

LAWRENCE JOHN MANN



12th July 1917

1896-1917 Aged 21

Second Lieutenant 16th (Service) Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers.

Lawrence Mann was born in Liversedge on 3rd January 1896. He was the son of Abel Mann and his second wife Clara Longbottom. His grandfather John Mann owned Southfield, a small coal mine which was managed by Abel. The family lived in Woodlands Cottage, which was grander than its name suggests, at nearby Norristhorpe. Abel married Clara, a dressmaker, in 1887. They had four children, Lawrence being the youngest of their three sons. He went to Bradford Grammar School from 1906 until 1913, between the ages of ten and seventeen. He was on the Modern side of the School, so he did not study the Classics. He was a talented artist who was twice awarded the Henry Maufe Prize for Art. In general he did better at Maths, Chemistry and Physics than he did at the Humanities and Modern Languages. In his final year he was House Captain for the Reds and captain of their gym team, and he was also the goal-kicker for the First XV. His only sister Elsie died in 1910 while she was away at school in Lancashire.

With the family colliery destined to pass to his eldest brother Arthur, in 1914 Lawrence went to study Agriculture at Harper-Adams College, Shropshire. He successfully completed the first year of his course, by which time the war had been raging for a year and Lawrence must have felt it was his duty to serve. In October 1915 he joined the Leeds University O.T.C. and in December he attested under the Derby scheme. The following January he was posted to the Inns of Court O.T.C. at Berkhamsted (Herts.), then in August 1916 proceeded to No.2 Officer Training Battalion at Pembroke College, Cambridge. Lawrence was commissioned into the 3rd Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers on 18th December. In February 1917 he went to France to join the regiment's 16th Battalion, known as the 'Newcastle Commercials'.



During the first six months of 1917, the 16th Northumberland Fusiliers were at Beaumont Hamel on the Somme, then they fought on the extreme right of the British line supporting French actions near St. Quentin, before they were sent in June to the opposite end of the line on the Belgian coast at Nieuport. This movement was part of an intended amphibious operation by the British planned as part of the Third Battle of Ypres. However, the Germans realized that landings were planned and launched a spoiling attack during which Lawrence Mann was killed. The official date of his death was given as 12th July, however there is good reason to believe he was killed on the night of the 10/11th. On the 10th the 16/ Northumberland Fusiliers were in support in cellars in the resort-town of Nieuport. A heavy German bombardment began at 6 a.m. At 10 p.m. they were ordered forward to man the defences, and in doing so Mann was killed by a German shell. The battalion then crossed the Yser Canal and was involved in heavy fighting. Over three days they lost 240 men and 11 officers, a third of their strength. Mann's body was not recovered, so his name is on the Memorial to the Missing at Nieuport. It is also on the memorials at Norristhorpe parish church and Cleckheaton. Both his brothers also served. Arthur was killed in 1918.



Acknowledgements:

Mann's photo is from the School Memorial Book, with thanks to the O.B.A. and B.G.S. The family were researched using Ancestry.com. Lawrence's school record is from the B.G.S. Annual Reports 1907-1913, and The Bradfordian 1913. His Officer Personal Record is Officer Personal Record WO339-68852. For the Inns of Court O.T.C., <<http://1914-1918.invisionzone.com/forums/index.php?/topic/7727-inns-of-court-otc/&>>. For Operation Hush, <<http://www.1914-1918.net/hush.htm>> (both acc 1-7-17). The War Diary of 16th Northumberland Fusiliers is at <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/interactive/60779/43112_2398_1-00091?pid=524583&backurl=http://search.ancestry.co.uk/cgi-bin/sse.dll?_phsrc=%3DKih1048%26_phstart%3DsuccessSource%26usePUBJs%3Dtrue%26indiv%3D1%26db%3DUKWarDiariesWWI%26gss%3Dangsd%26new%3D1%26rank%3D1%26msT%3D1%26_F0007CF4%3DNorthumberland%2520Fusiliers%26_F00088EF%3D16th%2520battalion%26MSAV%3D1%26MSV%3D0%26uidh%3D6n6%26pcat%3D39%26fh%3D108%26h%3D524583%26recoff%3D%26fsk%3DBEK58RUIgADtawADaYY-61-%26bsk%3D%26pgoff%3D%26ml_rpos%3D109&treeid=&personid=&hintid=&usePUB=true&_phsrc=Kih1048&_phstart=successSource&usePUBJs=true#?imageId=43112_2398_1-00111>. Mann's death is recorded after the order to move forward at 10 p.m. on the night of the 10th. In his Officer Personal Record his death was dated 10th July, later altered to 12th, the date given on the Death Certificate issued so that his father could settle his estate.

This biography was researched and compiled by Nick Hooper (Nhooper1956@googlemail.com). I acknowledge the use of Charlie Turpin's short biography (<<http://branches.britishlegion.org.uk/branches/spenborough/branch-information/spenborough-roll-of-honour/world-war-one-1914-18-officers>> acc. 1-7-17).