

Gunner Frank Brown[©]

Regimental number: 686704

Royal Horse Artillery and Royal Field Artillery, Territorial Force

born: 17 August 1887–died: 29 July 1917

TOO DEARLY LOVED
TO BE FORGOTTEN
LOVING WIFE ALICE¹

Gunner Frank Brown married Alice Mary Hindle on 23 August 1913 at the Salem Methodist Chapel (United Methodists), Regent Street, in Haslingden.² Alice was a cotton weaver and the daughter of Thomas Hindle, blacksmith, and his wife, Alice Ann.³ Frank was a grocer's assistant and the son of George Brown, a retired loom overlooker, and his wife, Elizabeth (née Hammond).⁴ Frank's parents had married in 1878.⁵

Sadly, Frank and Alice were married for three years before he enlisted to serve in the Great War, but had no children.⁶ He died just over a year later,⁷ just as he was about to celebrate his thirtieth birthday.

Frank grew up in Cloughfold, on the outskirts of Haslingden, Lancashire. At the beginning of their marriage, his parents lived in Alma Cottages in Cowpe, Lench, Newhall Hey, Hall Carr⁸—a township in Bury Parish, four miles from Haslingden, Lancashire.⁹ In 1891, Frank, his parents and four siblings were still in Alma Cottages.¹⁰ Ten years later, the family was living a couple of miles away at 5 Plantation Street in Cloughfold, where they would remain for over 60 years. By then, five of the Brown children, including Frank, were cotton weavers.¹¹ Frank had a total of eight siblings, seven of whom were still living in 1911:¹²

- Mary Alice (born on 25 August 1878)¹³
- Elizabeth A. (born on 20 July 1880)¹⁴
- George Frederick (born on 15 June 1882)¹⁵
- Jane Ellen (born on 18 June 1885)¹⁶
- John (born on 6 September 1890)¹⁷
- Susannah (born on 28 May 1894)¹⁸
- Walter (born in 1897, but sadly died at the age of 2)¹⁹
- James Ashworth (born on 14 December 1899)²⁰

Frank enlisted to join the army in about May 1916.²¹ He became a gunner in the Royal Horse Artillery and Royal Field Artillery as part of the Territorial Force.²²

Just over a year later, he was injured and admitted on 29 July 1917 to the No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station²³ with injuries to his groin and abdomen; he died the same day.²⁴ No. 1 CCCS was stationed in Adinkerke, Belgium, just across the Franco-Belgian border, when Frank was one of 477 soldiers admitted that day.²⁵ He was buried the following day in Coxyde Military Cemetery (Plot II, Row A, Grave 9). A letter was sent to his wife, Alice, to notify her of his death.²⁶

Frank was awarded posthumously the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).²⁷

At a memorial service for Frank, held at the United Methodist Church in Haslingden, Rev A. J. Keeley spoke eloquently about the lost soldier.

In the days of his childhood our brother was connected with St John's, Cloughfold, where he was baptized in confirmed. He was a regular and conscientious communicant, and was also a member of the choir. Four years ago, however, he married Miss Alice Mary Hindle, and became attached to our people here at Salem. He enjoyed the services of this place, and was seldom absent from the minister's class . . .

For seven or eight years he was the servant of the Cloughfold Co-operative Society. Greatly beloved by the manager and staff, he possessed the singular facility for putting a customer in a good mood, and spared no pains to oblige and give satisfaction. Buoyant, competent, trustworthy, he found pleasure in the performance of his duties. His good-nature produced an atmosphere in which brotherhood became real and fellowship possible. It is said of him that he never saw anything that required to be done without doing it. Those who know him in his business relationships bear him high testimony, and declare that it will be difficult indeed to fill his place. Hearing of the difficulties which have arisen as a result of the depleted staff in the department in which he served, he cheerily replies: "Wait till we come home. We'll soon put things right." But our waiting for that happy day is over; we know now that he will not come back.²⁸

The minister also spoke affectionately of Frank's relationship with his wife Alice and his hopeful return home.

