

Salisbury Cathedral

Roll of Honour



Lest we Forget

World War I



COLONEL

F. A. SYMONS

ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS

30TH APRIL, 1917 AGE 48

*Until The Day Break
And The Shadows Flee Away*

Frank Albert SYMONS

Frank Albert Symons was born at Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada on 28th April, 1869 to parents John Hughes Symons & Anna Barbara Symons (nee Rudolf).

On 30th January, 1893 Frank Albert Symons was appointed Surgeon-Lieutenant & on 30th January, 1896 as Surgeon-Captain.

From 1899-1900 Captain Frank Albert Symons served in South African War.

In December, 1903 Captain Frank Albert Symons embarked for Malta & was part of the Malta Garrison.

Frank Albert Symons, Captain Royal Army Medical Corps, aged 31, married Dorothy Bennett, aged 21, on 9th August, 1900 at Salisbury Cathedral. Frank Symons' parish was listed as Aldershot & his father was listed as John Hughes Symons, Gentleman. Dorothy Bennett's parish was listed as The Close, Salisbury & her father was listed as Edmund Grove Bennett (deceased).

Newspaper report on Marriage:

SYMONS – BENNETT – On the 9th inst., at Salisbury Cathedral, by the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Salisbury, assisted by the Rev. Prebentor Carpenter and the Rev. Canon Bankes, Captain Frank Albert Symon, Royal Army Medical Corps, son of John H, Symons, of Halifax, Nova Scotia, to Dorothy, second daughter of the late Edmund Grove Bennett, of The Close, Salisbury. (London Standard – Saturday August 11th, 1900)

The 1901 Census recorded Frank A. Symons as a 31 year old, Captain, Royal Army Medical Corps, living with his wife – Dorothy (aged 22, born Salisbury) at "Rokeby" in Farnham, Surrey. Also listed were 2 servants – Edith E. Brown (Housemaid, aged 18, born Sutton Veny, Wilts) & Jane T. Selmes (Cook, aged 31, born Sussex).

On 21st October, 1901, Eugenie Cecil Symons was baptised in Salisbury Cathedral. Her parents were listed as Frank Albert (Captain in Royal Army Medical Corps) & Dorothy Symons of Weybourne, Surrey.

On 23rd February, 1903, Sylvia Clare Symons was baptised in Salisbury Cathedral. Her parents were listed as Frank Albert (Captain in Royal Army Medical Corps) & Dorothy Symons of Aldershot, Hants.

On 30th October, 1904 Captain Frank Albert Symons was promoted to Major.

On 23rd December, 1907, Helen Mary Symons was baptised in Salisbury Cathedral. Her parents were listed as Frank Albert (Major R.A.M.C.) & Dorothy Symons of Military Hospital Millbank, London.

The 1911 Census recorded Major Frank Albert Symons, aged, 41, Royal Army Medical Corps as part of the Military stationed in Ceylon and India.

The 1911 Census recorded Dorothy Symons, aged 32, living with mother, siblings & daughters at The Close, Salisbury in a 15 roomed dwelling. The head of the house was Dorothy's mother – Georgiana Jane Bennett (aged 70, widow). Dorothy's siblings were – Ethel Mary Bennett (aged 42), Cecil George Bennett (aged 40, Newspaper Manager & Editor) & Margaret Bennett (aged 30). Dorothy's children were listed as Eugenie Cecil Symons (aged 9, born Hants, Aldershot), Sylvia Clare Symons (aged 8, born Wilts, Salisbury), Helen Mary Symons (aged 3, born London, Millbank) & Dorothy Geraldine Symons (aged 1, born Ceylon). Dorothy had been married for 10 years & had 4 children. 4 servants were also listed – Jessie Elizabeth Young (Nurse, aged 22), Bessie Louisa Harvey (Cook, aged 26), Ethel Louise Brown (Parlourmaid, aged 18) & Florence Annie Jefford (Housemaid, aged 19).

Major F. A. Symons, M.B. was awarded the Companion of the Distinguished Service Order. (*The London Gazette* – 16 February, 1915). The Distinguished Service Order (D.S.O.) was a military decoration awarded to individual instances of meritorious or distinguished service in war. Between 1914 and 1916 the D.S.O. was awarded under circumstances which could not be regarded as under fire, but after 1917 this was awarded only to those serving under fire. Recipients of the order are officially known as Companions of the Distinguished Service Order.



Distinguished Service Order (D.S.O.)

Major Frank A. Symons, D.S.O., M.B., was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel, dated 1st March, 1915. (*The London Gazette* – 2 March, 1915).

From *The London Gazette* (Supplement) – 16th December, 1915:

Army Medical Service

The undermentioned Lieutenant-Colonels to be temporary Colonels whilst holding the appointments of Assistant Directors of Medical Services – Frank A. Symons, D.S.O., M.B., Dated 18th November, 1915.

