Ralph Talbot Fox







Rank: - 2nd Lieut.

Regiment: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 4th Battalion (Territorial)

Killed in Action: - 25th August 1918 aged 38

Cemetery: - Mory Abbey Military Cemetery, Mory, Pas-de-Calais, France 1.C.11

Batley News, 7 Sep 1918. Dewsbury District News, 7 Sep 1918 (photo)

Family Details

Ralph Talbot was born in Batley on 3rd April 1881 the son of Phineas and Hannah Fox (nee Talbot). He was baptised at Zion Methodist Church on 23rd June 1881 by T.D. Carruthers. The couple had married in 1873 and Herbert Talbot was born in 1875 followed by Mary Ellen (1877), Jessie (1879), Ralph, Harry Talbot (1883), Amy (1884), Joe Talbot (1886), Alfred Talbot (1890).

In 1881 the family was living in Holland Street and the census states Ralph was just one day old when it was taken. Phineas was a woollen rag merchant.

Ralph attended Park Road Council Schools and he was well known at Zion Chapel where he was an enthusiastic worker for the Boys' Brigade. He was an energetic footballer at one time playing for a junior association team called the Batley Swifts. Latterly he took a major part in regimental sports.

Within the next decade the family had moved to 2, Stanley Terrace, Park Road, Batley.

Hannah died in January 1893 when he was only 11 years old. After her death the family moved to 6, Whitaker Street, Batley and in 1901 Ralph was a rag merchant whilst his father had become a Life Assurance Commission Agent.

In 1905 Ralph married Rose Alice Stinton in Hereford, Margery Hannah was born in 1907 and the family went to live at Stoneroyd, Quarry Hill, Horbury.

By 1911 Ralph had become a commercial traveller of rags. The family later moved to live at Wyville, Grove Road, Horbury.

Ralph had moved to Horbury when he set up business as a rag merchant for himself and was connected to the Ossett and Horbury V.T.C.His father, Phineas died in June 1921.

Service Details

Ralph enlisted in June 1917, after serving sometime in the ranks he went to cadet school and was granted a commission in February 1918 and went to France in June 1918.

He had only been in France two months when he was killed. His wife first received a letter from a Chaplain who wrote: -

"He was killed in action on Sunday last (August 25th) during the latest advance. He was greatly missed by both officers and men, and I, specially shall feel the loss of a splendid influence."

This was followed soon afterwards by a Record Office telegram which posted Lieutenant Fox" missing from August 25th "and added "this does not necessarily mean that he is either killed or wounded." This message gave hope to the anxious relatives but the following letters which they then received from fellow officers report his death beyond doubt.

His Colonel wrote: -

"It is with great regret that I write to inform you of the death in action of your husband and other officers giving their men a magnificent lead took them over and charged the enemy who were completely beaten and suffered heavy casualties. We got him in and he was buried at Mory. Please accept my deepest sympathy in your loss."

His Captain wrote: -

"Your husband's death has caused great sorrow not only in the Company but in the Battalion. As Company Sports Officer he became known to many, not only in this unit but in others and I know few officers who gained affection more quickly. Personally, I thought the world of him principally because of his strong, clean character and the good example he set all his boys. I often used to feel that at his age it was hard to have so much to contend with. When on long route marches I frequently offered him my horse to reserve his energy a little but he only took advantage of these offers very occasionally" because he wanted to show his platoon he could do as they" so to speak. Your husband has not departed this life without adding his full quota to all that is noble in a man's character."

Another touching letter full of affection was received from his co-Lieutenant, Clifford Fox, who was a Staincliffe lad.

28 other soldiers including one German were buried at Mory Abbey cemetery on the same day.

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

He is remembered with Honour at Mory Cemetery Military Cemetery and Zion Methodist Church, Batley .



Researched by members of
Batley History Group