

# FRANK MATTHEW- MAN



21st July 1916

1892-1916 Age 23

**Corporal 1277, 1st-6th Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment (Territorial Force).**

Frank Matthewman was born in Frizinghall, Bradford, on 21st October 1892. He was the third and youngest son of William Alfred Matthewman and Emily Dyson, both from Bradford. He also had an elder and a younger sister. The family lived at 4, Granville Road, Frizinghall, for more than thirty years from around 1890. His father William worked for Charles Matthewman & Son Co. Ltd., yarn agents, of 24 Charles Street in the centre of Bradford. This was his father's company, which William took over following his death in 1900.

All three Matthewman boys attended Bradford Grammar School in the first decade of the twentieth century. Frank started in 1905, in Third Form Modern Middle, just before his thirteenth birthday. He was at the school for three years. His education was intended to equip him for a role in the commercial life of the city. In his final year (1907-8) he won the Form Prize for Modern Languages, and he also did well in Chemistry, Maths, History and Geography. When he left school he took up an apprenticeship with George Whitaker and Co., a Bradford wool merchant, and he was working as a traveller in 1914.

Frank and his eldest brother Charlie were pre-war members of the Territorial Army 6th Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment, whose 'H' Company was regarded as a B.G.S. 'club'. When war broke out, 'H' Company was absorbed into 'C' Company. The middle Matthewman son Harold, who worked for their father, did not join up until March 1916. Charlie and Frank went to the Western Front in April 1915, and both survived an arduous time in the Ypres Salient in the second half of the year. In the following year they took part in the 6th Battalion's suicidal attack on the fortified village of Thiepval on the afternoon of 1st July at the start of the Somme offensive.

The brothers' luck would run out, however, later in that month. On 15th July, when the battalion was in the Leipzig Salient, Charlie was killed in the course of driving off a strong German assault. The following day, the battalion was moved to trenches opposite Authuille Wood.



The chief occupation of the Battalion during this spell in the line was to dig a communication trench across no man's land to join up with the old German front line which been captured during July. This was dangerous work, at night under German fire, and it was also very unpleasant as it involved digging through the putrefying bodies of British soldiers who had been lying there since 1st July. The Battalion War Diary says little about the last ten days of July, repeating for several days that there was *'some shelling by enemy of our reserve companies and Battalion Head Quarters, also of our front line trenches ... the shelling at times being very intense.'* One of these shells must have accounted for Frank on 21st July. The Battalion Chaplain wrote to his parents:- *'I scarcely know how to begin my letter to you ... It seems so cruel to have to give such awfully sad news. Two sons in one week; it is really very, very sad. I hear that Corporal Matthewman was killed instantly, and therefore would suffer no pain. Both your boys were very popular amongst their comrades ...'*

Frank's body was buried in Blighty Valley Cemetery between the villages of Authuille and Aveluy. As the fighting had moved on from this area, it remained undisturbed. The third brother Harold went to France in 1917. He survived the war.





### Acknowledgements:

Frank's photo is courtesy of the O.B.A. Roll of Honour. The information about the Matthewman family is from the records available on Ancestry.com. The information about his school years comes from the Yearbooks in the School Archives. This photo of Frank's grave and cutting from the Bradford Daily Telegraph was supplied by Tricia Platts.

Compiled and composed by Nick Hooper, July 2016 (Nhooper1956@googlemail.com).

