



Bawtry Heritage Group

Preserving our Past for the Future

Registered Charity No. 1188945

BAWTRY WORLD WAR 1 HONOUR ROLL

Names & brief biographies of Bawtry men killed during
World War 1

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This is a copy of a "Roll of Honour" dedicated to the men of Bawtry who gave their lives for King and Country in the Great War.

It is a stark reminder, if one were needed, that war is no respecter of rank or social station.

It is with great thanks that we remember those who made, and those who continue to make, the ultimate sacrifice.

Thank you for your service.

Please note this honour roll was compiled many years ago and not all information was available. Therefore, there may be some mistakes and names missing. Anyone aware of mistakes in the original information, or who has new information about other individuals, may contact Bawtry Heritage Group (bawtryheritagegroup@gmail.com) and we will add the information.

Sydney Abson

PRIVATE SYDNEY ABSON, of the 2nd Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, was born on the 10th November 1896, at Bawtry, and was the son of Mr. James Abson, of Bawtry, Farmer.

He was called up to the Army on the 20th January 1916, at Pontefract, and at that time he was working on his late father's farm.

He was first reported "missing," and subsequently reported killed in action on the 18th November 1916, in France, 20 years of age.

His father died before the outbreak of war. He was unmarried, and left his mother, one brother, who was under military age, and two sisters surviving.

Fred Bailey

PRIVATE FRED BAILEY, aged 19 at the time of his death, was the son of Henry Bailey, Midland Railway Guard, of Long Eaton, Derbyshire.

Prior to joining up he lived with his brother, Tom Bailey, in South Parade, Bawtry.

He had three brothers, viz., Tom, with whom he lived at Bawtry (on attending for enrolment at Pontefract, Tom Bailey was sent by the authorities to work on munitions at Sheffield in 1915, and so worked till the Armistice in November 1918);

Ernest, who was in the R.A.M.C., served in France, and after the Armistice served with the Army of Occupation in Germany; Albert, who was first in the Yorkshire Dragoons, afterwards transferred to the 4th Battalion K.O.Y.L.I., and after being twice wounded was transferred to the Machine Gun Corps, and was demobilised a short time after the Armistice.

Fred Bailey enlisted at Pontefract on 14th September 1914, soon after the declaration of war, in the 10th Battalion K.O.Y.L.I., and afterwards fought in France and Flanders.

He was unmarried, and at the date of enlistment was working at the shaft then being sunk for the new colliery at Harworth. At the outbreak of war the company or syndicate which owned this colliery was German. At the head of this company was Hugo Stinnes, a man well known in Germany as a coalowner, steel magnate, and millionaire. At the outbreak of war a number of the Germans at this shaft were interned, though some of them, including a son of Stinnes, who was lodging in South Parade, Bawtry, got back to Germany a few days before war was declared, having no doubt received orders or information from Germany.

Private Bailey was killed in action at Loos, in France, on the 26th or 27th September 1915.

On 19th October 1915, his parents were officially informed that their son had been wounded; subsequently he was reported "missing," and eventually as killed in action on 27th September. That this brave boy enlisted so early in the war from a stern sense of duty was shown by the answer he gave to his mother's inquiry as to why he had enlisted. He wrote, "I have enlisted in order to help to protect you and other boys' mothers and little children like my sister."

Frank Bell

FRANK BELL was the son of Mr. Joseph Theaker Bell, who for 50 years lived at Austerfield and Bawtry, having removed to the latter place six or seven years before the war, where he lived at Station Road Cottages, near the Railway Station, belonging to the Great Northern Railway Company, in whose service he had been for many years.

Frank Bell was born in the old Manor House at Austerfield, and was a bachelor. He was called up on the 31st July 1916, and joined the K.O.Y.L.I., being afterwards posted to the 12th Battalion York and Lancaster Regiment. He had only about three months' training (men being then badly needed) before he joined his Battalion in France, where he served and fought until he died, after only a few days' illness, on the 18th July 1917, at Aubigny-en-Artois, of pneumonia contracted by long exposure in the trenches, aged 38 years.

Arthur Maurice Cooper

PRIVATE ARTHUR MAURICE COOPER, of the 1st Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment, lived in Church Street, Bawtry, and was a postman when war broke out. He left a wife and one son surviving. Cooper was in the Army Reserve, and was recalled to the Colours on the 5th August 1914. He was wounded in action near Mons, and taken prisoner on 14th September 1914. The Infantry Record Office, Lichfield Station, on the 14th April, 1915, reported that Cooper died on the 22nd January 1915, in Kriegsgefangenen Lazarette, Alexandrinen Strasse, 1/12/13, Berlin. Previously he had been reported to have died "between 21st January and 25th January 1915." He was buried at Berlin Garns Cemetery, Hasenk, separate grave 32 Platz, 7R7.

William Gill

SAPPER WILLIAM GILL, of the Royal Engineers, was the eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Gill, of Bawtry. He was born at Newington, in the parish of Misson, and baptised at Misson Parish Church.

At the outbreak of the war he was 16 years of age. He was at once eager to join the Army, but was too young to be allowed to do so.

