Percival Caleb Burnley





Rank: - Private

Regiment: - 15th Battalion Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment)

Number: - 270207 (formerly 281711 Highland Light Infantry)

Missing, presumed killed in Action: - 26th August 1917 aged 33

Memorial: - Thiepval, Somme, France

Batley News, 22 Sep 1917 (photo), 27 Jul 1918

Family Details

Percival Caleb Burnley was born in Batley on 8th May 1884. His parents were David Fox and Mary Ann Whitaker (Polly) Burnley (nee Lane), who were married at Batley Parish Church 7th February 1878.He was baptised at Batley on 11th June 1884.
In 1891 the family were living at 2, Bonnacord Terrace, Purlwell, Batley. David Fox Burnley was a Banker's Clerk, James Robert (1879) and Percival were both scholars attending Purlwell Council School. They had a live-in servant Sarah Popplewell aged 18. In 1901 Percival was a clerk in a rag warehouse living with his parents at 165, Taylor Street, Batley.
His brother married Emily Ann Waring White in 1903 and his father died suddenly in October 1910 whilst at Liscard, Cheshire. Percival was living in a 6 roomed home at Ings View, Batley in 1911 with his mother, maternal grandmother Martha Lane aged 79 (she died 11th June 1914) and his uncle Walter Lane (38) a Woollen Rag Merchant. Percival is described as being a Woollen Cloth finisher.
The family later moved to 18, Bankfields, Batley.
He was the grandson of James Lane of Purlwell House where he gained firsthand experience of the rag trade. In April 1916 he left the employ of Messrs. Wutow Ltd., rag merchants where he worked as a warehouseman before joining the Highland Light Infantry in April 1915. He later transferred to the Royal Scots.

Service Details

Percival Caleb enlisted at Batley in April 1916 into the Highland Light Infantry and became Private 281711. He disembarked in France in June 1917.

The 15th (Service) Battalion (1st Edinburgh) of the Royal Scots was formed at Edinburgh in 1914 by the Lord Provost and City. In June 1915 they moved to Ripon and attached to 101st Brigade 34th Division. They landed at Le Havre on 8th January 1916.
The Division would have fought in Arras Offensive in 1917 taking part in the 1st and 2nd Battles of Scarpe and the Battle of Arleux before Percival joined them.

In August 1917 the Division was fighting at Hargicourt which is a small commune in Picardy 16 miles south east of Amiens and on the 26th August the British captured enemy positions east of Hargicourt (North west of St Quentin) on front of over one mile to a depth of 0.5 miles.

Walter Lockwood of Clerk Green sent 2 letters to his mum saying that Percival had not been seen since 25th August 1917.

In the Roll of Honour in the Batley News of 27th August 1918 it states: -

BURNLEY –Private Percival Caleb Burnley, 15th Royal Scots, aged 33 reported missing August 26th 1917 now Reported Dead on that date (or since), younger son of the late D.F. Burnley and Mrs. Burnley, 18, Bankfields, Batley.

Percival was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal,

He is commemorated at Batley Parish Church, Batley War Memorial, and Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France.

There were seventy men killed or missing commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial on the same day as Percival.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group