Marshall Gibson





Rank: -Private

Number: -202784

Regiment: -King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 8th Battalion

Killed in Action: - 8th December 1917 aged 19

Cemetery: -Giavera British Cemetery Arcade, Italy. Plot 2 Row B Graves 8

"PEACE, PERFECT PEACE"

Batley News, 5 Jan 1918 (photo)

Family Details

Harry Gibson of Earlsheaton and his wife Clara (nee Murton) of West Ardsley were married on 13th August 1889 at Batley Parish Church. During their married life they had seven children of which only three survived infancy. Robert William (1890), Walter Clarence (1893) and Marshall (1898). The family were living at 13, Back Lawson Street, Dewsbury but during their time there Harry and Clara lost 2 of their 5 children –Irwin (1892-1892) and Wilhemina Lawrie (1897-1897). Marshall, the youngest surviving son of Harry and Clara, was born 14th March 1898 in Central Street, Dewsbury and was baptised at St Philips, Dewsbury on 11th April 1898.

By 1901 Harry, who was employed as a teamer, moved his family to 3, Cross Street in Batley. During their time at Cross Street Harry and Clara lost 2 more of their children James Arthur Murton (1900-August 1901) and Ella Maria (1903-1903).

By 1911, the family had moved again this time to 8, Carlton Street, off Commercial Street, Batley and Harry worked as a night watchman whilst his two elder sons were employed as piecener and young Marshall was attending Park Road Council School.

Marshall was also a member of Batley Parish Church Sunday School, becoming well known at the Church and being a member of the Church Lads' Brigade.

He had several jobs after leaving school being employed at Messrs. Coulter & Co., engineers, of Bankfoot Foundry, Batley, and also by Messrs. Newsome, Askham & Co., engineers, Bradford Road, Batley as a moulder. For several months before joining up he had worked in the flock department at the Clerk Green Mills of Messrs. Joseph Auty and Co. Ltd., woollen manufacturers.

Service Details:

Marshall joined His Majesty's Forces in September 1916 going across the Channel in June 1917.

He was transferred to Italy in November 1917. He would have been with the soldiers who completed concentration between Mantua and Marcaria on 16th November 1917.

Commonwealth forces were at the Italian front between November 1917 and November 1918.

On 4th December 1917, the XIth and XIVth British Corps relieved the Italians on the Montello sector of the Piave front, with the French on their left. The Montello sector acted as a hinge to the whole Italian line, joining that portion facing north from Mount Tomba to Lake Garda with the defensive line of the River Piave covering Venice, which was held by the Third Italian Army.

The Commonwealth troops on the sector were not involved in any large operations, but they carried out continuous patrol work across the River Piave, as well as much successful counter battery work.

The painful task of writing to his parents, who had already lost their son Walter Clarence in August 1915, of the death of Marshall had fallen to a Batley officer, Second –Lieut. W.T. Akeroyd, son of Alderman F.W. Akeroyd of Oak Dene, Upper Batley. A sympathetic from the Italian Front read: -

"*It is with the greatest possible regret that I have to inform you of the death of your son, Private Marshall Gibson. He has been in my platoon for several months, and I had a great respect for him. Believe me he was a good lad and a splendid soldier. He was in a trench along with his section when a shell, unfortunately, landed straight into the trench and killed him and others. I hope that the knowledge that he died instantaneously and suffered no pain will to some extent mitigate your grief. I hardly know what to say to you, this being the second of your brave sons who has made the supreme sacrifice for King and country. Only half an hour before he met his death, I was sitting in the trench chatting with him about our common home- Batley. We could ill afford to lose such cheerful, brave and willing lads as he. I was not actually on the scene when the shell burst, but I was there within minutes, so I can honestly assure you that he suffered no pain."*

Other letters were received from the captain and the chaplain and the captain also testifies to the character of Marshall. The chaplain explained that he had been buried in a cemetery near where he fell.

The family continued to put Obituaries in the Batley News

GIBSON In loving memory of our dear son Private Marshall Gibson, 1st-4th K.O.Y.L.I. who was killed in action in Italy, December 8th 1917, aged 19years.

It's only a mother who knows the sorrow

It's only a mother who knows the pain

Of losing a son she loved so dearly,

But she hopes to meet him again.

We often sit and think of him when we are all alone,

But memory is the only thing we can call our own;

Like ivy on a withered oak, when other things decay.

Our love for them will ever live, and never fade away.

They have laid their richest gift---their life on the altar of sacrifice.

From father, mother, brother, sister-in-law and niece

Marshall is honoured on Batley Parish Church, Batley War Memorial and Giavera British Cemetery, along with another 14 who were killed on the same day.

He was awarded British War Medal and the Victory Medal.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group