Leonard Sykes





Rank: - Rifleman

Number: - A/203721

Regiment: - King's Royal Rifle Corps (Formerly SS/3724 Army Service Corps) 18th Battalion

Died of Wounds: - (24)-28 /03/1918 Age: 32 years

Cemetery: - Bancourt British Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France 1.O.17

"HE LAID HIS RICHEST GIFT ON THE ALTAR OF DUTY HIS LIFE"

Family Details

Leonard was born in Batley Carr/Dewsbury in 1885 the son of Alfred James and Emma Sykes nee Digby who had married at Dewsbury Parish Church on the 5th February 1878. Alfred James was a groom. Henry was born in 1878 and died in 1878, followed by William James in 1880, Edith Emily 1883 and Leonard.

In 1891 the family was living at Wilson Wood Street, Batley Carr. In 1901 Alfred James and Leonard were living in Whitechapel Road, Cleckheaton, Leonard was employed as a farmer's boy and Alfred as a farm servant. Alfred said he was widowed and living with them was 30-year-old Sarah J, Richardson stating she was a servant.

On the 27th December 1909 Leonard married 30-year-old Clara Ellis at Whitechapel Church, Cleckheaton. He gave his employment as a teamer and Alfred's as a gardener.

In 1911 Leonard, Clara, his father-in-law and sister-in-law were living at 18, Whitehall Terrace, Hunsworth, near Cleckheaton, he was employed as a waggoner at a wire works. Ellis was born on the 16th October 1911 in Cleckheaton. The family moved to live at Morecambe and at the time when the C.W.G.C. asked for details his widow was living at 46, Claremont Road, Morecambe.

Service Details

Leonard enlisted at Morecambe and went to France on the 25th August 1914 with the Royal Army Service Corps. In August 1914 there were 120,000 men and 53,000 horses on the Western Front and this had increased in November 1914 to 3,000,000 men and 500,000 horses, 675,000,000 lbs meat for the month, 90,000,000 lbs. bread, 32, 250,000 lbs forage. These huge tonnages were moved through a complex chain of supply, which usually went broadly like this: -

From Britain via sea to a Base Port.

By rail from the Base Port to a Divisional Railhead or an Advanced Supply Depot;
By motor transport from Railhead or Advanced Supply Depot to a Divisional Refilling Point.

By horse transport to the forward dumps where goods were taken over by a fighting unit's quartermaster.

The unit itself would then move material by horse transport and manpower to the front-line positions.

His service records have not survived and it is not known when he left the R.A.S.C. to join the King's Royal Rifle Corps. They had landed at Le Havre on 3rd May 1916 moving to Italy in November 1917 and returned to France in March 1918.

His Division fought on the Somme at:-

The Battle of St Quentin (21-23 March)
The Battle of Bapaume (24- 25 March)
The Battle of Arras (28 March)

Some reports state he was missing, other reports say he died from his wounds on the 28th March 1918.

His wife was notified on the 2nd May 1918.

He was awarded the 1914 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Leonard is remembered with Honour at Batley War Memorial Addenda and Morecambe and Heysham War Memorial.

Son of Alfred and Emma Sykes, of Batley, Yorks; husband of Clara Sykes, of 46, Claremont Rd., Morecambe, Lancs.

Thanks to Alan Howe



Researched by members of
Batley History Group