On the 25th June 1915, being then only 17 years old, he enlisted in a Battalion of the Royal Engineers, then being raised at Doncaster, and consisting of men recruited from the surrounding district. At this time he was learning the trade of a plumber and sanitary engineer. After enlistment he was trained at Doncaster, Rushmore Camp, and other places. He left Southampton on the 3rd June 1916, arrived at Havre on the 4th, and was at Colonne on the 9th. He was killed in action by a shrapnel bullet on the 27th June 1916 (that day being his father's birthday), and was buried in the British Military Cemetery at Colonne the next day, 2,000 yards N.W. of Lievin and four miles S. of Vermelles, in France.

Sapper Gill was a fine, tall boy, looking older than his years. When at Newington he attended Austerfield Church, and afterwards sang in the choir at St. Nicholas, Bawtry. He was unmarried, and left his parents, three brothers (all of whom were too young for service), and four sisters surviving. Fifteen of his cousins served with the Forces.

The following are some of the letters received by W. Gill's parents—

From his comrade, A. Ramsbottom, No. 1 Section, 231 Field Company, R.E., B.E.F., France, 28/6/16

Dear Madam

It is with great regret that I write you on behalf of the comrades of son W. Gill. He was a good soldier, always happy, and well liked amongst the boys. We made him a coffin and buried him in a cemetery in rear of the lines. This fearful accident occurred in the night of the 27th. The enemy were heavily bombarding our lines when a portion of shell struck your son in the chest. Death was practically instantaneous. He died with a smile on his face, and I can assure you that the sympathies of the whole of the section go out to you in this your bereavement.

I am, on behalf of the section

Yours sincerely

A. RAMSBOTTOM

From his Section Officer

29th June 1916, France

Dear Mr. Gill

By the time you receive this you will have received the official War Office intimation of your son's death. I know too well that nothing I can say can take away your sorrow, but it may be some consolation to you to know that he was instantaneously killed, and showed no sign of suffering whatever. He was shot through the heart by a shrapnel bullet. I was only five yards from him when the shell burst in the trench, and the force of the explosion knocked me over, and three or four others with me as well. We have laid him to rest in the little British Cemetery here; his friends in the section have provided a coffin, and we are erecting a wooden cross to his memory. Later on, when we move from here, I will tell you the name

of the village and the nearest town. I have known him for nearly a year, and have always found him, both at home and in France, a good worker. He was, I think, the youngest boy in my section, and a favourite with everyone. His cheery laugh and good-humoured grumbles kept everyone alive, and he will be greatly missed by us all, and certainly not least by myself, his section officer. With my very deepest sympathy, believe me to be,

Yours truly

FREDERICK W. CLARK

Lieut., R.E.

The parcel contains his private papers, which are just as I removed them from his pockets. The small copper cross on his identity disc-chain was made by him from a French bullet, and was intended as a gift to his mother.—F. W. C.

From Lieut. Winter Nicholson, of Bawtry, who was himself killed later (see his record in this book)

10th July 1916, B.E.F.

Dear Mr. Gill

It was only yesterday that I heard the news about poor Willie. I now write to offer to Mrs. Gill, yourself and family my sympathies in your loss. You probably know that the companies have not been together for some considerable time, and that we don't come across each other very frequently. The last time I saw Willie was a month at least ago, and I thought what a big fine man he was making, although he was only young. I know it will be a hard blow for you all to bear, but you will always be glad to know that Willie gave his life for England in a cause worth fighting for. We are some little distance away from the 231st Co., but when I am at liberty I will endeavour to find out more, but I expect Willie's officer will have written to you. With kindest regards to Mrs. Gill and yourself,

I am yours sincerely

WINTER NICHOLSON

Edward V. T. Hall

EDWARD VERNON TOWNSEND HALL, aged 25 at the time of his death, was the eldest son of the late Mrs. Chas. Pettit, of Bawtry. He was a Private in the 1st Battalion York and Lancaster Regiment, in which regiment he enlisted on the 27th December 1910, and thus formed one of that glorious small Expeditionary Force which within a few hours of the declaration went over to France to stem the German tide of advance. That force, described by the Kaiser as that "Contemptible little army," sacrificed itself to give our country time to raise the millions of men who afterwards followed. Few, very few, of that gallant "contemptible little army" survived the war.

At the date of his enlistment Hall was engaged in farm work at Styrrup. He was unmarried. He was killed in action at Zonnebeke, near Ypres, on the 11th April 1915.

Prior to the war he had been three years in India with his Battalion.

Writing to Hall's aunt, Mrs. Peck, who lives at School Hill, Bawtry, Captain G. H. Wedgewood says—

Dear Mrs. Peck

I am sorry to have to inform you that Edward Hall was killed in the trenches last Sunday. His end was painless, as he was shot clean through the head. We are all very sorry to miss him, as he was a very popular man in his platoon, and a very good soldier too. He was buried close to our Headquarters with three others of the Company killed the same day.

Yours truly

R. H. WEDGEWOOD, Captain

O.C., D Company

Private Hall's fiancée also received a letter from the same officer, saying how sorry he was to lose Private Hall, as he was such a good soldier and a nice quiet man.

