



Frank Copley 1891 – 1917

Frank was born in Wakefield in 1891. His father was Joe Copley, a dyer born in Wakefield in 1863 and died in 1941. His mother was Priscilla (nee Moorhouse) born in Wakefield in 1865 and died in 1928. They were married at All Saints Church, Wakefield on 5th April 1885.

Their other children were; Maud, born in 1886, Caroline, born in 1888, Winifred, born in 1890, Norah May, born in 1893, Christopher, born in 1895, Eliza Clara, born in 1897, Thirza, born in 1899, John Shaw, born in 1900, Laurence, born in 1902 and George Arthur, born in 1905.

On the 1891 Census the family were living at Queen's Place, Thornes, Wakefield, in 1901 at Carlton Terrace, Leeds Road, Huddersfield.

On the 1911 Census Joe is recorded as a widower living with Caroline, Winifred, Christopher and John at 26, Thornhill Street, Savile Town, Dewsbury. Priscilla is recorded as a widow living at Midland Street, Hillhouse, Huddersfield along with Norah, Clara, Thirza, Laurence and (George) Arthur. The head of the household is recorded as *Edwin Copley*, son of Priscilla, age 21, born in Lee Fair, Tingley near Wakefield. No birth or death record has been found for him and he does not appear on any earlier census records.

In 1911 Frank was living with Mr and Mrs James Mitchell as a boarder in Warren Street, Savile Town, Dewsbury. He was married to Annie Starkie (born in Halifax in 1893 and died in 1965) at All Saints Church, Dewsbury on 16th January 1916, whilst already serving in the Army. They lived at 126, Vulcan Road, Dewsbury and did not have any children. Prior to enlistment he worked for the Dewsbury Pioneers Industrial Society (Co-operative) as a Coal Teamer. Annie was remarried at St. John the Baptist Church, Dawgreen on 24th April 1920 to Herbert Turner (born in 1890 and died in 1949).

He enlisted in Dewsbury in August 1915 serving as Private 23335 in the 13th Battalion Yorkshire Regiment and was sent to the Western Front in March 1916. He was killed in action in France on 2nd June 1917, being shot through the heart by a rifle bullet. He was buried in Fins New British Cemetery, Sorel-Le-Grand, Somme, France. Frank was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Fins is a village on the road between Cambrai and Peronne. The British Cemetery is a little south-east of the village in the district of Sorel Le Grand on the road to Heudicourt. Fins and Sorel were occupied at the beginning of April 1917, in the German Retreat to the Hindenburg Line. They were lost on 23rd March 1918, after a stubborn defence of Sorel by the 6th K.O.S.B. and the staff of the South African Brigade; and they were regained in the following September. The New British Cemetery was not begun until July 1917. It was used by fighting units (especially the 40th, 61st (South Midland) and 9th (Scottish) Divisions) and Field Ambulances until March, 1918, when it comprised about 590 graves. There are now 1289, First World War casualties commemorated in this site. Of these 208 are unidentified.

Frank is also commemorated on the Dewsbury Cenotaph in Crow Nest Park and in the Dewsbury Roll of Honour kept in Dewsbury Central Library.

In Memory of

Private

Frank Copley

23335, 13th Bn., Yorkshire Regiment who died on 02 June 1917 Age 25

Husband of Annie Copley, of 10, Oastler Square, Boothroyd Lane, Dewsbury.

Remembered with Honour

Fins New British Cemetery, Sorel-Le-Grand



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Headstone photograph by courtesy of Tony Emptage.