



Michael Sweeney (Q3 1882 – 9 October 1917)

Michael was the son of James and Bridget Sweeney (nee Daley) who married in Brentford in February 1865. James and his wife Bridget were both born in Ireland and Joseph worked as a gardener. They had five children. Ellen (born 1872), Mary Ann (born 1876), John (born 1877) James Joseph (born 1880) and finally Michael, the youngest, born in 1882.

In 1881 the family were living in George Yard, 1 South Street, Isleworth but in November 1890 Michael's father, James, died at the age of 45 when Michael was aged just 8. By 1891 the family, now headed by widow Bridget, was living at 8 Hayes Terrace, Talbot Road, Isleworth. Bridget gave her occupation as Garden Woman. Sisters Ellen and Mary Ann worked in domestic service while the three younger children were at school. However, Michael's mother Bridget died in 1898 at the age of 49 when Michael was 16. In 1901 Michael was living with his older sister Mary in Gordon House Square, Isleworth. He was working as a bargeman's mate while Mary was employed as a laundry hand.



Michael enlisted into the army in Rotherham in September 1914 at the age of 29. His occupation at the time of enlisting was a collier. He became a Private in the York and Lancaster Regiment. Initially he was in the 3/5th Battalion but later transferred into the 1/4th Battalion of the same Regiment.

In October 1917 Michael's Regiment was part of the 49th Division located a few miles south west of Passchendaele in Belgium. On 8 October the 1/4th Battalion marched for 11 hours to reach an assembly position ready for attack. The Battalion War Diary records that the men were very tired and it was difficult to rouse them to be ready at zero hour on 9 October. When the advance began it was found that the Ravbeek stream presented a serious obstacle as the ground was cut up and very



Gravestone at Tyne Cot Cemetery

wet for a breadth of about 30 yards. Only some of the soldiers were able to cross it and Battalion troops became divided on either side of the stream and were subjected to heavy enemy machine gun fire. On 10th October a report was received that gave information about the location of some of the Battalion and patrols were sent out but "no trace of our men could be found". Michael died on 9 October 1917. He was aged 35.

Michael's brother John also enlisted in 1915 at the age of 38. He was in the Yorkshire Regiment. John was Michael's next of kin and survived the war.

Michael's body was initially buried on the battlefield but was later exhumed. He was identified by his identity disc. He is now commemorated at the Tyne Cot Cemetery West Flanders in Belgium.