John William (Ackroyd) Akeroyd





Rank: - Private

Number: - 37291

Regiment/Battalion: - East Yorkshire (formerly 33256 K.O.Y.L.I.) 1st Battalion

Missing Presumed Killed in Action: - 4th October 1917 aged 32

Remembered with Honour: - Tyne Cot Memorial Panel 47 to 48 and 163 A

Batley News, 27 Oct 1917, 20 Jul 1918. Batley Reporter, 16 Nov 1917, 19 Jul 1918

Family Details:

John William was born in Batley on 11th May 1886 the son of Walter Akeroyd and his wife Sarah (formerly Swales nee Jenkinson) who was from Kirkheaton.

Sarah had married William Swales at Batley Parish Church in November 1867 but he died less than a year later aged 20. There was one child to this marriage William born 1869. Sarah married Walter Akeroyd at Batley Parish Church on 10th April 1875 when his occupation was given as cloth finisher. Charles was born the following year. John William arrived in 1886 followed by Susan in September 1888 who sadly died 2 months later.

In 1889 Walter applied for an alehouse licence and again on 28th August 1893 for a beer licence for the Lord Nelson Pub of which he was the licensee.

Early in 1901 Walter was the Inn Keeper at the Lord Nelson Inn, 52, Cross Bank, Batley but he died in July 1901 and Sarah became the Inn Keeper with John William as the manager. By 1911 they had a domestic servant, Emily White, living with them in the eight roomed inn. John William attended Carlinghow Council School and St. John's Church, Carlinghow and at some point, before enrolling in the army, he had a fish and chip business in Carlinghow.

On the 25th August 1913 John William married Florrie Littlewood at St. Agnes Church, Leeds. A son, Walter was born on 13th May 1914.





Sadly, both Florrie and her mother died in October 1918 due to the flu epidemic which swept across the world and young Walter went to live with his aunt.

Service Details:

John William enrolled in Batley on 18th July 1916 and disembarked in December 1916. At first, he joined the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry number 33256 later

transferring to the East Yorkshire Regiment. The East Yorkshire Regiment from November 1915 was part of 64th Brigade 21st Division.

He would have been involved with the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line. The first major battles he would have experienced would have been the 1st Battle of Scarpe, 9th -14th April 1917 which was part of the flanking operations around Bullecourt. The 3rd Battle of Scarpe took place between 3rd and 4th May.

The Battle of Polygon Wood took place during the second phase of the Third Battle of Ypres and was fought near Ypres in Belgium, 26th September – 3 October 1917, in the area from the Menin Road to Polygon Wood and thence north, to the area beyond St. Julien. Much of the woodland had been destroyed by the huge quantity of shellfire from both sides since 16 July and the area had changed hands several times. General Herbert Plumer continued the series of British general attacks with limited objectives. The British attacks were led by lines of skirmishers, followed by small infantry columns organised in depth, (a formation which had been adopted by the Fifth Army in August) with a vastly increased amount of artillery support, the infantry advancing behind five layers of creeping bombardment on the Second Army front.

John William was missing presumed killed in action on the 3rd October the last day of this battle. There were 15,375 British casualties of which 1,215 were killed. It was not until July 1918 this was made official.

He is Remembered with Honour: St. John's Carlinghow, Carlinghow Working Men's Club, Batley War Memorial and the Tyne Cot Memorial.

John William was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group