



# LEST WE FORGET



**Details of those from the parish who gave their lives  
in the Great War (1914-18)**



The war memorial is just inside the west door of St George's Catholic Church.

It takes the form of a Crucifix above a brass plaque bearing the names of six men, including two brothers, who died in the service of their country in the First World War (1914-18).

The oldest was 38 years old and the youngest aged only 16, possibly the youngest soldier from the Taunton area to die in action.

This leaflet is intended to provide some basic facts about all these men and where possible details of their families and their links to the parish.

The information in this booklet has come from many sources, including: -

**Soldiers Died in the Great War (1914-1918)**  
**Commonwealth War Graves Commission**  
**British Army WW1 Medal Rolls**  
**British Army WW1 Service Records**  
**Census returns 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911, 1921**  
**Somerset Light Infantry 1914-1918 (Everard Wyrall)**  
**Newspaper archives (SHC and Find My Past)**  
**Royal British Legion Roll of Honour**

**Every effort has been made to check the accuracy of the details given here. However, if you spot any errors or omissions or can add to the information, please contact Ray Stokes on 01823 762417 or email**

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John **BAKER**  
Private 2295  
1<sup>st</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> battalion, Somerset Light Infantry

Died of illness  
4 January 1919 aged 29  
Taunton

John Baker was the son of John and Mary Anne Baker who lived in Holway Terrace, Taunton. His father was a serving soldier and in 1911 was a sergeant major with the 1<sup>st</sup> battalion, Somerset Light Infantry at Jellalabad Barracks. His mother was born in Birr, County Offaly, Ireland, so they probably met when he was serving there with the 13<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot which later became the Somerset Light Infantry.

Their daughter Louisa, who was born in Enniskillen, became the organist at St George's Church, following their move to Taunton.

Her younger brother John went to St George's School in Taunton and was an altar server and bell ringer at the church. After school he became a compositor/printer at the Pool Wall factory in Taunton.

On 4 September 1914, just a month after war was declared, he enlisted in the 5<sup>th</sup> battalion Somerset Light Infantry and was sent to India. His division sailed on 9 October and landed at Bombay in November.

The following February he was admitted to hospital in Ambala with haemoptysis (coughing up blood). His medical notes say: "Cause unknown. No TB found" and he was released from hospital 30 days later.

But in January 1916 he was again admitted to the hospital and this time tests revealed tuberculosis of the lung. The medical notes say: "Result of active service. Strain and exposure to infection. Probable duration 12 months." He was discharged as medically unfit in April 1916 and eventually returned to the UK. He had been at home for more than a year when he died.

John Baker is buried in St Mary's old cemetery, Taunton.

Francis (Frank) **CROSSMAN**  
Lance Corporal 7848  
1<sup>st</sup> battalion, Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry

Killed in Action  
8 May 1917 aged 34  
France

Frank Crossman was the younger brother of James Thomas Crossman (see next page). He was the son of James Crossman and his Irish wife Bridget (nee Snow). In 1891 they were living in Nutts Court, Upper High Street, Taunton. Both his father and an older brother were serving in the Army.

In 1911, following the death of both of his parents, Frank was a boarder in the home of his older sister Mrs Annie Bowker who lived with her husband and young family at 4 Haydon Terrace, East Reach. He gives his employment as railway labourer.

He may have been serving in the Army either as a reservist or territorial because his medal card shows he landed in France on 21 August 1914 – just 18 days after the declaration of war.

In April 1917 British forces launched an attack against German defences near the city of Arras. The offensive was initially successful but the Germans regrouped and the battle became a costly stalemate for both sides. Total British losses were 160,000.

Francis Crossman's name appears on the Arras Memorial commemorating those who died in this sector but have no known grave. He is also remembered on the Great Western Railways Roll of Honour at Taunton Station.

**NOTE:** It seems likely that his Irish born mother was a member of St George's having been baptised in the Catholic church in Dungarvan, Waterford, in March 1849



James Thomas **CROSSMAN**  
Stoker 1<sup>st</sup> class, SS100401  
HMS Goliath

Killed in Action  
13 May 1915 aged 38  
Dardanelles

James Crossman, older brother of Frank Crossman, was born on 12 September 1876 in Nowshera in north west India (now Pakistan) where his soldier father James Crossman was serving with the 51<sup>st</sup> regiment (The King's Own Light Infantry).

