



Harold Purdy

1892 – 1915

Harold was born in Staincliffe, Batley on 15th September 1892. His father was George Wilson Purdy, a Warehouseman born in Batley in 1870 and died in 1950. His mother was Esther Ann (nee Ward) born in Sharlston near Wakefield in 1870 and died in 1936. They were married at Christ Church, Staincliffe on 21st May 1892.

Their other children were; Ethel, born in 1894, Clifford, born in 1897 and served in World War 1, Arthur, born in 1901, Annie Elizabeth, born in 1904 and Norman, born in 1909.

On the 1901 and 1911 Census the family lived at Calder Bank Road, Dewsbury.

Harold had lived from birth with his paternal grandparents, George and Elizabeth Purdy at 32, Dewsbury Gate Road, Staincliffe and went to Staincliffe National School. He worked for Messrs J. Fenton and Sons in Batley Carr as a Warehouseman. George died in 1914 aged 77 and Elizabeth died in 1931 aged 92.

He was married to Ruth Oates (born in 1893 and died in 1975) at St Mark's Church, Dewsbury on 29th April 1911; they had a daughter, Edna, born on 5th October 1911. Ruth was remarried to a George Smith (born in 1885) at St. Saviour's Church, Brownhill, Batley in 1918.

He enlisted in Dewsbury serving as Private 930 in the 1st/4th Battalion Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry and was sent to the Western Front on 13th April 1915. He was wounded in action in France on 10th May 1915 and was taken to the 2nd London Casualty Clearing Station at Merville where he died the following day 11th May 1915. He was buried in Merville Communal Cemetery, Nord, France. Harold was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Merville is a town 15 kilometres north of Bethune and 20 kilometres south-west of Armentieres. It was the scene of fighting between the Germans and French and British cavalry early in October 1914 but from the 9th of that month to 11th April 1918, it remained in Allied hands. It was a railhead until May 1915, and a billeting and hospital centre from 1915-1918. On the evening of 11th April 1918, in the Battles of the Lys, the Germans forced their way into Merville and the town was not retaken until 19th August. Merville Communal Cemetery was used by French troops (chiefly cavalry) in October 1914, and for Commonwealth burials from that date until August 1916 (in the case of officers, to March 1918). It now contains 1,268 Commonwealth burials of the First World War.

Harold is 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
H Purdy

930, 1st/4th Bn., King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry who died on 11 May 1915

Remembered with Honour
Merville Communal Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Headstone photograph by courtesy of Richard Houghton.