



Frank Bernard Bower

1899-1918

Frank was born in Paddock, Huddersfield on 30th March 1899 and baptised 27th May 1899 at St. Thomas's Church, Longroyd Bridge, Huddersfield. His father was John Bower, a Signaller for the London and North West Railway Company born in Reddish, Stockport in 1869 and died in 1953. His mother was Mary Ellen (nee Bates) born in Bickershaw near Wigan in 1869 and died in 1937. They were married in Stockport in 1895. Frank was their only child.

On the 1901 Census the family lived at 54, New Street, Paddock and in 1911 at 31, Netherfield Road, off Calder Road, Ravensthorpe.

Frank was a single man who worked as a clerk with the London and North West Railway Company, Dewsbury and at the same time was studying at Dewsbury Technical School; he was connected with St. Saviour's Church in Ravensthorpe and was a member of St. Cuthbert's Bible Class.

He enlisted on 13th April 1917 into the Durham Light Infantry with the Service Number 80631 and had a prolonged period of training until his 19th birthday when he was sent to the Western Front in early April 1918 serving as Private 64887 in the 22nd (Tyneside Scottish) Battalion of the Northumberland Fusiliers. On 9th April he was in a French hospital at Nieppe near Armentieres suffering from a poisoned stomach; on 11th April the hospital was overrun by the enemy and he was taken prisoner. In June his parents received a field postcard from him saying that he was a prisoner of war at Limburg and in mid-October a further letter arrived from Friedrichsfeld POW Camp in which he said he was "*in the pink*". He must have been transferred after writing the letter, as he died of pneumonia at Heilsberg POW Camp on 29th October 1918 and was buried in Lidzbark Warmiński War Cemetery, Poland, formerly part of East Prussia. Frank was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Lidzbark Warmiński War Cemetery near Markajmy in Poland, is a military cemetery from the time of the First World War. Here about 2800 inmates of the German prisoner of war camp in Heilsberg (the German name for Lidzbark Warmiński) were buried. For the most part Russian prisoners of war were interned there in addition to a smaller number of British. Historians assume a crowded camp where the prisoners lived in poor hygienic conditions and had to work with poor nutrition, causing many to fall ill and die. The dead were buried in unmarked mass graves in the cemetery. Between August 1918 and December 1918, 39 British soldiers died in the camp hospital. The cemetery was maintained until the 1960s, but then increasing decline led to them being commemorated on a special memorial 75 miles away in Malbork Commonwealth War Cemetery. In the spring of 2014, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission built a new War Cemetery for the British dead in the old cemetery.

Frank is commemorated on the Dewsbury Cenotaph in Crow Nest Park and in the Dewsbury Roll of Honour kept in Dewsbury Central Library and on the Ravensthorpe War Memorial in St. Saviour's Church.

In Memory of
Private

Frank Bernard Bower

64887, 22nd (Tyneside Scottish) Bn., Northumberland Fusiliers who died on 29 October 1918 Age 19

Son of John and Mary Ellen Bower, of 4, Netherfield Rd., Ravensthorpe, Dewsbury, Yorks.

Remembered with Honour
Lidzbark Warminski War Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Headstone photograph by courtesy of the Website of Radio Olsztyn, Poland.