She and he had nothing but joy in their union . . . His letters reveal a joyous anticipation of time when the last trench shall have been stormed, the last bullet shot, and the boys shall greet once more, on their own hearths, their loved ones and friends. He wrote this one who never knew fear. He was eager for the fight, believing that the sooner our enemies could get at the enemy, the sooner there would be an end of this awful desolation. His unchanging optimism admitted of no doubt that he would share in the song of victory, and the joy of coming home. But those expectations are now beyond all hope of realization. His body lies buried with the mortal remains of other gallant comrades in a Military Cemetery somewhere, we believe, in Belgium.²⁹

After the war, Alice was living with her parents at 4 Elm Street, Haslingden, where she was working as a cotton weaver.³⁰ On 23 July 1921, she married Harry Eastwood, also a cotton weaver, at the Salem Methodist Chapel in Haslingden.³¹ They appear to have had two girls—Ethel, born in 1922,³² and Vera Margaret, born in 1930.³³ In 1939, the family was living eight miles away at 11 Tennyson Avenue in Padiham, Lancashire, and Alice's mother was living with them. Alice served in the Women's Auxiliary in World War II.³⁴

In addition to his wife, Frank was mourned by his mother, father, four sisters and three brothers. After the war, four of Frank's siblings were still living with their parents at 5 Plantation Street. His father had retired from James Henry Ashworth & Co, cotton manufacturers. However, three siblings continued to work for the company—Mary Alice and Jane Ellen were cotton weavers and John an office caretaker. Their brother James was an office clerk for the corporation electricity tramway.³⁵ It is likely that family members had worked for James Henry Ashworth & Co for a long time—perhaps

it is the reason that the last Brown child carried the middle name Ashworth. The company was probably established in Rawtenstall in the 1890s and appears to have been one of the biggest cotton spinners and manufacturers, with 36,000 spindles and 940 looms.³⁶

Frank's parents lived for another ten years after his death—his father died on 8 February 1928³⁷ and his mother the following year, on 12 February.³⁸ They were both buried in Rawtenstall Cemetery.³⁹

Frank's brother **John** also served in the Great War,⁴⁰ but no information was found about his service. **Mary Alice**, John and **Jane Ellen** did not marry and were living together at 5 Plantation Street in 1939;⁴¹ they remained there until their deaths—Mary Alice on 3 April 1953,⁴² Jane Ellen on 25 April 1962⁴³ and John on 5 June 1965.⁴⁴

Frank's sister **Elizabeth** married Frank Chadderton in 1904.⁴⁵ Frank was a pressman in a slipper factory, and the family lived in Cloughfold⁴⁶ and Rawtenstall⁴⁷ all their lives. Elizabeth died in Haslingden in 1974.⁴⁸

George married Mary Elizabeth Allpress in 1909⁴⁹ and, in 1911, they were living at 2 Albert Terrace in Cloughfold, where George was a loom jobber. He served as an air raid protection warden in World War II.⁵⁰

Susannah married Harold Tattersall in 1920⁵¹ and the following year the couple was living at 1 Height Side Cottages, Waterfoot, in Rawtenstall, where both were working as cotton weavers at J. H. Ashworth & Co. They had a son, Frank, born on 27 May 1924—perhaps named after his late uncle.⁵² Susannah died in Haslingden in 1964.⁵³

The last Brown child, **James**, married Doris Brindle in 1926.⁵⁴ In 1939, they were living at 268 Newchurch Road, Rawtenstall, where James was a junior consumer clerk for the local government electricity department.⁵⁵ He served as an air raid protection warden in World War II and died in Rawtenstall on 10 March 1955.⁵⁶

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¹ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org; accessed 14 June 2024), entry for Gunner Frank Brown, Service No: 686704

² "Lancashire, England, Non-Conformist Registers of Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, 1762-2005," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 10 June 2024), entry for Frank Brown

³ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 14 June 2024), entry for Alice Mary Hindle, Registration district number: 471, Sub-registration district: Haslingden, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 03, Piece: 24734

⁴ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 14 June 2024), entry for Frank Brown, Registration district number: 471, Sub-registration district: Haslingden, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 13, Piece: 24708

