

Claude Ramon Forse - Headmaster

Claude Ramon Forse was headmaster of Trentham School for 11 years before he joined the Royal Garrison Artillery in July 1916.

Born in Englefield Green, Surrey in 1879, he was educated at Kingston Grammar School and St Marks College Chelsea. He married Margaret Burton in April 1905, shortly before taking up his headmaster's post in Trentham. They had three sons: Edward John, Claude Burton and Ian Richard.

Claude was an active member of the Teachers' Association and President of the Staffordshire Branch in 1912. He was also a member of Trentham Parish Council and Secretary of the Staffordshire Beekeepers' Association. At school he introduced lessons in woodwork, poultry keeping and bee keeping. At the school prize giving in 1912 he said these subjects were: "...not taught for the purpose of turning out professional poultry keepers, but used as a foundation for other work in the school."

Teaching was a reserved occupation, but Claude enlisted in November 1915 and became a gunner in 208th Siege Battery of the Royal Garrison Artillery. He was promoted to Corporal in August 1917. He died of wounds on 30th April 1918 aged 38.

A high tribute to Cpl Forse's soldierly qualities is contained in a letter sent to his widow by a commanding officer, who says: "I am writing to offer you the very deepest sympathy of all the officers and men in the battery in your sad loss. He was one of the best loved men in the battery, owing to his unselfish disposition. When he was Acting Quartermaster-Sergeant in the battery just recently ...his whole time was spent in working for the men or thinking out plans to increase their comfort. Whatever your husband took up he did it with his whole heart, and there is no one in the battery whom I could so ill afford to lose.

When we were attacked your husband personally saw that all the men who were firing the guns were served with hot coffee. Later, he assisted to save one of the guns, being one of the men who dragged it three miles to take up a new position, part of the journey being covered under heavy shell fire. For his work on that day his name was submitted for the award of the Military Medal...He was hit by a chance shell. He received every possible attention, the doctor accompanying him in the ambulance to the dressing station, where he died the same morning."

Claude is buried at Ebblingham Military Cemetery (Nord) in France.



Claude Forse with his wife and eldest son [Family collection]

DEATH OF CORPORAL FORSE.
Headmaster of Trentham Schools.

LATE CORPL. C. R. FORSE.

We regret to announce that Corporal Claude R. Forse, for thirteen years headmaster of Trentham School, has been severely wounded in action on April 30th. Mr. Forse, who served in the Royal Garrison Artillery, was widely known and highly respected not only in Trentham, but throughout North Staffordshire, and the news of his death has come as a great blow to his many friends. In his profession, Mr. Forse had the high respect, both of teachers and scholars, and his work, which was accomplished with characteristic ability, will leave its mark on the boys and those with whom he worked so assiduously and ungrudgingly.

Mr. Forse was born at Englefield Green, Surrey, and was 38 years of age. He was educated at Kingston Grammar School and St. Mark's College, Chelsea, afterwards being appointed to St. Marks', Margaret-street, London, Resident Chair School, where he worked until he took up his duties at Trentham Schools in 1905. Mr. Forse joined the Army in July, 1915, and went to the front in December, 1916. He was on leave in December last, returning to the firing line on Christmas Day.

For many years he was an active member of the National Union of Teachers, and was appointed President of the North Staffordshire Association in 1912. He was also closely associated with the Staffordshire Beekeepers' Association, and as secretary performed valuable work. He was a member of the Trentham Parish Council, and filled other offices in connection with the parish, where his constant efforts for its welfare will long be remembered. Mr. Forse leaves a widow and three children, with whom the sincerest sympathy will be felt in their great loss.

Recommended for Military Medal.

A high tribute to Cpl. Forse's soldierly qualities is contained in a letter sent to Mrs. Forse by a Major, who says:

"I am writing to offer you the very deepest sympathy of all the officers and men in the battery in your sad loss. We who knew your husband well can realize to a small extent what the loss of your husband will mean to you. He was one of the best loved men in the battery, owing to his unselfish disposition. When he was Acting Quartermaster-Sergeant in the battery, just recently, he spent some weeks of his time in his character as forward most prominently. His whole time was spent in working for the men or thinking out plans to increase their comfort. Whatever your husband took up he did it with his whole heart, and there is no one in the battery whom I could so ill afford to lose, in addition to which all the officers feel that they have lost a good friend and companion. He was hit by a chance shell. He received every possible attention, the doctor accompanying him in the ambulance to the dressing station, where he died the same morning."

