William Thachrah



Rank: - Private

Number: - 432777

Regiment: - Canadian Infantry 49th Battalion

Died of Wounds: - 07/06/1916 Age: 27 years

Cemetery: - Contay British Cemetery, Contay, Somme, France 111.B.4

"HE LAID DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS"

Dewsbury Reporter

Family Details

William was born in Batley on the 25th April 1889 the son of Batley born Ben and Holmfirth born Annie Thackrah nee Battye. The couple had married at Holy Trinity Church, Batley Carr on the 18th August 1885 and Harry was born 1887.
In 1891 the family was living at 37, Town Street, Batley Carr where Ben kept a grocers' shop. Kathleen followed in 1894 and Dorothy in 1899 but within the next two years the family moved to live at 7, Rosslyn, Potter-Newton, Leeds and Ben had become a commercial traveller selling provisions. A newspaper report suggests that Ben was also a grocer at 224, Roundhay Road, Leeds before moving his family with the exception of William to live at Hightown, Liversedge and becoming a salt merchant employing people before 1910.
William attended Batley Grammar School and later Leeds Higher Grade School.
On the 21st April 1906 William landed at New York having sailed on the "Caronia" from Liverpool. He stated he was going to farm with the help of a friend J.W. Richardson. He must have returned to England because he once again landed at New York on the 2nd May 1910 from Liverpool onboard the "Carmania. "He gave his father as Ben Thackrah of Brook House, Hightown, Liversedge and travelling with him were Ernest Buckton of Edwin Street, Hightown and Clement Firth of Hightown. They were all "non-immigrant aliens" and William gave his trade as a dry salter.

Service Details

William signed his attestation papers on the 5th January 1915 at Edmonton. Unusual for this time his height was given as 6ft. 2 inches, having a fair complexion, blue eyes and fair hair. His father, Benjamin Thackrah was given as next-of-kin living at Middle Hall Farm, Liversedge and his trade was given as a carpenter.
The 49th Battalion was authorized on 7 November 1914 and embarked for Great Britain on 3 June 1915. It disembarked in France on 9 October 1915, where it fought as part of the 7th Infantry Brigade, 3rd Canadian Division in France and Flanders until the end of the war. The 49th Battalion recruited in and was mobilized at Edmonton, Alberta.
The 49th Battalion was awarded the following battle honours: -
Mount Sorrell
Somme 1916
Flers-Courcelette (15-22 September 1916)
Ancre Heights (1st October -11 November 1916)
Arras 1917 and 1918
Vimy (9-14 April)
Hill 70 (15-25 August)
Ypres 1917 (Passchendaele) (31st July-10th November 1917)

It was reported that William was injured whilst he was coming out of the trenches on the 5th October. He was taken to a dressing station but a shell burst near where he had been placed causing other serious injuries. A telephone message was sent to his brother Harry who was serving with another regiment nearby and they were able to be together when William died at a base hospital on the 7th October 1917.

His parents were reported to be living at Middle Hall, Liversedge at the time of his death.
William was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.
William is remembered with Honour at Batley Grammar School, Liversedge Church War Memorial and Batley War Memorial Addenda 2019.

Unfortunately, because he had left Batley Grammar School and the family moved to Leeds and then he moved to Canada his details were not found for his inclusion in “Batley Lads” by Phillip Wheeler et al