⁵ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 10 June 2024), entry for George Brown, Registration district: Haslingden, Inferred county: Lancashire, Volume: 8e, Page: 179

⁶ Based on "War Gratuity Calculator" (<https://wargratiuity.wordpress.com/2015/08/16/gratuity-calculator/>; accessed 18 May 2017); "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 10 June 2024), entry for Frank Brown

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- ⁷ "Soldiers Died in the Great War 19F14–1919," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 10 June 2024), entry for Frank Brown
- ⁸ "1881 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 15 June 2024), entry for George Brown, Registration district: Haslingden, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 14, Piece: 4135, Folio: 40, Page: 16
- ⁹ "Cowpe, Lench, Newhall Hey, Hall Carr," *Genuki* (<https://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/LAN/Cowpe>: accessed 15 June 2024)
- ¹⁰ "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 June 2024), entry for Frank Brown, Registration district: Haslingden, Sub-registration district: Rossendale, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 27, Piece: 3850, Folio:47, Page number: 7, Household schedule number: 40
- ¹¹ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 June 2024), entry for Frank Brown, Registration district: Haslingden, Sub-registration district: Rawtenstall, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 06, Piece: 3600, Folio: 25, Page: 41, Household schedule number: 241
- ¹² "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 June 2024), entry for Frank Brown, Registration district number: 471, Sub-registration district: Rawtenstall, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 14, Piece: 24708
- ¹³ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 14 June 2024), entry for Mary A Brown, Schedule number: 216, Sub-schedule Number: 2, Enumeration district: Nwxv, Borough: Rawtenstall
- ¹⁴ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 14 June 2024), entry for Elizabeth A Chadderton, Line Number: 21, Schedule number: 77, Sub-schedule Number: 2, Enumeration district: Nwyc, Borough: Rawtenstall
- ¹⁵ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 June 2024), entry for George F Brown, Line Number: 36, Schedule number: 314, Sub-schedule Number: 1, Enumeration district: Nwxs, Borough: Rawtenstall
- ¹⁶ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 14 June 2024), entry for Jane E Brown, Schedule number: 216, Sub-schedule Number: 2, Enumeration district: Nwxv, Borough: Rawtenstall
- ¹⁷ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 14 June 2024), entry for John Brown, Schedule number: 216, Sub-schedule Number: 2, Enumeration district: Nwxv, Borough: Rawtenstall
- ¹⁸ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 June 2024), entry for Susannah Tattersall, Line number: 15, Schedule number: 305, Sub-schedule Number: 2, Enumeration district: Nwxx, Borough: Rawtenstall
- ¹⁹ "GRO online index (birth)," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 15 June 2024) entry for Brown, Walter, Registration district: Haslingden, Volume 08E, Page 87; "Rawtenstall Cemetery, Rawtenstall in the County of Lancashire," *OnLine Parish Clerks* (https://www.lan-opc.org.uk/Rossendale/Rawtenstall/cemetery/burials_1900-1901.html: accessed 15 June 2024), entry for Walter Brown
- ²⁰ "1939 Register," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 26 March 2024), entry for James A Brown, Enumeration District: NWXR, Schedule Number: 62, Sub-schedule number: 1, Piece number: 4872F, Item number: 7, Line number: 11
- ²¹ Based on "War Gratuity Calculator;" "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929," entry for Frank Brown
- ²² "Soldiers Died in the Great War 19F14–1919," *Findmypast*, entry for Frank Brown
- ²³ A casualty clearing station was a military medical unit behind the front lines, usually located near transportation. Casualties who did not soon die or could not be adequately treated in the CCS were stabilized before being transported to a field or military hospital. (Casualty Clearing Station," *Wikipedia* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualty_Clearing_Station: accessed 2 May 2020)
- ²⁴ "Search Name Index," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 10 June 2024), entry for Brown, F., No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station

