Frederick (Fred) William Moody







Rank: - Private

Number: - 1832

Regiment/Battalion: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry "D" Company 1st/ 4th Battalion

Killed in Action: - 25th May 1915 aged 18

Cemetery: - White City Cemetery, Bois-Grenier, Nord, France. E 4

Family Details:

Although Frederick William (Fred), the son of Ada Willows, was born on 27th June 1897 in Meanwood, Leeds, Ada did not marry his father, William Moody, until 2nd October 1897 at Meanwood Holy Trinity Church.

A further son, Wilson Mallinson Moody, was born in 1899 but sadly he died in May 1900 aged 6 months.

In 1901 the family was living at 17, Victoria Street, Carlinghow and William earned his living as a sewing machine agent. Sometime before 1911 the family had moved yet again, but only several doors away, to 38, Victoria Street, Carlinghow. William was still a sewing machine agent and was employed by the Jones Sewing Machine Company, a British Manufacturer founded in 1860 and young Fred was an apprentice engineer in tool making and engineering company. The family had now increased with the additions of Axiah Hannah (1904) and Edith (1909-1913). A further son, Stead Nowell, had been born but died in August 1908 at the age of 7 months. The family later had four other children Charles Squires (1912), Ada (1914-1918), Annie Doraisa (1916) and Minnie (1918). Ada died in December 1918.

After leaving school Fred worked primarily at Wensleydale Mills, Birstall (which was a woollen mill and print works) but worked latterly for two years at Messrs. Chas. Robinson & Sons (woollen manufacturer).

Service Details

Fred joined the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 1st /4th Battalion like a lot of other Batley men and was in "D" Company. After training he left for France at Easter 1915.

He wrote home on a regular basis and on arrival in France he wrote: -

"*I think I am all right as regards health but financially—Oh! And cigarettes –talk about a London office boy walking down the Strand on Monday morning looking for tab ends –it isn't in it. I haven't had a smoke for a day or two and I fear if I*

don't get one soon, I shall have forgotten which end to put in my mouth (I don't think).

April 27th. You must not get in a stew if you do not get a letter regularly, because we can only send one a week.

May 6th In the trenches---- I would have sent you a letter but I can't get hold of paper or envelopes. We have been in the trenches for three days this time and are going back to the rest station tonight for a day or two.

May 11th – I am still in the trenches and going on right enough. Try to send that mouth organ, will you? We are having beautiful weather here – a little too hot if anything.

May 21st – I received the "Batley News" on Monday night before going into the trenches. We are having changeable weather –been up to the eyes in mud for two days but that makes no difference to us, we are none the less happy. Of course, it is not like being at home but we have got to see it out, and the sooner those Sausage Eating Monsters are kicked off the map the better. The lads out here will do it. The way they walk about and sing ----you would think they were going to the "Hip".

May 24th (his last letter) ---You must excuse delay in writing we've had a big job on and I have been unable to write sooner. I've been within 30 yards of the German trenches and I can tell you I felt just a bit nervous getting over the parapet and going out in front of our own trenches, with bullets flying around like hailstones. They say in the papers that the Germans can't shoot. Not a bit of it. We had to lie down for quarter of an hour in about six inches of mud, so heavy was the rifle fire, but we got back alright. Of course, a few got hurt."

At Whitsuntide 1915 the Territorials came under fire for the first time. Captain J. P. Critchley wrote a letter to Mr. G. R. C. Fox (Staincliffe)

"I should like to tell you that the Battalion has distinguished itself during the Whitsuntide holidays.

