Walter Preston





Rank: - Private

Number: - 204570

Regiment: - York and Lancaster Regiment 1/5th Battalion

Died of Wounds: - 11th October 1917 aged 23 years

Cemetery: - Oxford Road Cemetery, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium V.J.18

Batley News, 3 Nov 1917 (photo)

Family Details

Walter was born in Batley on 28th June 1894 the youngest son of George and Emma Preston nee Lowe and baptised on 29th July 1894.

In 1901 the family which consisted of George, Emma, William 1874, Herbert 1878 – June 1917 who was feeble minded, John George 1882, Eliza Ann 1885, Beatrice 1888, was living at 41, Taylor Street, Batley. All the men of the family were coal miners. George died in August 1909.

In 1911 Emma, Beatrice and Walter were living in a two roomed home at 12, Billcliffe Buildings, Preston Street, Batley. He worked below ground at a colliery. The 1911 census shows that 12 children had been born alive but 4 had died in infancy.

On the 28th September 1912 Walter married Rachel Lowe at St. Andrew's Church Purlwell giving his occupation as a hanger on at a colliery. Lydia was born on 26th March 1913. They lived at 7, Back Richmond Street, Cross Bank, Batley.

Walter changed his occupation and was at one time employed by Mr. Harry Helliwell, butcher, and attended a stall in Batley market. Later he was in business on his own account in Westtown but prior to enlisting was employed as a teamer by Mr. John Thompson, cloth finisher of Wensleydale Mills.

Walter was associated with Wellington Street Primitive Methodist Church.

His mother married Ben Rhodes in 1914 and lived at Bradford Road, Carlinghow.

Rachel, his widow, married Willans Gray, son of James and Ada Gray in 1919.

Service Details

Walter enlisted in January 1917 into the 1/5th York and Lancaster Regiment which on 15th May 1915 after landing in Boulogne formed the 148th Brigade, 49th (West Riding) Division.

He went to France in July 1917 and was gassed before he was fatally wounded. Unfortunately, his war records have not survived.

In July and August, the Division took part in operations on the Flanders coast (Operation Hush) and they fought at the Battle of Poelcapelle on 9th October which was a phase of the 3rd Battles of the Ypres.

It is most probable that Walter was injured in this battle and died two days later of his wounds.

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

He is remembered with Honour at Wellington Street Primitive Methodist Church and Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group