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- ²⁵ "War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13–1919/03/31," *Library and Archives Canada* (<https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/Pages/war-diaries.aspx>; accessed 26 March 2023)
- ²⁶ "Search Name Index," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa*, entry for Brown, F.
- ²⁷ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 10 June 2024), entry for Frank Brown
- ²⁸ "Search newspapers," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk; accessed 10 June 2024), entry for Frank Brown, *Haslingden Gazette*, 25 August 1907
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*
- ³⁰ "1921 Census Of England & Wales," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk; accessed 13 September 2024), entry for Alice Mary Brown, Registration district: Haslingden, Registration district number: 417, Sub-district: Haslingden, Sub-district number: 3, Enumeration district number: 3, Archive series: RG 15, Piece number: 20099, Schedule number: 59, District reference: RD 471 RS 3 ED 3
- ³¹ "Lancashire, England, Non-Conformist Registers of Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, 1762-2005," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 14 June 2024), entry for Alice Mary Brown
- ³² "GRO online index (birth)," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>; accessed 15 June 2024) entry for Eastwood, Ethel, Registration district: Haslingden, Volume 08E, Page 166
- ³³ "GRO online index (birth)," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>; accessed 15 June 2024) entry for Eastwood, Vera Margaret, Registration district: Haslingden, Volume 08E, Page 115
- ³⁴ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 22 June 2024), entry for Alice M Eastwood, Line Number: 1, Schedule number: 329, Sub-schedule Number: 2, Enumeration district: Nwni, Borough: Padiham, Registration district: 472 A/1 Nelson
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- ³⁶ "1891 Cotton Mills in Rawtenstall," *GraceGuides* (<https://gracesguide.co.uk/1891-Cotton-Mills-in-Rawtenstall>; accessed 21 June 2024)
- ³⁷ "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1995," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 10 June 2024), entry for George Brown
- ³⁸ "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1995," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 10 June 2024), entry for Elizabeth Brown
- ³⁹ *UK and Ireland Find A Grave*© Index, 1300s-Current, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 10 June 2024), entry for George Brown, *UK and Ireland Find A Grave*© Index, 1300s-Current, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 10 June 2024), entry for Elizabeth Brown
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- ⁴¹ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry*, entry for Mary A Brown
- ⁴² "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1995," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 22 June 2024), entry for Mary Alice Brown
- ⁴³ "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1995," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 22 June 2024), entry for Jane Ellen Brown
- ⁴⁴ "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1995," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 22 June 2024), entry for John Brown
- ⁴⁵ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 22 June 2024), entry for Elizabeth Ann Brown, Registration district: Haslingden, Inferred county: Lancashire, Volume: 8e, Page: 132
- ⁴⁶ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 22 June 2024), entry for Elizabeth Ann Chadderton, Registration district number: 471, Sub-registration district: Rawtenstall, Enumeration district,

institution, or vessel: 13, Piece: 24707; "1921 Census Of England & Wales," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 22 June 2024), entry for Elizabeth Ann Chadderton, Registration district: Haslingden, Registration district number: 471, Sub-district: Rawtenstall, Sub-district number: 1, Enumeration district number: 18, Archive series: RG 15, Piece number: 20072, Schedule number: 179, District reference: RD 471 RS 1 ED 18

⁴⁷ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry*, entry for Elizabeth A Chadderton

⁴⁸ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 June 2024), entry for Elizabeth Ann Chadderton, Registration district: Haslingden, Inferred county: Lancashire, Volume: 10c, Page: 1068

⁴⁹ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 June 2024), entry for George Frederick Brown, Registration district: Haslingden, Inferred county: Lancashire, Volume: 8e, Page: 293

⁵⁰ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry*, entry for George F Brown

⁵¹ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 June 2024), entry for Susannah Brown, Registration district: Haslingden, Inferred county: Lancashire, Volume: 8e, Page: 265

⁵² "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry*, entry for Susannah Tattersall

⁵³ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 June 2024), entry for Susannah Tattersall, Registration district: Haslingden, Inferred county: Lancashire, Volume: 10c, Page: 350

⁵⁴ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 June 2024), entry for James A Brown, Registration district: Haslingden, Inferred county: Lancashire, Volume: 8e, Page: 251

⁵⁵ "1939 Register," *Findmypast*, entry for James A Brown

⁵⁶ "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1995," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 June 2024), entry James Ashworth Brown