

## L'Sgt. Ambrose G PRESTON (1885 - 1915)

(King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry)



Ambrose Goodwill Preston was born in Hanging Heaton, Batley in 1885. His parents, Edward Preston and Fanny Lawson, were married at Holy Trinity, Batley Carr on the 4th October, 1884.

The 1891 Census shows Edward and Fanny living at Rouse Mill Lane, Batley and Edward is a Corn Miller. They also had a daughter Myra born in 1889. Edward died in 1900 and by 1901 Fanny and the children were living at Commonsides, Batley. Fanny was a Washerwoman and Ambrose was working as a Cloth Cutter. Ambrose married Emily Loadsman from Soothill on the 22nd of September, 1906 at St Paul's, Hanging Heaton.

The 1911 Census shows the couple living in 3 rooms at Nursery Wood Road, Hanging Heaton. They now have two daughters Phyllis (1907) and May (1910). Their daughter Ivy was born in 1908 but died in 1909. Ambrose was now working for Henry Sykes, Rag Merchants, Bond Street, Dewsbury.

The records show that Ambrose Goodwill Preston enlisted in Batley. He was killed in action on the 29th May, 1915. There are no known newspaper reports about him but it is known that on the 22nd May 1915 the 1st/4th KOYLI (West Riding) Division were ordered to undertake offensive operations in the neighbourhood of Touquet. Working parties of men from the battalion were digging new trenches in advance of the existing lines on the Bois-Grenier - Bridoux Road. The new trench was to include two ruined houses situated on the road about half-way between the 1st/4th KOYLI trenches and the German trenches. Unfortunately, the ruined buildings were occupied by a strong force of German soldiers who, with rifle and machine gun fire, constantly fired on the working parties digging the trenches. From the 25th May to the 31st May 1915, the new British trenches were heavily shelled every day by the Germans with 1st/4th KOYLI taking casualties every single day. It is reasonable to assume that Ambrose was amongst the casualties.

Emily, his widow, and the two girls Phyliss and May, emigrated to Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Emily remarried in 1930 to Bert Sykes. May married Fred Willcock in 1930 and Phyliss married John Wilson McNee in 1931.

Fanny, his mother and Myra, his sister continued to live at 158 Greenwood Buildings, Commonside, Batley. Fanny died in 1946 aged 85 and Myra never married and died in 1969.

Lance Sergeant Ambrose Goodwill Preston 120, 1st/4th Battalion, King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry is Remembered with Honour at Bois-Grenier Communal Cemetery. He is remembered at Hanging Heaton, Memorial. His name appears on the Addendum of Batley War Memorial.

Researcher

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