

FRANK WILLIAM SPRINGETT

1899 – 1918

Kings Royal Rifle Corps, 16th Battalion.



Surname/Christian name: Frank William Springett.

Rank/Service No: Rifleman - A/205166

Regiment/Unit: Kings Royal Rifle Corps, 16th Battalion.



Date of Death: 26/08/1918

Age: 19

Type of Casualty: Died of wounds.

Theatre of War: Battle of the Somme.

Born/Year/Location: 12th January 1899 in Tabors Cottages, Horsmonden, Kent.

Enlisted/Attestation: St Albans, Hertfordshire

Son of/Address: He was the son of Stephen John Springett and Eliza Ann (Gurr) Springett.

Buried/Commemorated/Memorial: GRAND-SERAUCOURT BRITISH CEMETERY
Marle German Cemetery. Mem. 18.

Personal Inscription: A personal inscription was added to Frank's memorial headstone by his father Stephen John which reads -" *His Name Will Forever Be Treasured In Our Hearts.*"

Personal Inscription Form

The form is titled 'Imperial War Graves Commission' and is used for recording headstone inscriptions. It includes fields for 'No. of Contract', 'Name and Address of Firm', and 'Schedule'. The main body of the form is a table with columns for 'Badge Design No. and Layout', 'Headstone No.', 'Line 1', 'TEXT Line 2', 'Line 3', 'Line 4', and 'No. of Letters in Text'. Handwritten entries in red ink are visible in the table, including '1386' and '1389'.

Badge Design No. and Layout (1)	Headstone No. (2)	Line 1 (3)	TEXT Line 2 (4)	Line 3 (5)	Line 4 (6)	No. of Letters in Text (7)
	1386		(Mrs C. W. Springett), 27 Arlington Street, Anlaby Road, Hull			
1029/1C	1389		His Name Will Forever Be Treasured In Our Hearts (Pia J. Springett, Tulen Cottage, Hornumden, Kent)			11-8 40
	1389		(Mrs. Wm. L. L. L., 17, Colman Street, New North Road, Islington, S.I.)			

Additional personal and family information:

Prior to joining up Frank was a Grocer's Assistant, working for Waters, Grocer & Draper, Wistaria House.

Siblings Birth year/Name: Sidney Kentmere Springett 1891, Walter Stephen 1892 (also died in WW1), Edward John 1895, Edith Ellen 1901, Alice Maud 1903, Gladys Adelaide 1904, James Arthur 1907 and Winifred May 1909.

Relevant Military Record/Diary of Events:

The Service Records for Rifleman Springett were destroyed by fire when the Army repository in Wandsworth was hit during a German air raid in 1940 when approximately two thirds of the records were destroyed.

Fortunately, from a series of over 30 letters by Frank, mainly to his oldest brother Sidney, kept by the Bay Museum, Canvey Island, Franks movements can be followed.

Military

Frank enlisted in the spring of 1917 and was placed into D Company, 22nd Training Reserve at St Albans, Hertfordshire in the first week of May 1917. His regimental number was 6649, rank, Private. On 4th July 1917, D Company was moved to New Hall Farm Training Camp at Upper Dovercourt, near Harwich, Essex

Frank remained at Dovercourt until September 1917 when he moved to Bourne Park Camp at Bridge, near Canterbury. He was placed in A Company 2nd Platoon, 284th Infantry Battalion, with the rank and service number Private 56153.

By the 6th Nov 1917 he had moved to Cliftonville, Margate and was placed in the King's Royal Rifle Corps., Frank was now 56153 Rifleman Springett of A Company, 3rd Platoon, 51st G Battalion.

In a letter to Brother Sid he writes, "You will notice I am in the King's R.R. now and I have got a badge at last, I shall be able to swank now, Ha Ha."

By December 1917, Frank had passed his training and was now proficient in trench digging, rifle shooting, bayonet fighting, and also trained to use a Lewis Machine Gun.