Dennis Hatfield

PRIVATE DENNIS HATFIELD, of the 2nd Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, was born at Misson on the 28th May 1883. He was a bachelor, and at the time of joining the Army was an engine fitter, and lived at Bawtry with Mr. William Ernest Pinder. He joined up at Pontefract on the 29th March 1916, and, after training at Ferriby, near Hull, and other places, went to France, and took part in heavy fighting with his Battalion.

About the 9th December 1916 he was shot in the breast during action, and died in hospital at Rouen on the 19th December 1916, from his wounds. Aged 33 years.

Ernest A. Hempsall

PRIVATE ERNEST ARTHUR HEMPSALL, of the 2nd Fifth Leicestershire Regiment, was the son of Mr. John Hempsall, of Bawtry, and was born there. He joined the Army on the 14th February 1917, at Pontefract, and was posted to the Leicestershire Regiment. At that time he worked at the Rossington Colliery. After joining his Battalion in France, he was killed in action on the 26th September 1917, aged 21 years. He was not married, and left seven brothers surviving, five of whom served with the Army. His eldest brother, John, was in the 5th Battalion K.O.Y.L.I., and was very badly wounded in the head, and was invalided home some time before the end of the war.

Samuel, in the Royal Garrison Artillery, was gassed and wounded.

Fred, in the 7th Battalion Durham Light Infantry, served eleven months.

Oswald, 3rd Battalion K.O.Y.L.I., wounded and prisoner.

Charles in the Army, but Regiment and Battalion not known.

Albert, not old enough to serve.

William, unfit for service, owing to defective sight.

J. Machin Jackson

JOSEPH MACHIN JACKSON, of the 2nd/5th Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, was the son of Mr. Frank Jackson, of Bawtry, chemist, and Annie, his wife. He joined the Army at Sheffield in April 1917, being then a motor engineer.

After training at Clipstone Camp with the 4th Reserve K.O.Y.L.I., he was transferred to the 12th Battalion. He joined his Battalion in France, and fought in and around Ypres. He was laid up with "trench feet," and went into hospital, and on recovery was transferred to the 5th Battalion K.O.Y.L.I. after taking a machine gun course.

He was killed in action on the 2nd June 1918, aged 24 years. He was buried at Bienvillers Military Cemetery, three miles N.N.W. of Habuterne. Rank, Private.

Sydney Johnson

PRIVATE SYDNEY JOHNSON, of the 2nd/5th Battalion K.O. Yorkshire Light Infantry, was a railway porter in the employ of the Great Northern Railway Company, and lived in one of the Railway Company's cottages near the Railway Station at Bawtry.

He was badly wounded in action, and taken prisoner on 27th March 1918.

He died in Germany on the 19th May 1918, aged 25 years, leaving a widow and a daughter aged 2 years, and two stepsons, both under military age, surviving.

His widow only survived him a few months, dying at Bawtry on 1st March 1919.

Henry G. Kellett

PRIVATE HENRY GLADSTONE KELLETT, of the 3rd Battalion Coldstream Guards, was the eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. William Kellett, of Swan Street, Bawtry, and was born at Bawtry on the 14th July 1888.


He joined the Army 13th July 1916, went to Caterham on the 14th, from there to Windsor, and eventually from Windsor to France. Whilst at Windsor he was frequently on guard duty. After only about five months' training he went with his Battalion to France (this would be at the end of December). In October 1917, he was reported to be "missing" as on the 11th of that month. Three months after this he was officially presumed "killed in action." He was married, and left a widow and one son. The deceased soldier had one brother, who was in the telegraph section of the Royal Engineers.

Pte. H. G. Kellett appears to have been killed by a shell at Boeshinge, in Flanders.

Some time after his death his widow received a letter from a Belgian soldier, who, on the battlefield after the action, had come across a group of British soldiers evidently killed by the same shell, and on or lying beside the body of one of them were some letters and photographs.

This was Harry Kellett, for one or more of the letters bore his wife's name and address, and the Belgian soldier forwarded these to the widow with a letter of explanation.

Joseph H. Lane

CORPORAL JOSEPH HENRY LANE, of the 2nd Fourth Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, was the eldest son of the late Joseph Lane and Anne, his wife, of Bawtry, and at the outbreak of war managed his late father's business of a draper and general dealer in the High Street. He was married and left a widow and three children.

Lane had previously been a Corporal in the Bawtry detachment of the 3rd Volunteer Battalion of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, where he gained the respect and esteem of his C.O. and all ranks by his zeal and military efficiency. For some time after war broke out he was the only one of the family left to carry on the family business.

He was called up to the Army in 1917, and after completing his training he went to France, where he fought with his Battalion in many engagements.

He was first reported "missing" after action on the 25th March 1918, and was never heard of again. Eventually he was officially reported killed in action on that date. Aged 36 years.

He had five brothers, all of whom served in His Majesty's Forces, namely,

Ernest Arthur, a Sergeant-Major (1st Class) in the Royal Air Force.

Frederick James, a Flight Sergeant in the Royal Air Force.

Walter Horace, a Gunner in the Machine Gun Corps.

Wilfred Howden, a Corporal in the Royal Engineers.

