Frederick Butler Baines





Rank: - Private

Number: - 17994

Regiment: - King's Own Scottish Borderers 1st Battalion

Missing, presumed killed: -31st July 1915 aged 20 years

Memorial: - Helles Memorial, Turkey panel 84-92 and 220-222

Batley News, 28 Aug 1915, 23 Oct 1915, 30 Oct 1915, 13 Nov 1915, 4 Dec 1915, 11 Dec 1915 (photo), 14 Oct 1916 (photo)

Family Details

Frederick Butler was born in Batley on the 13th March 1896 the son of Alfred and Mary Ann Baines (nee Butler). He was baptised on the 19th April 1896 at Batley Parish Church when his father's employment was given as a carrier and living at Dark Lane, Batley.

In 1901 the family was living at 21A, Dark Lane, Batley. Willie had been born in 1894 followed by Frederick, Eveline (1900). The family moved to nearby 43, Norfolk Street before the birth of Olive May (1905) and Winnie (1908). The 1911 census shows the family was living at 82, Dark Lane, Batley and the couple had lost one child, which would have been Zillah who died in November 1892 aged 5 months. Frederick was an apprentice plumber. His grandfather Solomon Baines was a well-known contractor in Batley.

Service Details

The 1st Battalion of the King's Own Scottish Borderers was attached to the 29th Division. The first contingent arrived at Cape Helles, Gallipoli on the 25th April 1915, but it would appear that Fred arrived in the Dardanelles in early July.

A letter was received from him on July 26th saying he had just arrived in Gallipoli and was going into battle for the first time. A parcel was sent to him but it was returned saying his "present location uncertain". His name had not appeared in the War Office casualty lists.

On 31st October there was a report in the Batley News saying that a Carlinghow soldier, Private H. Brook of Victoria Street (a comrade of Baines) had been invalided home after an attack of dysentery and had related the circumstances under which Baines disappeared. Brook relieved Baines one midnight for three hours and it was during those hours that Brook was attacked with dysentery.

An officer noting his condition told him to report sick on leaving duty. When the relief man went to follow Baines, he was not to be found nor was anything heard of him afterwards. It was thought he may have strayed or been taken prisoner.

A fortnight later the Batley News reported that Private Harold W. Burton whose parents lived in Lady Ann Road had sent a letter on his arrival in the Dardanelles saying: -

"I write to let you know I am still in the best of health and we are having an enjoyable time here. We arrived at our destination on October 9th and it was the first time we had touched ground for two weeks. We were glad because we are sick of the sea. When we got off the ship four big shells came right over our heads and we wondered what was coming. When I got up here, they told me that Fred Baines was a prisoner of war and Harold Crossley (another Batley lad) is in the hospital. The Turks do not supply any list of prisoners to our Government nor allow the men who had fallen into their hands to write home they are said to be otherwise more humane in their treatment than the Germans."

His parents tried the help of neutral authorities to try to find their son without success.

On the 4th December 1915 the Batley News reported that his parents had received an official notification from Infantry Records Office at Hamilton stating: -

"I regret to inform you that a report this day has been received from the War Office that 17994 Private Fred Baines 1st KOSB was reported as missing after the engagement on July 31st. The term "missing" does not necessarily mean that a soldier is killed or wounded. He may be an unwounded prisoner or temporarily separated from his Regiment. Any further information received will be at once sent to you."

On the 28th July the battalion went into the firing line at 3.30 am at Gully Ravine. They remained there and on the 30th there was a "Feu de Joie" preceded by three cheers to celebrate the victory of the troops in the Persian Gulf but this brought very heavy fire from the enemy. During the day there were improvements done to the trench and a lot of sniping done. This continued the following day when Fred went missing.

Fred was awarded the1915 Star, British War Medal, the Victory Medal and is remembered with Honour at Purlwell Wesleyan Chapel and Batley War Memorial.