After 6 days leave in December, his unit embarked for France from Southampton on the 13th January 1918, one day after his 19th birthday.

Frank was taken prisoner during the German Spring Offensive and taken to Limburgh an der Lahn, Prisoner of war camp in Germany, near Wesel.

He was posted as missing on 18th April 1918 and officially accepted as having died of wounds on 26th August 1918 while a prisoner of war.

Sadly, Frank's father Stephen, continued to write unaware that his son had died – a copy of this letter is shown.

Frank was buried by the Germans in Marle Cemetery along with six other British soldiers who had died in POW camps, two of whom were from Frank's battalion.

WAR DIARY/INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

The War Diary shows the Kings Royal Rifle Corps, (KRRC) were defending the front line around Neuve Eglise which is about 15km South of Ypres, where Rifleman Springett was captured in the trenches during the battle that raged from the 12th April to the 17th April. He was posted missing on the 13th April 1918.

The Germans captured Neuve Eglise, driving the Allies back, during the Spring Offensives with both sides suffering massive casualties. The Germans were able to pull 50 Divisions from their Eastern Front giving them a huge numerical advantage on the Western Front which enabled them to push the front line forward up to 60km in places.

The King's Royal Rifle Corp's casualty list for the action of the 12th to the 17th April included Officers killed, wounded and missing and are named in the diary and of the other ranks 27 were killed, 125 wounded, 337 missing, 25 wounded and missing.

Frank Springett was officially posted missing on the 13th April 1918, along with over 300 O.R (other ranks) missing, wounded & missing or taken prisoners of war as the numerically superior enemy overran their positions. This amounts to more than half of the Battalion.

The 16th King's Royal Rifle Corps gallantly defended Neuve Eglise, alongside the South Lancashire's and the 2nd Worcester's in their section of the line for two days against overwhelming odds before being forced back, significantly slowing the German advance and inflicting vast numbers of casualties.

The diarised account which shows the 16th King's Royal Rifle Corps movements leading up to the capture of Rifleman Frank Springett are shown on the WAR DIARY RECORD attached at the end of military/family account.

The following newspaper articles were seen:

From The Times Special Correspondent of the day: -

"Today I have heard some details of the doings of troops which did stubborn fighting in the defence of Neuve Eglise, when some five separate German attacks in strength were beaten back. For two days some Worcester's and King's Royal Rifles held on to the Neuve Eglise positions at great odds and when the enemy more than once broke into the village they counter attacked and drove them back. The last man to leave the Neuve Eglise was the commanding officer of the Worcester's, who declares that the German dead were literally piled in heaps before the positions his troops had defended and we know from many sources that the German casualties were terrible".

The Western Evening Herald - Monday 15th April 1918

(Describing the German offensive towards Bailleul and Hazebrouck)

"Over and over again Ebenhardt's troops came back to the charge, with special violence against the village of Neuve Eglise.

Fighting at this point was very severe and lasted all day. The struggle, indeed, is still in progress without any decision having been reached.

The tenacity of the British in this action has been beyond praise." "a German communique records no progress beyond Vieux Berquin and Merris, and it admits the fact that there were lively battles around Bailleul, without being able to give definite particulars as to their outcome.

Finally it announces the capture of Neuve Eglise, but the village having passed continually from one side to the other throughout the day, this statement, as we may see from the British communique, is probably not true now.

Kentish Express, Saturday 3rd August, 1918.

"For Their King and Country"

"Mr. & Mrs. S.J. Springett of Horsmonden have received official news that their son, 205166, Rifleman F. W. Springett, King's Royal Rifles, is a prisoner of war in Germany.

He joined up at the age of eighteen and was in France the day after his nineteenth birthday.

He was in continuous fighting from the time he landed in France and took part in the great battle that started on the 21st March, being taken prisoner on the 13th April.

Previous to joining up he was a grocer's assistant and his many friends will be pleased to know that he is still alive.

