

## Frank Gash



Frank Gash was born in Henley, Oxfordshire in 1886. He was the son of William Gash (born in 1839 in Henley, Oxfordshire), an agricultural labourer, and his wife Amy nee Piggott (born abt. 1847 in Hambledon, Buckinghamshire. His parents married in 1863 in Henley and by 1901 were living at 13 Orchard Road, Hounslow, Isleworth and by 1911 were living at 27 Orchard Road, Wellington Road, Hounslow, Isleworth. The 1911 census records that the parents had had 21 children, 14 of which had died by then. In 1911 his father, William, was listed as a gardener. Both his brother William and sister, Mary, worked at Pears Soap factory in

Isleworth- *see below*. By 1917 William and Amy had moved to 33 St Mark's Road Hanwell. William died in 1918 followed by his wife Amy in 1931. Both deaths were registered in Brentford.



In 1911 Frank, a farm labourer, was living with his wife Rose, nee Reeves, (born 1886 in Whitton) at 5 White Hart Cottages, Nelson Road, Whitton. They married in St Philip and St James, Whitton in 1909. Rose died in 1919 in Whitton aged 33. Their son Frank George was born 1911. He married Ivy M

Cowell in Chelmsford, Essex in 1939 and died there in 1987.

Frank served as a Private (service no. 40285) in the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion South Wales Borderers and was killed in action on the 1<sup>st</sup> August 1917, the first day of the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele). In the Third Battle of Ypres an offensive was launched to divert German attention from the weakened French front further south. The offensive quickly became a dogged struggle against determined opposition and rapidly deteriorating weather. The campaign finally came to a close in November with the capture of Passchendaele. According to the South Wales Borderers' war diaries the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion was dug in, supporting the 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion in front of Iron Cross Ridge on the 31<sup>st</sup> July. On the 1<sup>st</sup> August the Germans opened a terrible artillery barrage along the Steenbeeke and on Iron Cross Ridge. The 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion sustained over 200 casualties on the 1<sup>st</sup> August.

Frank is commemorated on Panel 22 of the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial. The Menin Gate is one of four memorials to the missing in Belgian Flanders, which covers the area known as the Ypres Salient. The site of the Menin Gate was chosen because of the hundreds of thousands of men who passed through it on their way to the battlefields. It now bears the name of 54,000 officers and men from Australia, Canada, India, South Africa, New Zealand and the United Kingdom who died in the Salient and whose graves are not known. Whilst his brother Frederick (born 1879) who served in the Princess Charlotte of Wales' (Royal Berkshire) Regiment survived the war, his brother William Albert (born 1888) died of cerebro spinal fever on the 27<sup>th</sup> March 1917 and is buried at Longuenesse (St Omer) Souvenir Cemetery. It may well be that Frank and William Albert both enlisted in May 1916 as they have consecutive service numbers. They were both formerly in the Royal West Surrey Regiment. The Middlesex Chronicle (18/8/1917) records: " Frank Gash killed in action in France August 3<sup>rd</sup>. Private Frank Gash, of South Wales Borderers, dear brother of the late Private Willie Gash, to the everlasting sorrow of Mother, Dad, Sisters and Rhoda".