

IN MEMORY OF FRANK DAVIS RAINBOW

DIED IN ACTION 25 AUGUST 1918

Lived at Orchard House, Pump Street - now The Homestead, Crown Street
NO PLAQUE

Frank served in the 55th Field Ambulance of the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC). The RAMC was a relatively new establishment, only formed on 23 June 1898. For years, medical care for the sick and wounded had been inadequate, with cases that appeared hopeless sometimes even being killed by their own side as an act of mercy.

Yet during the First World War conditions improved. The RAMC sanitary Sections were formed to ensure that the hospital sites were clean and organised. The nature of modern warfare meant that the rate at which men were wounded sharply increased, in such numbers that it was impossible to treat them on the front line. A chain of evacuation was established to allow surgeons to take the time to properly and efficiently treat the wounded. The intention was to get the men back to the front as quickly as possible.

This was the corps Frank was to join, though his early life gives no indication of his medical future. Born in Worcester in 1893, his father was a carpenter. By 1901 he had four younger siblings, all living with their parents. By 1911 the family had moved to Harbury, and Frank had begun to work as a gardener. Three years later they were still living in Pump Street, directly opposite the Crown pub, at 'The Homestead'.

Frank did not train to be a doctor - indeed he does not appear to have received any kind of medical training. Yet he became an ambulance man. This was hardly a safe option, as the RAMC men did not carry weapons to defend themselves and would have risked their lives, sometimes in the heat of battle, to retrieve the wounded.

Though the RAMC was not a fighting force, its service was recognised, with many of its members - Frank among them - awarded medals for bravery. On 18 July 1917 (just under two years since reaching France) he was awarded the Military Medal, receiving it a second time that November, for bravery. His ambulance division saw many battles, from the Somme to the capture of Irlles.

When he was killed in action on 25 August 1918, he joined the 6,873 other RAMC personnel lost during the war. He was buried at Albert, where he fell. The curling snake crowned with laurels, the sign of the RAMC, is carved onto the smooth stone of his grave.

Frank is further remembered through the naming of Rainbow Crescent off Bush Heath Lane



Harbury World War 1 Memorial Trail

Remembering the men of Harbury parish who fell during the first world war in service of their country.

