



**Francis Horwood VERCOE D.C.M and Bar. Corporal. 145th Siege Bty. Royal Garrison Artillery**

**At KES:**

Francis (Frank) was born in Hemel Hempstead in 1889 and came to KES in 1900. He was described as a good baker and it was no surprise than that when he left in 1914 he went back to Hemel Hempstead and started work as a baker. Later he joined the Metropolitan Police Force.

**Date of Death: 4<sup>th</sup> June 1917**

**Place: Belgium**

**Buried: Underhill Farm Cemetery, Hainault**

Francis was a brave man who was awarded the D.C.M and Bar, details below. He was killed by a shell whilst off duty and sitting reading outside his dug-out. These are his medals.



**KES Magazine - an Old Boy D.C.M**

It has been officially announced that Gunner F. H. Vercoe , of the Royal Garrison Artillery, has been awarded a clasp to his Distinguished Conduct Medal for a further act of gallantry.

The medal was awarded in January under the following circumstances:- **For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty near Ypres on December 29<sup>th</sup> when, under heavy fire of high explosives and gas shells, he left his dug-out and went about two hundred yards through a dense cloud of gas to a farm where another battery was billeted, and rendered first aid to several wounded men. Whilst he was doing this a bursting shell blew him across the room in which he was working, but he coolly picked himself up and returned to work. Although badly bruised and gassed, Gunner Vercoe's sole concern was to attend to the wounded.**

The circumstances under which the second award is made are as follows: **He went out with his officer under heavy shell fire, and assisted in rescuing the drivers of a waggon, which had been hit by a shell, drivers and horse being wounded. He and his officer were then both wounded by a shell, the latter very severely. Gunner Vercoe wounded as he was, carried him back under heavy fire, and refused to have his own wounds attended to till he had assisted to dress those of his officer.**

## Obituary

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July 1917

Francis Horwood Vercoe fell in action on June 4<sup>th</sup>. As our readers will already know, Vercoe was our first Old Boy to win the D.C.M., and shortly afterwards won a bar to this coveted medal for again "displaying conspicuous gallantry and devotion." His loss is deeply regretted, but his example will ever be remembered. Vercoe was a real modest hero, and we well recall his visit to us during August when the lads crowded round him and accorded him a reception such as KES boys give to those who add lustre to their school "Roll of Honour". Vercoe worked in the Kitchen and a few years after he had left us joined the Metropolitan Police Force when his duties were mainly carried out chiefly in the Woolwich Arsenal. Vercoe truly "did his bit"; he was twice wounded, and returned to France in the beginning of last Autumn. We join with all those who knew him in expressing heartfelt sympathy to his bereaved mother and family.