

William Francis

Isle of Wight County Press – 14 November 1925

CAMP HILL.

THE DEATH – of Principal-Officer William Francis, of Camp Hill Prison, occurred on Monday after a few day's illness, and the news of his passing was received with general regret not only by his brother officers, but also by the inmates of the Prison. Of a kindly and genial disposition, the deceased had endeared himself to all with whom he came into contact, and he was greatly esteemed. The deceased, who was born at Englishcombe, Bath, on August 2, 1872, had served in the 2nd Battalion North Lancashire Regiment, joined the prison service at Dartmoor on April 21, 1897, and was transferred to Camp Hill on July 1, 1913. He was promoted to the important post of principal-officer on October 1, 1915, and carried out his duties with zeal and loyalty. The funeral took place on Thursday, the first part of the service, which was choral, being held at the Prison Chapel, conducted by the Chaplain, the Rev. H. T. Green. The large congregation, which included the Governor of Camp Hill (Mr. F. E. Wintis), the Rev. R. and Mrs. Meiklejohn, Dr. and Mrs. Craig, Dr. F. E. Forward, Messrs. F. Bracegirdle and J. Blatchford, engineers, Camp Hill; ex-Chief-Warder J. Burrow, who served with deceased at Dartmoor 28 years ago, Mrs. Burrow, M. F. J. E. Pullen, foreman of works, Parkhurst, Principal-Officers Bailey, Somerville, Riley, Simpson, and Dove from Parkhurst, and Principal-Officers Hamblis, Gater, and Grimmond from Camp Hill. In addition 15 officers were present from Parkhurst-prison, in charge of Chief-Officer Simpson. The mourners were Mrs. Francis (widow), Mr. G. Francis, Leicester (brother), Mrs. Alice Hansford, Bristol (sister), Mr. F. Hayes, London (step-brother), Mr. J. Taylor, Chiswick, Mr. and Mrs. Bartlett, Camp Hill, Mr. and Mrs. Wheeler, Parkhurst, and Miss Went. The deceased was W.M. of Lodge Benevolence, no. 656, of Freemasons, and six prison officers who are brother masons acted as bearers, namely Bros. Taylor, Brown, Bailey, Hounsell, Bridle, and Bottle. The coffin was carried from the late officer's quarters and passed to the hearse between two ranks of prison officers lined up on the road to the chapel. .. The inmates had shown their great respect for the deceased by purchasing from their small earnings a wreath of white chrysanthemums, which was placed on the coffin by a member of the convict choir during the service, the other wreath of hydrangeas, gathered from the deceased's garden, being from the widow. ... the cortege left the church for Carisbrooke Cemetery, where the interment took place in the presence of a large gathering of sympathising friends, including the Governor of Camp Hill, and in addition to those already mentioned, ex-Principal-Officer Hayler, Mr. R. Sprake, Chale, and P.S. Arnold, of Newport. The coffin of plain oak with silver-plated fittings was covered with beautiful wreaths, and that from the prisoners bore the inscription, "With deep sympathy to Mrs. Francis in her sad bereavement, from the men at Camp Hill." ... The funeral arrangements were carried out by Messrs. H. and F. Damp.

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