From the *London Gazette* (Supplement) January 1, 1917

*To be additional Members of the Third Class, or Companions, of the said Most Distinguished Order :-
Lt. Col. (temp Col) Frank Albert Symons, D.S.O., M.B., R.A.M.C.*

From the *London Gazette* (Supplement) 29 May, 1917:

The following is in continuation of Sir Douglas Haig's Despatch of 9th April, submitting names deserving of special mention, published in the London Gazette of Tuesday, 15th May, 1917-*

Symons, Lt.-Col. (temp Col.) F.A., C.M.G., D.S.O., M.B., R.A.M.C.

*(*The list of names is being published in six separate Supplements at intervals of a few days)*

Lieutenant Colonel Frank Albert Symons was killed in action on 30th April, 1917, aged 48 years.

Colonel Frank Albert Symons was buried in St. Nicolas British Cemetery, France – Grave reference – I. B. 16. His death is acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission & as such he has a CWGC headstone. The CWGC lists Colonel Frank Albert Symons as the son of the late John Hughes Symons and Barbara Symons of Halifax, Nova Scotia; husband of Dorothy Symons, of the Close, Salisbury, England. M.B.

Newspaper Death Notice:

SYMONS – Killed in action on the 30th April, Lieutenant-Colonel (acting Colonel) Frank A. Symons, C.M.G., D.S.O., Assistant Director of Medical Service, the beloved husband of Dorothy Symons (The Close, Salisbury). (The Times, London – Monday May 7th, 1917)

Obituary:

Colonel Frank A. Symons, C.M.G., D.S.O., Assistant Director of Medical Services, was killed in April 30 while on his way to an advanced dressing station. He left England in August, 1914, in command of a clearing hospital, and expecting a few days' leave at intervals, has been abroad ever since. He was mentioned in Lord French's first dispatches and again later. In the first honours list of the war he was awarded the D.S.O., and in the New Year honours list of this year he was made a C.M.G. He served in the South African war, being present at the Relief of Ladysmith, including the action at Colenso. Colonel Symons was a son of the late John Hughes Symons of Nova Scotia. In 1900 he married Dorothy, second daughter of the late Edmund Grove Bennett of The Close, Salisbury, and leaves a widow and four daughters. A brother officer writes: - "He died at his post doing his duty as always. He was a gallant officer, gifted above all of us, and a true friend who was universally beloved and respected. His place will be difficult to fill, and it is cruel that such a career as his should have been cut short by such a mischance". Colonel Symons was fond of writing, and for some years had contributed at intervals to several well-known magazines. During the winter months his "Tale of a Casualty Clearing Station" was published in Blackwood's Magazine under the pseudonym of "A Royal Field Leech."

(The Times, London – Thursday May 10th, 1917)

Probate was granted on 23rd August, 1917 at London Registry:

"Symons Frank Albert of Salisbury colonel R.A.M.C. died 30 April, 1917 at Arras in France. Administration (with Will) London 23 August to Dorothy Symons, widow. Effects £1,816 11s. 2d.

F. A. Symons is remembered as a Casualty of WW1 in the Diocese of Salisbury Memorial Book for Salisbury Cathedral.



Battlefield Cross for Colonel Frank Albert Symons in Salisbury Cathedral (Photo courtesy of Michael Day)

This Cross was placed over the Grave of
Colonel Frank A. Symons C.M.G.
D.S.O., M.B. Army Medical Service
Who was killed in action at Athies April 30th, 1917
Buried in St. Nicholas Cemetery, Arras May 1st.

The Edinburgh Medical Journal, 1917 has the following information for Lieutenant-Colonel Symons:

Killed in action, Lieutenant-Colonel Frank Albert Symons, C.M.G., D.S.O., R.A.M.C., on 30th April, aged 48. Lieutenant-Colonel Symons was educated at Edinburgh University, where he graduated M.B. and C.M. in 1891. He entered the Army as surgeon-lieutenant on 30th January 1893. He served in the South African War and received the Queen's medal with three clasps. He had served in the present war since the beginning.

Frank Albert Symons is remembered in the University of Edinburgh Roll of Honour 1914 – 1919:

Symons, Frank Albert (b. 1869)
Dalhousie College, Nova Scotia. Student of Medicine, 1887-91; M.B., C.M. 1891. R.A.M.C., Lieut. 1893; Major Oct. 1904; Lieut. Col. 1915; Temp. Colonel Nov. 1915. South African Campaign, 1899-1902. France 1914. Mons, Marne, and Aisne. Thrice mentioned in Dispatches. D.S.W. Feb. 1915; C.M.G. Jan. 1917. Killed in action on 30th April, 1917.

