Tom Riley





Rank: - Private

Number: - 85753

Regiment: - Northumberland Fusiliers 4th Reserve Bn. (Depot). Home service at Hornsea

Died in Camp of heart failure: - 13/10/1918 Age: 39 years

Cemetery: - Dewsbury H “U” 106

Dewsbury District News, 19 Oct 1918 (photo)

Family Details

Tom was born in Ossett on the 3rd December 1878 the son of Benjamin and Hannah Riley nee Bowring who had married on the 10th April 1871 at Dewsbury Parish Church. He was baptised at Hanging Heaton on the 8th November 1880.

In 1881 he was living at Bromley Road, Hanging Heaton with his parents and siblings Annie Lelia 1872, Emily 1873, Eliza Jane 1874, Robert Henry 1877, who were all born in Ossett with the exception of his mother who came from Barnsley and Sarah born 1880 in Hanging Heaton. Agnes was born in 1882 followed by Frank 1st December 1884 but his mother, Hannah, sadly died in December 1884 a few days after his birth.

Benjamin who was a spinner, married spinster Martha Pickles on the 27th December 1890 at Ossett-cum- Gawthorpe Church. They went to reside at 6, New Street, Hanging Heaton. In 1901 Tom was working as a woollen spinner like his father. His parents continued to live at New Street, Hanging Heaton.

Tom attended Mill Lane Council School and Common side Wesleyan Chapel. He was a member of the orchestral band and was employed at the Scarr End Mill, Earlsheaton. He was an accomplished concertina player and violinist. Tom married Annie Eliza Smith on the 26th September 1903 at Dewsbury Parish Church. In 1911 the couple were living at 25, Brook Street, Flatts, Dewsbury and he had changed his occupation to be a card cleaner at a blanket mill. The couple lived at 80, Walker Street, Earlsheaton.

Service Details

Tom enlisted at Dewsbury in May 1918 into the Northumberland Fusiliers Depot Battalion and was sent to the East Riding Camp at Hornsea.

On Sunday 13th October at 2.30 am he was heard to be snoring quite loudly and a comrade placed him in a different position but at 6 am he was found to have died of heart failure. He was to have come home on the Tuesday for his first leave. Tom had been attached to the officer's mess and was a favourite with them all. His wife travelled to the camp after hearing of her husband's death and they all expressed their sincere regret giving her a lot of consideration.

Tom was interred at Dewsbury Cemetery on Thursday, 17th October with military honours. The Rev. J. S. Hainstock officiated at the service and amongst the floral tributes was a beautiful wreath from the officers' mess at the Camp.

He is remembered with Honour at Dewsbury and Batley War Memorials, Earlsheaton Park War Memorial; St Peter's Church, Earlsheaton; Hanging Heaton War Memorial (St Paul's).



Researched by members of
Batley History Group