Harvey Lilley





Rank: - Private

Number: - 30093

Regiment: - East Yorkshire Regiment 1st Battalion

Died in Captivity: - 30th September 1918 aged 31 years

Cemetery: - Marpent Communal Cemetery, Nord, France C 3

Family Details

Harvey Lilley was born in Ossett in late 1887 the fifth child of ten born to Joseph Lilley and his wife Sabina (nee Saxton) who were married at Ossett Holy Trinity Church on the 14th September 1875. Three of the children had died before April 1911. Both parents and all of the children were born in Ossett.

In 1891 the couple were living with six children, including Harvey, at Naylor Street, Ossett. By 1901, the family had moved to Dewsbury Road, Ossett and by 1911, they had moved to live at the five-roomed Laurel Villa, Flushdyke, Ossett. Harvey was 23 years old and like his younger brother he was assisting his father in his tripe dressing business.

On the 18th May 1912, Harvey, a dripping refiner's assistant of Flushdyke Ossett married Martha Shepard of Whitaker Street, Batley at Broomhill Chapel, Batley. Their only child, Elsie, was born on the 16th March 1913.

Service Details

The "Batley News" of 22nd February 1919 had this obituary for Harvey Lilley:

"Died in German Hands - A Prisoner's Fate Behind The Lines - Official news has been received that Pte. Harvey Lilley (39), 1st East Yorks, whose wife and child reside at 44, Whitaker Street, Batley, died whilst a prisoner-of-war at Marpont, Belgium, on September 30th, 1918 from grippe (Spanish influenza) and heart failure. He joined the K.O.Y.L.I. nearly three years ago, and had been twice gassed and had suffered trench fever. Early last year he was transferred to the East Yorks and on April 25th he was taken prisoner (unwounded) at Kimmel. His wife had several communications from him whilst in captivity and these purported to come from Stendal in Germany, whereas in reality he was working behind German lines in Belgium. Pte. Lilley was a native of Ossett, and at the time of enlistment was working for his father Mr. Joseph Lister at his tripe-boiling works at Flushdyke.

Writing to Mrs. Lilley, Pte. J. Stower, Boston Street, Manchester who was a prisoner-of-war with Pte. Lilley, says a number of prisoners were working behind the lines on the construction of a railway track from Marpont to Maubeuge, when Pte. Lilley had the misfortune to fracture his right leg owing to a truck leaving the metals at a curve where he was working. "He was taken into a so-called hospital at Mauberge" Pte. Stower continues "and after being the place six or eight weeks, he was sent back to the camp situate in Marpont Jeumont village about 7 1/2 miles from Maubeuge. He was looking fairly well considering

the circumstances existing at the time. All in the camp who knew your husband were very much grieved when they heard the news of his death, which occurred about four days after his return to the camp."

Pte. Stower adds that the dead soldier was given a decent burial. Other prisoners-of-war (including Stower) acted as bearers, and two ladies who owned a farm in the village, two little girls and an elderly gentleman were present, and the ladies placed wreathes on the coffin. A British soldier read the burial service, and the little party sang 'Nearer my God to Thee' and two verses of 'Abide with Me"

Private Harvey Lilley, aged 31 years, son of Joseph Lilley, of Ossett and husband of Martha Lilley, of 44, Whitaker St., Batley, Yorkshire, died on the 30th September 1918 and is buried at grave reference C. 2. at the Marpent Communal Cemetery, Nord, France. Marpent is a village in the Department of the Nord, 10.5 kilometres east of Maubeuge in the valley of the Sambre. The Commission graves are in the south part of the Communal Cemetery.

There are now over 20, 1914-18 war casualties commemorated in this site. All died as prisoners in August-October, 1918.

Harvey is remembered with Honour at Broomhill Chapel, Taylor Street, Batley and Batley and Ossett War Memorials.

See Ossett .net Thanks to Alan Howe.

