William McManus





Rank: - Sapper

Number: - **132062**

Regiment: - Royal Engineers 252th Tunnelling Coy.

Killed in Action by enemy mine explosion: - 2nd March 1916 aged 32 years

Cemetery: - Auchonvillers Military Cemetery, Somme, France 11.A.14

Family Details

Sarah Ann Townsend born 1880 and William 1884 were born in Batley, the children of Mary Townsend, who in 1886 married Thomas Mc Manus and in 1891 were living at 88, New Street, Batley. They were brought up as his children.

Thomas was born in 1888 followed by John 1890, James 1892, Frank 1893-1895, Michael 1895-1896, Margaret 1898-1902.

In 1901 the family was living at 38, Peel Street, Batley, Thomas was working as coal miner hewer whilst William was a hurrier below ground.

In 1911 the family had moved to 30B, Peel Street and Mary stated seven of her eleven children had died. William had moved to find a job as a miner at Darfield, Barnsley.

His mother died in April 1916 and Thomas in October 1916.

Service Details

When war broke out William was working as a miner at Darfield Main Colliery, near Barnsley. He enlisted at Pontefract on the 22nd September 1915 after receiving notification. He was living at 26, Sealdale Terrace, Darfield and was given the job of a tunneller's mate in the Royal Engineers for 2s.2d. per day (11p).

He went to France on 10th October 1915 and re-mustered as a Sapper and became a tunneller. A letter from his employees stated: -

Mitchell Main Colliery Company Ltd.

Darfield Main Colliery.

"This is to certify that William McManus has been employed at the above colliery for over two years as a miner and we have always found him to be a good worker and thoroughly used to any pit work he took in hand. J.W. Halmshaw (manager).

Many miners joined the engineers or similar to be used to dig tunnels under enemy lines and plant mines etc. Sadly, William died from an enemy mine exploding on the 4th March 1916.

He was awarded the 1914-15 Star. The British War Medal, and Victory Medal.

He is remembered with Honour at Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group