

William Richard DALE

Born: 1896, Padstow, Cornwall
Occupation: Carrier carter worker
Enlisted: Padstow: 4th August 1914 (Pre-war Territorial)
Unit: 1st/2nd Lancs Heavy Battery, RGA (TF)
Rank/number: Gunner: No.1068
Death: Died, 18th March 1916
Detail: Little or nothing is known of William Dale's death, though what scant evidence there is seems to point to him succumbing to disease. He was taken ill a month after landing with his unit in France and was taken to Le Treport in France where three hospitals were situated. He later died. William's father Richard was killed of the Gallipoli coast in 1915.



Age at death: 20

Military info: Early in 1913 William, along with many of his pals, joined the Territorial Royal Garrison Artillery at Padstow. The part-timer gunners were responsible for a section of No.1 Heavy Battery which was part of the county's coastal defences. Men trained in their spare time and went away to a summer camp. Territorials were not obliged to serve overseas, but in the event of war they could be called upon for full-time service -"embodied." When war broke out in 1914 the TF men were asked to volunteer to serve overseas. Most did, but those who did not, for reason of choice or because they were not yet 19 and old enough for foreign service, joined an RGA unit at home. William, who was only 18, was posted to the 1/2nd Lancs Heavy Battery, part of 42nd (East Lancs) Division (TF). That December the battery, which had four 4.7-inch guns, joined the newly-formed 66th (2nd East Lancs) Division, a second-line TF unit, and remained with them on home service until 5th January 1916 when they left the Division and headed for France. On 9th February 1916 the 1/2nd Lancs arrived on the Western Front where they joined XV1 Heavy Brigade RGA. But little over a month later William died in hospital at Le Treport near Dieppe. The cause is a mystery, but disease is the likely culprit.

Grave/memorial: William is buried at Le Treport Military Cemetery in France, and also commemorated at St Petroc's Church, Padstow and Padstow War Memorial.

Family info: Father: Richard Dale, born Padstow, Cornwall on 2nd March 1866. Petty Officer 2nd Class in the Coastguard and former Able Seaman in the Royal Navy. Mother: Marry Hannah Bray, born Padstow in 1876. The couple wed in 1894 and had six children. William's father was in the Royal Fleet Reserve and had to report for service in the navy when war broke out in August 1914. He was killed when his ship was shelled off Gallipoli on 28th April 1915.



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.

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