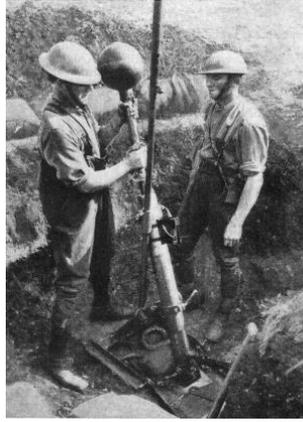




# Bombardier Frank West



## Royal Garrison Artillery

**Died 28 October 1914**

**Age 23**

**Frank West** was a bombardier in the 19th Trench Mortar Battery of the Royal Garrison Artillery (RGA) and was killed in action on 28<sup>th</sup> October 1916.

The RGA developed from fortress-based artillery located on British coasts. From 1914 when the army possessed very little heavy artillery it grew into a very large component of the British forces. It was armed with heavy, large-calibre guns and howitzers that were positioned some way behind the front line and had immense destructive power.

In late October 1916 Frank is likely to have been involved in the battles to capture the Dewdrop and Boritska Trenches, part of the battle of the Somme which took place between 1<sup>st</sup> July to 18<sup>th</sup> November 1916.

By May 1916 the trench mortars had been standardised on three types: the 3-inch Stokes ('light'), the 2-inch medium (superseded in 1917 by the 6-inch Newton Mortar), and the 9.45-inch heavy. The 'Z' battery of which Frank was a part used the 2-inch medium mortars, which fired a spherical cast-iron bomb the size of a football attached to the end of a pipe ('stick'), hence the nicknames 'Toffee Apple' and 'Plum Pudding'. They were used in cutting barbed wire defences and attacking enemy front line trenches, though their short range was a disadvantage as they could only be used if no man's land between the British and enemy front line was relatively narrow.

Born in Southampton in 1893 and listed as a 'Shop Assistant' in 1911, Frank was the son of Thomas and Emma E West of 40 Sefton Street. He married May Edith Clark who is listed as living at 27 Rotherwood Road in Putney. The war record refers to May Edith Clark as 'formerly West' so Clark is likely to be her maiden name which she reverted to on her husband's death.

Service Number : 65549