Reginald Frank, after serving in the Bawtry detachment of the 3rd Volunteer Battalion of the K.O.Y.L.I., joined the Staffordshire Yeomanry, in which he was a Corporal.

Stanley Little

PRIVATE STANLEY LITTLE, aged 19 at the time of his death, lived with his mother in Church Street, Bawtry. His mother was a widow. He enlisted at Doncaster on the 21st January 1918, in the 1st Battalion East Yorkshire Regiment. He was unmarried.

Prior to enlistment he had been a grocer's assistant, and afterwards was engaged in the works of the Bawtry Motor Company.

For a short time before joining up he was a Cadet in the Bawtry detachment of the 3rd Volunteer Battalion K.O.Y.L.I.

He was reported "missing" after action whilst with his Battalion in France on the 10th September 1918, and was never afterwards heard of.

Winter Nicholson

NIEUTENANT WINTER NICHOLSON, aged 34 years at the time of his death, was the elder son of Mr. George Thos. Nicholson, of Conisborough, who was a Director of the firm of Whitworth & Co. Limited, brewers, of Wath-upon-Dearne.

He was educated at King Edward's School, Retford, and the Sheffield and London Universities. At the outbreak of war he was living in the Station Road, Bawtry. On 9th June, 1915, he joined a Battalion of the Royal Engineers which was being raised at Doncaster, and with characteristic courage and self-sacrifice he joined as a Private in the first instance, but subsequently received a commission. He was trained at Doncaster, Rushmore Camp, Borden, and Pirbright, and went to France in June 1916.

He was with the Forces at Bethune, Hulloch, Hebuterne, and Peronne.

In his Battalion were many men from Doncaster, Bawtry, and district, and, like so many of the officers, was well known to the men and the men to him (see William Gill's record).

He was eventually killed by shellfire at Clery-sur-Somme on the 16th March 1917, greatly regretted by all ranks.

He left a widow and three children.

He had one brother, who spent the whole period of the war in captivity at Ruhleben.

John W. Ogley

PRIVATE JOHN WILLIAM OGLEY, of the 2nd Battalion York and Lancaster Regiment, was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Ogley, of Bawtry, and was 21 years old at the time of his death.

He enlisted in the above Battalion at Bawtry on the 23rd June 1915, and was then working on a farm. He fought with his Battalion in France, and was killed in action on the 21st April 1916.

He was unmarried.

One of his brothers, Arthur Ogley, early in the war served in the Bawtry detachment of the 3rd Volunteer Battalion K.O.Y.L.I., and afterwards served with the Army in France.

Raymond Peake

LIEUTENANT RAYMOND PEAKE, of the Coldstream Guards, was the eldest son of Major and Mrs. Peake, of Bawtry Hall. He died of wounds when 20 years of age.

He was at Eton when war broke out, and would have been Captain of his House (Mr. A. C. Rayner Wood's) had he not left school prematurely to go to the Military College at Sandhurst, entering in September and passing out at Christmas, 1914, when he was gazetted to the Coldstream Guards. After the usual training, he joined the 1st Battalion in France in April 1915, and in October 1915, was invalided home with pneumonia, which affected his heart. Though not completely recovered, he was anxious for service abroad again, and went out in July 1916 quite cheerfully, but under the conviction that he would not return.

At the end of his diary he wrote these lines of Rupert Brook—

“ If I should die, think only this of me :
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.”

He was at once given command of a Company notwithstanding his age, and in September 1916, during the continued fighting on the Somme, he was badly wounded in the leg by a stray shell whilst looking out a position near Berrafait Wood for his Company to take up. His leg was amputated in hospital, and two days later he died from blood poisoning, the weakness of his heart from his previous illness probably contributing to this result.

The following are extracts from letters received—

From the C.O.

“ Conspicuous for his ability as a soldier and for his charming personality as a brother officer ; a special favourite with those who were above him and below him as well as among his own contemporaries.”

From a Brother Officer

“ The pluckiest fellow I have ever seen. Though suffering agonies he gave directions about the bandaging as though he had not been touched. The C.O. was very much struck by it.”

Another Officer wrote—

“ It was such bad luck, just as he had got his Company ; always full of spirits and splendidly brave.”

Raymond Peake delighted in all games, was three years in the boats at Eton, and won his colours for football. He was a particularly good shot with a gun. At the same time he took a keen interest in more serious matters, giving promise of being a most useful citizen. His two brothers, Osbert and Harald, subsequently served in the Coldstream Guards, the former being wounded, but making a good recovery.

Five first cousins on his father's side, out of seven of military age, were killed in the war.

John W. Staveley

SERGEANT JOHN WILLIAM STAVELEY, of the 1/5th Battalion (Territorial) King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, was the son of Mr. John Staveley, who for 30 years has been railway signalman at Bawtry Station. He was born at Bawtry on 29th May 1888. When about four years before the war a Bawtry officer of the above Battalion, wishing to obtain recruits, called a meeting for that purpose in the Public Hall, this gallant boy was the first to mount the platform and to give in his name. He had the true soldierly spirit, and was greatly esteemed by both officers and men. When war was declared on the fateful 4th August 1914, the Battalion was undergoing its annual training at Whitby, and all the officers and 90 per cent. of the men (including John William Staveley) at once volunteered for service in France. Prior to the war, however, he was one of those members of the Territorial Force who had engaged themselves for foreign service whenever called on. The Battalion was in training for some time at Sandbeck Park, and then near Skegness on the Lincolnshire coast, and Gainsborough and York. The Battalion eventually went to France in April 1915. He got his Sergeant's stripes just before going out.

