were returned wounded. Labour Corps units were often deployed for work within range of the enemy guns, sometimes for lengthy periods. In April 1917, a number of infantry battalions were transferred to the Corps.



**Labour Corps working 'somewhere in France'**

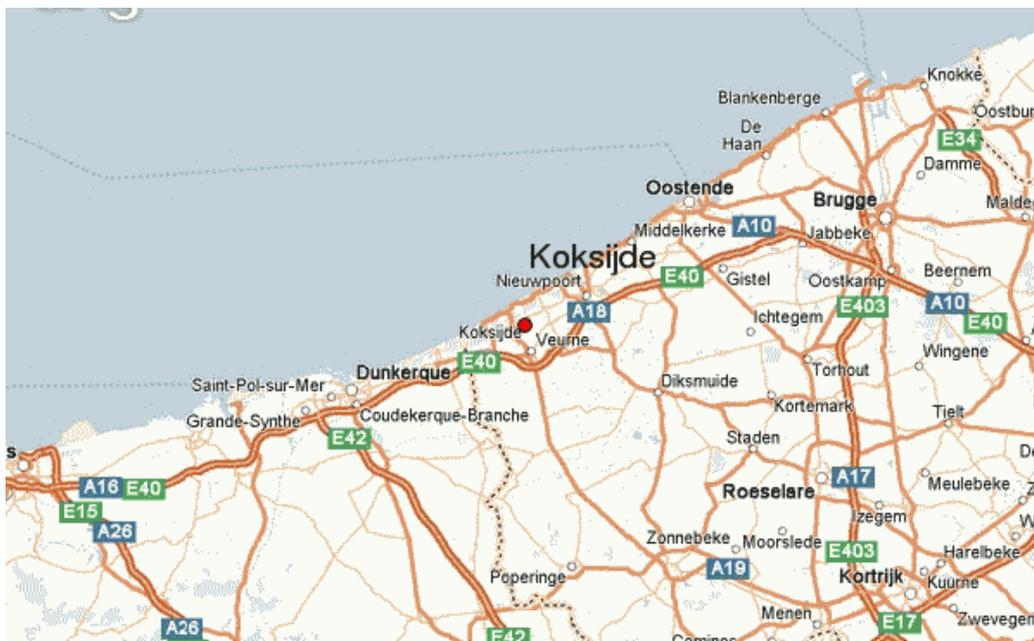
The Corps always suffered from its treatment as something of a second class organisation: for example, the men who died are commemorated under their original

regiment, with Labour Corps being secondary. Researching men of the Corps is made extra difficult by this, as is the fact that few records remain of the daily activities and locations of Corps units.

Frederick Jacob is known to be buried in:

COXYDE MILITARY CEMETERY, Belgium, III. C. 32.

SON OF MR. F. W. JACOB, OF ROSE COTTAGE, ALDERMASTON, BERKS.



**Coxyde (now Koksijde) – situated just west of Nieuwpoort (now Nieuwpoort)**

As given in the description of this cemetery, bodies were brought here for burial from the front line areas then situated at Nieuwpoort 10km distant. In addition, Coxyde received distant shelling. Coincidentally, the author's Great-grandfather (serving with the 1/6<sup>th</sup> West Riding Regiment) was present in Coxyde during the weeks leading to the time that Frederick Jacob lost his life. The war diary of this battalion does make mention that Coxyde was shelled on several days and was bombed by aircraft, though neither appear to have been severe. Another factor specific to this area and timing (August 1917) was that the Germans at Nieuwpoort were trying out their new 'mustard gas' and many British troops, unprepared for its effects had become casualties.



**The Coyxde – Nieuport Road - 1917**



**Coxyde today**

## COXYDE MILITARY CEMETERY



### **Location Information**

Coxyde Military Cemetery is located approximately 500 metres beyond the village of Koksijde on the N396 towards De Panne

### **Historical Information**

In June 1917, Commonwealth forces relieved French forces on 6 kilometres of front line from the sea to a point south of Nieuport (now Nieuwpoort), and held this sector for six months.

Coxyde (now Koksijde) was about 10 kilometres behind the front line. The village was used for rest billets and was occasionally shelled, but the cemetery, which had been started by French troops, was found to be reasonably safe. It became the most important of the Commonwealth cemeteries on the Belgian coast and was used at night for the burial of the dead brought back from the front line.

The French returned to the sector in December 1917 and continued to use the cemetery, and during 1918, Commonwealth naval casualties from bases in Dunkirk (now Dunkerque) were buried there. After the Armistice, the remains of 44 British soldiers were brought into the cemetery. Ten of them had been buried in isolated graves. Nineteen came from Furnes Road British Cemetery, Coxyde, a cemetery made in July, 1917, by the 2nd Manchesters and the 49th (West Riding) Division on the East side of the road to Furnes (now Veurne). Twenty-five (of whom 22 belonged to the 49th Division) came from Oosthoek Military Cemetery, Adinkerke, 4 Kms South-West of Coxyde.

The cemetery was used again during the Second World War, chiefly for the burial of casualties sustained during the defence of the Dunkirk-Nieuport perimeter in May 1940.

The cemetery now contains 1,507 Commonwealth burials of the First World War, the French graves from this period having since been removed. Of the 155 Second World War burials, 22 are unidentified.



MEMORY OF  
HUSBAND  
EVER DEAR

37243 PRIVATE  
F. J. JACOB,  
DEVONSHIRE REGIMENT  
30TH AUGUST 1917



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FOR ME