Harry Burnley



Rank: - Private

Number: -13033

Regiment: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 1st Battalion

Killed in Action: - 4th October 1915 aged 19 years

Remembered with Honour: - Loos Memorial Panel 97 & 98

Batley News, 6 Nov 1915

Family Details

Harry was born at Cross Bank, Batley on 14th January 1896 the son of Frederick William and Emily (nee Preston) and was baptised at Cross Bank Wesleyan Chapel on 5th February 1896.

His siblings were Walter Preston (1888), Florence (1889), Ernest (1890), Lucy (1892) and Annie (1894). His mother, Emily, died in 1899 when the family were living at Pynate Road, Batley.

Frederick William married Brighouse born spinster, Harriett Brooke at Batley Parish Church on 25th July 1899. By the 1901 census the family were living at 36, Pynate Road, Batley and Walter was the manager at the Cross Bank grocery store.

There were 2 children to this marriage, Winifred who was born in Hanging Heaton in 1902 before the family moved to Hillsborough, Sheffield where Edith Laura was born in 1905.

In 1911 the family were living in a five roomed house at 121, Findon Street, Hillsborough, Sheffield. Frederick William was working as an agent for the Wesleyan and General, Ernest was a printer's assistant and Harry was working as a steel turner. It is probable that he worked at Atlas Works in Sheffield.

Ernest was killed in action on 14th April 1918 and is remembered with honour on the Tyne Cot Memorial.

Service Details

Harry enlisted at Sheffield in the 1st Battalion of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. This battalion was in Singapore at the outbreak of war and returned to Southampton in November 1914, moving first to Hursley Park then to Harwich and back to Hursley Park on 17th December coming under the command of 83rd Brigade in 28th Division. They were sent to France as much needed reinforcements embarking from Southampton and landing at Le Havre between 16th -19th January 1915 and then moved to concentrate on the area between Bailleul and Hazebrouck.

They took part in the 2nd Battle of Ypres which took place between 22nd April and 25th May 1915 and also the Battle of Loos which took place between 25th September and 8th October 1915.

The Battle of Loos was part of the final attempt by Franco-British forces to push the German Army out of France before the onset of winter in 1915. Sir John French, the

Commander in Chief of the British Expeditionary Force, was recalled shortly after the battle to be replaced by Sir Douglas Haig.

Casualties on 25 September were the worst yet suffered in a single day by the British army, including some 8,500 dead. In total, the battle resulted in casualties of more than 50,000, of whom some 16,000 lost their lives.

At 5.45 a.m. on the 1st October the 1st Battalion were sent to occupy the front-line trenches. They were later relieved and sent to billets at Annequin. On the 3rd they were told at 6.30 am to be ready to move at very short notice and at 9 a.m. they marched to Clarks Keep Vermelles before moving to the trenches to relieve the 6th Welch at 10.30 a.m. with the 2nd King's Own Light Infantry in support. They were relieved at around 6 p.m.

On the 4th October "A" and "D" Companies were ordered to attack Hohenzollern Redoubt. The attacked at 4.45 am and were met with heavy machine gun fire and rifle fire. There was no artillery bombardment. The distance to the German Line was about 200 yards and the men got about half way but by that time they were almost wiped out. One officer was killed, one wounded and two missing, ten other ranks were killed, 65 wounded and 101 were missing although a few were got in the following night. Harry was amongst those missing.

He was awarded the 1915 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

He is remembered on the St Polycarps Church, Wisewood, Loxley Methodist Church, Atlas Works Roll of Honour at Sheffield and Batley War Memorial Addenda 2019.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group