Fred Delamere Griffiths





Rank: - Gunner

Number**: -** 144864

Regiment/Battalion: - Royal Field Artillery "B" Battery 79th Brigade

Killed by Shell: - 8th October 1917 aged 30

Cemetery: - Cement House Cemetery, Belgium I.F.14.

"EVER REMEMBERED"

Batley News, 20 Oct 1917 (photo)

Family Details

Fred Delamere was born in Birstall in 1886, the son of John William and Alice Lidith Griffiths (nee Delamere) who both came from Cheshire. In 1891 the family was living at the Smithies, Birstall near the Greyhound Inn with his elder sister Dora (1885), younger sister Amy Sarah (1891), paternal aunt Ruth Griffiths and cousins Annie J., Alice and James Smith. John William was employed as a stock keeper for cloth printers although before his marriage he had worked as a railway signalman.

A decade later the family had moved to Railway Terrace and John William was an insurance agent and Fred was working as a twister in a woollen mill. The family had grown, Richard Delamere was born in 1898 and Tom Delamere in 1900 but their cousins continued to live with them. John William became a well-known labour councillor for Batley Town Council before his death in 1905.

Fred attended Birstall Central Schools.

His mother, Alice, married Henry Cookman at Carlinghow St. John's Church on 10th April 1909 and they went to live at 22, Beck Lane. In 1911 Fred was described as dyer's labourer.

On 2nd August 1913 Fred married Sarah Elizabeth Bottomley at St. Michael's Church, Buslingthorpe, Leeds. They moved back to Beck Lane, Carlinghow where twins Alice Delamere and Pansy Gwendoline M were born in 1915.

Fred worked as a willeyer at Messrs. R. Talbot, Bulrush Mills, Batley, he attended St. John's Church and was a member of Carlinghow Working Men's Club.

Service Details

Fred enrolled in May 1916 and went to France in December 1916.

This brigade was originally comprised of numbers 247, 248 and 249 Batteries RFA and the Brigade Ammunition Column. It was placed under command of the 17th (Northern) Division. The brigade then remained with the division throughout the war.

In early 1917 they fought at the First and Second Battles of the Scarpe and the Capture of Rouex in April and May which were parts of the Arras offensive. They

also fought at the Battle of Passchendaele which was near Ypres. Passchendaele was a ridge east of Ypres and five miles from the railway junction at Roulers which was vital to the supply system of the German 4th Army. The First Battle of Passchendaele began on the 12th October 1917 and Fred would have been preparing to go into battle whilst the Germans would have been trying to reduce the number of Allied guns.

News of Fred's death arrived on Saturday 13th October from a captain to his wife at 29, Beck Lane: -

"Your husband was killed yesterday afternoon (October8th). He was shaving outside his dugout when a splinter from a shell struck him in the neck, and he died within ten minutes without gaining consciousness. He had been with the Battery for some time, and was always useful. He did some good work for the Battery. "

"Cement House "was the military name given to a fortified farm building on the Langemark –Boesignhe road. The original cemetery was begun at the end of August 1917. It was used by the 4th and 17th Division burial officers, by field ambulances and units in the line until April 1918.

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

He is remembered with Honour at St. John's Church, Carlinghow, Batley War Memorial and Cement House Cemetery, Belgium.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group