. **Ernest Archer**





Rank: - Privat e

Number: - 33040

Regiment: - Kings' Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. 2nd Battalion

Died of wounds: - 18th December 1916 aged 28

Cemetery: - Ontario Cemetery, Sans-les-Marquion, France 11.E.13

"STILL OURS IN MEMORY THOUGHT AND LOVE"

Batley News, 9 Dec 1916, 16 Dec 1916 (photo), 10 Feb 1917, 24 Feb 1917 (photo)

Family Details

Ernest was born in 1888 in Batley Carr the son of Benjamin and Jane Archer (nee Stead) he was baptised at St. Mary's, Woodkirk on 2nd September 1888 when his father's occupation was given as a millwright. His parents had married on 11th September 1871 and there were several older siblings, Lizzie (1872), Fanny (1873), Stead (1875), Lucy (1878), Nelly (1880), Edith (1885), Ernest, Herbert (1890). In 1891 the family was living at 80, Upper Road, Batley Carr but had moved to 38, Wood Hill before 1901. Wright Willans Archer was baptised at Holy Trinity on 1st March 1894 but died a few days later. In the 1911 census they were still at this address and it shows there had been 14 children born alive but only 6 were still living. In 1911 Ernest was working as a cloth finisher.

On 24th July 1915 at Holy Trinity Ernest married Minnie Jardine, the daughter of Matthew Jardine who was a well know Batley Carr tradesman. On their marriage certificate it states Matthew was a confectioner. Ernest was a member of Batley Carr Working Mens' Club and was well known in connection with Holy Trinity and before enlisting worked in the Finishing Department at C.W.S. Livingstone Mills, Batley Carr.

Service Details

Ernest enlisted at Dewsbury in July 1916 under the Derby Scheme and disembarked in September 1916.

The 2nd K.O.Y.L.I.'s were stationed at La Vicogne. On the 15th November news arrived that they were going into attack on the following day. On arrival at Englebelmer the brigade was told they would move into line the following day north of Beaumont-Hamel. Final orders were issued. The first objective was the Munich Trench followed by Frankfurt Trench. The 2nd KOYLI's would form a defensive flank on the left.

During the night of the 17th /18th the brigade moved into battle positions but it was difficult to carry out because the troops had no previous knowledge of these trenches. At 5.15 am the battalion was drawn up in an advanced line. Conditions were bad and it started snowing just before the attack was going to start which made observation difficult. The barrage commenced at 6.10 am, which was intense and very effective. The left half of the battalion reached their objective

to take Munich Trench but the right half was held up with intense machine gun and rifle fire so they took up a line of shell holes in front of the German wire. At 5.30 there was no news from the left flank and the Commanding Officer decided to withdraw to the original line.

Ernest went missing on 18th November 1916 and nothing was heard about him until Minnie, who was living at 16, Town Street, Batley Carr with her parents, received notification in February 1917 that Ernest was in a German hospital at Fields Aisy Le Verges suffering with a broken left leg due to gunshot wounds.

Two weeks later she received a letter from the Central Prisoners of War Committee who wrote: -

" We deeply regret to have to inform you that since writing on the 15th inst. we have received news from a German list , dated January 22nd , forwarded to us through Geneva that Private E. Archer, 33040, K.O.Y.L.I., died on December 18th 1916 in a reserve field hospital at Aisy le Verge and was buried in a cemetery there. No further details are given, but should any come to hand we will at once let you know. Please accept our sincere sympathy."

The Batley News reported the details and said he was respected by all who knew him.

Ernest is remembered with Honour at Batley and Dewsbury War Memorials, Ontario Cemetery, France and Holy Trinity Church, Batley Carr.

He was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

