Herbert (Farrar) Lockwood



Rank: - Private

Number: - 16300

Regiment: - York and Lancashire "D" Coy 8th (Service) Battalion

Killed in Action: - 19th February 1916 (aged 21)

Cemetery: - Rue-David Military Cemetery, Fleurbaix, and Pas-De-Calais, France.
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Family Details:

Herbert was born 21st October 1894 in Batley to Annie Farrar (Nee Braime) who came from Wakefield. Herbert was baptised at Batley Parish Church on 11th November 1894 and his father was given as Jim Farrar (weaver) of Cobden Street, Batley. Annie had married James Farrar on 21st June 1887 and they had a child Sarah Anne (1890). They were living at 3, New Street, Batley in 1891.

It appears James and Annie separated and she set up home with Fred Lockwood. We believe Herbert was actually his child followed by Walter Lockwood (1896), Fred Lockwood (1898), Louisa Lockwood (1901), Arthur Lockwood (1903), Joshua Lockwood (1908), and Harry Lockwood (1910). The children had all been registered under the surname of Farrar. In 1901 the family were living at 73, Peel Street, Batley but by 1911 the family were living in a four roomed house at 9, Peel Street, Batley.

Fred and Annie eventually married at St. Thomas's Church in July 1915 when they were living at 7, Yd 1, Hilberoyd Road, Batley. Fred had two surviving daughters from his marriage to Emma Farrar who died in April 1893, Minnie (1885) and Lily (1890). Ernest Megson Farrar had died in August 1889 aged 18 months.

Before he enrolled in the army, Herbert worked at Messrs. Critchley's, Batley Colliery as a hurrier, where his father, who was a banks man, had worked for over 30 years, He was an old scholar of Park Road School, and attended Up Lane Sunday School.

Service Details:

According to his Attestation papers signed on 31st October 1914 he was 20 years and 14 days when he enlisted at Dewsbury and he worked as a hurrier in the pit. He was 5ft 6 inches in height, weighed 139 lbs., he had a fresh complexion, grey eyes and light brown hair.

Herbert was immediately mobilized and sent to Pontefract before being sent to Frensham on the 7th November 1914 followed by Aldershot on the 1st December 1914. He states that his next of kin is Fred Lockwood (father) of 8, North King Street, Batley followed by Annie (mother) and Sister Sarah Anne Lockwood. When in May 1919 Annie of 12, Hilberoyd Road, made a declaration

of the relations of the deceased she stated that he had 5 brothers and one sister of full blood and Sarah Ann Smith, Minnie Newton, and Lily Lockwood were half blood.

He was sent to France 27th August 1915. At Helles Barracks on the 30th August he broke out of billets at 11a.m. and remained absent until 8 pm. For this he was given 1 day

On 5th September the Division was attached to III Corps and moved to the Merris-Vieux Berquin area, where trench familiarisation began under the tutelage of the 20th (Light) and 27th Divisions. The Division took responsibility for a front-line sector for the first time nine days later, taking over between Ferme Grande Flamengrie to the Armentieres-Wez Macquart road. CIII and CV Brigades RFA were attached to 8th Division for operations in connection with the Battle of Loos.

He would have fought with his Division at the Battle of Bois Grenier 25th September 1915.

Compared with the small-scale British efforts of spring 1915, this attack of six Divisions was a mighty offensive indeed - so much so that it was referred to at the time as 'The Big Push'. Taking place on ground not of their choosing and before stocks of ammunition and heavy artillery were sufficient, the opening of the battle was noteworthy for the first use of poison gas by the British Army. Despite heavy casualties, there was considerable success on the first day in breaking into the deep enemy positions near Loos and Hulluch. But the reserves had been held too far from the battle front to be able to exploit the successes and succeeding days bogged down into attrition warfare for minor gains.

In August 1915 Herbert Cleveland of the Yorkshire and Lancashire Regiment wrote home to his father in Thornhill: -

"*We have been very busy these last ten days. We have just been in action and thank God I got out safe. I do not want to go through again what I have these last five days. It was like what I heard a man say "Hell let loose with the sides burst." Shells were going over like hailstones. It must have killed thousands of Germans and was the fiercest bombardment ever known in the war. If we could only have , all along the line, the bombardment like the one we had , we could*

go to Berlin, and had we not been kept under control we could have gone for miles, we could have taken five or six of their lines, but as I said before we were kept under control and stopped when we had taken two lines of their trenches.

