



BARLOW William C.

Private Co F, 105th Engineers Regiment, 30th Division
KIA 27 augustus 1918
Plot B – Rij 2 – Graf 20
Army serial number 1881232



William Cataloe Barlow was born in Dixons Beat, AL on 27 December 1888. He is the only man from Alabama buried at Flanders Field. He was one of 3 children of Leroy H. Barlow (1849) and Russia Bryan (1856). Later the family moved to Dothan where Leroy had opened a store.

However, William became a farmer in Ashford with his grandfather. On 24 March 1918 he married Effie Palmer from Edison, Georgia. William was called to arms in June 1917 but he requested not to be drafted as his parents were dependant on him. To no avail, on 25 April, 1 month and 1 day after his marriage; he had to report for duty in Dothan. The next day he was already on the train on his way to boot camp in South Carolina. On 17 May William was assigned to Company F, 105th Engineers Regiment, 30th Division. Sailing on the SS Melita he arrived in Europe on 27 May 1918.

On 17 August, during the battles around the village of Voormezele, an order was issued that during the night of 24 op 25 August 2520 gas cylinders would be opened in the direction of the German trenches. The area of the front where this was to happen was in the zone of the 30th US Division. However, the attack was delayed for 3 days. On 28 August at 02:25 hours, the wind was favorable and the gas cylinders were opened. Three minutes into the gas attack, the direction of the wind changed. This caused the gas to reverse in the direction of the British and American troops. Although they had gas masks, three men were killed instantly. These men were Private Dave Lee from North Carolina (Plot B - Row 22 – Grave 2), Corporal Ray Stroman from Indiana (Plot B– Row 23 – Grave 2) and William Barlow. Although he was able to use his gas mask, the concentration of the gas was so high that it rendered insufficient protection. He died a few minutes later during transportation to an aid station. Barlow, Lee and Stroman were buried at Hagle Dump British Military Cemetery in Poperinge.

In 1931, Russia Bryan Barlow (photo right) visited her son's grave. As an exception to policy, permission was granted for her daughter to accompany her during the trip. They left New York on 25 June. The trip was not without incidents: Russia was slightly wounded at the head by a falling step ladder. She had lost consciousness for a short time and complained of constant headaches during the whole trip. She accused the S.S. Roosevelt that the incident was caused by carelessness and requested some kind of compensation. She had probably suffered concussion.



Also his wife Effie had requested to visit William's grave but this was denied because she had remarried a certain Jasper Kirksey in 1930. Jasper was a successful cotton trader from Georgia. Effie died on 14 October 1969 in Arlington, Georgia.

William's older brother Bryan (photo right together with William) had graduated as doctor in 1916 and worked for an insurance company in Indiana. Bryan was killed in a car crash in Minnesota in 1919. He had two small children and his wife was pregnant of their third. His son Robert was killed during World War II on 26 July 1942. He was with the 90th Bomber Squadron, 3rd Bomber Group, Large. He is memorialized on the Wall of the Missing at Manila American Cemetery.



William's father Leroy died on 5 May 1929. Russia survived him almost 25 years and died in her 97th year on 26 March 1954 . William's younger sister Essie Dell remained unmarried. For a while she had her own hat store but later worked for an employer. She died in 1990 at a 100 years of age and lies buried next to her parents in the cemetery of Dothan.

