

# FORGET ME NOT

## CHARLIE HAWORTH JAMES HAWORTH'S GRANDFATHER



My grandfather, Charlie Haworth, was born on the 11th December 1896 in Blackburn, Lancashire. Sadly his mother (my great grandmother), Margaret, died in 1909 at a young age leaving my grandfather and his three brothers as well as their father.

Shortly afterwards, the family moved to Leek in Staffordshire where my great grandfather remarried.

When war broke out in 1914 Charlie was a few months short of his 18th birthday and was working as a clerk in Leek.

Sometime in 1915 or 1916 he joined the South Staffordshire Regiment and as far as I am aware, he saw active service with the British Expeditionary Force as a private.

Our family records show that in October 1917 he successfully completed officer training and went back to the front as a 2nd lieutenant at the age of 20.

According to a report handwritten by him, a Captain by this time, he was involved on the 21st March 1918 in fighting, believed to be at the Somme (possibly the Battle of St Quentin), was injured and taken prisoner by the Germans. A transcript of this report is attached. He saw out the war at the Offiziergefangenen-Lager POW camp in Mainz.

There are some photos of Charlie and of his brothers Harrison and James who also fought in

(and survived) the war. In fact James (who was known as Jimmy) was captured in Singapore in World War II and held prisoner by the Japanese working on the Thai-Burma railroad. He survived that too!

I have Charlie's medals and some other memorabilia of his war time service.

After the war he married my grandmother, Mary, and they had three children, Phillip, Geoffrey (my father) and Pamela. They owned and ran the White Hart restaurant in Leek, which is still there today. He served on the Leek Urban District Council and was the leader of the Council in the 1950s. He died in 1965 aged 68.

Although I met my grandfather I was only 3 years old when I last saw him and therefore too young to have any memories of him. I have known for many years that he had been a prisoner in the First World War but it is only upon the centenary of that conflict that I asked my father to let me have any photos or other information that he had that concerned Charlie's wartime experiences. We do not know a lot about those years but seeing the photo of him as a young officer and reading his account of the battle in which he was captured were very moving.



Charlie's Brother Harrison



AT HOME		SERVICE	
Loc.	From	To	Remarks



**A transcript of the report by Capt Charles (Charlie) Haworth, of the ensuing battle prior to his capture by the German army.**

On the morning of the 21st of March I was in charge of No 15 platoon situated in Zypher trench as Counter Attack Platoon. My Company (CO Capt Adams) was in reserve in Railway Reserve. At 5.30am (approx) Capt Adams ordered me to "Stand to" at 6.05am in Zypher Trench

The bombardment was so severe that I had to order "Stand down" at 6.15am permitting the men to go in the dugout, leaving two men as sentries.

Intermittently I went round the trenches to visit 16 platoon who were in charge of a sergeant and gave him orders to be on the (Guitier?)

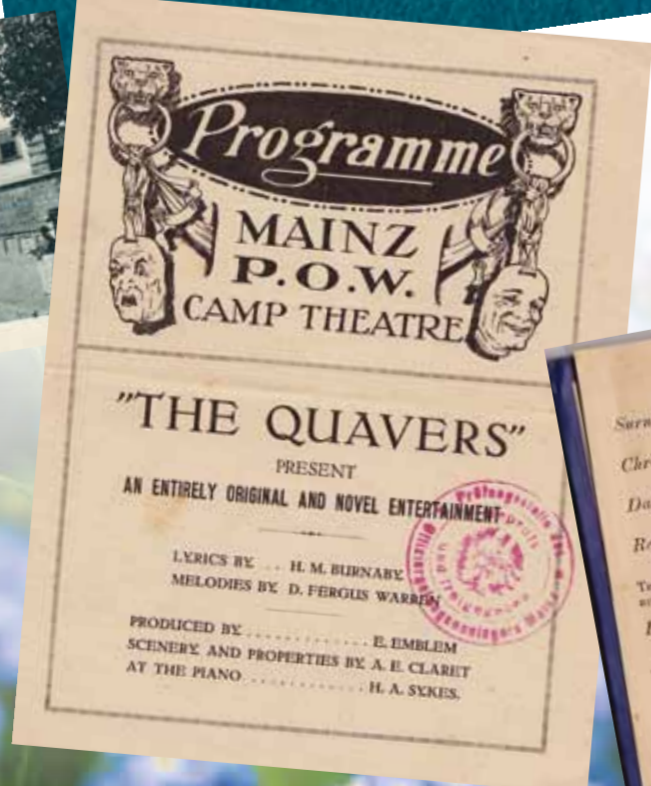
At 7.30am all the surrounding trenches were blown in. There was a continuous strong gas attack. I returned to the platoon dugout at 7.30am as it was impossible to get about owing to the severe barrage he laid down on all the system of trenches. I tried again and again to get to 16 platoon dugout with my sergeant, only to return. I kept one sentry on duty in a fairly safe position personally changing them every ten minutes.

In the meanwhile I remained with the men giving necessary orders and cheering them to keep up their morale. At 7.55am he raised his barrage so I ordered a "stand to" on the ground (where?) Zypher trench was once, being only a trench in places. I picked the best ground for field of fire which was situated facing the valley and at the end of Zypher trench. It was very foggy and could see very little of what was happening. At 8.05am we sighted the enemy coming on our right and left on both sides of the valley I was facing. I utilised the Lewis gun to an excellent purpose against the enemy on the left and ordered rapid fire to the men against the enemy on the left and can say with impunity that we slaughtered many. I could not get into communication with anyone other than a runner informing me that our forward posts had fallen and that the enemy had passed through butts on our right and left and was surrounding us. I told the men that we should have to make a stand for it and sent Sergt Beedel to get to 16 platoon and to see how they were progressing and inform them of the circumstances but he never returned.

We then had a heavy bombardment of Whiz-bangs and a few gas shells on our front. Half of the men were now casualties, some I bandaged to the best of my ability.

At 9.20am I reconnoitred a little to my left, leaving my men in charge of Beidel, when I saw from a shell hole a German officer and men coming towards us from the left. I used my revolver to good advantage and returned to my men, finding only four left.

At 9.25am we saw the enemy coming en masse 30 yds in front of our position. We mowed them down until all our (amm?) was finished when I told my gunner to break the gun whereupon he threw the pistol grip at the leading German. The enemy had already taken Railway Reserve behind us. We fired until the last when a shell blew us up and we were coiled in our own wire. It was then that I was taken from the wire and taken prisoner with four of my men all wounded, and two of us gassed, through shrapnel penetrating our helmets. I personally think the men made a glorious stand until the last, sticking it from 8.05am to 9.35 am continuously.



Handwritten form with fields for: Surname (Haworth), Christian Names (Charlie), Date of Birth (Dec 11 1896), Regiment (2nd Staffs), Permanent Home Address (Leek, Staffs), Civil Profession or Occupation before the War (Clerk), Agents (Messrs. J. & J. ...), Full Name and Address of Next-of-Kin (James Haworth, Leek, Staffs).

