Charles Orlando Thompson





Rank: - Private

Number: - 41140

Regiment: - Highland Light Infantry 15th Battalion (formerly 21865 Northumberland Fusiliers).

Died of Double Pneumonia: - 3rd February 1917 aged 35

Cemetery: - Bertrancourt Military Cemetery, Somme, France Plot 2 Row A Grave 18

"HE LAID HIS RICHEST TREASURE ON THE ALTAR OF DUTY- HIS LIFE"

Batley News, 3 Mar 1917 (photo). Dewsbury Reporter, 3 Mar 1917 (photo)

Family Details:

Charles Orlando was born in 1880 at Adwalton the son of John and Martha Jane Thompson (nee Eddison) who came from Bristol.

In 1881 John, who came from Deighton, was a farm labourer, living with his family at Wakefield Road, Adwalton. Edith (1873), Mary Ann (1875), Sarah L (1877) and 9-month-old Charles.

By 1891 there had been additions of Clarissa (1883) and Laura Alberta (1886) and the family had moved to Birstall before the birth of Robert Russell (1889).

Charles's mother died in 1893 whilst they were living at Brownhill.

In 1901 the family had moved yet again to North Street, Carlinghow and Charles was working as a stone quarry man whilst his father was hard coke gas worker but by 1911 Charles was living with his father and siblings at 2, Pearl Street, Carlinghow

Having lived at Birstall he was well known in the area. He worked in the rag department of Messrs. George Hirst and Sons, Britannia Mills, Birstall and was intimately connected to Carlinghow Working Men's Club since its opening in 1905, where he served on the Committee for several years becoming Vice-President. He would have been elected President had he not been called to serve his country.

He also attended Birstall Wesleyan Chapel.

Service Details:

Charles was called up in March 1916 under the Derby Scheme. He was originally in the Northumberland Fusiliers, later transferring to the Highland Light Infantry departing for France in November 1916.

The 15th Highland Light Infantry was often known by its original title *Glasgow Tramways Battalion.*

When Charles joined his battalion, they would have been fighting at the Battle of Ancre which took place 13th-18th November, which was the last major battle of 1916 in the Battles of the Somme. During the rest of 1916 and early January

1917 military operations by both sides were restricted to survival in the rain, snow, fog, mud fields, water logged trenches and shell holes.

The first news of his death was received on 14th February from one of his chums, Private G. Hardy of Dewsbury: -

"Very sorry to have to inform you of the death of your son, Charlie. I am a chum of his and both joined up from Dewsbury together. He had not felt well for a long time, being troubled with rheumatism which I hear turned out to be pneumonia, of which he died in hospital after being in two days. I did not hear until I came from the trenches the last time. Please accept my deepest sympathy."

This was followed by official notification that Private Thompson died in hospital, in France on 3rd February of double pneumonia.

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

Charles is remembered with Honour at Batley War Memorial, Carlinghow St. John's Church, Carlinghow Working Men's Club, Birstall Wesleyan Methodist Church (St. John's) and Bertrancourt Military Cemetery, France.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group