Lawrence Carney





Rank: - Private

Number: - 11760

Regiment: - King's own Yorkshire Light Infantry 2nd Battalion

Died: - Date of death 28 September 1916

Cemetery: - Batley Cemetery O 433

Lawrence was born in Birstall in early 1895. His parents were English born Andrew and Norah Carney. Though his family origins were Irish, Andrew came from Batley and Norah nee Kilkenny came from either Newcastle or Sunderland but was living in Gomersal before 1881. The couple married at St. Mary's on 3 August 1885 and went on to have nine children. Michael was born in 1886, Thomas 1887, James 1889, John 1891, Lawrence 1895- and eleven-months later Edward, but he died in September 1904. Patrick was born in 1897, Andrew 1903 and finally a girl Mary Ellen in 1904.

Eight of the nine children were still living in 1911 but family life was harsh with extreme poverty, brushes with the law and time spent in the dreaded workhouse. Andrew was well known to the law even before his marriage, predominantly being charged with drunk and disorderly, or riotous behaviour, and some of these led to short stretches at Wakefield Prison because he could not pay the fines imposed. This continued after his marriage.

Andrew was released from prison just before Christmas 1895 to return to the family home at Coach Lane, Birstall. Andrew earned 18s. a week as a miner at Soothill Colliery and normally gave his wife 10s. a week but the prison sentence and fines had taken their toll and for the previous three weeks had only received 3s.6d. and Norah had to borrow 6d. from a neighbour. Because of the state the family were now living the Society of Cruelty to Children became involved.

Edward was born on Christmas Day. By the end of January, the landlord had been granted an eviction order, but the description of the house left much to be desired. One headline described it as "*a wretched hovel*". The house was condemned as unfit for human habitation and consisted of a room and a pantry, the latter containing nothing but a few raw potatoes and a loaf of bread. Furnishings were an iron bedstead, a rotten straw mattress, filthy bedding a cradle and a chair without a back. There was no soap or water in the house and when the Inspector visited his description of Lawrence read:

"*The youngest, aged 11 months was in the cradle insufficiently wrapped up in clothing and lying on something that was completely rotten. The baby and its garments were covered in vermin..."*

The children were taken to the workhouse pending proceedings against their parents.

In January 1896 Andrew was found guilty of child neglect and imprisoned for three months. The case against Norah was dismissed but told the magistrate that she too would have to go to the workhouse because she had neither home or habitation.

Lawrence was a member of St. Mary's church and also the school where he gained great admiration for his swimming abilities. He represented the school many times, as did his brother, Patrick, winning many prizes.

In 1911 Lawrence was living at home with his parents in New Street, Batley but on 30 November 1912 he married Annie Gavan, the daughter of Bridget Gavan and step-

daughter to John Herbert (Jack) Hill at St. Mary's church. On 12 January 1913 Annie gave birth to their son, John, but he died two months later. On 18 November 1913 their second child Annie was born. Daughter Ellen, known as Nellie was born on 30 December 1914.

Lawrence worked in the pits as a trammer and some obituaries state he worked a Soothill Wood Colliery but because he appears on the Crawshaw and Warburton Memorial, it does appear he was associated with either Shaw Cross or Soothill Colliery.

His service papers have not survived but because of his service number it is likely he enlisted in late August 1914 into the 6th KOYLI. The Battalion was initially based at Woking and moved to Witley Camp, Godalming, Surrey in November 1914. Lawrence arrived home for five days leave on the day Nellie was born but extended it without permission and because he had no money to return to camp simply waited to be picked up. Lawrence and Annie spent their first years of married life at Peel Street, Batley but Annie moved to Victoria Street, Carlinghow whilst Lawrence was away.

Lawrence did not go out to France with the 6th KOYLI's initial deployment in May 1915, not going overseas until 15 December 1915. On 23 June 1916 Lawrence appeared in the official newspaper casualty lists, wounded. However, there was a significant time lapse between this report and the date of Lawrence's injury. The 6th KOYLI Unit War Diary records he was taken off ration wounded on 28 May 1916, so his injury occurred around that time. It is possible Lawrence was injured whilst taking part in a patrol beyond our front-line trenches at Agny, about three miles south of Arras. The entry on 28 May 1916 reads:

"Patrol went out opposite G16 last night and found German lying outside our wire. They immediately attacked him, but he managed to free himself from them. A German patrol which was covering him threw bombs at our patrol and unfortunately wounded all three men. 10164 Sgt. Robinson was rather badly wounded, but 11584 Lance Corporal A. Dodsworth himself wounded gallantly carried him back to our trench.

Lawrence's injuries were not so serious as to keep him out of the Front line for long. The Battle of the Somme commenced on 1 July 1916 and Lawrence returned to the Front to serve with the 2nd KOYLI in late July. It appears Lawrence was wounded again in the middle to latter part of September 1916. In September the 2nd KOYLI were based predominantly in trenches around the Cuinchy area, around 20 to 25 miles north of the Somme battlefield.

On 23 September 1916 Annie received a card from Warrington Lord Derby War Hospital, Winkworth to say her husband lay wounded there. Lawrence did manage to write home to say he was in great pain. Then, on Wednesday 27 September, Annie received a telegram informing her that her husband was now seriously ill and a visit was permitted. She travelled to Warrington the next morning. Within half an hour of her arrival Lawrence died from his injuries. These had necessitated the amputation of his left leg above the thigh, but such were his injuries he was also due to have an operation to remove his other leg.

Lawrence's body was brought back home to Batley for burial. His funeral took place with full military honours in Batley Cemetery on the afternoon of Monday 2 October. Many people assembled along the route and at the cemetery. There was no band but a firing party from Pontefract attended as did several wounded soldiers from Batley hospital. The coffin was borne shoulder high to the grave by local soldiers. The officiating priest was Rev. Father Lea and after he had committed the coffin in the earth, three volleys were fired and the *Last Post* sounded by a bugler.

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

He is remembered on Batley War Memorial, St. Mary's Church and the Memorial erected by Crawshaw Warburton for their employees who had died during the war.

In April 1918 Annie married Sergeant Ernest Henry Passaway of the Royal Army Ordnance Corps.

Lawrence and Annie's daughter, Annie, died on 1 December 1918 and was buried alongside her father. Annie's death occurred during the horrendous second wave of the Spanish flu pandemic. Lawrence was the nephew of Michael Carney.



Thanks to Jane Roberts and for further information and acknowledgements please see pasttopresentgenealogy.co.uk