He was with his Battalion in the trenches in and around Ypres when he was killed by a shell on the 9th August 1915, aged 27. In him the Battalion lost an able and efficient N.C.O. He was unmarried.

He had three brothers, all of whom fought in the war, namely—

Albert was married, and had four children. He was a Lance-Corporal in the Leicestershire Regiment, and died of wounds received in action. See his record in this book.

Harold, aged 22, who was a Driver in the Army Service Corps, joined January 1916, went to France at the end of the month, and was still there in July 1919.

Arthur, aged 21 in October 1918, was first in the Royal Garrison Artillery, then transferred to the K.O.Y.L.I., and finally a signaller in the Field Survey Company. He went out in November 1917, and was demobilised June 1919.

The following letters were (amongst others) received by Sergeant Staveley's parents—

From Major Parkin

1/5th K.O.Y.L.I., 47th Division

11/8/15

Dear Madam

It is with the deepest regret that I have to inform you of the death of your son, Sergt. Staveley. He had gone from the front trench to consult the doctor with regard to some minor ailment, when a shell burst right in the dressing station in which he was waiting, badly wounding him and several others and killing another man. Your son has since died of his wounds. His courage was magnificent, and was remarked on by the doctor and others who saw him being attended to. He actually lit and smoked a cigarette when being carried away. He will be greatly missed by us all, officers and men alike. No man could have faced his death in a more noble fashion.

I am, dear Madam

Yours very truly

J. L. PARKIN, Major, O.C., D Coy., 1/5th K.O.Y.L.I.

To Mrs. Staveley, Bawtry

From Captain J. W. Walker of Bawtry, who was afterwards killed in action, and whose record is in this book.

5th K.O.Y.L.I. 49th (West Riding) Division
148th Infantry Brigade

11th August 1915

Dear Mr. Staveley

I am sorry to have to have to tell you that your son who was badly wounded by a shell two days ago, died soon after reaching hospital that night.

He was injured by a shell while in a dugout behind the trenches with some stretcher-bearers.

I am sorry to have to send you such sad news, for I had great hope that he would recover, but it was not to be.

He bore his injuries most bravely, and his courage was the admiration of all who saw him on his way to hospital. Please tell Mrs. Staveley how sorry I am, and that I hope she will remember that his death was for his country.

Yours truly

JOHN W. WALKER, Capt.

Albert Staveley

ALBERT STAVELEY was a Lance-Corporal in the Leicestershire Regiment, and was the brother of Sergt. J. W. Staveley, whose record is in this book. He joined up in January 1915, and went to Mesopotamia. He was with the force which marched to the relief of General Townsend and his army, who were shut up in Kut.

He was severely wounded in three places (one in the hand and two in the shoulder) whilst marching in the desert on the 7th March 1916, and was sent down the Tigris with many other

wounded at the time when the medical arrangements there were at their worst. He was landed in India, and for five months was officially reported "missing." He was sent home to England in July 1917, where he went into hospital, and died from his wounds on the 2nd September 1918, aged 29 years.

He was married, and left a widow and four children.

With reference to his brothers, see the record of Sergt. J. W. Staveley in this book.

Robert Smith

PRIVATE ROBERT SMITH at the time of his death was 38 years of age. He was married, and with his wife and three children lived at Fern Cottage, Church Street, Bawtry. He enlisted early in the war, viz., 6th February 1915, at Doncaster, in the 1st Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, and joined his unit on the 10th February 1915.

At the time of enlistment he was a contractor at the Rossington Main Colliery.

He was killed at Kemmel, near Bailleul, on Friday, the 10th September 1915.

The news of his death was conveyed to his widow by the Revd. C. G. Danbury, Wesleyan Chaplain, who wrote—

"It is my very sad duty to inform you that your dear husband, 21536, Private R. Smith, 1st K.O.Y.L.I., was killed in action early this (Friday) morning. He was in the trenches doing his duty when a bullet shot him through the heart. I went up and buried him at eleven o'clock to-day. He lies by the side of many others who have given their lives for their King and Country."

Whilst in Bawtry Private Smith was a regular worshipper at the Primitive Methodist Chapel.

Francis J. Watson

PRIVATE FRANCIS JOSEPH WATSON, aged 18 years and 11 months at the time of his death, was the son of Joseph and Isola Watson, of Church Street, Bawtry. He enlisted at Doncaster on the 1st October 1917, in the 6th Battalion Leicestershire Regiment, and with his Battalion fought in France and Flanders. He was unmarried. Prior to enlistment he was a hairdresser, and acted as assistant to Mr. Waddington, of Bawtry, and afterwards to Mr. Hooseman, of Carr House Road, Doncaster.

