Michael Lydon



Rank: - Private

Regiment: - 2nd Battalion, Alexandra, Princess of Wales's Own (Yorkshire Regiment)

Number: - 48517

Date of Death: - 1 September 1918.

Cemetery: - Vis-en-Artois British Cemetery, Haucourt, Pas-de-Calais, France

Michael was the only son of Irish born Dominic Lydon and his wife Annie (nee Kenny), who was a native of Charlestown, County Mayo. The couple married at St. Mary's RC Church, Batley on 30 August 1887. Their eldest child, Eliza Jane was born that October. Another daughter, Mary, followed in January 1890, but she survived for only three weeks and was buried at Batley cemetery on 15 February 1890. At this time the family address was given as Spring Gardens, Batley.

The 1891 census records the family living at Yard 2, East Street with Dominick working as a mason's labourer and Annie as a rag sorter.

Michael was born in Batley on 15 December 1891. On 5 September 1894, his father died. Then on 5 August 1898, Eliza also died. This left Annie who never re-married, to bring up Michael, although she may have had family help because in

1901 her mother and brother Patrick were living in the East Street home. She also took in boarders to supplement the family income. In 1911 it is recorded that Michael was working as a piecener in a woollen mill. Prior to joining the Army he was employed by the Great Western Railway Company as a goods porter at Batley railway station.

Michael enlisted and joined his regiment, Alexandra, Princess of Wales's Own (Yorkshire Regiment) better known today as the Green Howards, in December 1917. In June 1918 he went to France. From surviving records, it appears he may possibly have initially served with the 1/5th Yorkshire Regiment – transferring to the 2nd Battalion when the former was reduced to cadre strength in mid-July 1918.

Michael was killed on 1 September 1918 only 11 days after writing an informal will leaving everything to his mother.

The day before his death, the Battalion had captured the village of Hamblain-les-Pres, about eight miles east of Arras with, according to the Unit War Diary, slight opposition and low casualties.

The diary entry for the day of Michael's death is very low key. The Battalion spent the day maintaining and consolidating captured positions. The diarist recorded that enemy artillery was very quiet and there was nothing of importance to report. The enemy damned the Trinques River flooding no-man's land. He did not list any casualty details for the day, although CWGC records that Michael was one of three soldiers from the Battalion to die on 1 September. One was buried in the same original cemetery as Michael, and like Michael was moved after the war.

Annie was officially notified of Michael's death at her home at 12 East Street. This included via letters from an officer and a private who served with him. The latter, a pal of Michael's wrote: -

I am sorry to inform you that your son was killed on Sunday, September 1st by the bursting of a shell, and buried "Somewhere in France." I wish to express my sympathy and also that of the platoon by whom he was so well liked.

Michael was originally laid to rest at Bois-Du-Sart British Cemetery, Pelves. This small local ground was situated at the North-Western angle of the Bois-du-Sart, a wood. It contained the graves of ten soldiers and airmen from the United Kingdom (including one from the 2nd West Yorkshire's who died the same day as

Michael), and nine soldiers from Canada, who fell in August and September 1918. After the war their bodies were exhumed and reburied at Vis-en-Artois British Cemetery, Haucourt.

Michael is remembered with Honour at St. Mary's Church and Batley War Memorial.

He was awarded the Victory Medal and British War Medal.



Thanks to Jane Roberts and for more details please see: -

pasttopresentgenealogy.co.uk