Thomas Ashton





Rank: - Private

Number: - 242107

Regiment: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 2/5th Battalion

Missing, presumed killed in action: - 3rd May 1917 aged 39 years

Memorial: - Arras Memorial, Pas-de- Calais, France Bay 7

Batley News, 14 Jul 1917 (photo), 2 Mar 1918 (photo)

Family Details

Thomas was born in Batley Carr in c. 1878 the son of Thomas and Sarah Ann Ashton (nee Ounsworth). The couple had married in 1860.

His father was a cabinet maker, who was born in York and his mother, who was at one time a shirt maker, came from Hull.

The coupled had settled in Dewsbury for the birth of Fredrick 1861 and Anna Maria in 1862 before moving to Leeds before the birth of Ellen 1865, Sarah Anne 1868, Fred 1872 but returned to live in the area at King Street, Batley Carr before Humphrey was born in 1875 ,Thomas, William 1880 and John 1883.

In 1891 the family was living at 57, King Street and Thomas had left school and was working as a maker of confectionery although his elder brothers had become miners. A decade later the family was living at 51, King Street and he also had become a coal miner hewer. His younger brother, William was working on his own account as a greengrocer and Thomas later joined him in the business.

His father, Thomas, died in October 1906 and Sarah Ann in October 1914 when they lived at 80, King Street, Batley Carr.

Thomas married Annie Elizabeth Sykes on 21st March 1916. He was a well-known member of the Ancient Order of Druids.

Service Details

His service records have not survived but we know from newspaper reports he joined up in July 1916 into the local Territorial Battalion of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry and went to the Front in January 1917. The 2/5th KOYLI was attached to the 187th Brigade, 62nd (2nd West Riding) Division.

During 1917 they took part in the following operations: -

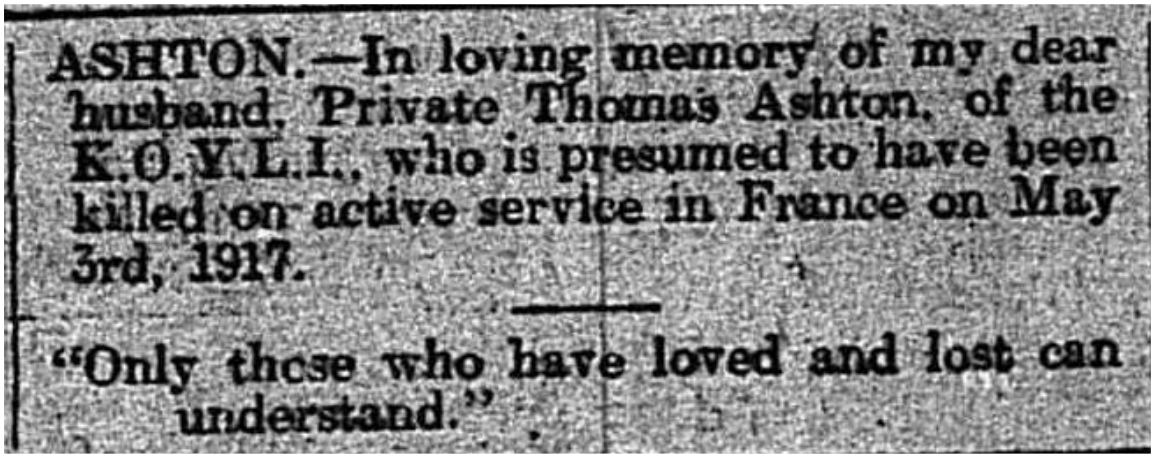
The Operations on the Ancre (15 February – 13 March)
The German retreat to the Hindenburg Line (14 – 19 March)
The first attack on Bullecourt (part of the Arras offensive) (11 April)
The German attack on Lagnicourt (part of the Arras offensive) (15 April)
The Battle of Bullecourt (part of the flanking operations round Arras) (3 – 17 May).

He was in an engagement at Bullecourt when he was reported missing. Thomas was seen to walk down the line wounded but nothing more was seen or heard of him by his comrades.

William had been killed in September 1916 and his brother John, was serving in France at the time he went missing.

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

Thomas is remembered with Honour at Congregational Rooms, King Street. Batley Carr, Batley War Memorial.



ASHTON.—In loving memory of my dear husband, Private Thomas Ashton, of the K.O.Y.L.I., who is presumed to have been killed on active service in France on May 3rd, 1917.

"Only those who have loved and lost can understand."

Batley News 2nd March 1918



Researched by members of
Batley History Group