By 1881 the family had returned to Taunton and were living in Nutts Court, Upper High Street.

Ten years later James, aged 14, joined the Somerset Light Infantry and spent some years with his regiment in India.

On 20 January 1904 he joined the Royal Navy. He gave his job as brick labourer. Six months later – on 3 July 1904 - he married Alice Arbery in Trull Church.

James left the Navy on 23 January 1909 and was transferred to the fleet reserve. In 1911 he and Alice were living with their son and daughter at 27 Tangier, Taunton, and he was working as a labourer in the gas works.

As a reservist he was recalled to the Royal Navy at the outbreak of war and was posted as a stoker to HMS Goliath, a 13,000-ton battleship, which was sent to provide gunfire to support the troops landing on the Gallipoli peninsula.

While anchored in Morto Bay, Goliath was attacked by the Turkish destroyer Muavenet which fired three torpedoes. Each struck their target and the Goliath capsized with the loss of 570 of her 700 plus crew.

James Crossman, who left three children, the eldest ten years old, is remembered on the Plymouth Naval Memorial and the Taunton War Memorial in Vivary Park.

Edgar Allen **FORD**  
Rifleman 7794  
1<sup>st</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> battalion London Regiment (Queen Victoria's Rifles)  
previously Private 3111 Middlesex Regiment

Killed in Action  
9 September 1916 aged 20  
France

Edgar was the eldest of two children of commercial traveller Allen Samuel Ford and his wife Edith Mary (nee Fenton) who lived at 11 Malvern Terrace. Taunton.

After leaving school Edgar went to London and shortly before the war was living at Wood Green. He enlisted in Hornsey and was posted to the 2<sup>nd</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> battalion Middlesex Regiment.

According to the records he arrived in Egypt on 24 August 1915 but eight months later he was posted to the London Regiment in France, arriving on 15 May 1916 as the Allies prepared for the Battle of the Somme.

On 9 September, British forces launched an offensive to capture the village of Ginchy to deprive the Germans of observation posts overlooking the surrounding countryside.

The British began a bombardment early in the morning but waited until late afternoon to advance to deny the Germans time to counter attack before dark.

The London division reached Bouleaux Wood, south of the village but the attack in the centre was repulsed although Ginchy was eventually captured.

Edgar Ford is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial that commemorate more than 72,000 men who died in this sector during the war and have no known grave.

Francis Edgar **GLOVER**  
Private 240289  
5<sup>th</sup> battalion, Somerset Light Infantry

Died of wounds  
2 December 1917 aged 24  
Egypt

Born in 1892 Francis (Frank) Glover was the son of draper Thomas Edgar Draper and his wife Mary Jane (nee Haas). His parents both came from North Devon but just before his birth were living in Bristol.

Unfortunately, his father died in 1899 and two years later widow Mary Glover and her three children were living with her parents Joseph and Margaret Haas at 2 Sydney Terrace, Taunton.

Frank attend St George's Catholic school and was an altar server at the church for many years.

By 1911 the whole family had moved to 18 Silver Street and Frank was working as a print compositor at the Somerset County Gazette.

He had joined the Somerset Reserve and was in the first division to be sent to India in October 1914 where he joined the signals section. When posted to Palestine in the summer 1917 he was given a role in telecommunications. This required the laying of wires between trenches often in forward positions.

He was hit by a sniper while his unit was dug in just outside Jerusalem. He was taken to the hospital in Kantara in Egypt where he died a few days later.

Frank Glover is buried in Cairo war memorial cemetery.

