

Harold Edwin Veale

Church Hulme

Killed in Action 24th July 1917

His death was instantaneous and was reported by letter from his company officer as follows: 'I cannot tell you how sorry I am to have to write to tell you your son was killed here in action on 24th. I am sure it must be a terrible blow to you. To us here the blow was so sudden and sad that hardly yet do we realise how much we have lost. The Battery was in action at the time, shooting in support of a daylight raid by the Infantry. In the middle of all the noise our own guns were making, a German shell burst within a few yards of the gun on which your son was serving and killed outright the whole detachment. Death was quite instantaneous, and I am sure he did not know a moments pain. We buried him here, together with his four comrades, in the afternoon, a clergyman holding a service over the grave.'

I feel at times like these words of sympathy are of such poor comfort, but I must tell you how we all do sympathise with you. Since your son joined the Battery out here he has proved his worth. He was a wonderfully plucky chap, and one of our most promising gunners. Will you please accept from us all, men and officers, our most sincere condolence in your bitter loss.'

His Story

Harold Edwin was born in August 1896 at Ockham, Surrey to William and Annie Eliza Veale. His father was a gardener at Hatchford End and by 1911 Harold was also working in the garden. After 1911 it appears the family moved to Holmes Chapel because of the reports in the Parish Magazine but no details have been found. As William Veale was a gardener at a significant property in Surrey he may have moved to Cranage Hall as gardener but it is conjecture. We know William and Eliza moved to Llandudno Junction at a later stage but dates are not known.

His War Record

He enlisted into the Royal Field Artillery as a Gunner, number L/1079. He served with the B Battery 153 Brigade.

In April 1917 the Parish Magazine reported that Mr and Mrs Veale's two sons were in hospital but by May it was reported that they were both out of hospital and back with their regiments. However, in August it was reported that Harold had been killed in action in France on July 24th 1917 when he was aged 20 years.

A memorial service was held at St Lukes for him on August 8th.

He was buried in Grave H16 at the White House Cemetery, Jean les Ypres in Belgium. White House Cemetery was begun in March 1915 and used until April 1918 by units holding this part of the line.