

PRIVATE FREDERICK CHARLES CLEMENTS

47228, 1st Battalion, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers

Died aged 23 on 4 October 1918

Buried with honour at *Dadizeele New British Cemetery, Ypres, Belgium*; II D 7

Commemorated in Tewkesbury at the Cross, in the Abbey and in the Methodist Church



Dadizeele New British Cemetery, Ypres



Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers

FREDERICK CHARLES CLEMENTS was born in 1895 in Tewkesbury, the fourth son of Alfred Clements and Alice (formerly Blake) of 4 Jeynes Row, Oldbury Road. Alfred was born in Tewkesbury and Alice came from Lydney. Frederick was a pupil of the Council Schools in Chance Street and the Wesleyan (Methodist) Sunday Schools. After leaving school he was employed first by T. G. Smith, Draper, of 131 High Street, and then by W. H. Smith on the bookstall at the Railway Station. In 1911 he was working as a General Labourer. His obituary stated that he was a *'bright willing lad and is highly spoken of by his employers'*. As he is commemorated there, it can be assumed that his family were members of the Methodist Church

In late October 1915, Frederick enlisted as a volunteer in the Territorial Force in Tewkesbury; the first of the three army service numbers that he was allocated during the war indicates that he joined the 5th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment. The Abbey Volunteer Register states that Frederick probably joined the 3rd/5th Battalion, a third line (home service) unit. By law Territorial soldiers could not be sent abroad unless they expressly volunteered for foreign service. Evidently Frederick did volunteer again as he moved to France sometime in 1916. He was subsequently reported as serving either in the 1st, a regular battalion, or in the 1st/5th, the first line Territorial battalion, both in France at the time.

Frederick was reported as wounded twice, once in November 1916 and then again in August 1917. On the second occasion he received *'a severe wound'* in the buttocks but he did send his parents a very reassuring letter,

published in the *Tewkesbury Register*, which stated that he was in St. Thomas' Street Red Cross Hospital, Winchester: *'I am still alive and kicking, and am quite safe and happy. Keep smiling. My wound is not very bad this time, but plenty bad enough for me.'* His wounds were not serious enough to earn him a permanent *'Blighty One'* as he was transferred after recovery, a common practice at the time, to the 1st Battalion, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. The battalion had served in Gallipoli in 1915 before landing at Marseilles for service in France on 18 March 1916. On 5 February 1918 the battalion was transferred to the 109th Infantry Brigade in the 36th (Ulster) Division.

That Division was part of the Second Army in Flanders and was in the forefront of the campaign known as *'The Last Hundred Days'*, which saw the Allies inflict a series of crushing defeats on the German Army, culminating in the Armistice. Frederick almost certainly sustained *'a gunshot wound in the chest'* during the *Battle of Ypres* (28 September-2 October), the first of a number of battles in the *Final Advance in Flanders*, and died of his wounds on 4 October 1918.

Private Frederick Charles Clements is buried in *Dadizeele New British Cemetery*, Moorslede, Ypres in Belgium. In marking his death, the *Register* commented that he was *'one more addition to the list of noble dead'*.

Frederick had two older brothers who served in the war and survived: William George and Reginald (who had emigrated to Canada before the war). His sister Alice Mary married William Lilley of Birmingham in January 1918.