Claude Farrar





Rank: - Private

Number: - 12/1006

Regiment: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 12th Battalion

Died of Wounds: - 28th April 1918 aged 29

Cemetery: - Boulogne Eastern Cemetery 1X.A. 38

Batley News, 11 May 1918

Family Details:

Claude was born on the 29th June 1892 in Wakefield, the son of Henry Farrar born Kirkhamgate and his partner Charlotte Schofield born Sandal, Wakefield. His brother, Harry, was born in 1888 when the family lived at Engine Fold Cottages. Henry was a widower and had older sons, Albert (1862), Herbert (1865) and William Broadhead Farrar (1873). His previous wife was Mary Broadhead, who he had married in 1857.

In 1891 the family were living at Bailey's Buildings with Henry (labourer), Charlotte, William (gardener) and Harry born August 1888.

Henry died in March 1892 before Claude, who was baptised at St Andrew's Wakefield on 20th July 1892, was born and the family was living at 29, Bailey's Buildings, Kirkhamgate, Wakefield. Subsequent research shows he may have been born at Gawthorpe. It must have been very hard at this time for Charlotte and she went to live with George Turner as his wife and had another son, George, (1895). The family were living at Mill Bank, Thornhill in 1901 and all the children had the surname Turner. Sadly, Charlotte died in 1903 and by 1911 Claude and his half-brother George were living in Oak Street, Heckmondwike as the adopted sons of George and Margaret Atkinson. Claude was working in the mines as a coal hurrier. He later moved to Batley living first at Woodwell Street and later lodging with Mrs. Coulson of 34, Peel Street, Batley whose daughter Mary Elizabeth he was engaged to. He worked at the Diamond Colliery, Heckmondwike.

Service details:

He enlisted in September 1914 at Dewsbury and disembarked for Egypt on 12th December 1915.

The 12th (Service) Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry (Miners) (Pioneers) was formed in Leeds in August 1914 by the West Yorkshire Coalowners Association. At first the soldiers went to Farnley Park near Otley In May 1915 then moved to Burton Leonard, near Ripon and attached as Pioneer Battalion to 31st Division. They moved to Fovant, Salisbury in October 1915 and then to Egypt in December 1915.

The Division took over the No 3 Sector of the Suez Canal defences and Divisional H Q moved to Kantara on 23rd January. Their stay in Egypt was short, and between 1st-6th March the Division sailed to Marseilles for service in the planned summer offensive on the Somme.

The 31st Division subsequently remained in France and Flanders and took part in these actions:

The Battle of Albert 1-13 July 1916
the Battle of the Ancre 13-18 November 1916

The Third Battle of the Scarpe 3-4 May 1917
The Capture of Oppy Wood 28 June 1917

Between 1st July and 30th November 1917, they were attached to Fifth Army Troops for work on light railways.

The Fifth Army took part in the following battles between 31st July and 10th November 1917.

Battle of Pilkern 31st July - 2nd August 1917

Battle of Langemarck, Battle of Menin Road, Battle of Polygon Wood, Battle of Broodseinde, Battle of Poelcapelle, First and Second Battles of Passchendaele.

They returned to the 31st Division on the 30th November 1917 as a Pioneer Battalion and took part in the following battles: -

The Battle of St Quentin 21-23 March 1918
The Battle of Bapaume 24-25 March 1918
The Battle of Estaires 9-11 April 1918

Below Photo :--Men of the 12th Battalion, King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, the pioneer battalion of 31st Division, break for food amidst the ruins of Feuchy. This was in April 1917 during the Battle of Arras. From the Imperial War Museum Collection



Private Claude Farrar was most probably fatally injured on or around the 13th April 1918 in the desperate defence of the Nieppe Forest, part of the Battle of Hazebrouck when the 4th Guards Brigade with 12/KOYLI (attached pioneers of the 31st Division) took the worst of a prolonged German assault. At the height of the fighting, the greater part of three German Divisions attacked the 4,000-yard front held by 4th Guards and adjacent units. After sustaining his injuries, Private

Farrar will have been moved to a Casualty Clearing Station near Boulogne where he later died on the 28th April 1918 from his injuries.

A year later in the Memorial Column of the Batley News there appeared a Memorial.

Farrar – *In loving memory of Private Claude Farrar, K.O.Y.L.I. of 34 ,Peel Street, Batley ,died of wounds in France----------He thought little of his time so short In this world to remain, And that when from home he went He'd never return again . No loved ones stood around him to bid a last farewell, No word of comfort could he leave, To the ones he loved so well. From his loving sweetheart, Mary Elizabeth.*

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

He is remembered with Honour at Batley Parish Church, Batley War Memorial and Boulogne Eastern Cemetery.

Claude died of wounds on the 28th April 1918 and there are another 39 soldiers buried in the same cemetery who died on the same day from a total of 5,766 remembered on this memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group