

FREDERICK WILLIAM LAYCOCK



4th November 1918

1888-1918 Aged 30

Gunner 140566, M.M., A Battery 76th Brigade Royal Field Artillery.

Frederick was born in Thornbury, Bradford, on 24th July 1888. He was baptized in Greenhill Wesleyan Methodist Church, which he later attended and would be remembered on its war memorial. His parents William Laycock and Sarah Ann Marris were originally from Leeds where they married in 1875. Shortly after this they moved to Bradford where their three children were born. Frederick was the youngest, born twelve years after his brother Harry and eight years after his sister Florence. William was initially a wool warehouseman and then a wool buyer for the Bradford cloth manufacturer and exporter, Ferdinand Heilborn & Co. of East Parade. Harry worked as a merchant for the same company. Frederick started at the Bradford Grammar School in 1900 shortly after his twelfth birthday and was a pupil there for three years. He showed aptitude for French and German, Maths, Chemistry and Physics. After he left school he too worked in the wool trade. In 1911 the census recorded he was a wool sorter, and later he was a wool buyer for another Bradford wool merchant, Bertram Parkinson & Co.

When the war began Frederick was twenty-six and a single man living with his widowed father and his sister Florence. Unlike many Bradford wool men he did not volunteer in 1914. As no service record survives for him it is difficult to be certain, however he is known to have enlisted in April 1916. This



suggests he attested late in 1915 under the Derby Scheme and was called up a few months later. He served with the Royal Field Artillery, in 'A' Battery of 76th Brigade. His rank was Gunner, although the *Bradford Weekly Telegraph* later described him as a Signaller in its death notice. It is probable Frederick was involved in extensive action. His battery served in France as part of the Guards Division in the later part of the Somme fighting in 1916, then at Arras in the first part of 1917. It then became an Army Brigade and served at Ypres from May to November 1917. At the end of that month it was sent to Italy, returning to the Western Front in April 1918. Between mid-August and early November Laycock's battery provided supporting fire for a series of attacks which advanced the British line from a position near Beaumont Hamel forty miles to the north-east. At some point Frederick's actions earned him a citation for the Military Medal, although he was long dead when the award was published in the *London Gazette* in June 1919. According to a report in the *Bradford Daily Telegraph* he was 'slightly wounded'. He was evacuated to 72nd General Hospital at Trouville on the Normandy coast and developed pneumonia, possibly as a consequence of the influenza epidemic which was prevalent. He died there on 4th November.



Acknowledgements:

There is no photo of Laycock in the School memorial book, nor has one been found one in local newspapers. The family was researched using Ancestry.co.uk. His years at B.G.S. are recorded in the Annual Reports for 1901-1903. His military service and death were reported briefly in the *Bradford Weekly Telegraph* 22.11.1918. The M.M. citation was published *London Gazette* 13.6.1919, issue 31405, page 7651. In researching this, and 76th Brigade R.F.A., I have benefitted from contributions to Great War Forum, <<https://www.greatwarforum.org/topic/266178-a-battery-76-brigade-rfa-gnr-f-w-laycock/?tab=comments#comment-2698417>>, <<https://www.greatwarforum.org/topic/251941-driver-bertie-gutteridge-79137-a76th-brigade-rfa-reason-for-military-medal/>>, <<https://www.greatwarforum.org/topic/17301-royal-artillery/>>, all accessed 30.10.2018. For 76th Brigade, see also <<https://wartimememoriesproject.com/greatwar/allied/fartillery.php?pid=9948>> accessed 31.10.2018.

Frederick was a wealthy man when he died. His effects of £4476 would be worth £295,000 in 2018. This presumably included an inheritance from his father who had died in 1916.

This biography was researched and composed by Nick Hooper in October 2018. For further information, contact Nhooper1956@googlemail.com, or see <<http://www.bradfordgrammar.com/former-pupils/bradford-grammar-school-in-ww1/>>.