

PRIVATE FRANK NEALE

2849, Royal Gloucestershire Hussars

Died aged 21 on 13 September 1916

Remembered with honour on *Jerusalem Memorial, Israel*; Panel 3

Commemorated in Tewkesbury at the Cross and in the Abbey



Jerusalem Memorial, Israel



Private F. Neale



Royal Gloucestershire Hussars

FRANK NEALE was born in 1895 in Tewkesbury to Frank Neale and Alice Maude Mary (formerly Jaeger, née Newman), who was a widow when they married in 1887; her first husband, Otto Jaeger (from Lubeck, Germany), was Captain of the brig *'Bertha Carrington'* which was lost at sea in October 1880. Frank senior was born in Tewkesbury and Alice came from Sandhurst, near Gloucester. In 1911 Frank junior was living at 154 High Street with his parents and three older siblings, two sisters and a brother, Charles. Frank senior's occupation was Hairdresser and Tobacconist. Frank attended the Council School in Chance Street, and subsequently worked for the Mayor (his father was Town Hall Keeper), then with his father as a hairdresser. His obituary stated that he was regarded as a *'nice, quiet boy'*.

Frank and Charles enlisted in Gloucester on 26 April 1915 in the Gloucestershire Yeomanry, a pre-war Territorial Force cavalry regiment. After training they were both posted to the 1st Royal Gloucestershire Hussars, a unit liable for overseas duty. The battalion served in Gallipoli in 1915, operating as dismounted infantry; in October 1915 the regiment had a strength of just 81 men of all ranks. In December 1915 the brigade withdrew from Gallipoli and moved to Egypt. In January 1916 it was renamed the 5th Mounted Brigade and, reunited with their horses and armed with sabres, became part of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force. Based on their medal records Frank and Charles, like **Pte. F. Perkins** [†] and **Pte. W.E. Greenwood** [†], did not join the regiment in Gallipoli, but went direct to Egypt. They arrived on 15 November 1915, most probably as part of a replacement draft to

bring the regiment up to strength; both brothers were entitled to the *'1914-15 Star'* medal.

In Egypt, the unit's role was to help defend the Suez Canal against attack by Turkish forces. In April 1916 the Hussars were scouting in the desert near the oasis of Katia. On 23 April a strong enemy force, with artillery, attacked and inflicted heavy casualties on the regiment's 'A' Squadron of 101 men. The survivors surrendered and Frank was one of those taken prisoner; they were then subjected to an 800-mile forced march with no food and very little water. Many did not survive the journey and died of maltreatment or disease. The luckier ones, including Frank, went to Jerusalem but whilst he was a prisoner of war he died on 13 September 1916 of wounds sustained at Katia. However, the sacrifice of these men enabled a proper defence of Suez to be organised, and the Canal – Britain's supply life-line to India and the Empire – was kept open.

Private Frank Neale's body was not recovered or identified after the war and he is commemorated on the *Jerusalem Memorial* in Israel. At home he is commemorated at the Cross and in the Abbey, and in Gloucester on the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars War Memorial.

Frank's brother, Charles, was in the same unit but was spared the trials of the others. Although he saw his brother hit, he *'could not render any assistance'*. He survived and was demobilised in April 1919. His father was in business in 1919 with his stepson, former **Sgt. William Jaeger** of the Coldstream Guards, wounded at the *Battle of the Aisne* in 1914 and then in a mine explosion in 1916. Frank's mother and father died in 1922/23 before the CWGC citation was formalised.