

FREDERICK JAMES WATTS NO 56

PRIVATE DM2/163287

ROYAL ARMY SERVICE CORPS

Background

Frederick James Watts was born in Shipley in 1882, the son of James Anthony and Ann Watts. James was a Coachman when he married Ann Elizabeth Nell in 1879. James was born in Byfleet, Surrey in 1853 and Ann in Southwick, Sussex in 1856.

Frederick was the second child of six, having four brothers and a sister and all born in Shipley. Addresses found in the Census were: -

1881 – 67, Keepers Cottage, Shipley.

1891 - Knepp Cottage, Worthing Road, Shipley.

1901 – Near Knepp, Shipley.

By 1911 James, Ann and the four younger children (Ernest, Bertram, Hilda and Harold) had moved to 122 Pavillion Road, Chelsea, where James was still a Coachman aged 57. The eldest son Harry had moved to Nottinghamshire and then to Cheshire where he married Lucy Broster in 1909.

Frederick, in 1901, was a groom at Oatlands Farm in Shermanbury. **Frederick** married Alice Elizabeth Raison in the Wesleyan Chapel, Milborne Port, Somerset on 18th August 1906. Alice was a Leather Glove Machinist as were several of her sisters including Sarah. Alice was the 4th daughter of Joseph and Sarah (nee Dungey) his second wife. She had 6 sisters and a brother and also 5 half-sisters and 2 half-brothers, a rather large family!

Frederick, Alice and her sister Sarah, then a Dressmaker, were all living together in Jolesfield Cottage in 1911. Their only child, a girl, Alice Elizabeth Lorraine was born 24th November, 1914.

From the Jolesfield School records Alice was admitted on 13th April 1920. Her parent was listed as Mrs A. Watts living in the High Street Partridge Green. Alice left Jolesfield in March 1923; the reason given was "left the district". Presumably they returned to her mother's family in Somerset. I have no further record of mother or daughter.

Military

Frederick enlisted into the Royal Army Service Corps and given the number DM2/163287 in Horsham 1st December 1915 for the duration of the war. He was recorded "vision defective" and classed as fit for non-shooting corps. He was placed on the Army Reserve the next day. He had given his occupation as a Licensed Chauffeur. He joined the unit at Grove Park 14th April 1916 and transferred to the Learners Section 5 days later. On 11th May he was granted a Certificate of Efficiency to hold a driving licence. **Frederick** is recorded as sailing Folkestone to Boulogne aboard the "Golden Eagle" on 16th June. His military record shows several transfers to and from various "MT" Batteries and Transport Companies. He is recorded as dangerously ill with influenza and died 25th November 1918 at 57th Casualty Clearing Station whilst attached to "Y" Siege Park attached to XXII Heavy Artillery.

Memorial

Frederick is buried in grave reference I.E. 25 at Valenciennes (St. Roch) Communal Cemetery. He is listed on the West Grinstead War Memorial and the St. Michaels, Partridge Green War Memorial.

Footnote

On 9th August 2012 The Commonwealth War Graves Commission agreed to amend their record for Frederick, from Private F S Watts to Private Frederick Watts. This includes removing the initial "S" from his existing headstone.

