Richard Jefferson Butler M.B.E.





Rank: - Captain

Regiment: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry (att. 2nd Battalion Somerset Light Infantry)

Died of heatstroke at Leo Dakka, Simla States, India: - 1st July 1919 aged 26 years

Memorial: - Delhi Memorial (India Gate)

Batley Reporter, 10 Jan 1919, 7 Mar 1919 (photo). Batley News, 12 Jul 1919. Dewsbury Reporter, 12 Jul 1919 (photo)

Family Details

Richard Jefferson (Dick) was born on the 10th August 1892 the son of James Jefferson and Emily Butler nee Hewitt and was baptised at St. John the Evangelist, Dewsbury Moor on the 2nd September 1892 when the family lived at Kelvin Grove, Batley. His father's occupation was given as a bank cashier.

The couple had married at St. John's Church on the 22nd July 1891.Thomas Oscar was born in 1894 followed by Hannah May 1896 and Herbert Cyril in 1901.

When the 1901 census was taken the family was living at 53, Track Road, Staincliffe with one domestic servant.

Before 1911 the family James had become a bank manager and the family had moved to live in a nine roomed house at Park Avenue, Batley. He was the manager of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Bank, Batley.

Richard attended Heckmondwike Secondary School and followed his father into working in banking, working for the National Provincial Bank at Barnard Castle.

Service Details.

Richard joined the forces in April 1915 when he took up a commission with the 3rd K.O.Y.L.I. The CWGC states that he served through the Mesopotamia Campaign with the 4th Battalion of the Welch Fusiliers.

During the course of his three years duties in Mesopotamia Richard had not been home. He had been shot through the right knee whilst going to the relief of General Townsend at Kut. He was in hospital in India for several months and had suffered several times from attacks of fever due to the heat.

In 1919 he received his demobilisation papers and was looking forward to coming home and secured a berth on the S.S. Hardinge and was on his way home from India when urgent papers came telling him to rejoin for service in connection with the Afghan trouble. The heat in Mesopotamia was trying but was worse in the Simla States and Richard died of heatstroke whilst attached to the Somerset Light Infantry.

On January 10th 1919 the Batley Reporter reported that Richard had recently been promoted to Captain and he had been mentioned in despatches by his General.

It was reported in the Batley Reporter of the 7th March 1919 that there had been a supplement in the London Gazette containing a list of honours and promotions for services in connection with the military operations in Mesopotamia which records the admission to membership of the Order of the British Empire of Capt. Richard J. Butler, K.O.Y.L.I. (S.R.) attached 8th (S) Royal Welsh Fusiliers.



BUTLER.—In loving memory of Richard Jefferson (Dick), Captain 3rd K.O.Y.L.I., dearly beloved eldest son of James Jefferson and Emily Butler, Avondale, Batley, who served through the Mesopotamian Campaign with the 8th Royal Welsh Fusiliers, and was recalled when on his way home and sent to the Afghan Frontier, where he died from heat-stroke at Leo Dakka, Simla States, 1st July, 1919, aged 26 years.

'A loving and dearly loved son and brother.

Batley News 3rd July 1920.

A later message came to his family that he had passed away in a Field Ambulance at Leo Dakka. At this time, he had been abroad for almost four years.

With the coming of Peace Day he was about to announce his engagement to Miss May Taylor of Croft House, Upper Batley.

Richard is remembered with Honour at the Delhi Memorial, Batley War Memorial and St. Thomas's Church.

He was awarded the Military Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (M.B.E.).



Researched by members of
Batley History Group