

Frederick Charles BARRETT

Born: 1897, Dulwich, Surrey
Occupation: Just left school
Enlisted: St Ives: 9th September 1915 (Volunteer)
Unit: 1/5th London Regt, London Rifle Brigade (TF)
Rank/number: Rifleman No.301756 (Also 2674)
Death: Died, 11th May 1917
Detail:

Frederick, or Charlie as he was known, died during the later stages of the Battle of Arras. His unit was resting and re-equipping in old German trench lines south of Tilloy. Casualty records state “accidentally” as cause of death, but the battalion war diary says that bomb and grenade training took place that day and it likely one exploded prematurely.



Age at death: 19

Military info:

Charlie’s older brother Richard enlisted in the London Rifle Brigade (later the 1/5th London Regt.) in February 1915 and went to France that September. That same month Charles joined the same regiment, a few weeks shy of his 18th birthday. His younger brother, Arthur, also enlisted in the 1/5th Londons that November. The LRB has strong links with the City and its is likely their father’s working associations with that part of London encouraged his sons to favour this regiment. Records indicate Charles arrived in France in late 1916, soon after turning 19. The 1/5th had already taken part in heavy fighting by the time Charlie joined their ranks, notably the bloody attack at Gommecourt on the Somme on 1st July. The battalion later fought at Arras in 1917 and on 3rd May they made the final attack on enemy lines east of Monchy le Preux. It was a costly failure and at 7pm the following day the 1/5th Londons rested in old German trenches near Tilloy, where Charles was accidentally killed.

Grave/memorial:

Charlie is buried at Tilloy British Cemetery, France. He is commemorated at St Petroc’s Church, Padstow and on the Padstow War Memorial.

Family info:

Father: Arthur Barrett, born Hardwick, Cambs in 1850. Auditor of the Exchequer.
Mother: Laura (maiden name unknown), born Sawston, Cambs in 1860. The couple married in 1889. Laura appears to have been married before as in 1891 the Barretts, who are childless, are living with Laura’s 10-year-old daughter, Laura Bennett, at Saltash, Cornwall. In 1901 the family were living in West Dulwich, London. By 1911 the family have moved to The Vicarage, Padstow.

Additional info:

Charlie’s death hit the Barretts like a hammer blow. On 19th May 1917 his sisters, Dorothy and Gladys, visited their friends the Millars at St Merryn to tell them the news. This family knew full well what they were feeling as their own son, Bright Millar, had been killed in the same battle two weeks earlier.



This information was researched by Peter Smith, who is currently writing a book about Padstow’s part in the Great War. Anyone wishing to correct errors or supply additional information can write to him at 24 Mallard Drive, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 5PW. Also phone 01825 762226 or email smithpeter24@gmail.com

+Lest we forget+