



## **Percy Wilfrid Giles**

### **1885 - 1917**

Percy was born in Dewsbury in 1885. His father was James George Giles, a Cloth Finisher and later an Insurance Agent and then a Caretaker born in Wellington, Somerset in 1857 and died in 1930. His mother was Frances (nee Parr) born in Waddington, Lincolnshire in 1857 and died in 1939. They were married in Dewsbury in 1878.

Their other children were: Arthur, born in 1879 and died in 1880, Ernest William, born in 1881, Horace, born in 1883 and died in 1883. Sydney Herbert, born in 1887 and died in 1888, Eva Kathleen, born in 1888, Louis Victor, born in 1891 and died in 1891 and Doris Elizabeth, born in 1896.

On the 1891 Census the family lived at 30, Clarke Street, Dewsbury, in 1901 at 12, Longcauseway, Dewsbury. Percy is working as a Toy Shop Assistant. In 1911 he was lodging in Hull, working as a Clothier's Assistant.

Percy was educated at St. John's Church School, Dewsbury Moor and later at the Victoria Jubilee Council School and attended the Ebenezer United Congregational Church on Longcauseway. He was married in 1911 to Elizabeth (Lizzie) Jane Ireland (born in Leicester in 1884 and died in 1952). They had three children, born in different places due to Percy moving around with his work; Muriel, born in Leeds in 1911, Ronald Aubrey, born in Halifax in 1913 and Winifred Margaret, born in Pontefract in 1916. He was manager of Messrs Hepworth's clothiers in Dewsbury and later for the Sky Tailoring Company of Castleford and Pontefract. They later moved to live at 13, Avenue Terrace, Pontefract.

He served as Private 302710 in the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion Durham Light Infantry and was killed in action during the Battle of Passchendaele on 10<sup>th</sup> October 1917. In the Official War Diary of the Durham Light Infantry for 13<sup>th</sup> October, he may have been one of the three shown as missing when the battalion left Scottish Wood and marched to the front line to relieve other companies. His remains were discovered in March 1920 and he is now buried in Buttes New British Cemetery, Polygon Wood, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. Percy was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

His obituary in the Dewsbury Reporter on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1918 stated that he had been posted as missing since 8<sup>th</sup> October 1917.

Polygon Wood (the "Polygone de Zonnebeke", or Polygoneveld) is a large wood south of the village of Zonnebeke which was completely devastated in the First World War. The wood was cleared by Commonwealth troops at the end of October 1914, given up on 3 May 1915, taken again at the end of September 1917 by Australian troops, evacuated in the Battles of the Lys, and finally retaken by the 9<sup>th</sup> (Scottish) Division on 28 September 1918. On the Butte itself is the Battle Memorial of the 5<sup>th</sup> Australian Division, who captured it on 26 September 1917. Buttes New British Cemetery was made after the Armistice when a large number of graves (almost all of 1917, but in a few instances of 1914, 1916 and 1918) were brought in from the battlefields of Zonnebeke. There are now 2,108 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in this Cemetery. 1,677 of the burials are unidentified but special memorials are erected to 35 casualties known or believed to be buried among them.

Percy is commemorated on the Dewsbury Cenotaph in Crow Nest Park and in the Dewsbury Roll of Honour kept in Dewsbury Central Library and on the Memorial Plaque in the Dewsbury Ebenezer Congregational Church, now known as Longcauseway Church (United Reformed and Methodist).

In Memory of

Private

## Percy Wilfrid Giles

302710, 13th Bn., Durham Light Infantry who died on 10 October 1917 Age 32

Son of James G. and Frances Giles, of 10, Northgate, Dewsbury; husband of Elizabeth Jane Giles, of 13, Avenue Terrace, Pontefract.

Remembered with Honour

Buttes New British Cemetery, Polygon Wood



Commemorated in perpetuity by  
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Headstone photograph by courtesy of Janette Panter.