



# Frederick Kelly, 1881-1916

## Frederick Kelly – the soldier

When war broke out in the summer of 1914, Frederick immediately volunteered for service. He was commissioned into the Royal Naval Division, a unit established by Winston Churchill to divert otherwise unutilised sailors into the army. Frederick joined this unit as an officer because it required no previous military service.

Between February 1915 and January 1916, he fought in the unsuccessful Gallipoli campaign and was twice wounded in action. He was one of the last British soldiers to leave in the withdrawal from the Gallipoli peninsula, was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for bravery and promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-Commander.

In May 1916, Frederick's unit was redeployed to fight on the Western Front in France. On 1 July, the British and French armies launched a huge assault against the opposing German troops in what became known as the Battle of the Somme.

On the morning of 13 November 1916, towards the end of the Battle of the Somme, Frederick's unit was involved in an assault on German positions at Beaucourt-sur-l'Ancre. The attack soon got into difficulty and it was reported that 'Kelly, setting an example at the head of his men, had led an attack on a bombing post' where he was killed instantly by machine-gun fire.

Frederick was buried in Martinsart British Cemetery in France. His sister Maisie commissioned the sculptor Eric Gill to design a memorial to him and other men from Bisham who died during the War. It still stands today near Bisham Abbey. Frederick is also commemorated in the parish church in Bisham and in the Leander Club.



Frederick's grave.  
Photo courtesy of Commonwealth War Graves Commission.



Bisham War Memorial.  
Photo by Chris Elliott.



British and German wounded soldiers, walking together during The Battle of the Somme.  
Photo courtesy of the Imperial War Museum.



Martinsart British Cemetery, France where Frederick Kelly is buried.  
Photo courtesy of Commonwealth War Graves Commission.