

Private Frederick Leonard Ansell

PO/16646 Royal Marine Light Infantry



Frederick Ansell was born in 1894 and was the son of Thomas Ansell, labourer, and Sarah who were living in Battens Avenue in 1911. He died on 8th March 1919 at the age of 24.



He was a career marine having enlisted with the Royal Marines Light Infantry, Portsmouth Division, at Southampton on 6 January 1913. He was stationed at Deal, in C Company and was transferred to B Company at Portsdown, remaining there until 20 April 1914 when he embarked in HMS St Vincent. After war was declared, HMS St Vincent became part of the 1st battle Squadron of the Grand Fleet.

During the battle of Jutland his ship fired 98 rounds and came out of the engagement with no damage at all. Fred served on St Vincent for almost the whole duration of the war. His character was always 'Very Good' although he suffered several penalties for lateness or absence.

He left St Vincent and disembarked for service in Portsmouth in the Marine Headquarters on 27 March 1918. On May 9 that year, he was transferred to the accounts of *President III*, an administrative unit, apparently based in Windsor, and became part of the Defensively Armed Merchant Ships (DAMS) sector. This meant that his service as a gunner was required on merchant ships as a means of their defence and protection. It is quite likely he served on several such vessels during the course of the following nine months.

Frederick Ansell

In 1919, Fred was on board HMS Eaglet. Whilst entering the harbour at Liverpool, the boiler in its engine room blew up, causing a fire that soon consumed the ship. Several of the crew were thrown into the sea, where they remained for a very long time, until eventually being rescued. Fred Ansell was taken to the Royal Infirmary, Liverpool, suffering from lobar pneumonia, where he died on 8 March. His body was transported home, and he was buried in Overton churchyard six days later.

Contributed by Ken Smallbone from 'Ansell, the history of a family', 2009.

Hants & Berks Gazette, Sat Mar 22 1919

Funeral Pte F L Ansell. On Friday in last week the remains of Private Frederick Leonard Ansell, Royal Marines, aged 24 years, were laid to rest St. Mary's Churchyard to the great regret of his very many relatives and friends. Deceased, who was an exceedingly smart service man, enlisted six years ago and served throughout the war, first on H.M.S. St. Vincent, and latterly in defence-armed merchant ships, sailing from Liverpool to the Mediterranean Ports. A short time ago he returned from his holiday spent in Overton to join his ship, but was taken ill of pneumonia and died at the Royal Infirmary, Liverpool on 8th inst., from which hospital his body was conveyed to his native village. Chief mourners were Mrs. Ansell (mother), Private Ernest Ansell, Royal Marines (brother), Mrs. A. Phillimore, and Misses May and Millie Ansell (sisters), Mrs. J Ansell (sister-in-law), Mr. W. Phillimore (brother-in-law) and Miss L. Rose. The funeral cortege was in charge of contingent of demobilised and service men on leave, under the command of Sergt. H. Tite, A.S.C. The church was filled with his many friends and those wishing to pay their last respects to a gallant defender of his country.



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Frederick Ansell



His family received one of the bronze memorial "plaquettes" which were issued to the next-of-kin of all British and Empire service personnel who were killed as a result of war. The inscription reads, "He died for freedom and honour. This was popularly known as the "Dead Man's Penny".

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