The number 13 has played a remarkable part in his army career.

He joined up on the 13th January; left St. Albans for Dovercourt 13th June; left Dovercourt for Bridge 13th August; left Bridge for Margate 13th October; left Margate for France 13th January 1918; joined battalion, 13th platoon; taken prisoner 13th April; Red Cross reports having heard he was a prisoner 13th July."

Following letter by his father, was written to Frank on the day he died: -

F Springett letter 26 August 1918

Tabors Cottage, Horsmonden, Kent, England.

Aug 26th 1918

To No 205166 Rifleman F.W. Springett

16th Batt King's Royal Rifles *** Kriegsgefangenen- Stammlagers Limberg A.A. Lahn

My Dear Son Frank,

We have received two cards from you & we were all so pleased to know you was well, I am happy to say we are all very well at present. I have been trying to get your address so that I can send you something useful to you & when you write please tell me of anything I can send you. You are ever in our minds & will be to the end, I am still at the same place. Alice has left the shop & is doing well. Edith is still at the King's Arms & my word you will not know your big sisters when you come home. What a day it will be, Little Win & Jim are growing & Jim is fair little member. Ted & Sid are still alright, Mother joins with me & your Sisters & Brothers in sending our fondest love to you trusting that we shall hear from you soon I remain

Your Ever-Loving Father

S.J. Springett

Other Relevant Documents:

Medals/Awards Received: Frank was awarded the British War and Victory Medals. Memorial Scroll and Plaque.

Medal Roll Index Card

Name	Corps	Rank	Regt. No.
SPRINGETT Frank W.	No. 6. Rif. Co.	Pte.	A. 205166
Medal	Roll	Page	Remarks
VICTORY	M. 101	622, 52	
BRITISH			
STAR			
Theatre of War first served in			
Date of entry therein			

British War and Victory Medals Memorial Plaque and Scroll awarded to Rifleman Springett



SOLDIERS EFFECTS

The Register of Soldiers Effects, confirms Frank's date of death, 26th Aug 1918. The British accepted his date and cause of death (ow = Of Wounds), from the death certificate that the German authorities would have sent to the British for POW's that died.

Record No.	Registry No.	Soldier's Name	Regiment, Rank, No.	Date and Place of Death	CREDITS			CHARGES			Date of Authority	To whom Authorized	Amount Authorized	No. of Pts in Voucher	
					Account and Date	£	s.	d.	Account and Date	£					s.
877591	719156	Springett Frank William	16th Res. Bn. Officially accepted No. 6. Rif. Co. as on 4/205166 26.8.18	24. 8. 1918	24	4	5				9.8.19	For Skepey	27	4	8

Other Articles of Interest:

The transcription of the letter that was sent to Frank by his father unaware that his son had died.

(The additional letters are shown on a pdf document attached separately.)

Tabors Cottages
Horsmonden
Kent
England
Oct 25th 1918

My Dear Son Frank,

It was with great thankfulness we received your letter. We were delighted & we will dispatch you a parcel as soon as we are permitted to do so. We are so pleased to know you are in a good camp & that your health is A1.

I am pleased to tell you we are all very well in health & Sid & Ted & myself have plenty in hand, I have started a new job not far from the old job & I am seeing a great deal of the War in all its realities. We trust it will soon be over.

I have written to Winchester & to the Red Cross London & believe me Frank we are doing everything for you that we can.

I have tried hard for months & the various replies will be interesting reading to you when it is all over & you are home again.

I suppose you have my photo & Ted's. Well, your mother and the girls will send you some on.

Your Sisters are getting big Girls now & Winnie & Little Jim are a couple I tell you. It would do you good to hear them sing. The capers they cart me is something to reckon with.

Miss Walters got your card first & you may look for a good parcel from us independent of the Red Cross. I shall send money to them to send you a few things you want & I trust you will receive them safely.

