Frederick Hill M.M.





Rank: - Private

Number: - 200858

Regiment: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 1/4th Battalion (formerly 3056)

Killed in Action: - 26th April 1918 aged 28 years

Memorial: - Tyne Cot Memorial, West Vlaanderen, Belgium. Panel 108 to 111

Batley News, 9 Feb 1918 (photo) 25 May 1918. Batley Reporter, 17 May 1918

Family Details

Frederick was born in Batley on 26th September 1889 the son of William and Ann Hill nee Marsden. He was baptised at Batley Parish Church on 13th October 1889 when his father's occupation was given as a mill hand. His elder sister Minnie Hill died March 1887 aged 9 months.

In 1891 he was living with his parents at 6, Fearnsides Yard, Batley. A decade later with the addition of Joseph E the family was living at 17, Weatherill Street, Batley and 11-year-old Frederick was working as a hair latherer whilst his father was employed as a willeyer and his mother was a machinist.

His father, William, died in May 1909.

As a boy Frederick attended Park Road School and earned himself a good name as being a promising swimmer. He assisted in winning both swimming cups and shields for his school and has three gold medals as a reminder of those occasions. In later years he became a member of both Batley and Dewsbury Swimming Clubs and played with Batley Polo Team. He has numerous trophies won in amateur swimming competitions and holds the 100 yards certificate of the Yorkshire Amateur Swimming Association which he won at Slaithwaite in 1907. In proof of his swimming capabilities he won a gallantry card in 1917 for meritorious conduct on 1st August and 11th September. The award was in recognition of him saving a sergeant and a sergeant-major from drowning. On one of these occasions he swam 400 yards in his clothes. He attended Up Lane Sunday school and was a member of Batley Working Men's Club.

Frederick married Ruth Collinson in 1907 and in 1911 they were living with his widowed mother and his brother at 33, Russell Street, Batley. The census shows that William and Ann had lost two children in infancy and Frederick and Ruth had lost one child which would have been Sarah Ann who died in November 1908 aged 10 months.

Ruth died in October 1911 at the District Hospital and in 1912 he married Mary Fradgley. Harry was born in 1913. In 1919 Mary married James A. Rodgers. Before enlisting he worked at Messrs. Slade and Bullock's, sweet works,

Dewsbury having previously worked in the finishing department of Messrs. G. & J. Stubley, Batley.

Frederick and his family lived at 9, High Street, Batley Carr and his mother had moved to live at 37, Queen Street prior to 1918.

Service Details

Frederick enlisted in the local territorial force in November 1914 and disembarked in France in February 1916. The 1/4th King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry was part of 148th Brigade in 49th (West Riding) Division.

In 1916 they served at the Battles of Albert, Battle of Bazentin Ridge, Pozieres Ridge and of Flers-Courcelette which were all part of the Battles of the Somme 1916.

In 1917 they took part in Operations on the Flanders Coast (Hush) and the Battle of Poelcapelle near Ypres.

In the Batley News of 9th February 1918, it was reported that Frederick had won the Military Medal. He had written to inform his wife: -

"You will be surprised to hear our Captain has recommended me, but I only did my duty. I suppose you will want to know how it came about. We were being bombarded for four hours and we had a lot of wounded and I was out in it all bandaging the wounded. I was sent back twice and shells were dropping within 10 yards of me and still I got the lads away."

In a later letter he said: -

"You will be pleased to know I got the Military Medal and ribbon. The ribbon is on my breast now."

In 1918 the Division fought at the Battle of Estaires 9-11th April the Battle of Messines 10-11 April, the Battle of Bailleul in which the Division defended Neuve Eglise 13-15 April, and the First Battle of Kemmel Ridge 17-19 April.

The Battalion and Division had paid a heavy price to stop the German advance, the Battalion lost three officers and 86 men killed with six officers and a large number of men wounded. Over the next few days, they were reinforced with 186 men and 11 officers. They were at Toronto Camp when orders arrived in the evening of 22nd April that they were to send a reconnaissance party to explore the Wytschaete area. The Germans attacked at 2.30 am on 25th April with a larger bombardment then usual of gas shells. At 6 am in dense fog the German

infantry attacked both north and south of Kemmel Hill and after intense fighting with the French they reached the summit of Kemmel Hill. At 8 am enemy shells landed in Toronto Camp killing three and wounding seven. A quick evacuation into adjacent fields took place amidst heavy machine gun fire and enemy planes bombing. Orders were given that the 1/4th were to counter attack.

At 1am on the 26th April the battalion left Ouderdam and by 4.25 am was in the Blue Line. The counter attack was confused but the British advance was halted by enemy machine gun fire and with only a little support from their own artillery they had to retire into their original positions. This brief and unsuccessful counter attack had caused severe casualties and the heavy machine gun fire which continued throughout the day caused more.

Frederick, who had been in France for two years and had escaped without even a scratch, until this time, was one of those killed.

This was called Second Battle of Kemmel Ridge 25-26th April and all the battles were near the River Lys.

He was officially awarded the Military Medal on the 22nd February 1918 which was listed in the London Gazette on 2nd April 1918.

Frederick was awarded the Military Medal, British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

He is remembered with Honour at Up Lane Sunday School, Batley Working Men's Club and Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group