Eric Fox Wharton





Rank: - L/Cpl

Number: - 42998

Regiment: - Lincolnshire Regiment 8th Battalion (formerly 2964 14th Training Reserve Battalion)

Killed in Action: - 3rd November 1918 aged 19

Cemetery: - Ghissignies Military Cemetery, Nord, France A.41.

"A MEMORIAL OF HONOUR AND A TOKEN OF OUR LOVE MOTHER, BROTHER, SISTER"

Batley News, 16 Nov 1918

Family Details

Eric was born in 1899 the son of Ernest Arthur and Rachel Emma Mary Wharton (nee Fox) and was baptised at Holy Trinity Church, Batley Carr on the 18th February 1899.

In the census of 1891 Ernest Wharton was living at the family home in Wilson Wood Street, Batley Carr and his father Joseph was shown as a manufacturer.

Ernest married Rachel Fox in 1894 bringing together two manufacturing families. The firm of Matthew Wharton and Sons, woollen manufacturers, Wilson Wood Street, Batley Carr was founded by Ernest's grandfather and was one of the oldest in the local textile trade.

In 1901 Eric was living at his maternal grandparent's home in Grosvenor Road. His grandfather, William J.R. Fox J. P., was a woollen manufacturer and an uncle was a physician and surgeon. His elder brother Joseph William was born in 1895. The family employed two live in servants.

A decade later he was living at Batley Carr where his widowed paternal grandmother was the head of the household living on private means whilst his father was described as a woollen cloth merchant. His sister, Mary Lilian, had been born in 1901 and another sibling had died in infancy. The family had one domestic servant, Gertrude Evans.

Eric started at Batley Grammar School in the autumn term of 1911 and the family was living at 18, Wilson Wood Street, Batley Carr.

After leaving school he was associated with his father's business in Batley Carr. Sadly, his father Ernest Arthur of Grosvenor House, Grosvenor Road, Batley died on 10th July 1918 leaving £ 6,531.8s.6d. to his wife.

At the start of the war Eric would only have been fifteen and too young to enlist.

Service Details.

His service records have not survived but in the December 1917 issue of the school magazine for Batley Grammar School his name appears in the role of honour for being a member of a training reserve battalion. He joined the

Lincolnshire Regiment from the training battalion, probably to make up numbers.

The war diary for the 8th Lincolnshire's for early November 1918 records that various companies were under cover in cellars in the village of Ghissignies in northern France. The diary for the 3rd November states: -

"*In the line, "A" Company raided posts at 23.45 hours. Between thirty to forty casualties were inflicted on the enemy. Heavy resistance offered, Casualties: - 11 other ranks killed, 18 other ranks wounded, 1 or more missing. "*

This attack came at a cost because on the next day the Germans subjected the British lines to a sustained mortar attack. The war diary records that several soldiers were killed. Twelve more men were killed and seventeen wounded in the last week of the war.

Mrs Wharton had just left Grosvenor House for Morecambe when news came that her son had been shot through the head by a machine gun bullet at close range and had died instantly.

His Captain sent a letter of sympathy to Mrs. Wharton.

Eric's headstone bears "*A memorial of honour and a token of our love. Mother, brother, sister. "*

His mother had moved to Roundhay, Leeds before the C.W.G.C. put details of family on the soldier's headstones.

He is remembered with Honour at Holy Trinity Church, Batley Grammar School, and Batley War Memorial.

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

Thanks to Philip Wheeler for details from Batley Lads.