"When we were attacked by the Germans the Captain of the Battery who was wounded at the same time as your husband informed me that although the Battery was very heavily shelled, your husband personally saw that all the men who were firing the guns were served with hot coffee. Later, he assisted to save one of the guns, being one of the men who dragged it three miles to take up a new position, part of the journey being covered under heavy shell fire. For his work on that day his name was submitted for the award of the Military Medal. If this honour is not conferred on him, you will know that it was only because it has been impossible to give a reward to everybody who earned it. May I again offer you our very sincere sympathy in the loss of such a fine character."

Army Form B. 103. **Casualty Form - Active Service.** Regimental Number 0250

Regiment or Corps ROYAL GARRISON ARTILLERY

Rank Corporal Surname FORSE Christian Name CLAUDE RAMON

Religion CHURCH OF ENGLAND Age on Enlistment 36 years 1 months

Enlisted (a) 22.11.15 Terms of Service (a) 12 MONTHS Service reckons from (a) 22.11.15

Date of promotion to present rank 4.8.17 Date of appointment to lance rank

Extended Re-engaged Qualification (b) or Corps Trade and Rate

Signature of Officer i/c Records.

Date	Report From whom received	Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, etc., during active service, as reported on Army Form B. 103, Army Form A. 20, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.	Place of Casualty	Date of Casualty	Remarks Taken from Army Form B. 103, Army Form A. 20, or other official documents.
		Emarked ...	<u>Don</u>	<u>14.12.16</u>	<u>Lady R. 7128</u>
		Disembarked...	<u>Don</u>	<u>15.12.16</u>	
<u>12.1.17</u>	<u>OC 208 SB</u>	<u>Admitted (Influenza)</u>	<u>Field</u>	<u>5.1.17</u>	<u>B213-A36</u>
<u>26.1.17</u>		<u>On duty with unit</u>		<u>19.1.17</u>	<u>B213</u>
<u>12.7.17</u>		<u>App'd Army Corporal</u>		<u>1.6.17</u>	
<u>9.8.17</u>		<u>Promoted Corporal</u>		<u>4.8.17</u>	
<u>29.9.17</u>		<u>App'd 1st Class Gun Serv</u>		<u>24.9.17</u>	<u>B213</u>
<u>6.10.17</u>		<u>Rejoined unit</u>		<u>3.10.17</u>	
<u>14.12.17</u>	<u>OC 208 SB</u>	<u>Leave to 4th North RA</u>		<u>12/12/17 to 26/12/17</u>	<u>B213</u>
<u>30.4.18</u>	<u>OC 1500A</u>	<u>Died of wounds</u>	<u>1500A</u>	<u>30.4.18</u>	<u>Memo.</u>

(c) In the case of a man who has re-engaged for, or enlisted into Section D, Army Reserve, particulars of such re-engagement or enlistment will be entered in the following No. quoted, I.P.T.O. (d) Signaller, Shoeing-Smith, &c.

W12050-H3374 250,000 4/17 HWV(F1614/9)

Any further letter on this subject should be addressed to: Officer i/c Records, Don, and the following No. quoted, 4140 1257 0573

From Don To Mrs Margaret Burton, School House, Don Station Don Date 23.4.18

SUMMER MADAM,

I am directed to forward the undermentioned articles of private property of the late No. 102394 Rank corporal Name Forse, Claude Regt. 208 Siege Bty RA and would ask that you will kindly acknowledge receipt of the same on the form opposite:—

belting, photos, paper, stationery, 2 wallets, pouch, keys on chain, buttons, book, cig case, 19 carat gold ring, watch, key, glasses in case, cheque book Barclays Co, £15.99.57/60, 2 locks of hair, 2 de-faced coins.

These are the only articles at present forthcoming, but should any further articles be received at any time they will be duly forwarded.

Yours faithfully, C. R. Forse Officer in Charge of Records.

Sir, I have to acknowledge receipt of the articles as stated opposite

Yours faithfully, Margaret C. Forse

The Officer i/c Records, P. G. A. Station Don



4-6-17

My Dear Baby Boy

Many happy returns of your birthday and next year may I be at home to give you the big hug and kiss that I should love to see you running about and how I would make you laugh + sorrow if I should take you in my arms. Grow up good and loving + I shall be proud of you when I come home

lots + lots of birthday hugs + kisses + real real love from your loving Dada