Patrick Cafferty





Rank: - Private

Regiment: - 6th (Service) Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry

Number: - 16972

Date of Death: - 23 July 1916

Cemetery: - Albuera Cemetery, Bailleul-Sre-Berthoult, Pas-de-Calais

Patrick was born in Batley in 1886, one of Michael and Bridget Cafferty's (nee Dunn) seven children. The couple were both from County Mayo and had married in Batley in 1881. John was born in September 1882 though he died in October 1884. Jane was born in February 1884 followed by Patrick. Thomas was born in October 1887, Michael in July 1889, Catherine in January 1892, but she died in March 1894. Their final child, James was born in1898.

In 1891 the family lived in New Street, Batley, but by 1901 they were living at Ambler Street, Batley. Patrick was working as a hurrier. Towards the end of 1905 he married Mary Ann Brannan and around a month later, in November, their daughter Ann was born. They initially lived in Ambler Street but in May 1906 Mary Ann summoned Patrick

to court citing persistent cruelty and requesting a separation order. Patrick worked as a coal miner and earned 23s. a week but only offered Mary Ann 7s for a fortnight, which she refused. As a result, he went out and bought himself some trousers, and spent the rest of the money on drink, although Mary Ann said he knew there was no money in the house. He even refused to give her money when she asked him "*to buy a bit of sugar for the baby's food*." They argued in court, the court granted them a separation but advised them to come back together. This they did. Mary Ann was pregnant and in November gave birth to a daughter, Jane. James was born in August 1908, followed by Mary in January 1910, and Thomas in March 1911.

The 1911 census saw the family living at Fleming Square, Batley. Patrick worked as a coal hewer and Mary Ann as a rag sorter. The census also records the death of two of their five children- both Jane and Mary failed to reach the age of one. Thomas died later in 1911, again under one. Their next child, Patrick, born in February 1912 only survived four hours. In December that year son Michael was born.

In July 1914, Patrick and Mary Ann were back before the Batley magistrates and fined for using obscene language.

In early September 1914, Patrick--who had been employed at Soothill-- enlisted with the 6th KOYLI. He went to France with them on 21 May 1915, serving initially in the Ypres salient.

Less than a month later, Mary Ann who was now living at Hume Street, gave birth to their eighth child, Patrick. On 7 February 1916 whilst Mary Ann was working at Harrison's leather works, seven- month- old Patrick was in the care of Mrs Burgoyne, a coffin maker's widow, from New Street. He went into fits. Mary Ann was called, getting back just before he died. This was the fifth of their children to die. A post mortem and inquest took place and found he had died suffering convulsions due to pneumonia.

In July 1916 with the Battle of the Somme raging, the 6th KOYLI were further north in the Arras area. Towards the middle of June onwards they took up position in the St Nicholas sector about a mile to the north of Arras.

According to the official history of the KOYLI. On 23 July 1916. The 6th Battalion were occupying trenches in that neighbourhood. Heavy trench mortaring started at 8.50am and continued until 1.30 pm. The trenches were demolished and the front line temporarily evacuated, but for four sentries who were subsequently buried in the shelling. The situation quietened for a while, but heavy shelling resumed once more between 4.30pm and 6.30pm. In the next spell of relative calm several attempts were made to get out the sentries, but this proved impossible because of enemy snipers. The bombardment commenced yet again at 9.15pm until 10.10pm This was followed by an enemy raid which, before being repulsed, reached as far as the support line and resulted in the bombing of the dug out where the company headquarters was based.

6th KOYLI records show that in the events of that day one officer was killed and another reported missing, almost certainly buried in the cellar of the house. Amongst other ranks nine were killed, six recorded as missing believed killed, and a further 22 wounded. The Unit Diary names Patrick Cafferty as killed that day.

News of his death was received by his wife from a "pal" Pte. Mark Brennen of New Street, Batley. He said that Pte Cafferty was killed on July 23 and added:

"I *cannot tell you how I feel. It has nearly broken my heart to think of it. You and his father and mother must bear this terrible news with a good heart. He died without pain. You have the deepest sympathy of all his chums who are left."*

This was closely followed by a letter from the War Office dated July 31.

At first Patrick had no known grave. In mid- September 1923 his remains were located just north west of Anzin- Saint- Aubin about two miles north west of Arras. He was recognised by his clothing, boots, Light Infantry Badge, Cap Badge and crucially his identity disc. His body was subsequently re-buried in Albuera Military Cemetery where it lies today.

His brother, Michael, died days after Patrick.

Patrick was awarded the 1914-15 Star, Victory Medal and British War Medal.

He is remembered with Honour at Batley War Memorial, St. Mary's Church and Albuera Military Cemetery.

Mary Ann had put his name forward to be added to Batley War Memorial which would be unveiled on 23 October 1923 but she died on 28 September 1923, in Wakefield.



Thanks to Jane Roberts and for more details see www.pasttopresentgenealogy.co.uk