

Stanley Percival Huggins
1892 – 1915: age at death 23
Student at the Society of the Sacred Mission

Family History

Stanley Percival was born in 1892 in Romford, Essex. His father was Henry T Huggins and his mother Eleanor Frances. Henry was the manager of a Seed Merchants.

Stanley was the fifth of eight children, and in 1901 they all lived with their parents in Ellens Lea, Witham, Braintree. His older sisters and brothers were Rosalind May, Doris, Alice and Henry and his younger siblings were Mary, Douglas and Catherine. The family included a general domestic servant, Caroline Bell.

By 1911 the family had moved to Upminster and Stanley, now aged 18, was working as a Clerk as was his brother Henry. He joined the Society in January 1913 as a theology student and enlisted in the Sherwood Foresters in the Autumn of 1914.

Military History

Stanley served as a private in the 8th Bn Sherwood Foresters in France. He was killed in action in October 1915.

Following his death an officer wrote

he was a in a quiet way one of the leading spirits of the platoon, and knew better than any one how to keep the others going in times of stress and exhaustion. I kept catching him in small acts of kindness ... carrying an extra rifle at the end of a long march, or sitting up with a lonely sentry ...

The same officer recounted episodes of bravery, which was reported in full in the Society's Newsletter:

I do know whether you heard of it, but on June 15th when one of our trenches was blown up, he and another man who were in charge of the telephone behaved with great gallantry. Their instrument was smashed and the wires cut. ... they went straight out across the open, found and mended the broken wire and got a reserve instrument.

After the enemy's position had been stormed and taken by our division ... [13th October 1915] the company he was attached to endeavoured in the early morning of the 14th to get across to the relief of their comrades, and while thus doing his duty he was killed by a bullet wound. He passed away very quickly, and from what I gather suffered very little pain.

Personally, I feel the loss very keenly, for not only was he a good soldier, always ready to do more than his bit, but to anyone who knew him intimately his upright Christian character was something to admire and a noble example to follow.'

He was 23 years old.

He is buried in the Bully-Grenay Communal Cemetery, British Extension, Plot VII, row B, grave 5.

SOURCES:

FindMyPast <https://www.findmypast.co.uk/>

Nottinghamshire Great War Roll of Honour: <http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/rollofhonour/>

Commonwealth War Graves Commission: <https://www.cwgc.org/>

Forces War Records website: <https://www.forces-war-records.co.uk/>

Society of the Sacred Mission Quarterly Newsletter, Borthwick Institute:
<https://www.york.ac.uk/borthwick/>