Robert Percival (Percy) Teale





Rank: - Private

Number: - 11750

Regiment: - Coldstream Guards 2nd Battalion

Killed in Action by stray shell: - 10th October 1917 aged 32 years

Memorial: - Tyne Cot Memorial, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium Panel 9 and 10

Batley News, 20 Feb 1915, 27 Oct 1917 (photo). Batley Reporter, 5 Mar 1915, 8 Sep 1916, 26 Oct 1917

Family Details

Robert Percival was born in Soothill, Batley on 19th February 1885 the son of Robert Parker and Harriett Ann Teale nee Stubley.

He was baptised at Batley Parish Church on the 12th December 1896. His parents had married on Christmas Eve 1881 and Frederick was born in 1882 followed by Ernest1883-1914, Robert Percival 1885-1917, Alexander Morgan 1886, Thomas Stubley 1889, Gwendoline Beatrice 1896-97, Miriam 1901 and Kathleen 1904.

In 1891 and 1901 the family was living in Soothill Lane and Robert Parker Teale was described as a rag warehouseman and Robert was working as a joiner's apprentice in 1901.

Before 1911 the family was living in a five roomed home at Brownhill Cottage 149, Soothill Lane, Batley and his father, Robert, had become a rag salesman and Robert was described as a joiner in houses, mills and undertakers.

All the brothers with the exception of Ernest had established a reputation as clever boxers and they held several cups and medals. Percy was the most well known and won many medals in the north of England.

Robert worked for Messrs. William North and Sons, Batley before he enlisted.

Ernest was in the Battle of Mons had not been heard of since August 26th 1914. He had been a reservist who had seen service with the Royal Scots in India.

Fred Teale had been in the Boer War and although he had been out of the army for 12 years volunteered when war broke out. Alex and Thomas joined the Royal Navy.

Service Details

According to the Batley News Percy left his employment at Messrs. William North's on September 8th 1914 to join the Coldstream Guards.

In 1914 the 2nd Battalion was part of 4th (Guards) Brigade 2nd Division who landed at Le Havre on the 13th August 1914. On the 20th August 1915 they transferred to 1st Guards Brigade, Guards Division.

They fought at the Battle of Loos from 26th September 1915 where Percy was injured.

In 1916 they fought at the Battles of Flers-Courcelette and Morval on the Somme.

In 1917 they took part in the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line (14 Mar – 5 Apr)
The Third Battles of Ypres
Battle of Pilkem (31 Jul – 2 Aug)
The Battle of the Menin Road (20 – 25 Sep)
The Battle of Poelcapelle (9 Oct)

Percy spoke to the Batley News just before Christmas 1914 with unrestrained admiration of the magnificent physique of home and Colonial troops quartered in the south of England. He went to France on January 9th 1915 and a postcard received in February indicated that he been wounded in the hand which would have been at the Battle of La Bassee. He sent another card home to say he was doing well and expected to be alright in a few weeks. The hospital where he had been sent had been a hotel and he was pleased with the treatment he had received.

Percy was wounded again at the Hohenzollern Redoubt near Loos and also at the Battle of Ypres. He was seriously wounded when the Germans made a very heavy bombardment on the British lines. He told the reporter for the Dewsbury Reporter: - *"Shells were falling all around and I was buried as a result of the bursting of a high exploding projectile. Then another shell came and blew me out again."*

Several of his comrades were killed or wounded and he was unable to walk but crawled 800 yards in one and a half hours before he was picked up and assisted to a dressing station by a Scots Guard. He sustained injuries in the body and leg and his ankle was broken. He told the reporter that on the night he was wounded the Germans tried to charge but they found the Guards too much for them and they did not take their trenches. However, they did succeed in capturing the trenches on the left and right. The Canadians were on the left and quickly retook the trench and the ones on the right were retaken shortly

afterwards. He also said that the Lewis gun was used extensively in the trenches as well as the machine gun and rifle. The Lewis gun could be used by one person and could fire very rapidly. He highly praised the stretcher bearers and spoke of the helpful administration of the Army chaplains. *"They used to come up to the front line and dish out chocolates, sweets and cigarettes."* Many of the services at the Front were held in the open air. The soldiers formed a square and the drums were placed in the middle. Percy was home on leave in early September after being in hospitals for four months the last being at Accrington, Lancashire.

He was appointed on the staff of drill instructors at Caterham Barracks but he asked if he could return to France. He came home on leave and went back to France in July 1917. He had not been there very long when he was wounded in his foot by shrapnel but he did not return to England.

His parents received official news in mid-October that Percy had been killed in action on the 10th October.

He was awarded the 1915 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Percy is remembered with Honour at Soothill Congregational Church, Hanging Heaton War Memorial (St. Paul's) and Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group