

## Francis James MATTHEWS

Francis, known as Frank, was born in Amersham on the 9<sup>th</sup> January 1891 to Elizabeth and Thomas, a house painter, and lived in White Lion Road. In 1911 he was working as a clerk with J. Lyons & Co. and later as a storekeeper. He enlisted on 29<sup>th</sup> March 1917 in the Royal Navy, later transferring to the RAF.

<https://amershammuseum.org/history/research/wwi/soldiers/#J>

### Supplementary Information

In 1911 Frank was still living with his parents and working as a Clerk (Receiving) for J Lyons & Co. This was a very well-known firm. Founded in 1886 in the East End, it opened its first Tea Shop in Piccadilly in 1894. The first Lyons Corner House opened in 1909 and the chain then expanded rapidly. The waitresses became known as Nippies because of the rapidity with which they served their customers.

In 1912 he married Dorothy Anne Mead, daughter of Minnie Mead. The 1911 census shows mother and daughter keeping a shop in White Lion Road. As Frank and Dorothy were of very similar age and both sets of parents lived along the same road it seems likely that they would have known each other from at least their schooldays. Dorothy's grandfather George Mead was the licensee of the White Lion from around 1881 until about 1898 but went on to farm Nightingales Farm.

Frank and Dorothy had twin boys in 1915, Sidney George and Francis Stanley.

Frank Matthews joined the Royal Navy on 29 March 1917. Six months later his older brother George Thomas Matthews, who had emigrated to Australia and returned to England as Private 707 of the Australian Imperial Force, was killed in Belgium during the battle of Polygon Wood on 26 September. <https://amershammuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/68.pdf>

Frank served with the Royal Naval Air Service and was promoted to Aircraftsman First Class on 29 September 1917 after about 6 months' service (ADM 188/615/27904). He was re-mustered to the Royal Air Force on its formation on 1 April 1918 and was stationed at Leuchars and Edinburgh Castle.. The RAF records give his wife's address as 24 Kingscote Road, Bedford Park, in West London. He returned to civilian life on 3 May 1919 and finally discharged from the RAF Reserve on 30 April 1920 (AIR 79/2051).

The 1921 census finds the family at 21 Goldhawk Road, Hammersmith. The sons are both aged 5 and Frank has returned to work as an Assistant Superintendent in the Roundsman's Department of J Lyons & Co.

Frank and Dorothy also emigrated but chose Canada rather than Australia. On 18 November 1928 they arrived in Quebec aboard the SS *Andania*, accompanied by their son Francis. There is a possible death entry in 1922 for Sidney in the Fulham Registration District. They set off for their new life with \$25, according to the ship's manifest. Frank gave his next of kin's details as 'Mrs A Standed', 10 Bell Cottages, Amersham Common. This is presumably his sister Adelaide Ivy Matthews (1888-1980) who had married Albert E Standen in 1922.

It has not yet proved possible to discover what they did or where they lived in Canada but Findagrave has details of the gravestone which commemorates them in Park Lawn Cemetery,

Toronto. This gives Frank's dates as 9 Jan 1891 to 13 June 1955 and Dorothy's as 29 Aug 1891 to 23 April 1978 (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/112337307/frank-j-matthews>).