Fred Firth





Rank: - Private

Number: - 242935

Regiment: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry (Formerly 6216 King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry) "C" Coy. 1st/5th Bn.

Killed in Action: - 19th July 1917 aged 27 years

Cemetery: - Ramscappelle Road Military Cemetery, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium I.C.7

Batley News, 4 Aug 1917 (photo)

Family Details

Fred was born in Birstall on the 13th March 1890 the son of Ernest and Mary Elizabeth Firth nee Nobles who had married on the 24th March 1883 at St. Peter's Church, Birstall. He was baptised at St. Peter's, Birstall on the 22nd June 1890 when the address was given as Partington Square, Birstall.

When the 1891 census was taken the family which comprised of Ernest, Mary Elizabeth, Margaret Jane 1883, James Henry 1885, Blanche 1888 was living at 27, White Lee and Ernest was employed as a woollen spinner. Noble was born on the 26th February 1893 and sadly his mother died shortly after and was buried at St. Peter's on the 2nd March 1893 when the address given was Brownhill.

On the 12th October 1893 Ernest married spinster Martha Nussey at Batley Parish Church.

In 1911 Ernest, Martha, Blanche, Fred and Noble were living at 9, Park Road, Batley. Ernest was a commission spinner, employer, and Fred was assisting in the business. Ernest died in the last quarter 1913.

In the last Qtr of 1912 Fred married Eva Killingley. Lilian Margaret was born in 1913 followed by Miriam May in 1914.

The couple went to live at 17, North Parade, Mount Pleasant and he was well known in the area and was associated with work at the Gospel Hall. Previous to joining the forces in September 1916 he was employed at Messrs. Albert Hill and Sons', oil works, Batley Carr. His wife went to stay with her parents at 112, Purlwell Lane, Batley.

Service Details

Fred enlisted in September 1916 as a Derby Recruit and went to the Front in December 1916.

From 15 May 1915 they came under the orders of 148th Brigade in 49th (West Riding) Division.

In 1917 they took part in: -

Operations: the Flanders offensive, 7 June – 10 November 1917 (Operation Hush)
7-14 June 1917, Battle of Messines.

A brilliantly planned and executed attack that resulted in the capture of the Wytschaete-Messines ridge south of Ypres, a feature that had given the British problems since 1914 and which was important to hold for future offensive operations in Flanders. It commenced with one of the heaviest artillery bombardments of the war and the explosion of nineteen enormous and long-prepared underground mines. Plans were made for an audacious British attack against the German-held coast of Belgium; a force was assembled and specialist training began. But a necessary advance from Ypres did not materialise and the operation was inevitably cancelled. A sharp German attack against British preparations in the *Battle of the Dunes* (*Operation Strandfest*) also disrupted matters.

Notice was sent to his wife that Fred had been killed in action on the 19th July 1917.

Fred was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

He is remembered with Honour at Temperance Hall – Smithies Lane, Birstall; Independent Order of Rechabites, Hope of Birstall Lodge and Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group