I have received a letter from Charlie Smith's mother & she had a letter from him in Bavaria. He was wounded in the neck & he wrote home & sent our address; I have written to him & will send him something if I can.

The weather is getting cold & wet, which of course is common about this time of year. I might tell you I had 7 letters come back from France, parcels as well.

Well my boy, I must now close. I will write after & send you what I can. I have an idea what would be useful to you & you shall have it. Or it will be no fault of mine if you do not receive it. We shall be looking forward for the day when you come home.

Dad will kill the fatted calf. So with love & best wishes for you I will conclude this letter trusting the day will not be far distant when we shall be united again.

There are signs that peace & goodwill on earth will soon be an accomplished fact again. May it be soon.
Your letter arrived on Sat Oct 19th.

From Your Loving & Aff Father
J. Springett

...

Cover to Kriegsgefangenensendung, British Prisoner of War 1006. No 205166 Rifleman Frank W. Springett, 16th K.R.R. Camp * Friedrichsfeld near Wesel. Germany

Postmarked 25 OC 18. Rest of stamp unreadable
OPENED BY CENSOR P.W. 963

Kent & Sussex Courier, Friday 12th June, 1914, (abridged)

THOUSANDS SEE CLEVER LOCAL AIRMAN "LOOP THE LOOP"

"The eagerly-anticipated flying demonstrations by Mr. Frank Goodden - the first of their kind ever held in Tunbridge Wells - took place on Wednesday and Thursday at the Liptraps Estate, Sandhurst-road. There were over 5,000 people on the ground on Wednesday afternoon when the machine, a Morane-Saulnier monoplane was hauled out of the hangar.

Although the wind was blowing at about 45 miles an hour, he ascended, and when at about 2000 feet, looped seven times including two difficult side-loops. He flew upside down for a few seconds but the weather conditions did not admit of much of this form of exercise. As it was, his engines nearly stopped and he was afraid he would have to plane to earth.

He encircled the aerodrome at a tremendous speed and concluded a brilliant piece of pilotage by planing in a daring graceful sweep to earth. His landing was perfection although the weather conditions were all against a successful landing.

The holder of an admission ticket bearing a certain number was to have been given a free passenger flight.

Master Frank Springett, a Horsmonden lad, proved to be the fortunate individual, but owing to the strength of the wind he had to forego the pleasure of a trip in the air. A sovereign however, appeared to afford him adequate consolation."

...

United Kingdom War Memorials - Horsmonden Memorial Building



1922



Present Day



Oak War Memorial Plaque in Memorial Building

(Rifleman Frank Springett shown left block, row 4 no. 3)

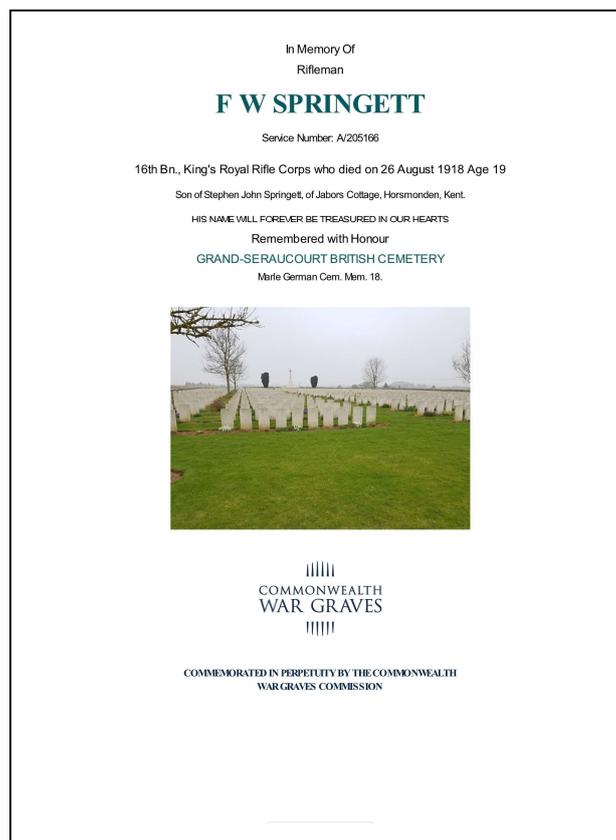
St Margaret's Church Memorial Scroll



...

