

Frank Archibald Price

Private

381535

13th Battalion Kings (Liverpool Regiment)



Frank Archibald Price (Archie) was not a Kington man but came from Rhayader. Born in 1892, Archie was the fifth child born to Rees and Cordelia Price. Rees was a farmer come general labourer who married his sweetheart Cordelia Lewis in 1883, Rhayader. The 1891 census shows the family living at 2 Water Lane, Bridge Street, Rhayader, where they had three children at that time, Annie born out of wedlock in 1879, William 1886 and David 1890. Ten years later in the 1901 census the family were still living in Water Lane but had grown with the addition of John, who was born in 1884 but in 1891 was living with his Grandmother in the tiny village of Llansantffraed-Cwmdeuddwr just outside Rhayader. Frank Archibald had arrived in 1892, and a younger brother Charles was born in 1895. By the 1911 census Archie had moved away from the family home and was working as a Waggoner on a farm and is recorded as living as a lodger to a Mrs Anne Jones who ran the general stores in Pant-y-dwr, a tiny village just outside St Harmon's, which in turn was five miles or so from Rhayader. Records also show that towards the end of 1914 Archie married a Daisy (Winifred) Lewis in Rhayader. Daisy was from Kington and it appears this was the only link Archie had with Kington. However, tragedy struck when in early 1915 Daisy died in Kington. It is no coincidence that a baby, Evelyn Price was born in late 1914 Kington to a mother whose maiden name was Lewis. Almost certainly this was Daisy who sadly passed away just a couple of months later. The 1st May 1915 issue of the Kington Times records this sad event and reveals details about Frank's military exploits.

Death of Mrs Daisy Price

We regret to record the death of Mrs Daisy Price, daughter of Mr and Mrs S Lewis of Mill Street, Kington, who died on Friday April 23rd at the early age of 19. The husband, Archibald Price, is in the 1st Herefordshire Regiment and is among those who have volunteered for foreign service. Deceased had been married for about 12 months and leaves one child.

We can only guess what was going through Archie's mind at this time. Newly wed to a wife who sadly died shortly after giving birth to daughter Evelyn but also answering the call of duty to his country. Tragic times indeed.

Regrettably very few of Archie's military records survive, but from those which do we know he enlisted in Hereford as Private 8187 Price of the 1st Hereford Regiment, sometime towards the beginning of the war. From his medal index card, we do know for sure that he first entered France on the 1st September 1915. At some point he was transferred into the 13th Battalion, The Kings Liverpool Regiment and given the new service number of Private 381535 Price. It was while serving with this regiment that Archie sadly lost his life. As I say we do not know exactly when Archie was transferred into the 13th Liverpool Regiment but from the Regimental War Diary we can discover what Archie was enduring in April 1918.

The Battle of Lys was fought between the 4th and 29th of April. This battle is also known as the 4th Battle of Ypres and by the Germans as The Lys Offensive. Throughout the war Ypres had been a thorn in the side of the Germans. Ypres had to be taken if they were to gain access to the coast of northern France/Belgium and thus cut off supply routes for the allies. The German Spring offensive of 1918 was yet another attempt at taking the by now devastated but still strategically important town of Ypres. The grand Spring Offensive by the Germans was to be known as Operation George, but for logistical reasons had to be scaled down and was consequently renamed Operation Georgette. The 13th Kings Liverpool Regiment was heavily involved in the defence of Ypres, to the south in the area around Bethune.

On the 1st April the battalion were bussed to Houdain, just south west of Bethune, where they were billeted for the next few days. At Houdain they were primarily involved in organising themselves, R&R and training. On the 3rd April a draft of 431 men joined. Perhaps Archie was one of them? On the 6th they marched to Coupigny (Hersin Coupigny) where they were again involved in training and digging trenches. At mid-day on the 9th the battalion were given the order to 'stand to', to prepare themselves for battle. That evening they were bussed to Bethune and went into Brigade Reserve for the 165th Infantry Brigade. They were then marched east to a point three miles outside of Bethune, to Gorre Chateau which was a

support post just behind the front line. On the 10th they moved forward to the front line at Festubert.



On the 11th the men were in trenches facing the enemy just to the north of Festubert in an area called Brewery Corner, so named after a defunct brewery which by 1918 was no more. The men were preparing for a massed assault by the enemy and at noon the German's opened fire with heavy artillery and a very heavy barrage ensued. Following the barrage their infantry attacked and by 4pm had driven the defenders out of their trenches at Festubert Keep East and Cailloux Keep. Men of 'C' Company, 13th battalion were ordered to retake Festubert Keep East which they did and held until relieved on the 13th April. Another company of the 13th retook Cailloux Keep, again holding it until relieved on the 13th. Following the horrific barrage of the 11th, men of 'B' Company were ordered to advance and to take up positions in shell holes to the left of Brewery Corner where they remained for the next two days. Despite repeated assaults by the enemy the men held their positions until relieved on the night of the 13th/14th, however, in spite of their undoubted bravery their stoic defence resulted in the battalion suffering very heavy losses. Frank Archibald Price was one of those casualties who was killed in action on the **11th April 1918**.



Archie's body was never recovered and his sacrifice is remembered on the Loos Memorial at Loos-en-Gohelle, a village three miles north-west of Lens. The memorial commemorates over 20,000 officers and men who have no known grave, who fell in the area from the River Lys to the old southern boundary of the First Army, east and west of Grenay. On either side of the cemetery is a wall 15 feet high, to which are fixed tablets on which are carved the names of those commemorated. At the back are four small circular courts, open to the sky, in which the lines of tablets are continued, and between these courts are three semi-circular walls or apses, two of which carry tablets, while on the centre apse is erected the Cross of Sacrifice. Archie is remembered on panels 27 and 30 and for



his sacrifice and bravery was awarded the 1915 Star, British War and Victory medals. While Archie is remembered on Kington memorial he is also, naturally, remembered on the Rhayader memorial, his name placed there by his loving parents. Rees and Cordelia remained in Rhayader until their deaths. Rees passed away in 1921 followed a few years later by Cordelia in 1931. As for baby Evelyn her fate is unknown. However, two marriages occurred in Kington, the first in 1943 when an Evelyn M Price married Clifford Price and the second in 1948 when an Evelyn M Price married Frederick Powell. Either one of these, or both, could have been the Evelyn Price who sadly lost both her parents before her fourth birthday. The sacrifice of these brave men and the devastation their deaths left behind, must never be forgotten.



Biography researched and compiled by Mark Wheatland