On Friday night a party of officers crept out in front of the trench, went towards the German lines, and laid out a line of trench within a hundred yards of the Germans. The following night two of our Companies, my own and Major

Chadwick's climbed over the parapet and armed with rifle, spade and pick crept up to the line and started to dig. Of course, so many men attracted the enemy's fire, and we had to keep watch whenever a flare light went up and fall flat on our faces as it was immediately followed by a sharp burst of rifle fire. Undismayed the job was continued and after doing the same for three nights – Capt Taylor's and Capt Chadwick's Companies also taking part and having losses each time owing to having machine guns being turned on --we dug a line of trench and captured a front of 400 yards in length and 100 yards deep, besides which we made the line so it was safe to hold and tenable.

The General in command of our Army Corps and also our own General in charge of the West Riding Division congratulated the Battalion most heartily on its work which has been a great success. It was the first time our lads had been under fire and although we had casualties the miners of Batley, Dewsbury, Normanton and Wakefield stuck to their jobs and worked for their lives. If only the local people could have seen the lads when they returned in torn clothes, minus hats, and covered all over in wet clay and mud still cheerful and willing, they would realise firstly what war is and secondly how ably our local towns were represented and thirdly they would try to send out more help."

Clifford Parkin who was in the same battalion wrote home to his parents: -

Whit Sunday:-I am on my holidays and spending them in the trenches. We came in last night and were working all night up to our knees in mud. It was glorious! Walter Gibson of Co-op Street, Batley has had to go in hospital suffering from neurasthenia.

May 26th – Many thanks for the "Batley News" which I received last night. We only came out of the trenches at eight yesterday morning after the liveliest time we have had. We went in at 4 p.m. Whit Monday and at 6 o'clock the artillery started a fierce bombardment of the German trenches and continued for three quarters of an hour. After five minutes our battalion simply bounced over the parapet and advanced about 60 yards and then commenced digging like fury, completing a line of trenches before daybreak. When we were going over the Huns didn't half pepper us, and they rapped it out all night. At daybreak, having completed the trenches and made them quite bullet proof, we realised the fact that we were only 150 yards from the German line. It has been a fairly big thing,

and we did remarkably well. The Divisional Staff have sent hearty congratulations, to our colonel, on the way we did our bit. Of course, we had a fair number of casualties but I am thankful to say all our old Church Lads' Brigade lads are alright but Fred Moody of Victoria Street, Carlinghow, was killed by a piece of shrapnel.

Harry Parkinson also wrote and gave an account of the event reporting that they had one killed and several wounded. He would never forget Whit Monday as long as he lived.

Private E. Punyer of Platoon 15, "D" Company, 1st/4th K.O.Y.L.I. wrote to his mother because his dad was on active service with the 10th K.O. Y.L.I.

"Dear Mrs Moody, - On behalf of your son's friends in "D" Company I beg to offer you deep regret which is felt at his death. He was killed instantly and suffered no pain. We were standing by, previous to making an advance to a piece of ground in front of our trenches and about 100 yards from the German trenches. They were shelling us with shrapnel and your son was lighting a cigarette when a shell exploded just above our heads. A large piece of shrapnel hit your son in the back and came out of his left side. He dropped to the ground with a moan, and never spoke again. I was close to him when he fell and I ran to him to offer my assistance, but he was quite dead. He died the death of a hero and feel it is my duty as late section commander to offer you the sympathy of his comrades. He was a good soldier and always ready to do as he was told. He was a general favourite with both N.C.O.'s and men. He used to keep us entertained with his mouth organ, and his death was deeply regretted."

His death was also reported by Robert Riley also of Victoria Street and several other Territorial's.

A letter was also received from Mrs Haslegrave of Holmfield, Wakefield, wife of Colonel Haslegrave Commanding Officer of the battalion: -

"I was most grieved to hear from my husband that your son had lost his life whilst fighting for his country. He behaved with the utmost bravery, and my husband is proud of his men, and much regrets the loss of your boy. If I can do anything for you, I hope you will let me know Colonel Haslegrave asked me to do all I can for you. "

Fred was awarded 1914- 15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal.

He is remembered with Honour on Batley War Memorial, St. John's Church, Carlinghow and White City Cemetery.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group