

The Animals' War: Personal accounts

Horses in WWI

At the end of the war

Private Christopher Massie, 76th Brigade, RAMC, 1918

The warhorse is honest, reliable, strong. He is a soldier. And I have written this eulogy of his merits as one soldier might write of another. I want someone to take his case up and see that he falls 'cushy' after the war. It is only fair. He is a mate of ours – one of us. A Tommy. Don't ring a lot of bells and forget him. A field of clover, a bundle of hay, a Sussex meadow, a bushel of apples, a loaf of bread, a sack of carrots, sunshine and blue hills, clean stables, and trusses of straw, may they all be his, for he has earned them! It is only fair.

Source: *Tommy's Ark*, Richard Van Emden, p302

Private Fred Lloyd, Army Veterinary Corps, 1918

At the depot, we classified the horses to see what was coming home and what wasn't. There were three grades, and peacetime vets were saying which ones were fit to go back to England, these went into quarantine; the next grade was to be sold to the farmers, and the others were for food. A terrific lot of the horses were blind, hundreds of them. They never found out why, perhaps it was exposure to gas. Some of the time, I was leading one awkward horse and three more that were totally blind.

If they weren't fit, we'd take them by train or, if they were, we'd take them by road. We used to go right up to Paris with horses, each man leading four to sell to the French for food. In the slaughterhouses, we led them on to scales four at a time and weighed them up. We sold them by weight.

Source: *Tommy's Ark*, Richard Van Emden, p302