

Frank Charles MOTH

Born: 1896, Newport

Parents: Frank Thomas Moth and Ellen Matilda Bradley

Last known address: Hale Farm, Farnham, Surrey

Last known occupation: Cow boy

Service number: 330997 **Regiment:** 1/8th Battalion, Hampshire Regiment
[I.W.Rifles]

Service history summary:

- enlisted: not known
- rank: Rifleman
- decorations: British War Medal and Victory Medal

Died: 19th April 1917 **Age:** 19 yrs

Commemorated: [Jerusalem Memorial](#)

Family: Frank Charles was the first child of Frank Thomas Moth, the son of a butcher (Henry Moth), and Ellen, daughter of Charles Bradley, a labourer. Frank and Ellen had married at St. John the Baptist Church, Northwood in 1895.

Brothers: William Charles (1899) and George Thomas (1901)

Sister: Ruth Agnes (1898)

Northwood/Gurnard connection: the three children plus their parents and uncle (Ellen's brother William Bradley *qv*) lived together in a cottage on Rolls Hill at the time of the 1901 census. Later that year (December 1901) Ellen gave birth to another son, George Thomas. By 1911 the family are found in Hale Farm, Farnham, Surrey. Frank senior is described as a cowman, Frank junior, now 14 years old, is a cow boy. Ruth and William are 13 and 11 years respectively. Sadly, George died, aged seven, in 1909 of heart disease whilst the family was living at Horsebridge Hill Dairy, before their move to Surrey.

It is unclear when the family returned to the Isle of Wight and Northwood but Frank Charles enlisted with the Isle of Wight Rifles at Newport and was living in Northwood, possibly at Luton Farm, at the time. During the War Frank's remaining brother William had become an apprentice boilermaker at J.S. Whites (shipbuilders) in Cowes, a reserved occupation. Tragically, William died of tuberculosis (TB) at home in Noke Common in May 1918,

So by the armistice of November 1918, Ellen and Frank Moth had just one child remaining, their daughter Ruth, now aged 20 years. By the following year Frank Thomas also passed away of consumption (TB), aged only 47 years. It seems that Ruth stayed with her mother for quite a while (perhaps to help her emotionally and financially) because it was not until 1928 that she married Arthur Cole and the

following year gave birth to Audrey. Ellen stayed at Noke Common Dairy until she died in 1944, aged 70 years. Ruth died in 1967.

War record: as his name does not appear on the passenger list of the *Aquitania* (the ship that took the first contingent of troops to Gallipoli) nor was he awarded the 15 Star, it can be surmised that Frank Charles would have joined the survivors of the Gallipoli Campaign, now in Egypt, in readiness for the attack on Gaza. In February 1917 the IW Rifles began a gruelling 145 mile march in full battle dress across the Sinai Desert. The First Battle of Gaza, which Frank survived, cost the lives of 4,000 allied troops and gave the Turks the advantage when three weeks later the Second Battle of Gaza was fought. It was during this battle (April 1917) that Rifleman Frank Charles Moth, aged 19 years, met his death, "killed in action".

A poignant entry appeared in the *Isle of Wight County Press* on Saturday 26th May, 1917 in the 'Information Desired' column,

Mrs Moth, Luton Farm, Northwood, I.W. would be very grateful if any comrade of the I.W. Rifles could give any information of her son, Rfn. Frank Moth, reported missing on April 19th.