

Pte. William HIGGINS (1889 – 1914)
(King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry)



William Higgins was born at Balk Street, Batley in late 1889. His surname at birth was registered as 'Higgings'. William was also known as Willie. His father, Michael, was born in County Mayo, Ireland and his mother, Ann O'Connor, originated from Sligo in Ireland. The couple were married in 1884.

William had many brothers and sisters and it is believed his father was married three times after being widowed twice. The oldest child was Patrick born in Leeds in 1868 and the youngest sibling was Ronald George born in Batley in 1907.

In the 1881 Census Michael had moved from Batley to Barnsley for a short time and is shown as a widower. His occupation was for many years that of a miner and when he lived at Balk Street in the Skelsey Row area of Batley he would probably have worked at Batley Colliery at the bottom of Batley Field Hill.

By the 1911 Census, Michael and Annie were living in three rooms at 18 Stanley Place in the Park Road area of Batley. Michael is now a condenser minder in a woollen mill. William (Willie) is a warp spinner, Harriett (born 1892) a rag sorter and Joseph (Joe, born 1898) a piecer.

The youngest four children Edward (1901), Francis (1904), Irene Teresa (1905) and Ronald George (1907) are all too young to work. In the Infirmity Column of the Census record, Francis is described as 'Feeble Minded'.

William enlisted in Dewsbury at the start of the War and disembarked on the 18th August 1914. There are no records of letters he wrote home, or any known newspaper reports, but William was killed in action on the 31st October 1914.

William Higgins 3/851, 2nd Battalion, King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, is Remembered with Honour at Le Touret Memorial, Richebourg L'Avoue near Bethune, Pas de Calais, France.

Researcher

Susan White, Batley History Group, July 2014