Wilfred Ewart Holmes





Rank: - Private

Number: - 6056

Regiment: - Durham Light Infantry (formerly 30672 KOYLI and 42292 Northumberland Fusiliers) 1/5th Battalion

Died of wounds: - 16th November 1916 aged 18

Cemetery: - St. Sever Cemetery Extension, Seine Maritime, France O.11.C.10

"THE PATH OF DUTY WAS THE WAY TO GLORY"

Batley News, 18 Nov 1916 (photo)

Family Details

Wilfred Ewart was born in Batley in c April 1898 the eldest son of Willie Brook and Amy Gertrude Holmes (nee Hemingway) and was baptised at Cross Bank Wesleyan Chapel on the 15th June 1898. Arnold Percy was born in 1900 followed by Arthur (1903) and James Albert in 1905.

In 1901 the family was living at 24, Pynate Road, Carlinghow, and Batley and in the census, Holmfirth born Willie Brook gave his occupation as a rag and shoddy traveller.

Before 1911 the family had moved to nearby 102, Chaster Street, Carlinghow, Batley in a five roomed home. Willie Brook gave his occupation as a commercial traveller for a shoddy and mungo merchant.

His brother, Willie Geoffrey was born in February 1917 and the family had moved to live at 15, Osborne Terrace, Field Hill, and Batley before 1919.

Wilfred attended Cross Bank Wesleyan Chapel and worked with his father at Messrs. Wildsmith and Carter's before changing his career to learn farming and had moved to Buckden in Wharfedale before enlisting.

He was well known in Cross Bank and attended the Cross-Bank Wesleyan Chapel.

Service Details

Wilfred Ewart enlisted at Pontefract in June 1916 and his records states he was 5 feet 2 3/4 inches tall and weighed 126 lbs.

He was posted to the Northumberland Fusiliers on 6th October 1916 before transferring to the Durham Light Infantry and posted to the 1/5th Battalion on 20th October 1916 joining the Field Unit two days later. The 1/5th Battalion was attached to 150th Brigade in 50th (Northumbrian) Division and in October 1916 took part in the Battle of Transloy Ridges. He suffered his wounds on 7th November 1916 at the Butte de Warlencourt in the aftermath of the battle of Le Transloy. On 5th November the battalion were under 10 minutes notice as reserve. On 6th November they proceeded to trenches in the Flers Line.

During the Battle of Le Transloy (1–20 October 1916), part of the Battle of the Somme, the Butte de Warlencourt was the subject of several attacks by the

British Fourth Army, which were costly failures; attacks in November 1916 also failed. The battalion was relieved on 9th November.

Wilfred was injured on the 7th November and admitted the next day to 1/1 Casualty Clearing Station with gunshot wounds to his face, hand and chest before being transferred to the 3-stationary hospital at Rouen.

His parents received a telegram from the Territorial Office at York stating: -

"Regret Pte. W.E. Holmes dangerously ill in 3 Stationary Hospital, Rouen, gunshot wound, face, hand and chest. Regret permission to visit him is not granted"

The same day a letter was received from a Wesleyan Chaplain which read: -

"Your *son, Pte. W. E. Holmes asks me to write you. He is dangerously wounded by gunshot in the side of the head. He is receiving careful attention from doctors and nurses and we hope that he will make progress."*

Wilfred died of his wounds at 11.20 am on Thursday, 16th November 1916.

He was only 18 years old and should not have been at the Front at this stage in the war and especially with so little training.

Wilfred Ewart was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal

He is remembered with Honour at Cross Bank Wesleyan Chapel, Batley War memorial and St. Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group