Percy Howard



Rank: - Private

Number: - 3895

Regiment: - West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince if Wales's Own) 1/5th Battalion

Killed in action: - 3rd September 1916 aged 23 years

Thiepval Memorial: - Pier and Face 2 A, 2C and 2 D.

Batley News, 16 Sep 1916. Dewsbury Reporter, 16 Sep 1916

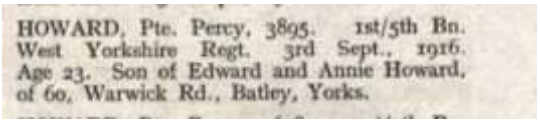
Family Details

Percy was born in Batley in c 1893 the son of Edward and Annie Howard (nee Wright). They had married at All Saints, Batley on 24th January 1889.Edward was from Wakefield, a greengrocer by trade, and Annie from Calverley but in 1901 the family was living at 6, Grafton Street, Batley with May (1891), Hilda (1895) and Doris (1896).

Percy attended Warwick Road School and Broomhill United Methodist Church.

Before 1911 with the addition of Edward (1907) the family had moved to live at 60, Wood Terrace, Warwick Road, Batley and Percy was working for his father as a greengrocer' assistant.

A newspaper report in the Batley News says that he was of a reserved disposition and worked as an assistant for his father who was a well-known Batley Carr greengrocer.


HOWARD, Pte. Percy, 3895. 1st/5th Bn. West Yorkshire Regt. 3rd Sept., 1916. Age 23. Son of Edward and Annie Howard, of 60, Warwick Rd., Batley, Yorks.

Service Details

His service details have not survived but the local paper states he was killed about seven months after joining the Army.

In August 1916 the Battalion was in the Leipzig Salient in France. They had been relieved by the 1st Wiltshire Battalion on the 19th August. They went into the Belfast City Trenches on the 27th moving to the Gordon Castle Trenches on the 29th and that day they had 10 other ranks killed and 7 wounded. On the 30th it was wet and they were shelled intermittently all day. On the 30th which was a quiet day they spent time repairing the trenches after all the rain.

At the beginning of September, the Battalion was still in the Gordon Castle Trenches and, on the 1st, hostile artillery fire was active and on the 2nd it was reported that the battalion was holding the line in preparation for the next day.

On the 3rd September between 2 am and 4 am the 1/6th and 1/8th West Yorkshire Regiment got into parallels for an assault on the German front and support lines. At about 4 am "A" and "B" Companies moved into assembly trenches at Gordon Castle, "D" Company was holding the British front line and at about 5 am "C" company moved to Gordon Castle and about 5. 10 am they all attacked the German lines but the attack failed. The H.Q. at Gordon Castle was heavily shelled during the day and also the front line and communication trenches. At 3.45 pm the battalion was ordered to form up to attack the German front line immediately south of the Ancre. At 6.30 pm the attack was cancelled. At midnight the battalion was ordered to take over the British front line as originally held. This was done and later they were relieved by the 1/4th York and Lancaster Regiment between 2am and 5.30 am and they proceeded to Martinsart Wood. Two officers and 20 other ranks were killed, 4 officers and 73 other ranks were wounded and 10 other ranks were missing.

The first intimation that Percy had been killed came from his Commanding Officer of his Company and although he quoted the wrong initial for Percy the number was correct. He said: -

"It is with the deepest regret that I have to inform you of the death of your son, Private G. Howard, West Yorkshire Regiment who was killed in action on the 3rd inst. It may be some consolation to you knows his death was instantaneous and that he suffered no pain. His loss is deeply regretted by the whole of the officers and men, who wish to convey their deepest sympathy in your sad loss. "

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

He is remembered with Honour at Thiepval Memorial, Broomhill United Methodist Church, Warwick Road School and Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of Batley History Group