

CHARLES TAYLOR WHITELEY



1st July 1918

1885-1918 Aged 32

Lieutenant 2/8th Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment, attached 14th Battalion.

Charles Whiteley's parents were both from the Huddersfield suburb of Lockwood, and were of established manufacturing families. Tom Whiteley was a son of William Whiteley, the owner of a substantial machine-making business. In 1877 he married Ada, daughter of Joseph Taylor, an iron and steel merchant. They had two sons. Charles, the younger, was born in Trowbridge, Wiltshire on 23rd November 1885. By 1891 the family lived in Otley where Tom was a manager in a worsted mill (presumably Ackroyd's). For most of the 1890s they lived on Queen's Terrace, then at 'Lindisfarne' on West Chevin Road. Their two sons were educated at Pembroke College in Harrogate. The elder Henry was apprenticed to an Otley printing press maker and trained as an engineer, later joining his grandfather's company in Lockwood. Charles attended the Bradford Grammar School for four terms in 1899-1900, between the ages of thirteen and fourteen. In his only full year he did well at Physics, Maths and Chemistry, but his results in Drawing and Art were not good. Nevertheless, he was articled to Mr. Rhodes Calvert of Forster Square, Bradford to train as an architect and surveyor. Following his mother's death in 1901, he moved with his father to Hall Royd, Shipley. Charles became an associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects, and for several years he taught building construction for evening classes organised by Shipley Education Committee. He also met and became engaged to Dorothy Wilson, youngest daughter of the manager of the Bradford branch of the Bank of Liverpool.

When the war began Charles was twenty-eight. He did not enlist until October 1915, a month short of his thirtieth birthday. He gave his brother's house in Mill Hill, north-west London as his permanent address, so he had perhaps moved there. Charles joined the Artists Rifles (28th Battalion London Regiment), which was an established route to a commission. His medical inspection shows him to have been 6 feet tall and of spare build. He was gazetted Second Lieutenant in June 1916 and was posted to his



preferred unit, the 3/8th (reserve) Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment. What connection he had with this battalion is yet to be established. At the end of August 1916 Whiteley joined the 2/8th Battalion in France, where he would serve until early in 1918. Over seventeen months with this battalion he was twice sent to hospital, had one period of leave and was sent on a course to learn to use the Lewis Gun in an anti-aircraft role. However, although his battalion spent much time in the line and also practised attacks, Whiteley did not himself have to take part in one. On 1st February 1918 he was sent home for six months, probably as a 'tired' or 'war-worn' officer.

Less than two months into his rest Whiteley was recalled to France where in late March the Germans had launched their offensive to win the war. As his original battalion had been disbanded he reported for duty with the 14th Royal Warwickshire near the Nieppe Forest on 25th May. One month later, on 28th June, the battalion took part in a successful attack at Arrewage. The next day the battalion held the new line and wired it at dusk. Whiteley was one of ten casualties suffered and was taken to 54th Casualty Clearing Station where he died of his wounds on 1st July.



Acknowledgements:

The photo of Charles Whiteley is from the School memorial book courtesy of the Old Bradfordians Association and Bradford Grammar School. The family was researched using Ancestry.com. There are two summaries of his life, from *Shipley Telegraph and Express* 12th July 1918 and *Hendon and Finchley Times* 9th August 1918. Henry Whiteley attended James Etchells' Collegiate School in Otley, so perhaps Charles also did. For Pembroke College, Harrogate, see <<https://picclick.co.uk/Old-Postcard-Pembroke-College-Harrogate-Yorkshire-182708920355.html>> (accessed 19-6-2018). His years at B.G.S. are recorded in the Annual Reports 1900 (Junior Upper 4th) and 1901 (Junior Upper 5th). His Officer Personal Record is WO374-73892. The War Diary for the 2/8th Royal Warwicks is T.N.A. WO 95/3057/1—Whiteley is referred to from 31st August to 1st February—and for the 14th Royal Warwicks T.N.A. WO 95/1556/2 (25th May-1st July 1918). Both were consulted through Ancestry.com. For the rested officer scheme, see Trevor Harvey, 'Turnover Amongst Brigade Commanders, 1917. The Real Reasons?', *Stand To! The Journal of the Western Front Association*, No. 109 (June/July 2017), 97-8. Charles was buried in Aire Communal Cemetery, Aire-sur-la-Lys, Plot 3, Row G, Grave 6. His name is not listed in Terry Carter, *Birmingham Pals* (Pen & Sword, Barnsley, 1997, 2011 edn.), 394.

This biography was researched and composed by Nick Hooper in June 2018. For further information, contact Nhooper1956@googlemail.com, or see <<http://www.bradfordgrammar.com/former-pupils/bradford-grammar-school-in-ww1/>>.