William Campbell Hughes



Rank: - Private

Number: - 9575

Regiment: - The King's (Liverpool Regiment) **1st Bn**

Killed in Action: - 17/10/1915 Age: 27 years

Cemetery: - Rue-des-Berceaux Military Cemetery, Richebourg-L'Avoue, Pas de Calais, France 11.E.55

Family Details

William Campbell was born in Manchester on the 28th November 1887 the son of Arthur and Sarah Ann Hughes (nee Hogg, m. 1887, registered Chorlton, Lancashire). He was baptised at St. Andrew's Church, Manchester on the 22nd January 1888. His parents gave their address as 1, Brick Street, Temperance Street, Ancoats, Manchester and his father was employed as a wheel wright.

Ethel was born in 1889 and the family moved to live at 670, Stockport Road, Rusholme, Manchester before 1891.His Liverpool born father had changed his occupation to become a carpenter.

Before 1901 the family had with the additions of Edith Ann 1893 and John 1900 moved to live at 38, Hassop Street, Bradford, North Manchester. Mary 1896 and Margaret 1898 both died in infancy. Francis Ernest was born in 1902 and in 1911 the family was living at 7, Chorley Place, Ardwick with only the two youngest children still living at home. William Campbell had joined the army and was in India in 1911 with the 2nd King's Regiment, aged 23 years saying born Bradford, Yorkshire.

His daughter Ada Florence was born on the 24th January 1914 and a few days later on the 9th February 1914 he married her mother Ada Bagley at Stockport Registry Office. They were both resident at 7, Builders Court, Lancashire Hill, Stockport. William is an assistant Stationary Engineer and the witnesses were Joseph and Esther Hague.

After her husband's death Ada moved to 14, Dane Street, Middlesbrough and married widower William George Chambers on the 15th March 1917. The family later moved to 85 Peel Street, Batley (on or before 1919) and in 1939 his daughter was living in King Street, Batley. William George Chambers died on 6th March 1944, his address being 75 King Street, Batley.

Service Details

William Campbell enlisted at Warrington and on the 12th August 1914 embarked for Le Havre, France and marched in intense heat to rest camp, according to his Medal Index Card.

The cwgc suggests he was 4th battalion but there is doubt this is correct. His service number 9575 suggests he enlisted in late spring or summer 1906. The Service Medal record shows him serving with the 1st Kings. It is possible he moved from the 2nd Battalion to the 1st Battalion which was part of 6th Brigade, 2nd Division.

The 2nd Division was one of the first British formations to move to France.
William will have served in 1914 at:-
The Battle of Mons and the subsequent retreat, including the Affair of Landrecies, the Rearguard affair of Le Grand Fayt and the Rearguard actions of Villers-Cotterets
The Battle of the Marne
The Battle of the Aisne including participation in the Actions on the Aisne heights
First Battle of Ypres

In 1915 at: -
Winter Operations 1914-15
The Battle of Festubert
The Battle of Loos (25 Sept -15 Oct 1915)

William died on 17 October 1915. Unfortunately, the Regimental War Diary for September 1915 and most of October 1915 has not survived but he died in the aftermath of the Battle of Loos. At the time, it was the largest British offensive of the First World War and witnessed the Army's first use of gas.

British losses at Loos were exceptionally high with 50,000 casualties (including at least 20,000 deaths). The Germans suffered approximately half the losses of the Allies. A significant proportion of the remaining pre-war regular troops were lost, and more than 2,000 officers were killed or wounded.

An offensive on 13 October, opened once again with a gas attack, came to a disastrous end: in ten minutes the 46th Division lost 180 officers and 3,583 men in an attempt to take the Hohenzollern Redoubt!

Sporadic sorties were launched by the allies and enemy in the remaining few days of the battle. Amidst gas, rifle, machine gun, light and heavy artillery from both sides the futility of the action was finally realised. William had weathered many storms including this one which commenced on 25 September 1915. He was killed in action on 17 October 1915 as both sides realised the futility of further losses.

The grave errors committed by the British High Command at the Battle of Loos were not heeded and were to be repeated on the first day of the Battle of the Somme which started on 1 July 1916 in the greatest disaster in the history of the British Army.

William Campbell was awarded the 1914 Star + Clasp, the British War Medal, and Victory Medal.

He is remembered with Honour at Batley War Memorial.

Thanks to Alan Howe.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group