

FRANCIS William G



Private: C Company 9th Platoon 17th Battalion Manchester Regiment

Formerly G/15906, Royal West Kent Regiment.

Killed in action: 23/04/1917

Service No: 41658

He was born at Salcott, enlisted at Colchester and resided at Whitham. The 1901 census shows him aged 18 born & living in Salcott working as a bricklayer. He formerly served with the Royal West Kent Regiment. He served in France & Flanders He married Caroline Elizabeth Lewis on the 19th September 1914 at Saint Mary Tollesbury. They lived at Wharf Cottage Salcott. There was a daughter Vera Mary. His attestation on the 19th June 1916, he was 35 years old and gave his occupation as a smallholder. He was 5foot 6 ins tall, weighing 137lb with 36 ½ ins chest.

The 17th (Service) Battalion (2nd City) of the Manchester Regiment had been formed in Manchester on 28 August 1914, by the Lord Mayor and City. April 1915 it had been attached to 90th Brigade, 30th Division. This Division was originally part of the Fifth New Army, and was numbered 37th. However, the Fourth New Army was broken up in April 1915, and the Division was renumbered 30th, part of K4. It was formed of many units that had been raised by public subscription and private projects, and was only taken over by the War Office on 27th August 1915. The Division moved to France in November 1915. It served on the Western Front with distinction throughout the war. He was at home from the 19th January 1916 until the 10th October 1916 crossing to France the next day.

William was killed in action during the Battle of Arras, 9 April to 15 May 1917 This was one of the most important campaigns in which the BEF was engaged, yet in comparison with the Somme of 1916 and Passchendaele of 1917, terribly neglected by historians. The British Army launched a large-scale attack at Arras, as part of a master plan by new French Commander in Chief Robert Nivelle. Although initially successful, it soon bogged down and became a terribly costly affair. The British attack was against the formidable Hindenburg Line, to which the enemy had recently made a strategic withdrawal. The battle can be considered to be composed of a number of phases: specifically he fell during the Second Battle of the Scarpe - 23rd - 24th April 1917



A Regimental Aid Post on the open Arras battlefield, 1917



1914-20 War Medal & 1914-1919 Victory Medal

Name	Corps	Rank	Regt. No.
FRANCIS	* R. W. Kent. Co. Middle. R.	Pte.	25248. 9/4-2552
William G.			
Medal	Date	Page	Remarks
Victory	* 5/1/02	634 3985	
War			
Location of War Entrenchment			
Date of entry (month)			



His name is recorded on the Roll of Honour at Saint Mary's Salcott

Casualty Type: Commonwealth War
Dead Grave/Memorial Reference: D. 59.
Cemetery: COJEUL BRITISH
CEMETERY, ST. MARTIN-SUR-
COJEUL

The village of St Martin-sur-Cojeul was taken by the 30th Division on 9 April 1917, lost in March 1918, and retaken in the following August. Cojeul British Cemetery was begun by the 21st Division Burial Officer in April 1917, and used by fighting units until the following October.

It was very severely damaged in later fighting. The cemetery contains 349 burials and commemorations of the First World War. 35 of the burials are unidentified and 31 graves destroyed by shell fire are represented by special memorials. The cemetery was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens. No. of Identified Casualties: 314



Saint Mary's Salcott cum Virley