



Woodford Remembers



Pte. Frank Steers

Summer 1879 – 9 February 1916

Family

Frank was the seventh of nine children. His father, Joseph was born to Samuel and Ann in Lowick in 1837 and his mother, Elizabeth Morrall in Pave Lane / Church Aston area of Shropshire in 1843 to Enoch and Ann. Joseph and Elizabeth married in St Mary's Church Woodford on 2 March 1865. The family lived in Addington Road next to Manor Farm where Joseph was chief stockman for Mr Jarvis. Frank was born in 1879 and attended the village school. His father, Joseph, died in 1886 and in order to earn a living his mother Elizabeth started work as a laundress. By 1901 Frank had moved to Royston, near Barnsley, Yorkshire where he worked as a Railway Porter.

On an unknown date, in Pontefract he joined the 13th Hussars, (Reg Number 6217) and the 1911 census places him in Meerut, India.

Army Service

The 13th Hussars who's ceremonial Regimental Colonel was Robert Baden-Powell, relocated to India in 1904 and remained there until 1914. It appears much of the time was a relaxed affair where polo, football and cricket were frequent pastimes. The Hussars recruited locals to the ranks and were part of the Meerut Battalion. Following declaration of war there was disappointment amongst the troops that the 13th remained India, but this all changed on 15th October (Balaclava Day) when deployment orders were received. The Hussars sailed from Bombay on 19th November 1914 with their horses in a convoy of six ships, across the Arabian Sea, and the Suez Canal to Marseilles. Embarking onto the railway they continued their journey north arriving at Orleans at 2am on a bitterly cold 17th December. A six mile march to the new camp followed, leading their horses. Over the next twelve months the Hussars were trained as Infantrymen rather than Cavalry and relieved different units along the front, often travelling in London buses.

Heavy snow fell on 8 February 1916 and on the following day Frank died. In regimental records his death was recorded as "Accidentally killed at Le Plouy".

He was a recipient of the Delhi Durbar Medal in 1911, together with the 1915 Star and War and Victory Medals. In June 1916, with little use for Cavalry on the western front, the 13th Hussars moved to Mesopotamia (modern day Iraq / Syria) where they fought against the Turks and operated in cities now synonymous 21st century conflicts; Basra, Baghdad, Tekrit and Mosul.

Burial / grave

Grave C.07 St Riquier British cemetery

Dependants

None

Commemoration

Grave stone C07 St Riquier British Cemetery

Woodford War Memorial

Woodford St Mary's Church

