

## **BOMBARDIER FRANK BOND (1894 -1917)**

Frank Bond was born in December 1894, the second son and seventh child of John and Jane Bond. John Bond was an agricultural labourer and the family moved around the local area. In 1881 they were living at Hotspur Cottages, Newton St Cyres, but by 1891 had moved to Tolleys in Crediton. The family suffered a tragedy when Jane Bond died in the January quarter of 1900. Frank was only five years old. Baby Annie went to live with an Aunt and Uncle in Powderham.

By April 1901 John Bond, with his daughter Florrie (14yrs) and sons Bert (9yrs) and Frank (6yrs) had moved to an address given as Vinny Tedburn, Crediton Hall, Crediton. In the October quarter of 1906 John Bond married his second wife Elizabeth Pike, widow of Robert Pike of Salmon Hutch, and by 1911 John, Elizabeth and Frank joined by Annie were back in Newton St Cyres living in West Town. Frank was also working as a farm labourer and his brother Robert was living and working as a farm carter in Tedburn St Mary.

Frank Bond (service number 76618) served with the 128<sup>th</sup> Battery, 30<sup>th</sup> Brigade Royal Field Artillery in France and in Flanders. The Royal Field Artillery was responsible for the medium calibre guns and howitzers deployed close to the front line and were reasonably mobile. The 128<sup>th</sup> were a Howitzer Battery. They remained on the Western Front throughout the war and in the late summer of 1917 fought in the battles of Pilkem and Langemarck. These were part of a series of battles, which culminated in the battles for the capture of the Passchendaele Ridge. Ultimately the Allies hoped to break through the German lines within the North Eastern Ypres Salient, so that with a further North Westerly move they could cut the Germans off from the Belgian Ports from where they operated submarines. That August was very wet, the drainage of a reclaimed swampy area had become thoroughly disturbed by shelling, and the result was mud and craters so horrific that men and horses could simply disappear. The Germans were eventually forced back from their ridge-top positions, and some few kilometres gained, only to be lost again the following spring.

Frank Bond's medal card shows that he entered the theatre of war in August 1914 and together with his Victory Medal and General War medal he was awarded the 1914 Star with Clasp. This was awarded only to those who had served in 1914 under bombardment.

Acting Bombardier Frank Bond was killed in action on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September 1917.

He is buried in the large Dozinghem Military Cemetery, West Vlaanderen, Belgium, where there are over three thousand British graves. Next of kin contact details were evidently given as John Bond, Lower Living, a house off the road from Newton St Cyres to Shobrooke and officially of that Parish. However a notice of death in the Western Times 11 Oct 1917 gives John Bond's address as Creedy Barton and Frank's age as twenty two. Frank is remembered on the plaque and in the remembrance window of Newton St Cyres Church.