

## **Frederick Martin**

**1878 - 1916**

Born in Eynsham, Oxfordshire

Saddler

Married with three children

Died at Halifax War Hospital, aged 38, on 26 August 1916

### **Family**

Frederick Martin was born in Eynsham, Oxfordshire, in 1878. His parents Henry Martin and Sarah Bryant had also both been born in Eynsham, and were married there. Henry was an agricultural labourer who could not sign his name, but Sarah was a servant, and could.

Frederick was the second of Henry and Sarah's ten surviving children. Three of them were baptised at an unspecified Primitive Methodist Chapel between 1889 and 1892, when the family was living in Botley (then a hamlet of North Hinksey, and in Berkshire). One brother was baptised at the age of 18 in 1913 at Wesley Memorial Methodist Church.

Frederick married Amelia Beatrice Morris in 1900 at St Andrew's Church in Headington, and they went to live in St Clement's. He was described as a saddler. But less than four months later Amelia died and was buried at Holy Trinity in Headington Quarry.

In 1901 Frederick had moved back to the family home in North Hinksey where his father was now a farm bailiff. He continued as a saddler. Then in 1904 Frederick married May Alice Clarke. They lived in East Oxford and their first child was baptised at St Clement's Methodist Church. Later they moved to Jericho, Oxford, and had two more children who were baptised together in 1913 at Walton Street Methodist Church.

### **War Service: D Battery, 86<sup>th</sup> Brigade, Royal Field Artillery**

Frederick joined D Battery of the 86<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the Royal Field Artillery as a Corporal Saddler. This unit was part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Western Division which formed in September 1914 in Bulford in Wiltshire, where Frederick enlisted.

After a period of training in England, Frederick arrived in France on 17 July 1915. His trade would have been valuable as each battery of field guns used 200 transport horses, as depicted in the well-known 'War Horse' story. They were in action for weeks or months at a time, and saddlers would work with drivers to maintain the tack and saddlery, which could deteriorate rapidly.

Frederick's brigade had their first action on 25 September at Pietre, staged to distract attention from preparations for the Battle of Loos. From July 1916 they took part in the Battle of the Somme at High Wood and the Battle of Pozieres. He seems to have been promoted to Sergeant at a late stage, as he appears with this rank in some records but remains as Corporal Saddler in others. At some point he became ill and was invalided home. He died in the War Hospital at Halifax on 26

August 1916, aged 38, and was buried in Botley Cemetery. His widow lived to the age of 94 and died at Sobell House, Oxford, in 1978.

---

This is the story of one of the men who appear on the war memorial of Walton Street Methodist Church, which can now be seen at Wesley Memorial Methodist Church in Oxford, UK. These stories were compiled in 2019 based on research by Stephanie Jenkins ([http://www.oxfordhistory.org.uk/war/walton\\_street\\_chapel/index.html](http://www.oxfordhistory.org.uk/war/walton_street_chapel/index.html)), supplemented by information from a variety of military sources.