



(Jacob) Charles Templar

Jacob Charles Templar was born in Gretton on 24th January 1898. He was baptised on 3rd April 1898. His father was William Bradshaw Templar of Gretton, his mother was Sarah Ann Templar (nee Reddyhoof Pridmore) from Elton near Huntingdon. William and Sarah were married in Gretton on 25th December 1857.

The Family

William and Sarah were to have 11 children over 21 years, although two (James 1885) and Rose (1899) were to die young. Jacob Charles was to be the only son to live to adulthood. Jacob Charles was named after his grandfather; in later records he was generally referred to as Charles Templar.

In the 1901 Census, William and Sarah and five of their children (including Jacob Charles) were living in Gretton. William was employed as a railway labourer. William and Sarah's daughter, Margaret Matilda died in 1910 age 19.

In the 1911 Census, William's occupation was recorded as foreman platelayer. Four of William and Sarah's children were recorded as resident, including Emily Rebecca (school teacher), Dorothy (general machinist in a clothing factory), Charles Jacob (at school) and their youngest child Ivy.

Military Service

Charles Templar enlisted in Kettering on 15th May 1916. He was originally assigned to the 3rd Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment (30922). His occupation was recorded as carpenter.

Charles was called-up on 17th November 1916 and remained in the UK until 2nd March 1917. He left Folkstone for Boulogne. He was transferred to the 1st Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment at this point, joining his battalion in the field on 29th March 1917.

Private Charles Templar was recorded as missing in action on 10th July 1917 whilst the battalion was involved in action at Nieupoort in Belgium. The battalion suffered many casualties during this action, as they became stuck in sand dunes having to face significant German forces without any chance of reinforcements. The "Battle of the Dunes" saw the Northamptonshire Regiment lose around 500 soldiers.

Private Templar's body was never recovered, he was officially declared dead on 30th March 1918.



Charles was 19 years of age when he died. He had been overseas just 130 days. The Grantham Journal of 11th August 1917 recorded –

Pte. C.J. Templer, of Gretton, of the Northamptons, and who had only been abroad a short time, is posted “missing”.

Private Charles Templar is commemorated on the Nieuport Memorial and on Gretton War Memorial.

Nieuport Memorial

The Nieuport Memorial commemorates 566 Commonwealth officers and men who were killed in Allied operations on the Belgian coast during the First World War and have no known grave. Twenty of those commemorated served with the Royal Naval Division and were killed or mortally wounded during the siege of Antwerp in October 1914. Almost all of the remainder fell in heavy fighting in the region of Nieuport in the summer of 1917. The memorial is constructed of Euville limestone and stands eight metres high. It was designed by William Bryce Binnie, an Imperial War Graves Commission architect who served with the Royal Highland Regiment during the war and was twice decorated for bravery. The lions standing at each point of the triangular platform were designed by Charles Sergeant Jagger, a celebrated British sculptor and decorated veteran of the Western Front. The memorial was officially unveiled by Sir George Macdonogh in July 1928.

British Operations on the Belgian Coast

The armies of the German Empire invaded Belgium on 4 August 1914. Within three weeks the fortified cities of Liege and Namur were in German hands and the Belgian forces had retreated to Antwerp, which was well defended and ringed by a series of forts. To begin with, the German First Army under General von Kluck bypassed the city and moved south-west toward the Franco-Belgian border. Yet on September 28, after weeks of heavy fighting in northern France, German artillery batteries began to shell the outer forts from the south-east. The accuracy of the German long-range guns had a devastating effect on the defences of the outer forts, and by the beginning of October the German infantry was slowly closing in on the city.

Fearing that the fall of Antwerp would expose the channel ports and leave Britain vulnerable to attack, the British deployed the newly formed Royal Naval Division to assist their Belgian allies in defending the city. The first British reinforcements, a brigade of Royal Marines, arrived at Antwerp on 4 October and relieved the 21st Belgian Regiment. On the following day the German forces crossed the river Nethe at Lier, 20 kilometres south of Antwerp. Two more British naval brigades arrived at Antwerp early on 6 October, yet while their arrival lifted the morale of the soldiers



and civilians in the city, they could do little to alter the strategic position of the Belgian garrison, which was now critical. On the night of 6 October, the Belgian fortress troops under General Paris retired to the inner forts on the outskirts of the city, and over the course of the next day the German forces crossed the river Scheldt and began to shell the streets and houses of Antwerp. By 8 October, the Belgian Field Army had evacuated the city, which was now defended by mixed units of Belgian and British troops. The first German troops entered the city, following heavy shelling, on 9 October and the siege was at an end.

British units did not return to this sector of the Western Front until June 1917, when the 32nd Division relieved French troops stationed at Nieuport in preparation for planned Allied landings on German-held territory along the Belgian coast. German marines launched a pre-emptive attack against the British forces on the river Yser in July and the landings, codenamed 'Operation Hush', never took place. Over 260 men commemorated on the Nieuport Memorial were killed or mortally wounded during heavy fighting with units of the German Marine-Korps Flandern on July 10 1917.

The memorial was designed by Major W.B. Binnie.

Reference

Commonwealth War Graves Commission
Gretton History Society
Grantham Journal

Lest We Forget

Charles Templar
of the Northamptonshire Regiment.

d.10th July 1917

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