

Pte. Fred MOODY (1897 - 1915)
(King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry)



Frederick William Moody Willows was born in Meanwood, Leeds in early 1897 to Ada Willows. Later in 1897 Ada married William Moody at Holy Trinity, Meanwood.

In 1901 the couple were living at 17 Victoria Street, Carlinghow, Batley. William was a Sewing Machine Agent and Ada was at home with young Frederick. By 1911 they had moved to 38 Victoria Street and were living in 4 rooms. William was still a Sewing Machine Agent and working for the Jones Sewing Machine Company. Frederick William was an Apprentice Engineer working for Charles Robinson and Sons, Victoria Mills, Batley. There were now also two girls in the family, Axiah Hannah (1904) and Edith (1909). Two other children had died in infancy. Edith died in 1913 and the family later had four other children Charles S. (1912), Ada (1914), Annie D. (1916) and Minnie (1918). Ada died in 1918.

Frederick William Moody enlisted in Batley and disembarked to France on the 11th April 1915. He was now known as Fred to his friends and family.

On arrival in France he wrote ...

"I think I am alright as regards health but financially - oh! and cigarettes - talk about a London office boy walking the Strand on Monday morning looking for tab ends - it isn't in it. I haven't had a smoke for a day or two and I fear if I don't get one soon I shall have forgotten which end to put in my mouth (I don't think)." In his letters sent in April and May he wrote about long periods of time in the trenches and the muddy conditions. He also asked for a mouth organ to be sent. He comments that the

sooner those sausage eating monsters are kicked off the map the better. In his last letter home he says they are within 70 yards of the Germans. He is nervous and the newspaper reports that the Germans can't shoot are nonsense."

News reached his mother that he had been 'Killed in Action' on Whit Sunday, 1915. His father was on active service himself with the 10th KOYLI. The letter was from Private E Punyer, Platoon 15, "D" Company, 1st/4th KOYLI, he wrote ...

"Dear Mrs Moody, on behalf of your son's comrades in D Company, I beg to offer you the deep regret which is felt at his death. He was killed instantly and suffered no pain. We were standing by, previous to making an advance to a piece of ground in front of our trenches and about 100 yards from the German trenches. They were shelling us with shrapnel and your son was lighting a cigarette when a shell exploded just over our heads. A large piece of shrapnel hit your son in the back and came out of his left side. He dropped to the ground with a moan and never spoke again. I was close to him when he fell and I ran to him to offer my assistance but he was quite dead. He died the death of a hero and I feel it is my duty as his late section commander to offer you the sympathy of his comrades. He was a good soldier and always ready to do as he was told. He was a general favourite with both N.C.O.'s and men. He used to keep us entertained with his mouth organ and his death is deeply regretted."

Several other men in the area also wrote letters, including a neighbour Private Robert Riley. Private Frederick William Moody 1872, 1st/4th Battalion, King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry is Remembered with Honour at the White City Cemetery, Bois-Grenier, Nord, France. He is also on the Roll of Honour at St, John's Church, Carlinghow, Batley.

Researcher

Susan White, Batley History Group, March 2015.