

**ST JAMES CHURCH TAUNTON**

**WORLD WAR 1 MEMORIAL PROJECT**

# Frederick James Sansome



**Name:** Frederick James Sansome

**Rank:** Corporal

**Service Number:** 55158

**Regiment:** RAMC

**Battalion/Unit number:** 15th Stationary Hospital

**Date/year of Birth:** 1893

**Place of Birth:** Taunton

**Place of Residence:** Fern Bank, 7, Priory Avenue

**Date of Death:** 21/11/1918

**Place of Death:** East Africa

**Burial/Memorial:** Nakaru North Cemetery, Nairobi

Frederick was the son of John and Eliza Jane Sansome of Fernbank 7 Priory Avenue<sup>1</sup> Taunton. John was born in Sherford the son of a labourer. In 1880 he married Eliza Vickery who lived with her family in Coal Orchard. The couple lived in Colliers Court to start with where John is registered as a Tin and Copper plate worker. By 1901 John was a tin and copper smith and in business on his own account. John and Elizabeth had a large family of 9 and this included Frances, Ethel, Walter (see below), Frederick, Victor and Hilda. (Three other children died in

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<sup>1</sup> It is not entirely clear where 7 Priory Avenue was but it seems likely that it was somewhere in the region of the entrance to the Cricket Museum.

infancy). Eliza died in 1910 and in the 1911 census. John was registered as a widower with only four of his children at home, presumably Ethel at 27 was keeping house. Frederick was 17 and working as a print machinist, and Victor and Hilda were still at school. Walter emigrated to Australia before the first world war.

Frederick's service record tells some of his service history. In 1915 he was living in Weston super Mare at 21 Swiss Road. He enlisted On 13<sup>th</sup> February 1915 and joined the RAMC.

In July 1915 he was based at Mudros which comprised a small Greek port on the Mediterranean island of Lemnos. It gained wartime significance with the determination of the Allies, chiefly the British and largely through the enthusiasm of Winston Churchill - in the early part of 1915 to support the attempt to seize control of the Dardanelles Straits, some 50km away. By the end of 1915 the importance of Mudros had declined and in 21.4.1916 Frederick embarked for East Africa Mobassa? (difficult to read record). By June 1916 Frederick had contracted malaria and was in hospital. He suffered six further admissions to hospital between 1916 and 1918 in Morogoro and Dar-es-Salaam

On 1<sup>st</sup> May 1918 he was appointed Acting Corporal, but during the next few months he had two further malarial admissions, in July and September 1918. He did not come out of hospital on his last admission but was transferred to Nakaru Hospital and was placed on the dangerously ill list on 20<sup>th</sup> November having contracted influenza in addition to the malaria. He died the following day. It is reckoned that during the war in East Africa disease incapacitated or killed 30 men for every one who died in the conflict.

His possessions were finally returned to his father in October 1919 and included a prayer book, two wallets, postcards, coins, training book, letters, cap badge, photos and a notebook.

The War in East Africa started slowly with both the governors of German and British colonies adhering to a principal of neutrality as stated in the Congo Act of 1885. This was ended by the British in August 1914 when the British launched an attack. Regarded very much as side show to the great European conflict nonetheless there was great loss of life, especially among the African bearers and carriers. The aim of German commander. General von Lettow-Vorbeck was to hold British troops there and prevent them reinforcing the Western front and in this it appears he was successful. There certainly appear to have been more British fatalities especially through disease. The whole of the East part of Africa including the Belgian Congo was caught up in the conflict.

The Germans in East Africa surrendered on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1918.

His brother Horace Victor served in the RAF but survived the war.