Richard Preston





Rank: - Private

Number: - 36299

Regiment: - Northumberland Fusiliers 18th Battalion (Tyneside Pioneers)

Killed in Action: - 17th April 1918 aged 32 years

Cemetery: - Mont Noir Military Cemetery, St. Jans-Cappel, France 1.D.5

"FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT"

Batley News, 4 May 1918 (photo)

Family Details

Richard was born in Dewsbury on the 25th February 1886 the son of Charles and Ellen Preston and baptised at the Wesleyan Chapel Batley Carr on the 9th November 1886 when the family lived at 16, Carlisle Street, Batley Carr. Charles, who came from Doncaster, and Ellen Tilford had married in 1872 in Doncaster. Charles worked as a porter for the railways.

Mary Ann was born in 1873 followed by Emma 1875, Annie 1878, Ellen (Nellie) 1883, Richard, Charles 1888, George Henry 1881 died shortly before his third birthday in 1884.

In 1901 the family was living at 10B, Carlisle Street, Batley Carr.

Before 1911 Richard and his parents were living at 8, Ellis Buildings, Upper Road, Batley Carr in a two roomed home. Richard was working as arag grinder and Charles had retired.

On the 22nd July 1911 Richard married Florence Gertrude Haley, at Batley Carr, Holy Trinity Church. The couple moved to live at 80, Field's Buildings, Chickenley Lane, Dewsbury. Charles was born in 1913.

Richard had been connected with Batley Carr Old School and was employed at Messrs. Fitton's, Pildacre Mills, Dewsbury as a rag grinder before he enlisted.

His wife and child later went to live at 2, Rock Terrace, Jack Lane, Common Side, Batley.

Service Details

Richard enlisted at Dewsbury but his service records have not survived. The 18th Battalion of the Northumberland Fusiliers were attached from June 1915 as Divisional Troops to 34th Division. They landed at Le Havre on 8th January 1916.

In 1916 they fought at
The Battle of Albert including the capture of Scots and Sausage Redoubts
The Battle of Bazentin Ridge
The Battle of Pozieres Ridge

The Battle of Flers-Courcelette (only 103rd Brigade and the Divisional Pioneers)
which were phases of the Battles of the Somme 1916

In 1917 they fought at
The First Battle of the Scarpe
The Second Battle of the Scarpe
The Battle of Arleux
which were phases of the Arras Offensive
The fighting at Hargicourt (August)
The Third Battles of Ypres (fighting for the Broenbeek, 13-23 October 1917)

In 1918 they fought at
The Battle of St Quentin, a phase of the First Battles of the Somme 1918
The Battle of Estaires (9-11 April)
The Battle of Bailleul (13-15 April)
The First Battle for Kemmel Ridge (17-19 April)

An officer wrote to his wife: - "*He was killed instantaneously by a shell whilst building our front line near Bailleul. We buried him the same night in a little farmyard not far from where he fell, with his officers and comrades who fell with him.*"

Richard was awarded the British War Medal, and the Victory Medal.

He is remembered with Honour at Dewsbury War Memorial; Earlsheaton Park War Memorial; Gawthorpe & Chickenley Heath St Mary the Virgin (demolished 2013); Chickenley Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Short Street (now demolished) and Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group