

Lt R J B Frank
By Julie Beck

Below is an extract from a letter written in 1915 by Lieutenant Robert J B Frank just before leaving England during WWI.

The Frank family lived at Jolesfield House from around 1900 — 1920, and were great patrons of St Michael's church and the old Jolesfield School.

The letter was sent to Harry Turrell, captain of the bellringers at St George's church, where Lieutenant Frank was also a ringer.

I must end as I have a lot of work to do yet.

*If you write to me, say in about a fortnight's time, address to
Lieutenant R J B Frank
1/4th Batt: Royal Sussex Regt:
160 Brigade
53rd Welsh Division
British Expeditionary Force
Mediterranean*

It is better to put in one's rank as it makes it more certain of getting it.

Good bye till we meet again.

15.7.15

Dear Turrell

I thought I would like to write and tell you we were leaving here tomorrow night and leave England the next day.

We are going to the Mediterranean and although we do not know where we are going exactly it is most probably the Dardanelles.

We are tremendously busy and have had very little time to get ready.

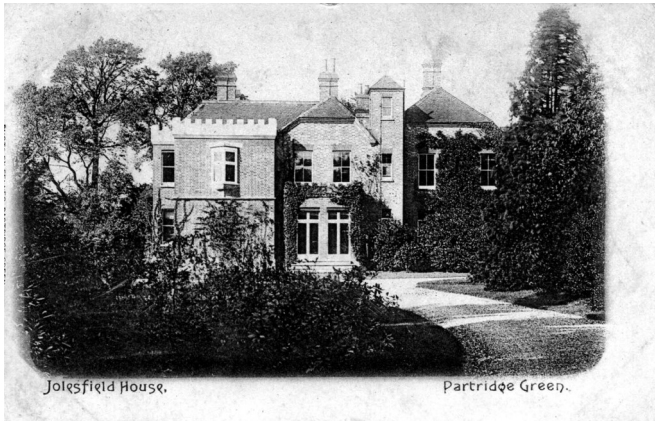
Mr Campion is going as our Chaplin, he has joined us from the Yeomanry, which is nice.

I wonder how the ringing is getting on, I shall look forward to the time when we all meet again in the belfry at West Grinstead to ring a peal to celebrate our Victory and Peace.

I wonder how Lark is and where he is now. [Lark' was Harry's son, he died in action, 28.9.1918].



Lieutenant R. J. B. Frank



In the following month's magazine:

'On June 12th, a memorial service was held at 11am at St Michael's for the late Lieutenant Robert Frank.

A large congregation was present, all anxious to show their respect and esteem for one who had fallen in his devotion to duty and country, and

also their sympathy with the bereaved family in their sorrow.

Mr and Mrs Frank have received many signs from the village to show how deeply the people feel for them and in what high esteem their son was held.'

He never made it back to ring that victory peal, Lieutenant Frank died on 6th June 1916 aged 28.

He is buried in the War Memorial Cemetery at Ismailia in Egypt and commemorated on the parish war memorials at St George's, St Michael's and Jolesfield Common (by Needs Farm).

An extract from a letter written by Rev Fred Campion (the Rector of West Grinstead at that time) in a 1916 parish magazine gives us further insight into what sort of person Lt Frank was:

'I must say a word about my dear brother officer and friend "Bob" Frank. It was my privilege to be with him through the strenuous fighting at Sulva Bay.

A simple courteous pure English gentleman without any "swank" he just did his duty bravely and conscientiously. He was often far from well and but for his spirit would have been invalided home. FHC.'

