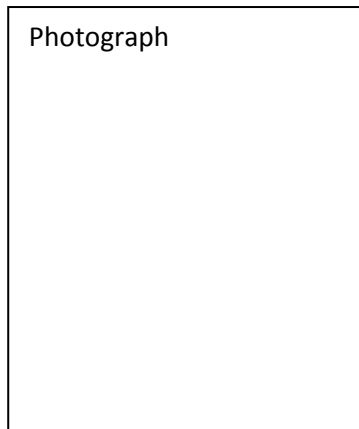


<i>Name</i>	James Frederick FLEMING
<i>Birth Place</i>	Smethwick, Staffordshire
<i>Occupation 1911</i>	'Superior' Plumber; Army Reservist
<i>Date of Birth</i>	First quarter of 1879
<i>Date Enlisted</i>	Re-enlisted 1 March 1915
<i>Parents</i>	William and Hannah FLEMING
<i>Married</i>	Ethel Ann Rebecca GARDNER (born in Bugbrooke) on 26 December 1909, in Northampton



Information from National Roll of the Great War

FLEMING, J. F., Corporal, Royal Engineers

Having previously served in the South African War, he volunteered in March 1915, and three months later was drafted to France, where he was engaged as a mining engineer on important duties in Ypres, Loos, Festubert and Givenchy sectors. He was unhappily killed by the explosion of a German mine on July 1st 1916, and was entitled to the 1914-15 Star, and the General and Victory Medals.

“He nobly fell that we might live”.

Rosetree Cottage, Bugbrooke, Northants

Additional Information

(James) Frederick FLEMING was the youngest of seven children. He served eight years as a Private soldier (Sapper No. 3200) in the Royal Engineers (RE), from 29 May 1899 to 28 May 1907, when he transferred to the Army Reserve for a further four years, finally released from any commitment on 28 May 1911. He had served with 5 Field Company, RE, in South Africa from 12 March 1900 to 10 February 1905. This period included active duty during the (Second) Boer War, for which he earned the Queen’s South Africa Medal with the three clasps ‘CAPE COLONY’, ‘WITTEBERGEN’, and ‘TRANSVAAL’, and the King’s South Africa Medal with the two clasps ‘SOUTH AFRICA 1901’ and ‘SOUTH AFRICA 1902’. He also earned two Good Conduct badges during his service.

Although a married man with two young daughters (Nora, born 10 November 1910 and Marjorie, born 7 April 1913), he re-enlisted on 1 March 1915 and as Sapper 69380 was posted to 128 Field Company, RE, on 7 March. He was very quickly promoted – to Lance Corporal on 17 April, to Second Corporal on 19 May and to Corporal on 25 June, and in that rank he embarked for France on 27 August. Sadly, in that same period, his young wife had died back in England, on 22 June, aged just 30.

Further tragedy was to follow, for at about 5.30pm on 31 December 1915 in France, during the rehearsal for an imminent ‘raid’, James was killed along with an officer and three sappers, when a large quantity of gun cotton they were handling accidentally exploded; four other sappers were injured. An army Board of Enquiry in January 1916 apportioned no blame, but was unable to decide on a specific cause of the explosion.

James qualified posthumously for the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal, which were sent to his mother-in-law, Esther Sophie GARDNER, at Rose Tree Cottage in Bugbrooke, along with a named Memorial Plaque and Scroll, all for his elder daughter in due course. His mother was an Executrix of his Will, proved in May 1916.

James is commemorated in Erquinghem-Lys Churchyard extension in France.