

LAWRENCE FAIRBANK BARNES



24th July 1917

1886-1917 Aged 30

Second Lieutenant 10th (Service) Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry.

Lawrence was born in Calverley, the eldest son of William Fairbank Barnes and his wife Selina. Several generations of the Barnes family owned a mill at Stanningley for the extraction of oils for various applications in treating textiles, and also imported olive oil. The business was a lucrative one. When Lawrence's grandfather John died in 1886 he left a personal estate valued at £13,000, which is the equivalent of more than £750,000 today. The business was inherited by his sons Joseph Roberts Barnes and Lawrence's father William Fairbank Barnes. William married Selina Yeadon in 1886. She was a woollen weaver, the daughter of a Master blacksmith from Pudsey. Lawrence was their first born, arriving only five months after the marriage. William and Selina went on to have eleven children in all, who all survived childhood. They lived at Providence House, Stanningley, which William inherited from his father.

Lawrence went to Bradford Grammar School when he was twelve, in 1898, and was there for two years. His first year was overall a success and he was given the form prize for English subjects. His second year went less well, and in September 1900 he moved to Woodhouse Grove School, which it must have been more convenient for him to attend from Stanningley. From school he joined his father and uncle in business as an oil merchant. He was a tennis player—he entered the Ilkley tournament in August 1911 and 1913—and he also played Lacrosse and represented Yorkshire on several occasions as well as being a member of the Bradford club.

Lawrence was a few weeks short of his twenty-eighth birthday when the First World War began, single and well off. He enlisted in the Leeds Pals on 10th September 1914, and he would serve with them in England, Egypt and France as Private 15/69 until April 1916 when he was attached to the 93rd Brigade Trench Mortar Battery. He survived the 1st July, when 13 officers and 209 Other Ranks of the Leeds Pals were killed. Three days later he reported



sick suffering from what was described as 'Septic Legs', that is infected wounds caused by scratching vermin bites. In less than a week he had been evacuated to a hospital in Leith, near Edinburgh. He was discharged in mid-September, but instead of being sent back to the front he was transferred to 9th Training Reserve Battalion at Rugeley Camp (Notts.). Presumably he helped train new conscripts, and while he was there he applied for an Officer's commission. He was accepted and ordered to proceed to 12th Officer Cadet Battalion at Newmarket. On 25th April 1917 he was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry.

On 23rd June Lawrence Barnes joined the 10th Battalion who were holding the line south of Arras, an area which had witnessed prolonged and bitter fighting earlier in the year. On 24th July Barnes was in command of an advanced post which could only be reached under cover of darkness. At 1 a.m. the Germans began to bombard this post with 'aerial darts', which continued for three hours. Although casualties were light, Barnes was killed around 1.15 a.m. His cool-headed Sergeant took command and organized the defence of the post, although no raid materialized.

Barnes' body was buried in one of the cemeteries near the village of Henin-sur-Cojeul just behind the front.



Acknowledgements:

For acknowledgements contact Nick Hooper (Nhooper1956@googlemail.com). This temporary biography will be replaced in August.