Willie Summerscales





Rank: - Private

Number: - 41703

Regiment: - Northumberland Fusiliers 16th Battalion (formerly 29986 K.O.Y.L.I.)

Killed in Action: - 23rd November 1916 aged 22 at Albert

Memorial: - Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France Face 10B 11B and 12 B

Family Details

Willie was born on 14th May 1894 the son of Lewis and Sarah Ellen Summerscales (nee Jackson) Arthur was born in 1890 followed by Harry (1892) Willie and Herbert in 1902. Lewis worked under ground as a coal miner hewer.

In 1901 the family was living at the top of Leeds Road Cutting, Dewsbury but had moved to 110, Bromley Street, Hanging Heaton before 1911. The 1911 census shows another child had died in infancy. They had moved again to 1, High Street , before 1916.

Willie was well known in Hanging Heaton being associated with Ebenezer Chapel. He was a member of the choir for nine years, played with the chapel cricket club and was a good worker in the Sunday school. He was employed as a percher at J.T&J. Taylor's, Cheapside Mills, and Batley.

Service Details

Willie enlisted at Batley on May 26th 1916. He was in training in England with George Arthur Carson (died 16/9/1916) who was also connected with Ebenezer Sunday School and Arnold Summerscales (died 17/7/1917) of Commonside.

On the 23rd November orders were received by the 16th Battalion to attempt to capture point 88 and the trench running between point 88 and point 17 .Zero hour was 5 a.m. and the attack failed because of the heavy condition of the ground and the men being stuck in shell holes and the enemy lined the trench in front shooting very accurately.

A comrade wrote: -

"I have the painful duty before me of informing you of the death of your son, who was killed in action on 23rd November at about 6 a.m. As he was my best pal, I felt deeply grieved, but I know your feelings will be far greater. It may comfort you to know he passed away immediately without any pain. We were about two yards from each other when poor Willie was sniped. The bullet entered his right armpit and came out through his breast. We buried him the best we could near our dugout to sleep a long peaceful sleep. I am sure you have the sympathy of the platoon officers and the platoon especially his comrades out of the K.O.Y.L.I.'s amongst whom he was gratefully respected. It will comfort you to know he and

I went to the Wesleyan chaplain the Sunday before we went to the trenches and gave ourselves to God."

At the time of his death his brother Harry was in the R.A.M.C. and Arthur was in France with the R.F.A.

He was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal

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



Researched by members of
Batley History Group