Fred Robinson





Rank: - Corporal

Number: - 17/530

Regiment: - West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own) 17th Battalion (Trench Mortar Battery) (2nd Leeds Pals)

Died of Wounds: - 25th August 1916 aged 21 years

Cemetery: - Dive Copse British Cemetery, Sailly-Le-Sec, Somme**,** France 11.G.20

Batley Reporter, 8 Sep 1916 (photo). Batley News, 16 Sep 1916

Family Details

Fred was born in Batley in c1896 the youngest son of Barnsley born George and Batley born Alice Robinson, although to date we have not found a marriage.

George had previously married Emma Smith on 1st November 1859 in Barnsley and the children of this marriage were John William 1860, George 1862, Henry 1865 and Martha 1870-1890. The family came to live in Batley in the Richmond Street area before 1871 and lived in Upton Street in 1881. George was a stone mason. Emma died at 63, Wellington Street, Batley in September 1886.

George and Alice may have married before Emma was born in1889 followed by Herbert 1890, John 1894 and Fred. In 1901 the family was living at 7, yard 2, Oxford Street, Batley. George was still a stone mason and Alice was working as a woollen weaver.

Fred attended Hanover Street Congregational Church and formerly Batley Town Mission. He also attended Purlwell Day School.

George died in February 1907 when the family lived at Denison Street, Batley. Before 1911 Alice and her family had moved to a four roomed home at 21, Wetherhill Street in the Woodwell area of Batley.

Fred was a prominent member of Batley Albion Association football team and assisted them when they won the Drighlington and District Cup in 1913-14.

Before joining the Colours, he worked at Messrs. G. & J. Stubley's, Bottoms Mill, Batley.

Service Details

Fred enlisted in December 1914 and went to France on 1st February 1916 landing at Le Havre. The battalion came under the orders of 106th Brigade in 35th Division.

They fought in 1916 on the Somme at the Battles of Bazentin Ridge (14th -17th July), the fighting for Arrow Head Copse and Maltz Horn Farm and the fighting for Falfemont Farm.

An officer wrote to his mother: -

"I am extremely sorry to tell you that your son has been wounded. Last Thursday I took the West Yorkshire section of the battery into the trenches and on Friday morning about 7 o'clock your son was hit. I was not near him at the time and owing to the narrow trench and congestion I was unable to see him until he was being carried out, but I am told a shell blew in the parapet of the trench close by your son who was talking to a sergeant. The sergeant was killed and many others, including your son were wounded. Corporal Robinson received injuries in the back, stomach, back of the neck and in one arm. I have made further enquiries at the clearing stations as to his condition but I am sorry to say I could get no further information but expect and hope he is in England now. Corporal Robinson is a great loss to me personally and the battery, a most excellent N.C.O. hard worker, cool and always to be relied upon. I shall find it difficult to fill his place. I hope when he is better and back again in Batley that he will get a good long leave, which he well deserves. All the officers and men of the battery are sorry to lose Cpl. Robinson and hope his injuries do not turn out to be very serious."

Sadly, Fred died on Friday 25th August, a day after he received his injuries.

A later letter from the Captain arrived which said: -

"*We all feel that we have lost in your son one of the best men of the battery. He was a most excellent N.C.O. and exceedingly popular with his men. For myself I mourn a man who was one of my best friends. Many times, when circumstances have been pretty bad his cheery way has helped his men. During an attack by the Germans at Neuve Chapelle his gun did great execution on one of the flanks putting a German trench mortar battery entirely out of action. I am sure it will be a great comfort to you in your great sorrow to know that he did his duty nobly and well. He was hit during a German bombardment after a French attack."*

Another letter was received which read: -

"*Your son was one of the most popular members of our unit and deservedly loved by both officers and men. I can speak with authority on the great respect every N.C.O. had for him. Being myself, Quartermaster-Sergeant I perhaps had more opportunity of judging his true worth more than the others and even in the most trying circumstances I always found him as good a pal as a man might wish for."*

The same week his mother also received news that John who had joined the K.O.Y.L.I. in April 1916 and had been in France for only 10 weeks, had been wounded by shrapnel in the right knee.

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

He is remembered with Honour at Batley Town Mission, Batley War Memorial and Dive Copse Military Cemetery, Somme, France.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group