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Entry

CWGC CERTIFICATE



GRAND-SERAUCOURT BRITISH CEMETERY





Imperial War Graves Commission.

No. of Contract _____ dated _____ Schedule "B" Part 20.
 Name and Address of Firm. _____ Place of Cemetery.

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT (B) HEADSTONE PERSONAL INSCRIPTIONS
 to be read in conjunction with
 COMPREHENSIVE REPORT (A) HEADSTONE MILITARY INSCRIPTIONS
 together with
 TWO STANDARD LAYOUTS (the layouts to be used are quoted on the badge design).

Badge Design No. and Layout (1)	Headstone No. (2)	Line 1 (3)	TEXT Line 2 (4)	Line 3 (5)	Line 4 (6)	No. of Letters in Text (7)
	1286		(Mrs C. W. Hodgson), 27 Arlington Street, Dublin Road, Hull)			
	1287					
1029/C	1286	THEir NAME WILL SERVICE BE REMEMBERED IN OUR HEARTS (Mrs J. J. Springett, Tatham Cottage, Horamander, Kent)			11-8	40
	1289	(Mrs. Thos. Lf., 17, Colman Street, New North Road, Islington, N.1.)				

Graves Registration Report from January 1925 - Grand Seraucourt British Cemetery Plot P, Row R, Grave G.
 Special "Kipling" Memorial (Kipling Inscription - "Known Unto God" a phrase coined by Rudyard Kipling, when working for the War Office, which was engraved on the memorials of missing or unknown soldiers)
"To the memory of these seven British soldiers, who died as Prisoners of War in 1918, and were buried at this time in Marle Communal Cemetery, German Extension, but whose graves are now lost."
"Their glory shall not be blotted out"

Gravestone Registration report.

Grave Registration Form

Imperial War Graves Commission.

No. of Contract _____ dated _____ Schedule "B" Part 20.
 Name and Address of Firm. _____ Place of Cemetery.

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT (B) HEADSTONE PERSONAL INSCRIPTIONS
 to be read in conjunction with
 COMPREHENSIVE REPORT (A) HEADSTONE MILITARY INSCRIPTIONS
 together with
 TWO STANDARD LAYOUTS (the layouts to be used are quoted on the badge design).

Badge Design No. and Layout (1)	Headstone No. (2)	Line 1 (3)	TEXT Line 2 (4)	Line 3 (5)	Line 4 (6)	No. of Letters in Text (7)
	1286		(Mrs C. W. Hodgson), 27 Arlington Street, Dublin Road, Hull)			
	1287					
1029/C	1286	THEir NAME WILL SERVICE BE REMEMBERED IN OUR HEARTS (Mrs J. J. Springett, Tatham Cottage, Horamander, Kent)			11-8	40
	1289	(Mrs. Thos. Lf., 17, Colman Street, New North Road, Islington, N.1.)				

Print Checked, Paid Check No. 1, Value Cash Payment, Print Check No. 2.

No. of Area I.W.G.C. _____
 Serial No. 45. **GRAVES REGISTRATION REPORT FORM.**
 10/1/25.

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT (B) HEADSTONE PERSONAL INSCRIPTIONS
 to be read in conjunction with
 COMPREHENSIVE REPORT (A) HEADSTONE MILITARY INSCRIPTIONS
 together with
 TWO STANDARD LAYOUTS (the layouts to be used are quoted on the badge design).

COMMENTS: GRAND SERAUCOURT.

PLACE OF BURIAL GRAND SERAUCOURT BRITISH CEMETERY. Certified complete and correct.

Map Reference 800. G.2. G.7.2.

