

unprepared to hold a large number of prisoners. By 1915, there were over a million prisoners of war and PoW camps had to be hastily constructed, and were therefore inadequate in every way. The administration of the camps was not centralised and conditions varied, but many were insanitary and in 1915 a typhus epidemic broke out which cost the lives of thousands of prisoners.



Niederzwehren Cemetery

Frank is buried in Niederzwehren Cemetery in the centre of Germany, a cemetery begun by the Germans in 1915 and used for the burial of prisoners of war who died at the local camp. However, after the war the graves of Commonwealth servicemen who had died in other German camps were also brought to Niederzwehren so we cannot be sure exactly where Frank was imprisoned when he died. He was awarded the Victory Medal, the British Medal and the 14 Star. Although Frank fought only briefly in the Great War before being taken

prisoner, his role was an important one. It has been said that “through the course of the entire war, never were British troops as heavily outnumbered” as they were at Le Cateau and they succeeded in giving the other British and French forces the time they needed to execute their retreat.

I am immensely grateful to Sherilley Leach for sending me Frank’s photo and so much information about him and his family. Sherilley is the granddaughter of Frank’s younger brother, Fred, who with his wife, Edith (née Hancocks) used to run the garage in Westbury where the dental surgery is now. Both Fred and Edith’s families built and owned a lot of property in Westbury and the Hancocks at one time lived at the Red Lion. Sherilley’s mother, Gloria, was born at the garage and she and her husband, Tony Leach, who celebrated their Golden Wedding in 2013, have lived in the village for most of their married life.

Last year, Sherilley was selected as a volunteer to help plant the poppies at the Tower of London. It allowed her time to have a silent prayer for Frank and all the others who have lost their lives in war. She says it was a very moving experience and one she will cherish for the rest of her life.

For further copies of this leaflet or if you have any information to add, please contact Di Landon on 01452 760531

Westbury Remembers - Part 3

A Prisoner of War—Frank Ingram

Written by Di Landon
and sponsored by

Westbury-on-Severn Parish Council



Frank Ingram (or Francis Henry Ingram as he was christened) was a regular soldier, one of perhaps six regulars from Westbury who died in the First World War. He was born here in October 1885 and his father, also named Francis and born in Westbury, was a labourer and carpenter. He and his wife Annie (née Liddington)



Private Frank Ingram

had ten children, of whom nine survived, Frank being their second child.

In 1901, when Frank was 16, the family was living in Ampney Lane and both Frank and his father, together with his uncle and cousin who lived next door, were working

as railway wagon builders for the Albion Carriage Company Ltd at Grange Court.

It seems that soon after the 1901 census he, like many other young men from Gloucestershire and Herefordshire, moved over the border to Wales. The Albion Carriage Company seems to have closed down between 1902 and 1907, so perhaps he was attracted by the guaranteed work and newly built

housing associated with mining in the Rhondda, or perhaps he had relatives or a girlfriend there—the address of a Miss M Hopkins of Bridgend, Glamorgan is on his Red Cross record card. (see page 3) Whatever the reason, he moved to Pen-Y-Graig in Glamorgan, but by December 1903

or January 1904, he seems to have decided on a military career and had enlisted in the Army in Swansea.

He joined the 4th Battalion of the Rifle Brigade. They were stationed in Malta from 1905 until 1909, but he would then have embarked with them on the *Braemar Castle* heading for Alexandria in Egypt. He was still in Egypt for the 1911 census but at some point he must have transferred to the 1st Battalion of the Rifle Brigade which, when war was declared in 1914, was part of the 4th Division and was stationed in Colchester. This division was initially planned to be part of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) but, at the last minute, was held back in England to counter any possible German landing. However, the fate of the BEF in France and the lack of any sign of Germans crossing the Channel reversed this decision and



Le Havre 1914

they were sent to France, landing at Le Havre in the early hours of 23rd of August 1914. The next day they traveled by train to Le Cateau and were just in time to provide infantry reinforcements at the battle which



Fighting at Le Cateau
26th August 1914

ensued there a few days later. *The short and sharp Battle of Le Cateau was fought on 26th August 1914, after the British and French had retreated following the Battle of Mons and had set up defensive positions in a fighting withdrawal against the German advance.*

The 2nd Corps was being closely pursued by the German First Army and the newly-arrived 4th Division had moved up alongside them. By the evening of 25th August, it had become clear that there was a lack of co-ordination between the British and French high commands and that the retreating troops were totally exhausted. General Smith-Dorrien felt that it would be disastrous if the withdrawal was forced to continue and ordered



General Smith-Dorrien

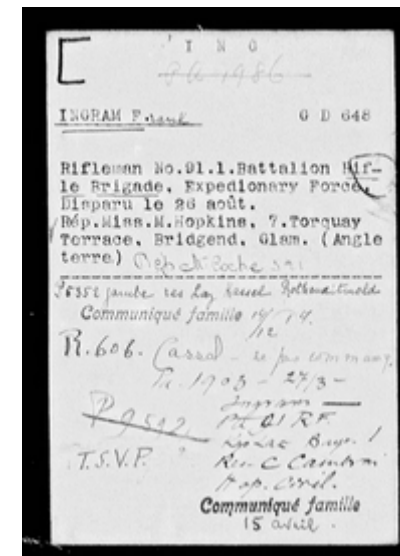
them to stand and fight, contrary to the orders of the Commander-in-Chief Sir John French.



Commander in Chief
Sir John French

Under shell fire and with the German infantry advancing, Frank's battalion took up defensive positions in a sunken road. The enemy came to within 100 yards, but the Riflemen held their position even though they were under fire from the front, left flank and rear. There were heavy casualties and when they had to withdraw, they were unable to move the wounded from the sunken road. Two officers and 345 other ranks of the 1st Battalion, including Frank, were wounded and taken prisoner.

The German advance had been slowed down and by that afternoon, the 2nd Corps were able to disengage and withdraw to the south. Heavy casualties were inflicted on the German army and their planned advance towards Paris was further delayed. Some time later Frank's parents received a letter from him saying that he was wounded and a prisoner of war in Germany. His Red



Frank's International Red Cross
Record Card

Cross record is difficult to understand but it shows that he was wounded in the leg and that he was in the civilian hospital in Cambrai at one time as well as in prison at a place called Rothenditmold in Kassel, which is about 100 miles from Berlin. He died nearly seven months later on 18th March 1915 but we do not know whether this was as a result of his wounds or from some other cause. He was 29 years old. Frank's parents later received a letter from a German lady who explained how she had nursed him in his final days. The letter was translated for them by someone who lived at Byways (now Westbury House).

In the early days of the war, the Germans had been confident of a swift victory and were therefore