Percy Mortimer



Rank: - Private

Number: - 32354

Regiment: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 2nd Battalion

Died: - 28th March 1918 aged 21

Cemetery: - St.Hilaire, Frevent, Pas-de-Calais, France. 1V.A.10

"THY WILL BE DONE"

Family Details:

Percy was born in White Lee on 7th June 1896 to Liversedge born couple John William and Esther Mortimer (nee Flint). He was baptised at St. Peter's, Birstall on 5th July 1896. They already had an older son Thomas William (1891). John William was a weaver.

The couple had married in 1886 and in 1901 were living with their children with the addition of Clara Evelyn (1900) at 75, Huddersfield Road, White Lee, Birstall.

Arthur was born in 1906 and the family had moved to live in a two roomed house at 26, White Lee, Heckmondwike with Susan Taylor, described as niece, living with them. John William must have had a sense of humour because when he filled in the census form in 1911, he put his wife's occupation as "wage spender". John was a woollen weaver whilst Thomas William was working as a rag grinder, Percy as a plumber's apprentice and Susan a worsted spinner. The couple had lost one child in infancy.

Service Details:

Percy joined the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry in Cleckheaton in August 1915. The 2nd Battalion was in Dublin when war broke out in August 1914. They were part of 13th Brigade in the 5th Division and landed at Le Havre on the 16th August 1914. They transferred to the 97th Brigade in 32nd Division on the 28th December 1915.

In 1916 they fought at the Battles of Albert, Bazentin and Ancre which were all part of the Somme offensive.

In 1917 they were in the operations on the Ancre, the pursuit of the Germans to the Hindenburg Line.

In 1918 Percy saw action at the First Battle of Arras.

At 10pm on 27th March 1918 at Lattre, St Quentin the 2nd Battalion K.O.Y.L.I. received orders telling them to prepare to move forward in support of the Guards Brigade holding the line in front of Adinfer Wood. The battalion was ready to march in full fighting condition before 11pm. A and C Companies were

in the advance under the command of Major H. W. Boddington followed by Brigade H Qrs and B and D Companies. They stopped marching for a hot meal at 4.30 am but by 5.45 am the Battalion was placed in a line of trenches astride the Ransart- Adinfer Road and were ordered to rest due to the fact they could be called at a moment's notice for strenuous work. The night was very cold.

At 9 a.m. a Brigadier General rode up to Battalion H.Q. and informed the Commanding Officer that it appeared that the enemy was attacking Adinfer Wood from the east and endeavouring to work round the southern side of the wood. The Battalion was ordered to form up immediately in Artillery Formation and advance into the wood in support of Guards Brigade, a distance of around 1,500 yards. The Battalion reached its objective at 10.20 am. Very little hostile shelling was encountered in the advance and the only casualties were one man killed and four wounded.

Percy was the only soldier in this Battalion to lose his life in this attack.

Percy was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

He is remembered with Honour at St. John's Church Carlinghow, Batley War Memorial, White Lee Working Men's Club and St. Hilaire Cemetery, Frevent, France.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group