



Percy Bowker 1899-1918

Percy was born at 4, Healey Place, Batley on 4th January 1899. His father was James Bowker, born in Hanging Heaton in 1879. His mother was Alice (nee Kelley/Kelly) born in Batley in 1877 and died in 1948. They were married at All Saints Church, Batley on 24th October 1898.

On the 1901 Census Percy and his mother Alice are living with her family at 8, Brearley Place, Batley. His father James is living with his family at 3, Richmond Street, Batley. In 1911 Percy and Alice are still living with her family at 143, Huddersfield Road, Dewsbury; James has not been traced on the 1911 Census and no subsequent death records match his age.

In 1920 Alice was married to Ernest Swallow (born in 1877 and died in 1940). They lived at 448, Huddersfield Road, Ravensthorpe.

Percy was a single man whose occupation is not known, as he was still at school in 1911.

He enlisted in Dewsbury into the Northumberland Fusiliers with the Service Number TR/5/4720 of the 3rd Battalion Territorial Reserve and later as Private 59935 in the 1st/5th (Territorial) Battalion. He was killed in action in France on 27th May 1918 during the First Day of the 3rd Battle of the Aisne (*Operation Blücher-Yorck*), the third stage of the German Spring Offensive (*Der Kaiserschlacht*). His remains were never identified for burial and so he is commemorated on the Soissons Memorial, Aisne, France. Percy was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal, although these were disposed of in 1922, presumably refused or returned from the sending address.

The town of Soissons stands on the left bank of the River Aisne, approximately 100 kilometres north-east of Paris. For three and a half years from September 1914, this part of the front was held by French forces and the city remained within the range of German artillery. Here, at the end of May 1918, they found themselves facing the overwhelming German attack which, despite fierce opposition, pushed the Allies back across the Aisne to the Marne. The Allied counter attack drove back the Germans by early August and recovered the lost ground. The Soissons Memorial commemorates almost 4,000 officers and men of the United Kingdom forces who died during the Battles of the Aisne and the Marne in 1918 and who have no known grave.

Percy is also commemorated on the Dewsbury Cenotaph in Crow Nest Park and in the Dewsbury Roll of Honour kept in Dewsbury Central Library.

In Memory of

Private

Percy Bowker

59935, 1st/5th Bn., Northumberland Fusiliers who died on 27 May 1918 Age 19

Son of Mrs. Alice Swallow (formerly Bowker), of 448, Huddersfield Rd., Ravensthorpe, Dewsbury, Yorks.

Remembered with Honour

Soissons Memorial



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

