

Frank Brooks Gill
1896-1916: age at death 20
Student at the Society of the Sacred Mission

Family History

Frank was the seventh and youngest child of Henry and Leah Amelia Gill. He was born in April 1896 and baptised at St Mary's Church, Handsworth, Staffordshire (now a suburb of Birmingham, 15 minutes from the city centre), on 5 August 1896. Handsworth was an industrial centre and three of the 'fathers of the industrial revolution', James Watt, Matthew Bolton and William Murdock are all buried in St Mary's Church.

The family lived close by at 81 Crompton Road, a mid-terraced house, typical of the many thousands built for respectable working men and their families at the end of the 19th century.

Frank's father, Henry, was a gold engraver which means he worked in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter. In 1901, Frank's brothers and sisters all lived at home with their parents. They were much older than him and were all in employment while Frank was only 4. They are:

- Lilly, age 26, was a clerk in a Drapery
- Leah, age, 24, was a Ladies' outfitter
- Emilie, age, 22, worked as a Pupil Teacher in a Board School
- Florence, age 20, was also a Ladies outfitter
- Hilda, age 17, joined her sister as a Pupil Teacher
- Harry, age 14 worked as a Diesinker (i.e. someone who engraves dies for stamping or embossing, so he probably also worked in the Jewellery Quarter with his father)
- Frank, age 4

Ten years later, the 1911 Census shows that the family was still living in Crompton Road though most of the children had moved on. Lily, the oldest daughter had married someone with the name Cattell – probably Richard Cattell – and they had a daughter, Norah aged 8. However, her husband is not listed in the Census documents, and she was still working as a Clerk in a Drapery.

The youngest daughter, Hilda, is listed as a school teacher and Frank, now aged 14, was working as a Drapery Clerk, presumably with his sister. Confusingly, and erroneously, they are listed on the Census forms as 'Cattell' not Gill.

Military History

Frank Brooks Gill served in the 6th Bn Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment) as a second lieutenant. Previously he had served in the 1/8th Battalion Sherwood Foresters and is listed in the Battalion roll of honour as lance corporal FB Gill as one of the 'other ranks

who were killed or died of wounds after being granted commissions in other units.' His promotion to 2nd Lieutenant is noted in *the London Gazette*, 26 April 1916.

V. Riding Regt.

2nd Lt. Harry A. Hughes relinquishes his commn. 26th Apr. 1916.

Lance-Corpl. Reginald Herbert Travers Zohrab, from Inns of Court O.T.C., to be 2nd Lt. (on prob.). 22nd Apr. 1916.

2nd Lt. (temp. Capt.) Percy N. King reverts to the temp. rank of Lt. on alteration in posting, with precedence as from 20th Sept. 1915. 18th Mar. 1916.

2nd Lt. (temp. Capt.) George B. Faulder is restored to the estab. 22nd Mar. 1916.

Lance-Corpl. Frank Brooks Gill, from Notts and Derby Regt., to be 2nd Lt. 16th Apr. 1916.

Pte. Frederick Lawrence Wilson, from Notts and Derby Regt., to be 2nd Lt. 16th Apr. 1916.

He was killed in action on 3 September 1916, age 20, probably at the Battle of Pozières Ridge (23 July – 3 September 1916) on the Albert-Bapaume road, part of the first Battle of the Somme. Australian and British troops fought hard for an area that comprised a first-rate observation post over the surrounding countryside, and an alternative approach to the rear of the Thiepval defences.

He was originally buried in a small, isolated cemetery known as Paisley Avenue, but such small sites were unmaintainable. He, together with others buried there, was exhumed and reburied in Lonsdale Cemetery, Authulle, France, in Plot P, Row E, Grave 4 to ensure proper commemoration.

Frank left a Will, bequeathing all his effects - £47 – to his father, Henry.

Sources:

1901 & 1911 Census Data on FindMyPast <https://www.findmypast.co.uk/>

Nottinghamshire Great War Roll of Honour:
<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/rollofhonour/>

Commonwealth War Graves Commission: <https://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/532048/>

Forces War Records website: <https://www.forces-war-records.co.uk/>

Firstworldwar.com: <http://www.firstworldwar.com/battles/pozieres.htm>

The London Gazette: <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/awards-and-accreditation/ww1>

GoogleMaps:

<https://www.google.co.uk/maps/place/Crompton+Rd,+Birmingham+B20+3QP/@52.5094936,-1.9129942,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x4870bcc9a362b7ff:0xcc9418e94f5c7d2f!8m2!3d52.5094904!4d-1.9108055?hl=en>