**DIED OF WOUNDS.**—We regret to record the death, from wounds received in the recent heavy fighting in Palestine, of Signaller Frank Glover, eldest son of Mrs. Glover, of 18, Silver-street, who before the war was a member of the "Somerset County Gazette" jobbing office staff. He was in the Somerset Territorials when the war started, and was in the first division sent to India in the autumn of that year. He remained in India until a few months ago, when his Regiment was ordered to Palestine. During his service in India he became an expert signaller, and on the Palestine Front he was entrusted with important telephone work to do with communications, having been transferred to a trench battery. It was whilst thus engaged, in what he described in a letter to his mother as "one man's job in no-man's-land," that he was picked off by a sniper, and dangerously wounded. This occurred on the 15th November, and the next intimation received at his home stated that he was in hospital at Kantara. On Wednesday the sad news came to hand that he had died in hospital on the 2nd December. Frank Glover was 24 years of age, and served his time as apprentice to the jobbing printing. His quiet, obliging disposition and manly character won for him the esteem and respect of his fellow-workers and of all who knew him. He was an old boy of St. George's Catholic Schools, and a server at the altar for many years. Faithful in all things, he was much attached to his church, and always set a good example to other lads. During the whole of the time he had been on foreign service, now over three years, he kept up a very regular correspondence with his home, and his letters invariably reflected his brave, cheerful spirit. Much sympathy will be felt for his mother, sister, and brother in their sad loss. His brother, Noel Glover, is in France, serving with a Lewis Gun Section.

*Taunton Courier 12 December 1917*

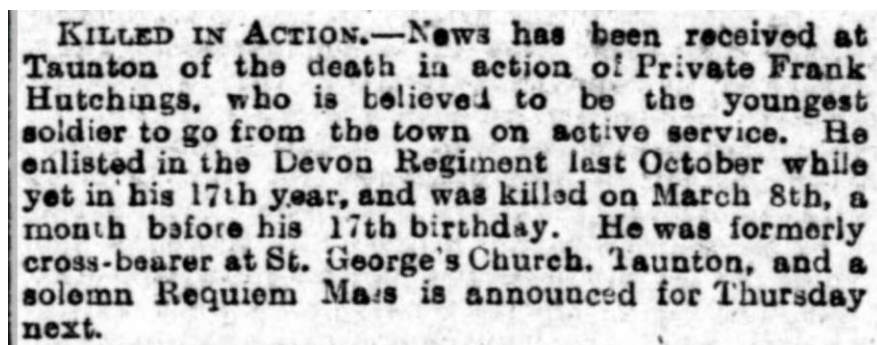


Francis Edwin **HUTCHINGS**  
Private 3683  
1<sup>st</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Devonshire Regiment

Killed in Action  
Died 8 March 1916 aged 16  
Mesopotamia (now Iraq)

Francis Hutchings, known as Frank, obviously added at least a couple of years to his age when he volunteered for the Army in October 1915. He was born in April 1899 so at the time of his death was still a few weeks short of his 17<sup>th</sup> birthday.

He was the son of shirt factory clerk William Hutchings and his wife Helena (nee Richards) who lived at 11 Westgate Street, Taunton.



KILLED IN ACTION.—News has been received at Taunton of the death in action of Private Frank Hutchings, who is believed to be the youngest soldier to go from the town on active service. He enlisted in the Devon Regiment last October while yet in his 17th year, and was killed on March 8th, a month before his 17th birthday. He was formerly cross-bearer at St. George's Church, Taunton, and a solemn Requiem Mass is announced for Thursday next.

*Taunton Courier 3 April 1916*

Frank had been an altar server at St George's church and at the Requiem Mass, his cassock and surplice together with the incense burner he had carried during services and a khaki cap were placed on a catafalque in front of the high altar.

The Rector, the Rev Canon James O'Shaunessy said Frank was a boy who loved and respected his parents and was never heard to utter bad words and was an example to all their children. He described him as a boy of unblemished character, a brave lad who in his heart of hearts had quietly thought it out and decided to join the ranks of his fellow soldiers that he might go out wherever sent to defend the land he loved.

On 8 March 1916 the 1/6 Devons were part of a force attacking a redoubt at Duailah, the southern anchor point of the Turkish defence, south of the besieged city of Kut. The assault party, split into two groups, was to march across the desert at night and attack in the early morning. The approach went well but the timing went astray and the gunfire of the other group alerted the Turks before the Devons were ready.

In the subsequent fighting and retreat the 6<sup>th</sup> Devons suffered their largest loss of life in a single day, with 19 officers and nearly 300 men, killed, wounded or missing.

Frank Hutchings name appears on the Basra Memorial commemorating those killed in this sector who have no known grave.