He was killed by a shell near Ypres on the 29th April 1918, and at that time he was attached to the 98th Field Company Royal Engineers.

In 1916 he enlisted in the Bawtry detachment, 3rd Vol. Battalion K.O.Y.L.I., and faithfully carried out his duties in the detachment until he joined up.

The following letter was received by his mother from the Officer Commanding his platoon—

2/Lt. F. W. Moss, 8th Leicestershire Regt.

Attached 98 Field Coy., R.E., B.E.F., France

30/4/18

To Mrs. Watson, Church St., Bawtry

Dear Madam

I much regret to inform you that your son, No. 47485, Pte. F. J. Watson, of the 6th Battalion Leic. Regt., and attached to 98 Field Coy., R.E., was killed yesterday morning, 29/4/18. He was in a bivouac along with a number of other men when a shell burst close to the bivouac. Pte. Watson was killed instantaneously. I can assure you that he would feel no pain, and that he would know nothing at all about it. You may like to know that the lad was buried in the afternoon by the Divisional Church of England Chaplain, at the corner of a little

wood, well behind the lines, and a memorial erected on his grave. The location of this has been notified to the proper authorities. In conclusion, I can only point out that your son has laid down his life for his country, just as surely as any man who is killed in a battle, for he was on duty at the time. With assurance of sympathy for you in your sorrow,

I am, dear Madam

Your obedient servant

F. W. Moss

His mother also received a letter from the Chaplain as follows—

Dear Mrs. Watson

11th May 1918

. . . . Your son was killed by a high velocity shell which struck the hut he was in, and his death was quite instantaneous, so that he cannot have suffered any pain; in fact he cannot have known anything about it. . . . He was buried at 1 p.m. on April 29th, and his grave is against those of four other brave men who gave their lives on the same day for their country and their homes. A cross stands over the grave, and his name and regiment and the date of his death is inscribed upon it. The funeral service, which was attended by the C.O. of the Field Coy. and as many others as were able to come, was most impressive. We read as the lesson St. John 6, verses 37-40. I only wish I could express to you all our sympathy for you. It seems especially sad as your son only landed in France a month before. But we out here all fully understand how tremendous a share the mothers of England have in the great sacrifice which the country is having to make in ridding the world of evils even worse than death, and winning peace and freedom for the world. May our Heavenly Father who gave His only Son to die that we might live for ever in His Eternal Home of Peace and Happiness bless and comfort you, and give you strength to bear your great sorrow.

I am, yours very sincerely

HUGH F. SAWBRIDGE

Chaplain, 110th Infantry Brigade, B.E.F.

Private Watson was the only child of his parents.

Thomas W. Whitaker

PRIVATE THOMAS WILLIAM WHITAKER, of the 6th Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, lived in the Station Road, Bawtry, and was a railway porter. He enlisted at Doncaster in the above Battalion on the 12th November 1915. After the usual training he served with his Battalion in France, and was killed in action there on St. Bartholomew's Day (24th August) 1917, during a strong German counter attack.

He had acted as servant to Lieut. Stowe, who was killed at the same time.

The Captain of his Company, writing to deceased's widow, said—
I have known your husband ever since he joined the Battalion in May 1916, and I realise what a splendid, true British soldier I have lost.

He was 36 years old, and left a widow and three children.

Albert E. Webb

PRIVATE ALBERT EDWARD WEBB, of the 9th Battalion K.O.Y.L.I., was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Webb, of Bawtry, and was born there. He joined the Army on the 16th December 1915. At that time he was employed at Cook's Works, Sheffield. He fought with his Battalion in France, and was reported "missing" after severe action at Kemmel Hill, near Ypres, on the 25th April 1918, and was never afterwards heard of. He was 21 years of age, and unmarried. He had two brothers serving in the Army, Harry Thomas Webb, of the Coldstream Guards, who went out with that first gallant Expeditionary Force, and during the retreat from Mons was wounded in the leg and taken prisoner, and remained a prisoner until the end of the war. His brother, Allan Fletcher Webb, served in the Royal Garrison Artillery.

John W. Walker

CAPTAIN JOHN WICKHAM WALKER, reported "missing" on the 5th July 1916, and afterwards reported killed on that date, was the eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. John Walker, of Bawtry. Captain Walker was born 7th May 1891, and was educated at Dulwich College, where he was a member of the Officers' Training Corps and in the Shooting Eight. He was a good Rugby football player and boxer. After matriculating in the First Division at London University, he was articled to his father, and admitted a solicitor in February 1913. On leaving school he obtained a commission in the 5th Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry (T.), and was given his Company a few months before the outbreak of war. On the outbreak of war his Battalion (like most other Territorial Battalions) was in camp for annual training. His Battalion was then in camp at Whitby. All the officers and over 90 per cent. of the men at once volunteered for foreign service, and, after training in various camps in England, he went with his Battalion to France in April 1915. He was in continual trench fighting on the extreme left of the British position, chiefly near Ypres. Whilst in the trenches he was slightly wounded, and suffered for a time from trench fever and shell shock. On the eve of the great British attack in July 1916, he left the Divisional School of Instruction in France, of which he had for a few months been second in command, and joined his Battalion in the fighting line, having not long before (30th April) been mentioned in despatches. He was with them throughout continuous fighting from the 1st to 5th July at and near Thiépval, during which the battalion lost a large proportion of its officers. The Battalion had thrust into the German lines in such a manner that they had the enemy on three sides of them. At daybreak on 5th July Captain Walker