You should have seen the Germans running and giving themselves up. It was said the dead were piled up on the top of each other in a wood close by, and I don't wonder, owing to the shells that went over. We advanced under our own shell fire. The Germans never thought of us advancing like we did.... If any one earned the V.C. it was the engineers who were putting out the barbed wire in front. It was the finest piece of work I have ever seen. I think our regiment has made a name for itself. We have made a name for ourselves digging, and now we have a name for fighting. The Germans once took one of our lines with a liquid fire, but we avenged that with our last success, and not half. I had often heard the men say they went out of their heads when they went in a charge, and it is true. I went out of my head as soon as we got over the top, and did not care what came. We were out for blood, and got it, but it was awful waiting for the time to go over the top, and get at them."

In his last letter home dated 12th February 1916 Herbert said: -

"Very glad I was to receive your very nice and welcome parcel last night. I was very pleased for a change of something. I can't say when I will get any leave, but I hope it won't be long. I am writing this letter in my dug out, in which I am very comfortable, although outside it is pouring down with rain. The Germans have been shelling our trenches very much and yesterday we had some casualties."

The first news of Herbert's death was received from Capt. R. C. Stewart the officer commanding his company. He said: -

"*I am writing you this letter to express my very deep sympathy with you in the death of your son. He was shot early last Saturday morning while on sentry duty in the front line, and died instantaneously. There are very few men who are more respected than he by his comrades in this company and from the point of view of officers I can certainly say that there was no man more zealous in the fulfilment of his duties* or more willing to obey orders.

The chaplain of the regiment wrote: -

"I am writing as chaplain to your son's regiment to express our deepest sympathy with the great loss you have sustained. I didn't know your son personally, as I only joined the regiment last week but all his officers and chums tell me how highly they thought of him and how much they miss him. It may comfort you to know that he met a soldier's death at his post as sentry and died instantaneously, never suffering or even murmuring. He had received a parcel the same night and generously shared it with his mates. Last night (February 20th) I went up and buried him with the rites of the Church. His Company Commander (Capt. Stewart), Sgt. Blockley, Pte Harrison and a few more of his friends came with me. In a day or two we are to put a cross over his grave with his name on it. Croix Marechal is the name of the cemetery, and beside him lie others of the regiment who have given their lives for King and country in this Great War. There are some things belonging to him which will be sent you soon. You will be glad to keep them in memory of your brave son. May God comfort you in this trial. All things are in His hands and may His will be done."

Later the same day his parents received a letter from his friend Sgt. T. Blockley: -

"No doubt when this letter reaches you, you will have received some very unwelcome news namely that of the death of your son Herbert. In this letter I want to try to express my sympathy with you. No one in the army knew him better than I did. I was in his tent at Frensham. I was his bed-mate at Aldershot, and his companion in billet at Bromley. It has been a great blow to me and at times I can hardly realise my loss. I want you to know there was no suffering, he died instantaneously. We buried him on Sunday night in a cemetery just behind the firing line. I have been told constantly I must not worry and I ask you not to worry. All is well and we shall know when the mist has rolled away------"The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away.""

Private Ernest Dennis whose parents lived at Oldroyd's Buildings, Town Street, Batley Carr wrote to his parents. He says --

"*I was with Herbert at 10 o'clock on the Friday night and he was shot at quarter past three the next morning. It seemed impossible for him to get hit in the place where he was stood but the bullet went straight through his head and he had no pain because death was instantaneous. He was taken away and lies in a good*

grave, with a cross and his name and number on it. The burial was carried out by our chaplain. Your son's death was felt very hard in our Company because it was our first casualty." Herbert's cousin, Private Lawrence Ryan, of Cross bank, had been killed24th April 1915 and another relative, Herbert Priestley of Broom Street, had been killed in action 8th May 1915. Yet another cousin, Pte. Arthur Braime, of Upper Commercial Street was serving with the Forces.

Herbert was awarded the 1914-15 Star, British War Medal 1914-20 and the Victory Medal.

He is commemorated on Batley War Memorial, Batley Parish Church, Up Lane Sunday School and Rue-David Military Cemetery, Fleurbaix, France. He was the only soldier buried there that day.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group