

## **Herts at War**

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**Name:** Frank Francis Brown

**Rank:** Private

**Service Number:** 17297

**Date of Death:** 19<sup>th</sup> April 1916

**Age:** 33

**Regiment/Service:** B Coy 8<sup>th</sup> Btn Bedfordshire Regiment.

**Award:** He was entitled to the 1914/15 Star, the British War and Victory medals.

**Grave/Memorial Reference:** Panel 31 and 33

**Cemetery/Memorial:** Ypres Memorial, Menin Gate

**UK Cemetery/Memorial:** Hitchin Memorial, St Mary's Church. Panel B  
St Mary's Church Memorial Book, Hitchin (*not confirmed*)  
British Schools Museum, Hitchin



### **Pre War:**

He was born in Hitchin and his home was 7, Parcell's Place, Bucklersbury, Hitchin and he was the son of Frank and Emma Brown and attended Hitchin Boys British School in Hitchin. He was the husband of Fanny Frances Brown. Frank was resident in Charlton and enlisted in Hitchin as a volunteer in September 1914.

### **Wartime Service:**

He was posted to the 8th Battalion of the Bedfords and was given the Regimental Number 17297. He was sent to the Western Front in August 1915 and after fighting in several engagements was killed in action on the Somme. The 'National Roll' shows his date of death as the 11th April 1916.

On the 11th April the 8th Battalion was in camp at Poperinghe providing work parties before moving up to the line on the 15th April to a position called 'Duck's Bill' near La Belle Alliance one mile from the canal in the Mortaldje Salient. A letter from a Private A.G. Slater of 51, Florence Street, Hitchin written in 1917 said that on the 19th April 1916 there was a terrible bombardment and the dugouts collapsed. Brown was dug out by the Germans and was killed at the time that Slater was captured. After the bombardment the Germans attacked at 8.00pm on the 19th April 1916 and overran what was left of the Bedfords trenches. Ninety-nine other ranks and five officers were killed at this time.

He has no known grave, but is remembered on the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing at Ypres in Belgium on Panels 31 to 33.

### **Additional Information:**

Francis was the cousin of Frederick Brown who was killed in action on the 9th March 1918.

### **Acknowledgments:**

Adrian Dunne  
David C Baines

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