Ernest Lightfoot





Rank: - Private

Number: - 12/1573

Regiment: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 12th Battalion

Died of Wounds: - 9th July 1916 aged 25 years

Cemetery: - Couin British Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France I.D.19

Batley Reporter, 28 Jul 1916 (photo), 8 Aug 1919 (classifieds)

Family Details

Ernest was born in West Town on the 12th November 1890, the son of John and Ellen Lightfoot nee Hanson who had married on the 3rd March 1879 a St. John the Evangelist Church, Dewsbury Moor. He was baptised at St. Matthew's Church, West Town, Dewsbury on the 7th July 1891.

His older siblings were Elizabeth Ellen born 1880, Albert 1881, Florence Amelia 1883, Harry 1885, Annie 1887, Clara 1889. In 1891 the family was living at 15, Fearnley Street, Dewsbury. Within the next decade the family had moved to live at Navigation Yard, Thornhill with the additions of Arthur 1893, Arnold 1896, Ivy 1898 and Dora 1900. Fred 1895 had sadly died shortly after birth.

The family went to live at The Wharfe, Savile Town, Dewsbury.

In October 1910 Ernest married Harriett Ann Cooper and they went to live at 6, Tweedale Street, Dewsbury later moving to 11, Springfield View, Dewsbury. Ernest worked as a carrier.

Service Details

Ernest enlisted in Dewsbury in about July 1915 and probably went to France in 1916. It is very unlikely he went to Egypt with his battalion in December 1915 because he was not awarded the 1915 Star. The 31st Division in which the 12th Battalion was attached went from Egypt to France in March 1916.

On the 1st July 1916 they took part in the Battle of Albert (1-13 July). On the first day Ernest suffered a bullet wound in his right arm, the bone of which was broken, a broken thigh and a bullet wound in his foot. It took him 190 hours to crawl into a trench, when he was without food and reach help. Sadly, he died from these wounds on 9th July.

A sister from the hospital wrote to his wife: -

"His wounds were very severe and though we hoped to pull him through and did everything possible for him he died today. He spoke to me of you and hoped you wouldn't worry about him. He was an excellent patient and as brave as possible to the end."

Major Summerhayes, R.A.M.C. (T.F.) and the chaplain who conducted Pte Lightfoot's burial service also wrote: -

"All I can do is to pray to God to support and strengthen you and give you His peace. You have the happiness of knowing you gave your very best for King and Country and that your husband died a hero's death, laying down his life for the Right. We laid his body in the military cemetery here. A cross will be placed at once in position and every care will be taken of the grave."

At the time of his death his brother Arthur was serving at the Front with the Royal Engineers, his brother Harry was with the R.A.M.C. and Arnold was a Trooper with the Dragoon Guards.

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

He is remembered with Honour at Batley and Dewsbury War Memorials.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group