

ARTIFICER FREDERICK THOMAS RAGGATT

Died aged 22 on 18 November 1919

Not commemorated by CWGC, but buried in a family grave in

Tewkesbury Borough Cemetery; C-428

Commemorated in Tewkesbury at the Cross



Raggatt Family Grave
[D. Benson]



Art. F.T. Raggatt
[Peter Raggatt]



HMS Warspite
[<http://www.maritimequest.com/>]

FREDERICK THOMAS RAGGATT was born in Tewkesbury on 20 April 1897, the first child of Frederick Francis Raggatt, a Boilermaker, and Clara Jane (formerly Harrington). In 1901 the family was living at 22 Spring Gardens; by 1911 there were eight children and the family had moved to 6 Jaynes Row. After leaving Trinity Schools, Frederick was apprenticed for four years at Walkers (fairground rides manufacturer) and *‘during this time he attended evening classes at the Grammar School’*.

Early accounts are conflicting as, according to his naval record, he joined the Navy in c.1907 as an Engine Room Artificer. He claimed to have been born in 1893, not 1897, as he would have been only 10 in 1907 and still at school.

Frederick’s name is included in the *Abbey Memorial to Volunteers* as serving on *HMS Warspite* and his obituary in the *Record* concurs:

‘In January 1915, when not quite 18 years old, he entered the Royal Navy as an E.R.A., joined H.M.S. Warspite and remained with her for about ten months. Then he went with some other chosen engineers to assist in fitting the engines and boilers in H.M.S. Resolution at Jarrow-on-Tyne [a Revenge Class battleship commissioned on 30.12.1916; this service is not mentioned in his record but he spent time at Vivid II, a Devonport ‘accounting establishment’]. When this was completed, he joined H.M.S. Leonidas and afterwards H.M.S. Albattross. [There] he gained various examinations ... after the signing of the Armistice, he met with an accident to his leg through which, after some months in hospital, he was discharged.’

There is mixed information here since his

record states that he was *‘invalided with a disease of the eyes’*. Since then he had been employed by Thos. Walker & Sons; some of his funeral supporters worked there.

Frederick Thomas Raggatt died at the Isolation Hospital, Tredington, on 18 November 1919 of enteric fever (possibly typhoid). The fact that he was invalided out of the Navy and was performing civilian work probably explains why he was only accorded a civilian burial in *Tewkesbury Borough Cemetery* on 22 November 1919. His obituary states that he was aged 26, which entails an 1893 birth.

What happened next is part of Tewkesbury folklore. An anonymous letter to the *Tewkesbury Register* from a subscriber to the *War-time Ambulance* wrote: *‘[I wish] to discuss the lack of a motor ambulance for the convenience of conveying urgent cases to the Rural Hospitals, when such removals are ordered by the medical profession. I am led to understand that such a case occurred in our town only last week, and for several hours vain attempts were made to secure a motor ambulance to convey an unfortunate young man to the Rural District Hospital at Tredington. Sad to relate, this individual case ended fatally.’*

Artificer Frederick Thomas Raggatt’s name is not included on the *Abbey Memorial to the Fallen* but is included on the *Memorial at the Cross*. This is an inconsistency but family lore insists that: *‘Fred Raggatt (senior) stormed into the council chamber and told the councillors that if Freddy’s name was left off, he “would get some dynamite and personally blow [it] up”.’* The result is inscribed in bronze.