Henry Watkin Pickering





Rank: - L /Cpl

Number: - 30956

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

Died of wounds in Captivity: - 27th November 1916 aged 26 years

Cemetery: - Porte-de-Paris, Cambrai, France 11.B.29

Family Details

Henry Watkin was born in Heckmondwike in 1890 the son of Frederick and Sophia Pickering (nee Barber).

Frederick, who was born in Batley, was a traveller and moved around the country. Sophia came from Lightcliffe but their eldest daughter Ethel Mary was born in Wyke in 1877 followed by Emily 1879 in Rastrick and in 1881 Frederick was described as a manufacturing chemist living at Hippperholme.

Charles Richard was born in Brighouse in 1882 followed by Agnes 1884 in Croydon, Arthur 1886 Croydon, Henry Watkin 1890, and Edith in 1895 at Heckmondwike. Frederick died in 1895 and the family moved to live at 6, Healey Lane, Batley.

Henry Watkin attended Healey Council School and Purlwell Wesleyan Chapel.

The 1911 census tells us that the family had moved to live in an eight roomed home at 80, Purlwell Lane, Batley and there had been 9 children born alive but only seven were still alive.

On 10th May 1914 Henry Watkin married Harriett Laughlin at Purlwell Wesleyan Chapel giving his occupation as a rag warehouseman and his address as 24, Ashburnham Road, Greenwich, London SE. His father in law was John Laughlin of Dark Lane and his brother in law was Benny Laughlin the Batley footballer.

The Batley News reported that before joining the Forces in June 1916 he was a timekeeper at J.T. & J. Taylor's Ltd.

The Dewsbury Reporter stated he assisted his brother in law Mr. W. H. Roberts of Bradford Road, Batley in business before going to work as a foreman for Messrs. Dandridge, rag merchants of Deptford, London.

On the 23rd September 1920 Harriett married Leonard Carrington at Purlwell Wesleyan Chapel.

Service Details

Henry enlisted in June 1916 in the 2nd Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. The Battalion was in 97th Brigade in 32nd Division.

He embarked for France shortly after Batley Feast which would have probably been the second week in September 1916.

In 1916 they fought at the Battles of Albert 1st -13 July, Bazentin14-17th July and the Ancre. This would have been the first battle he was involved with.

The Battle of the Ancre was fought between 13th-19th November 1916. Henry was captured on the 14th along with Private Osmond Smith of Cross Bank and Private Harold Wood of Morley. His wife heard that he was a prisoner of war but two days later she received from the Prisoners of War Committee the following letter: -

"We have to inform you with deep regret that we have received news that your husband died of his wounds on November 27th 1916 at German hospital No.5 Cambrai. The German list from which our knowledge is derived further states that he was buried at the Cemetery of Notre Dame, Cambrai grave No.1597, block 3. It is probable that this sad intelligence has already reached you, but it is possible you may not have heard the details and may like to have them. Assuring you of our sincere sympathy."

By the same post there was an official intimation from York Record Office that Lance Corporal Pickering received a bullet wound in his shoulder. According to the German list he died nine days after being captured.

Henry Watkin was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

He is remembered with Honour at Purlwell Wesleyan Chapel and Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group