Fred Pollard



Rank: - Private

Number: - 545029

Regiment: - Labour Corps 30th Coy

Missing since 23 Dec 1918, subsequently found drowned in canal: - 23/01/1919 Age: 42 years

Cemetery: - Courrieres Communal Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France Eastern Corner

Batley News, 8 Feb 1919

Family Details

Fred was born in Batley in c.1877 the son of Peter and Mary Ann Pollard nee Lister who had married at St. Peter's Church, Birstall on 6th December 1874.

They had five children, John William 1875, Fred, Ada 1879, Jane 1881 but sadly died aged 8 months and Sarah Jane 1883.

In 1881 the family was living at Bunkers Lane, Batley but the employment of Peter on the census was unknown. In July 1884 he was a cart driver for his father John Pollard and was killed by a train at Bottoms Crossing whilst delivering sand to Liversedge Sewage Works. The level crossing gates had been left open and he had been told to cross but a train came along and hit his cart on the crossing. This was witnessed by his brother and other people.

In 1891 the family was still living at 3, Yd 1, Bunkers Lane but his maternal grandfather and two uncles were also living with them and Mary Ann was employed as a weaver. In 1901 Fred was working as rag grinder. His mother died in August 1902.

Fred married Annie Fox at Christ Church, Staincliffe on the 15th September 1906. Mary Ann was born in 1907 and Ethel 1911. In 1911 the family was living at Staincliffe Hall Cottage and working as a night watchman. The family moved to live at 75, Common Road, Staincliffe. Before enlistment he was a rag grinder for Messrs. G. Collett and Sons, Chapel Fold Mills, Staincliffe.

Service Details

Fred enlisted in May 1918 and went to France in July 1918.

Fred went missing on the 23rd December 1918 and it was not until a month later that his body was found.

The Rev. D. Ivor Jones, Church of England Chaplain wrote to his wife in January 1919: -

"I deeply regret to inform you that the body of your husband was found yesterday in the canal at Courrieres. The deceased had been missing since the 23rd December 1919 and may have fallen into the canal in the dark as the bridges are all broken and only a plank bridge now spans the canal at the spot where the

body was found. An inquiry was held and a verdict "Found drowned" was returned, no evidence being obtained as to how deceased fell into the canal. The doctor certified that no marks of violence were found on deceased and one of his friends identified the body. I buried your husband yesterday with full military honours. May I express my deepest sympathy with you in your sad loss, and I trust that God will give you the comfort that He alone can give."

Captain H.C. Davidson wrote: -

"As your late husband's Commanding Officer, I feel it my duty to send you a few lines of sympathy from myself and on behalf of all ranks of the 30th Labour Company. No doubt by this time you have been informed from other sources that Private Pollard met his death by drowning in the canal near our billets. He was absent from Christmas Eve morning and we only came across his body on Thursday afternoon last, January 23rd. How he got into the canal no one can tell and as there are not many people about this place naturally, he would not have any chance of help. Yesterday afternoon we buried his body, in the cemetery here, but I believe the Chaplain is writing to you also, so there is no need for me to go into details. All his effects in his possession when found—including some money—have been sent off to headquarters, and will reach you in due course. Please again accept my deepest sympathy in your great loss."

Fred was awarded the British War Medal and Victory Medal.

He is remembered with Honour at Staincliffe Wesleyan Church and Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group