Frank Brook Roebuck





Rank: - Private

Number: - 82603

Regiment: - Royal Army Medical Corps "N" Coy Transferred to (11742) 20th Coy Labour Corps attached to Leicestershire Regiment.

Killed in Action by a shell: - 28th December 1917 aged 40

Cemetery: - White House Cemetery, St. Jean-Les-Ypres, Belgium 11.F.1

"REST IN PEACE"

Batley News, 12 Jan 1918 (photo), Dewsbury Reporter, 12 Jan 1918 (photo)

Family Details

Frank Brook was born in Hopton on the 6th May 1877 the son of Nimrod and Ann Roebuck (nee Mitchell). He was baptised at Mirfield 10th June 1877 when Nimrod gave his address as Hopton Wood Bottom and employed as a power loom tuner. By 1881 the family was living at Common Road, Hanging Heaton.

The couple had already Hannah (Hepworth,1857) Elizabeth (Holmfirth, 1858) Sarah Ann (1860) George William (Dewsbury, 1865), Emma (Batley,1868), Charles (Batley 1872), Benjamin Mitchell (Batley 1874).

Nimrod who was born in Holmfirth died in June 1885 in Hanging Heaton. A newspaper report at the time of his death states his parents were then residing in America.

Frank attended Mill Lane School and Hanging Heaton Ebenezer Methodist Sunday School. For the majority of his working life he worked at Messrs. R. Brearley and Sons, Queen Street Mills, Batley but a few weeks before joining up he went to work as a warper at Messrs. Joseph Newsome &Sons mill at Batley Carr. In his younger days he played rugby as a three-quarter full back for Batley, Rochdale Hornets and Heckmondwike old football teams. He was with Heckmondwike in the season 1899-1900 when he won a gold medal in the Northern Rugby Union Yorkshire Second Competition.

Frank married Louisa Madeley on 17th September 1904 at Batley Parish Church.

Herbert was born on 8th July 1905 followed by Annie on 21st December 1910.

The family lived at 34, King Street, Batley Carr.

Service Details

Frank enlisted in September 1916 and disembarked in November 1916.

His wife had received letters from Frank saying he and his comrades had a ballot and he was due to come home on leave at the end of the month, which he was looking forward to. This was in December 1917.

Sadly, she received a letter stating from a Commanding Officer: -

"It *is my painful duty to send news concerning your husband which will come as a great shock. On 28th December an enemy shell burst near to where he was standing and it killed him instantaneously. We buried him in a military cemetery*

close by and we shall have a cross fixed over his grave. It may be slight consolation to know his grave will always be cared for. Private Roebuck was respected by his officers and comrades as a man who his duty cheerfully and willingly and their heartfelt sympathy is yours at this terrible time. "

She also received a letter from the chaplain to the regiment: -

"*With his comrades he had been moved to a dangerous area on Boxing Day. They suffered severely from shell fire and while many were injured your husband met with instantaneous death. I did not know him personally but as chaplain to the group which he belongs I know he was one of the regular attenders at my camp services and that he was one of the large congregations that gathered on Christmas Day. On that day our thoughts and prayers were much with and for dear friends at home. He was a good workman and he will be missed by both officers and men in the very important work they had to do."*

Later Private Thomas Brannon, Labour Corps, of Mirfield wrote to say how Frank had met his death. He said that a few of the Labour Corps had been working since 4 in the morning under shell fire and having finished the job went to their billets a few miles back. They reached there safely but the Germans began to send over a large number of shells some of which fell all around the billets. The captain ordered them into the dugouts but he did not know whether Frank had heard the order because he was in a canvas tent with another man who had his heels blown off when it happened. He was within twenty yards of the shell and had a close shave. Private Brannon went on to say about the danger the Labour units were exposed to in the important work they did.

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

He is remembered with Honour at Ebenezer Methodist Chapel Hanging Heaton, Hanging Heaton War Memorial (St. Paul's) and Batley War Memorial.