led a picked body of men in an attack on the German trenches on one of the flanks. Soon after starting the Germans set up a barrage of fire, which cut off the detachment from all support, and not a man got back to tell the story. Only three men of this detachment survived, viz., Privates Halloran, Foxon, and Richardson, all of whom were wounded (Halloran very badly) and taken prisoners. Halloran, whose home is at Kinsley, near Wakefield, and who was eventually interned in Switzerland, in a letter to Captain Walker's father, says—

The attack was made at 4.30 in the morning of the 5th July. We were detailed off to make the attack, and your son, Captain J. W. Walker, had to lead the same, and believe me, sir, he did it like the real soldier he was. The last words he said to us when we were going over were "Come on, lads, death or glory this time." I was in his Company all the time I was in France, and been in a good few rough scraps with him, and I can honestly say I never saw a cooler man in all my life, and on the morning of the attack he was cooler than ever. We got over all right, but it was not long before we were getting it hot with bombs and shell fire. Most of the boys were down before we had gone far. As far as I could see there was only about a dozen of us got to the German trenches. The fighting became very hot, but did not last long. All were down except Captain Walker and myself. He was standing on the top of a dugout, and calling me to give him a hand. At the same time I got hit in the groin, and I had four Germans between Captain Walker and myself. Well, I got them out of the way, and was making to him when I got hit again right through the hip, and then I saw Captain Walker come off the dugout and dash down it. Afterwards I heard some shots in the dugout, and that was the last of it.

Captain Walker's younger brother, Lieut. Anthony T. Walker, of the Rifle Brigade, was killed in action at Hooze, in Flanders, on the 5th July 1915. His only surviving brother, Evelyn D. Walker, left school at Midsummer 1918, and joined the Royal Field Artillery.

Lieut. A. T. Walker's record follows this.

Anthony T. Walker

LIEUTENANT ANTHONY THORNTON WALKER was the second son of Mr. and Mrs. John Walker, of Bawtry, and was born at Bawtry on the 9th May 1894. He was educated at Dulwich College Preparatory School, and afterwards at Uppingham. Whilst at Uppingham School he served in the Officers' Training Corps, and when he left he was Head of the School and captain of football. He was a good musician, and leader of the Uppingham School Orchestra. From Uppingham he won an Open Scholarship and Exhibition at University College, Oxford, and intended to study for the India Civil Service. He was a good athlete and a fine classical scholar with keen literary tastes. Within a week or two of the outbreak of war he joined the Public Schools Battalion, and was soon afterwards given a commission in the 8th Battalion Rifle Brigade. When his Battalion went over to France in 1915, much to his disappointment he was left behind in charge of details, but eventually, on Sunday, 25th July 1915, he went over, and joined his Battalion in the trenches near Hooze, in Flanders, on the 29th. About 3 o'clock on the following morning (the 30th) the enemy attacked the portion of the line held by 8th Battalion Rifle Brigade. The German superiority in artillery during this attack was overwhelming, and the Battalion was fearfully cut up. Lieut. Walker was occupying with his platoon the edge of a wood which was held by the Germans, when a piece of shell struck him full in the face, and killed him instantaneously. And so he died within 24 hours of his reaching his Battalion. All the officers of his Company were

either killed or wounded that morning. Mrs. Maclachlan, wife of the Colonel, in a letter to deceased's mother, said—

“My husband was so fond and so proud of all his officers, and I can't tell you how dreadfully he has felt this awful disaster. It has nearly broken his heart.”

The following copies and extracts from letters received by Lieut. Walker's parents complete the story of this action and of his death—

From Colonel Maclachlan

Dear Mr. Walker

. . . . I don't quite know how much you have heard of your gallant son's death in action. He was killed at Hooge on the 30th about 5 in the morning. Even now, accounts are confused and conflicting, as there are very few of that Company left. In fact your boy rejoined his old Battalion only in time to see it broken up almost by 24 hours' continuous fighting. I cannot tell you how much I grieve for you and yours. I had the greatest opinion of your son as a soldier, and had endless correspondence to get him back here. It was delightful to see his return, and the welcome he got, and in a few hours it seemed as if he had never been away.

I've seen a Sergeant of his Company who was with him, and he tells me your son was hit in the head and killed at once, so he suffered no pain, and gave his life I know without fear. I hear he was so cool and courageous under the most trying circumstances, but every one knew he would be so. All the officers of his Company were either killed or wounded.

. . . .

I am, yours sincerely

R. MACLACHLAN

Lt.-Col., 8th Battalion Rifle Brigade

3rd August 1915

From Captain Sheepshanks

August 8th 1915

Dear Sir

Col. Maclachlan has asked me to write to you.
I very much regret to say that your son was killed on the morning of July 30th. He was occupying with his platoon the edge of a wood which was being heavily shelled at the time. He was struck in the face either by a bullet or a piece of shell and his death was instantaneous. His personal effects, letters, &c., were given over to his servant to take care of, but this man was afterwards wounded.