The VC and DSO Volume II Biographical book has the following information:

Symons, Frank Albert, Major, was born in April, 1869, son of the late John Hughes Symons, of Halifax, Nova Scotia. He was educated for the medical profession; took degrees of M.B., C.M., Edinburgh, 1891 and joined the Royal Army Medical Corps as Captain, 30 Jan. 1896 (after three years' previous service). He served in the South African War from 1899 to 1900, and was present at the Relief of Ladysmith, including the action at Colenso; operations in the Orange Free State, Feb. to March., 1900; operation in Cape Colony, south of Orange River, 1899-1900 (Queen's Medal with three clasps). He became Major 30 Oct. 1904. Symons served in the European War from 1914 to 1917, leaving England for France as Commanding Officer of No. 1 Casualty Clearing Station. He was mentioned in Dispatches in Oct. 1914, and twice again later, and was created a Companion of the Distinguished Service Order (London Gazette 1 Feb. 1915). He fell in action 30 April, 1917. He had married, in 1900, Dorothy, second daughter of the late Edmund Grove Bennett, of The Close, Salisbury. His D.S.P. was awarded "for service in connection with operations in the field."

* A burial was recorded on 9th October, 1943 at Salisbury Cathedral for Dorothy Symons of 35 The Close, Salisbury.



St. Nicolas British Cemetery, France

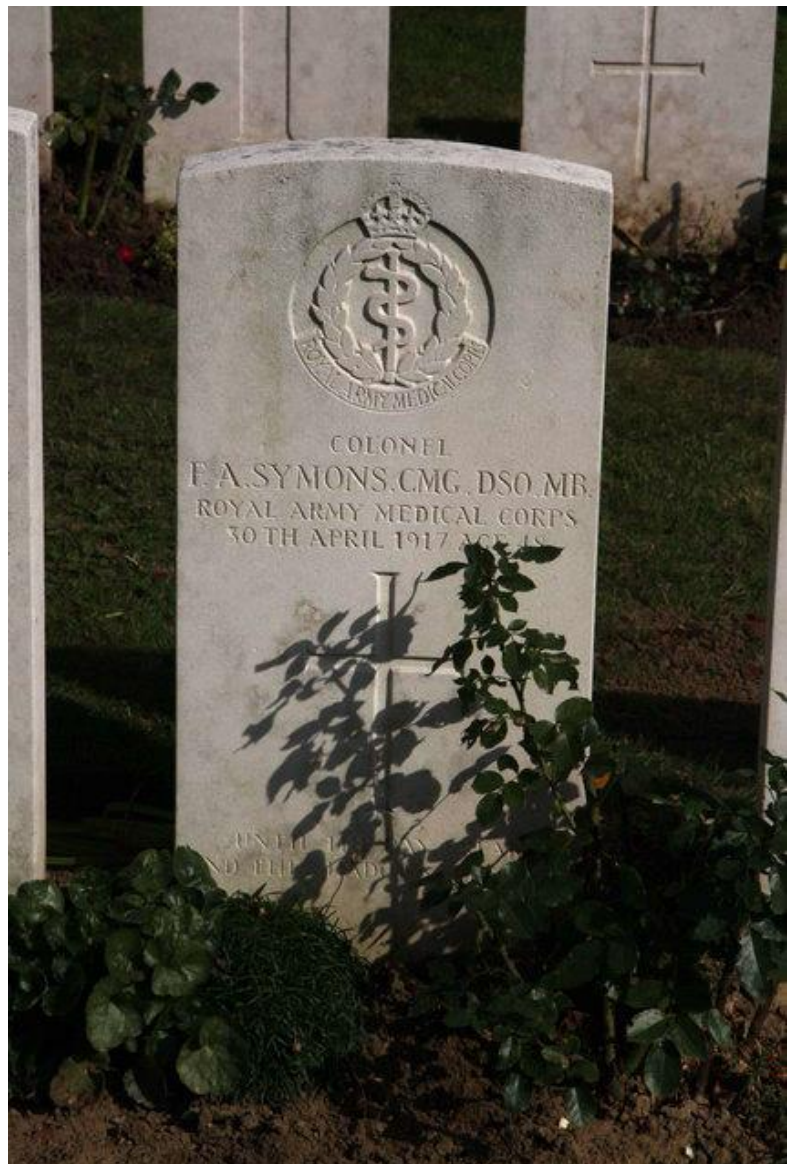
St. Catherine and St. Nicolas are villages and districts in the Department of the Pas-de-Calais, adjoining the city of Arras on the north side. St. Catherine lying to the west, and St. Nicolas to the east of the N37 road to La Targette and Souchez. St. Nicolas British Cemetery lies along a footpath to the south of the Rue D'Enfer, which joins the road to Roclincourt.

From March 1916 to the Armistice, the village of St. Nicolas was occupied by Commonwealth forces and for much of that time it was within the range of German artillery fire. The cemetery was started in March 1917 and used by the

divisions and field ambulances stationed there until October 1918. St Nicolas British Cemetery contains 364 First World War burials.



St. Nicolas British Cemetery, France (Photo & information from CWGC)



(Photo courtesy of David Milborrow)