The following are buried here:-

Regiment	No.	Name	Rank and Rank	Date of Death	Grave Reported or G. R. V. C.	Plot, Row and Grave
MEMORIAL PHOTO.						
SPECIAL "KIPLING" MEMORIAL.						
"To the memory of these seven British soldiers, who died as Prisoners of War in 1918, and were buried at the time in MARLE COMMUNAL CEMETERY, GERMAN EXTENSION, but whose graves are now lost."						
"Their glory shall not be blotted out."						
10/Cheshire Regt.	27562	NUTTALL	Pvt. J.	23/8/18.		12
1/7 Yorks.	45742	AXARCH	Pvt. W.	-80-		13
8/Wilt's Regt.	27904	MUTASHAW	Pvt. G.	"		14
126/1 P.R.C.	07198	SUTCLIFFE	Sgt. E.	"		15
R/North'd. Fus.	318187	HOBSON	Pvt. H.W.	"		16
16/5 P.R.C.	07149	GREENLAND	Sgt. W.	"		17
16/5 P.R.C.	205168	SPRINGETT	Sgt. P.W.	"		18

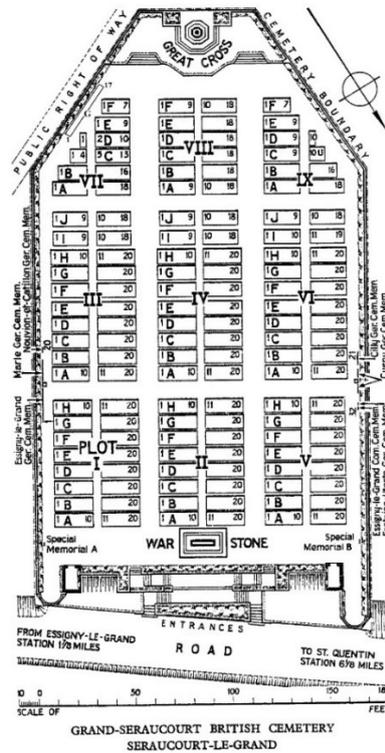
Not consolidated inscription see also 115

ENTERED 10/25
 SLIPS CHECKED 10/25

Headstone Report

No. of Contract _____ date _____ Name and Address of Firm _____		Imperial War Graves Commission.				Schedule "A" Page _____ Name of Cemetery _____ GRAND SERAUCOURT, B.C., "C"	
COMPREHENSIVE REPORT (A) OF HEADSTONE INSCRIPTIONS							
to this report is attached							
COMPREHENSIVE REPORT (B) OF HEADSTONE TEXTS							
(These headings to be inserted with text are underlined)							
and							
TWO STANDARD LAYOUTS (the layouts to be used are quoted on the badge design)							
Badge Design No. and Layout No.	1st Line	2nd Line	3rd Line	4th Line	Centre of Stone.	To be stencilled on foot of headstones below ground level	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
1044/1A	316197 PRIVATE	H.W. HEDGON	ROYAL SCOTISH INFANTRY	21ST AUGUST 1918	1918	CROSS	KIP.MEM. 1000
1029/1B	1/7149 RIFLEMAN	W. GOSLAND	KING'S ROYAL RIFLES	2ND AUGUST 1918	1918	CROSS	KIP.MEM. 1000
1022/1C	1/200166 RIFLEMAN	F.W. SPRINGETT	KING'S ROYAL RIFLES	21ST MARCH 1918	1918	CROSS	KIP.MEM. 1000
1047/1A	3/23166 RIFLEMAN	J.A. BURLS	THE RIFLE BRIGADE	21ST MARCH 1918	1918	CROSS	KIP.MEM. 1000

CEMETRY PLAN



Rifleman Frank William Springett



Footnote: The CWGC Unit text mistakenly names Tabors Cottage as 'Jabors'>

Research and compilation L Burgess and J Freeman
Horsmonden History Research Group