Yours sincerely

A. C. SHEEPHANKS, Captain

Captain Sheepshanks for his service in this action received the D.S.O. He was the second son of Mr. Wm. Sheepshanks, of Arthington Hall, Leeds, and was before the war an Assistant Master at Eton. Captain Sheepshanks' D.S.O. was officially stated to have been given to him for

Conspicuous gallantry in a counter-attack on 30th July 1915, when he continued to advance with his Company till only he and six riflemen were left standing.

Extract from Letter from Lieut. C. R. Gorrell Barnes, 8th Battalion Rifle Brigade, to Deceased's Brother

The facts are, roughly, these. We relieved at midnight, and at 3 a.m. the enemy attacked, using liquid fire. We had two Companies in the front line, one of which was completely cut off, and, as we believe, killed to a man. The other managed to fall back in some sort of order, after sending an urgent message for support. In response to this message your brother's Company, which was in support in dugouts in Zouave Wood, moved up to the edge of the wood, where they joined up with the remains of the other Company. It was at this point that your brother was killed, being hit in the head and dying at once.

Griffith Williams

PRIVATE GRIFFITH WILLIAMS, of the 8th Battalion York and Lancaster Regiment, was the son of Mrs. Ann Williams, of Doncaster Road, Bawtry, who was a widow. He joined the Army within a few weeks after the declaration of war, namely, on the 17th October 1914, at Doncaster.

After the usual training, he served with his Battalion in France, where he underwent great hardships and heavy fighting.

He was very severely wounded in the left shoulder (probably by shellfire) during action on the Marne on or about the 4th July 1916.

He was taken to Number 14 General Hospital behind the lines, and only survived for 24 hours after his admission. He was 36 years of age at the time of his death, and was unmarried.

His mother received many touching letters of sympathy from comrades of her son and others, in one of which the writer says that he would not allow his mother to be informed that he was about to undergo an operation. Like so many other brave men whose scanty records are in this book, the fear of death did not oppress them. They made light of their pain and suffering. His and their chief care was to relieve those dear to them of anxiety on their behalf.

Amongst others, his mother received the following letters. From this correspondence we gather that Griffith Williams was esteemed by his officers as a very plucky and daring soldier, and just before the action in which he was killed his Captain had promised to send his name forward for recognition.

From Miss M. C. Walker (Hospital Visitor)

Dear Mrs. Williams

Your son, Pte. Williams, of the 8th Y. and Lancs., has asked me to tell you that he has come into No. 14 General Hospital, wounded in the left shoulder, and is unable to write to you himself at present. He expects to go to England very soon, and will send you a line to say which hospital he is in. He sends you his best love, and hopes you are well, and that it won't be long till he sees you again. With all best wishes,

Very sincerely yours

Mabel C. Walker (Miss)
Hospital Visitor

From Mrs. Cox, Matron of the Hospital

14 General Hospital, B.E.F.

Dear Mrs. Williams

I am writing to let you know that your son is in this hospital, being severely wounded in the left shoulder. He was admitted last night, and am afraid is very ill indeed. However, you will like to know that everything possible is being done for him, and that he is in a nice ward. I will let you know in a day or two again about him.

Yours truly

4th July

M. Cox (Matron)

14 General Hospital, B.E.F., July 5th

Dear Mrs. Williams

I hope you received my letter telling you that your son has been severely wounded. I am very grieved to have to tell you that he passed away this evening at 6.30. He had been gradually getting worse all day, and was quite unconscious for about an hour before he died, so that he suffered no pain at the last. He spoke of you several times, and I told him I had written to you. He will be buried in the cemetery here (Wimereux), a village about three miles out of Boulogne, and we will put flowers for you on his grave. With much sympathy,

I am, yours sincerely

M. Cox (Matron)

From Miss M. C. Walker

No. 5 Red Cross Hospital, France, B.E.F.

July 18th 1916

Dear Mrs. Williams

I am most deeply grieved to hear of the death of your son, for whom I wrote to you a few days ago. I would have written yesterday, but had a great deal to do. I had a telegram besides asking me to meet the mother of a wounded officer in Boulogne. I only saw your son once, that time when he had just come into No. 14 General Hospital in Wimereux, near Boulogne, and when I saw him he was so quiet and plucky, and his one thought was for you. He was just waiting to have an operation on his wound when I saw him, and I asked if he would like me to say so to you, but he said "No," being evidently afraid of distressing you. I had no idea that he would pass away so soon, and was in another hospital some distance off the following day. If I can gather any particulars I will write to you again, but I expect you have already heard from the Matron all that she could tell. My heart aches for you in your sorrow. May God comfort and support you. It is in the cause of right and of God that your dear son has lost his life, and he will be waiting for you in the heavenly home. With deep sympathy,

Yours very sincerely

MABEL C. WALKER (Hospital Visitor)

So glad to hear from the Chaplain that he has written to you.

Private Griffith Williams' brother Hugh served during the war in the West Yorkshire Regiment.