

JACK JACOB HALLE



26th July 1916

1893-1916 Age 23

Lieutenant 13th Battalion (Service) Worcester Regiment, attached 25th Company Machine Gun Corps.

Jack was born in 1893, the fifth child of Moritz von Halle and Frances Lawrence Moss. Moritz, also known as 'Morris', was a German Jew, a cloth merchant from Hamburg and a member of Bradford's significant German community. He became a naturalized British subject in 1870. He was aged thirty-two when in 1873 he married Frances, from Canada. She was eighteen, and had been living with her uncle in London. Their eldest child was a son, Lawrence. Three daughters followed, and then after a long gap came Jack. He was the baby of the family, twenty years younger than his brother, and doubtless doted on by his sisters. Moritz's partnership with Ludwig Nathan Hardy came to an end in 1893, however he continued to trade under the name L. N. Hardy & Co., with premises on Burnett Street in Little Germany (now converted into luxury flats). By this time, Lawrence was already his apprentice. When Moritz died in 1910, Lawrence took over the business. The family were members of the Bradford Reform Synagogue on Bowland Street, Manningham. Lawrence was admitted to the Pentalfa Masonic Lodge in 1903.

Jack was a pupil at Bradford Grammar School from 1902, when he was nine, until 1907, leaving when he was fourteen. His academic record was variable, causing him to repeat his third year. His best subject was consistently Art, for which he several times won prizes. From B.G.S. he was sent to Lausanne in Switzerland to complete his education. What came next is not known—perhaps he joined his brother's wool cloth exporting business.

The impact of war against Germany caused Jack's family to modify their surname. They dropped the German 'von' and called themselves simply 'Halle' (which is how Jack's name appears on the school war memorial). He further adopted the spelling 'Halley', with the result that he appears in military records under both forms. He enlisted early following the outbreak of war and received a commission in the 6th Battalion West Yorkshire Territorials. However, he did not accompany them to France in April 1915, and instead was transferred to the 13th Battalion Worcester Regiment at Plymouth. This was designated as a training unit to send men



to other units at the front. Jack was attached to the 25th Company of the newly formed Machine Gun Corps and he finally entered the theatre of war in France in August 1915. The M.G.C. had the unenviable nickname of 'the suicide club'. The operation of the Vickers medium machine guns with which it was equipped required intelligent officers with skill at mathematics, trigonometry and calculus as well as at arms. Halley was promoted to Lieutenant with command of a section of two machine guns.

The 25th Company was attached to the 25th Infantry brigade, part of 8th Division. This incurred the greatest losses of any division on 1st July attacking Ovillers. By late July, the front had been pushed forward to Pozieres, and the 25th Machine-Gun Company was in the line giving supporting fire. His Captain wrote to Frances Halle after Jack's death: *'He was killed on about 7.30 p.m. on the 26th inst. while on duty in the trenches; his death was instantaneous and he did not suffer at all. He had been carrying out machine-gun indirect fire, and the Germans commenced to shell his position. He moved his gun and team to a position of safety, and then went to see what damage had been done to the gun-emplacement, when a shell burst about five yard from him, killing both him and his corporal. He was a very gallant officer ...'* Jack Halley and Corporal Clarke lie side by side in Vermelles British Cemetery, which is some distance from the Somme battlefield, to which their bodies must later have been removed.



Acknowledgements:

Jack Halley's photo is courtesy of the O.B.A. Roll of Honour. The family was researched using Ancestry.com. For Bradford Reform Synagogue, <http://www.bradfordsynagogue.co.uk/about.htm>. For the 13th Worcesters, http://www.worcestershireregiment.com/wr.php?main=inc/bat_13, and for the Machine-Gun Corps http://www.machine-gun-corps-database.co.uk/intro_page.html. Jack's death was reported in the Bradford Daily Telegraph on 31 July, and the letter to his mother appeared on 1st August.

Compiled and composed by Nick Hooper, July 2016 (Nhooper1956@googlemail.com).