# Frank Walker





**Rank: -** Private

**Number: -** 201136

**Regiment: -** King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 2/4th Battalion

**Killed in Action: -** 12/07/1917 Age: 27 years

**Cemetery: -** Queant Road Cemetery, Buissy, Pas de Calais, France 111.F.29

Batley News, 21 Jul 1917, 28 Jul 1917 (photo)

**Family Details**

Frank was born in Batley in c.1890 the son of Joseph William and Priscilla Walker nee Barnett who had married on 25th July 1885 at All Saints Church, Batley. In 1891 the family was living at Oxford Street, Mount Pleasant, Batley and Joseph was a power loom tuner. Emma had been born in 1885 followed by Laura 1886, Arthur 1888 and Frank.

Minnie 1892-Joseph December 1892 who only lived for 4 hours, Percy 1894 and Ernest 1896 and adopted daughter Mary Ann Blakeley born in 1906 the birth daughter of George Blakeley.

In 1901 the family was living at 9, Yrd1 Taylor Street, Batley but before 1911 they had moved to live in a three roomed home at 19, Upper North Street, Mount Pleasant, Batley.

Before he enlisted, he worked for Messrs. G.H. Hirst & Co. at Savile Town. He was actively involved with Mount Pleasant Gospel Hall being a member of the choir and an official of the Sunday School. He was also interested in Birstall Parish Church Cricket Club.

In 1915 he married Sarah Lister whose family lived in Mount Pleasant.

**Service Details**

Frank enlisted early in the war but only went to France in January 1917. The 2/4th Battalion was formed at Wakefield on 30 September 1914 as a second line unit. 1 March 1915: moved to Bulwell and attached to 187th Brigade in 62nd (2nd West Riding) Division. Moved in April 1915 to Strenshall and on in May to Beverley, going on in November to Gateshead, January 1916 to Larkhill and June 1916 to Flixton Park near Bungay. Moved again in October 1916 to Wellingborough. They landed at Le Havre on 15 January 1917.

They took part in the following operations in 1917: -

The Operations on the Ancre (15 February – 13 March)
The German retreat to the Hindenburg Line (14 – 19 March)

The first attack on Bullecourt (part of the Arras offensive) (11 April)
The German attack on Lagnicourt (part of the Arras offensive) (15 April)
The Battle of Bullecourt (part of the flanking operations round Arras) (3 – 17 May)
The actions on the Hindenburg Line (20 – 28 May)

Unofficial intimation that he had been killed was received from two Mount Pleasant soldiers Corporal Charles Bowers and Private Harry Hargreaves but this was followed by official confirmation from a Company Sergeant Major. He wrote: -

*"It is with regret I write to let you know that your dear husband was killed in action. Your husband was my orderly and I think it is my duty to write and let you know all about his death. Frank was one of a party of men working at night trench digging in the front line when he was hit by a trench mortar shell. It will be some consolation to you to know that he suffered no pain, death being instantaneous. Our stretcher-bearers did everything they could for him under very heavy shell and machine gun fire. They carried him out of the line to the place where he will be laid to rest alongside a Normanton comrade who was killed the same night in a beautiful cemetery just behind the line. I went to see his body in the mortuary last night to pay him my last respects. I should have liked to have been present at the burial service but unfortunately our Company had to relieve another Company that night. I assure you it has been a shock to me. In "Frankie" I have lost a good comrade. He was a brave and fearless soldier, always cheerful under any conditions. I don't think there was a better respected lad in the whole Battalion. I send you my deepest sympathy and Frank's comrades send their heart-felt sympathy."*

At this time his brother Ernest was waiting to be discharged from the army because he had been seriously wounded in September 1916.

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

He is remembered with Honour on Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group