



Richard Preston

1886-1918

Richard was born in Dewsbury in 1886. His father was Charles Preston, a Railway Goods Warehouseman born in Doncaster in 1851 and died in 1921. His mother was Ellen (nee Telford) born in Doncaster in 1852 and died in 1918. They were married in Doncaster in 1872.

Their other children were; Mary Ann, born in 1873, Emma, born in 1875, Annie, born in 1878, George Henry, born in 1881 and died in 1884, Ellen/Nellie, born in 1883 and Charles, born in 1888 and died in 1906.

On the 1891 and 1901 Census records the family lived at 10 Carlisle Street, Dewsbury and in 1911 at 8, Ellis's Buildings, Upper Road, Batley Carr.

Richard was educated at Batley Carr School and worked as a Rag Grinder at Messrs Fitton's, Pildacre Mills, Earlsheaton, Dewsbury. He was married on 22nd July 1911 to Florence Gertrude Haley (born in 1886 and died in 1966) at Holy Trinity Church, Batley Carr; they lived at 80, Field's Buildings, Chickenley Lane, Chickenley and had a son, Charles, born in 1913. Florence later lived at 2, Rock Terrace, Commonside Lane, Hanging Heaton, Batley.

He enlisted in Dewsbury on 4th January 1917 serving as Private 36299 in the 18th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers (Tyneside Pioneers) and was sent to the Western Front in the April of that same year. He was killed in action near Baillieul, France during the Battle of the Lys on 17th April 1918. He was buried in Mont Noir Military Cemetery, St. Jans-Cappel, Nord, France. Richard was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

St. Jans-Cappel is a village 3 kilometres north of Baillieul. The hill was captured by the Cavalry Corps on the 13th October 1914, and held throughout the Battles of the Lys in 1918. The Cemetery was made in April-September 1918 and there are now 149 Commonwealth burials of the 1914-1918 war here, 15 being unidentified.

A letter to his family written by an officer said; *"He was killed instantaneously by a shell whilst building our front line near Bailleul. We buried him the same night in a little farmyard not far from where he fell, with his officers and some comrades who fell with him."*

Richard 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 Earlsheaton Park War Memorial and on the Ossett War Memorial and on the Batley War Memorial, and on the Batley Town Hall Memorial and on the Gawthorpe and Chickenley Heath St. Mary the Virgin Church Oak Memorial Plaque (relocated to Ossett Trinity Church following the demolition of St. Mary's) and on the Memorial in the now demolished Chickenley Wesleyan Methodist Chapel (current whereabouts of Memorial untraced).

In Memory of

Private

Richard Preston

36299, 18th Bn., Northumberland Fusiliers who died on 17 April 1918 Age 32

Husband of Florence Gertrude Preston, of 2, Rock Terrace Jack Lane, Common Side, Hanging Heaton,
Batley.

Remembered with Honour

Mont Noir Military Cemetery, St. Jans-Cappel



**Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission**



Headstone photograph by courtesy of Réal Desmarests, Comines, Hainaut, Belgium.