



Frank Taylor 1885 – 1916

Frank was born in Thornhill in 1885. His father was Evison Taylor, a coal miner born in Thornhill in 1851 and died in 1927. His mother was Ann (née Man), born in Thornhill in 1851 and died in 1904. They were married at St. Michael and All Angels Church, Thornhill on 15th June 1873. Frank was their only child.

On the 1891 Census the family lived at Back Lane, Thornhill, in 1901 and 1911 they lived at Doubting Castle, Thornhill, a remarkable building originally built as a shooting box.

Evison was remarried at Park Congregational Church, Halifax on 29th October 1904 to a widow, Ann Foster née Holt, (born in Sowerby Bridge in 1853 and died in 1942).

Frank attended Thornhill Church of England School, before completing his education in 1899 at Wheelwright Grammar School. He became a pupil-teacher at Walker's Endowed School at Thornhill and after three years he moved on to become an uncertified master at Boothroyd Lane Council School, before going to the Sheffield Training College. From there he went to teach at the Milton High School, Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia. He was holidaying in England when war broke out. He was married at St. Michael and All Angels Church on 24th October 1914 to Polly Broadhead (born in 1889 and died in 1964) she was a former Wheelwright Grammar School girl and a teacher at Whitley Church School. Polly lived at 16, Victoria Crescent, Birkdale, Dewsbury until her death.

He immediately obtained a commission with the York and Lancaster Regiment, and was quickly promoted to the rank of Captain in the 10th Battalion. He was also appointed adjutant, which meant he had an administrative responsibility, including keeping the Unit War Diary when on overseas service; He was sent to the Western Front on 1st October 1915 and a month after arrival in France he was gazetted to the rank of Major. He was killed in action in France on 13th March 1916 and was buried in Cite Bonjean Military Cemetery, Armentieres, Nord, France. Frank was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

He kept in touch with his former school, Wheelwright, writing to the headmaster, Mr A. E. Holme on 13th December 1915: *"Dear Mr Holme, I was surprised tonight by the receipt of a parcel – cigarettes and a pair of mitts. The only clue I had was a note inside written in the names of the pupils of my old school. Allow me to thank you and the boys for their kindly thought, which is deeply appreciated.....We are in the firing line just at present, having a very rough but very interesting time. Life is full of incident, which is rather fortunate, as it prevents thought. We keep very cheerful out here, and I think pessimism is only to be found in England.....I should like to know if any of my form are serving out here. They may be near me, and it would be a real treat to meet them again. I saw from a newspaper cutting.....that Arthur Chadwick had been killed. We were in the same form, and I was very, very sorry to hear of his death. Once more thanking you and the boys for their good wishes and the 'smokes'"* He was the 6th Wheelwright Old Boy to die in the war.

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 War Memorial in St. Michael and All Angels Church, Thornhill and on the Wheelwright Grammar School Memorial Plaque to former pupils.

In Memory of
Major
Frank Taylor

10th Bn., York and Lancaster Regiment who died on 13 March 1916 Age 30

The Milton High School, Bulawayo, S. Rhodesia. Son of Evison and Annie Taylor, of Thornhill, Yorks;
husband of Polly Taylor, of 16, Victoria Crescent, Birkdale, Dewsbury, Yorks.

Remembered with Honour
Cite Bonjean Military Cemetery, Armentieres



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Headstone photograph by courtesy of Réal Desmarests.