Henry Gamble Bailey





Rank: - Private

Number: - 22045

Regiment: - King's Own Scottish Borderers 2nd Battalion

Missing Presumed Killed in Action: - 25th September 1916 aged 19

Remembered with Honour: --Thiepval Memorial, West Vlaanderen, Belgium. Pier and Face 4A & 4B

Batley News, 21 Oct 1916 (photo), 18 Nov 1916 (photo), 7 Jul 1917

Family Details

Henry Gamble Bailey was born at Carlinghow on the 4th June 1897 to Batley born couple John and Alice (Nee Gamble) and was baptised at Carlinghow, St. John's on the 6th February 1898.

By 1901 the family had grown to include Eva (1898) and Frederick (1900). His dad was an engineer in a woollen mill and they were living at 3 yd. 3, Wellington Street, Batley. The family, within the next ten years moved to 9, Fleming Street, Batley and Henry was employed as a grocer's errand boy. As a boy he attended Batley Parish Day School and Up Lane Sunday School and was later employed in the finishing department of J.T & J. Taylor's, Cheapside Mills, Batley. Before 1916 his parents moved to 7, Bankfoot Street, Batley.

Service Details

Henry, generally known as Harry enrolled in Batley in November 1915 and disembarked in France in February 1916.

He caught a fever whilst in France and was invalided home but returned to the Front in July 1916.

The 2nd Battalion Scottish Borderers were in Dublin at the outbreak of war, in August 1914 and were part of 13th Brigade 5th Division. They landed in Le Havre 15th August 1914. The 5th Division took part in the 1st and 2nd Battle of Ypres and in March 1916 when Harry joined them, they took over a section of front line between St. Laurent Blagny and the southern end of Vimy Ridge, in front of Arras. This was a lively time, with many trench raids, sniping and mining activities in the front line. When the Franco- British offensive opened on the Somme on 1st July 1916, the 5th Division was enjoying a period of rest and re-fit and was in GHQ reserve. However this was not to last they took part in:-

The attacks on High Wood (20th -26th July 1916).

The Battle of Guillemont (3rd -6th September 1916).

The Battle of Flers-Courcelette (15th - 22nd September 1916).

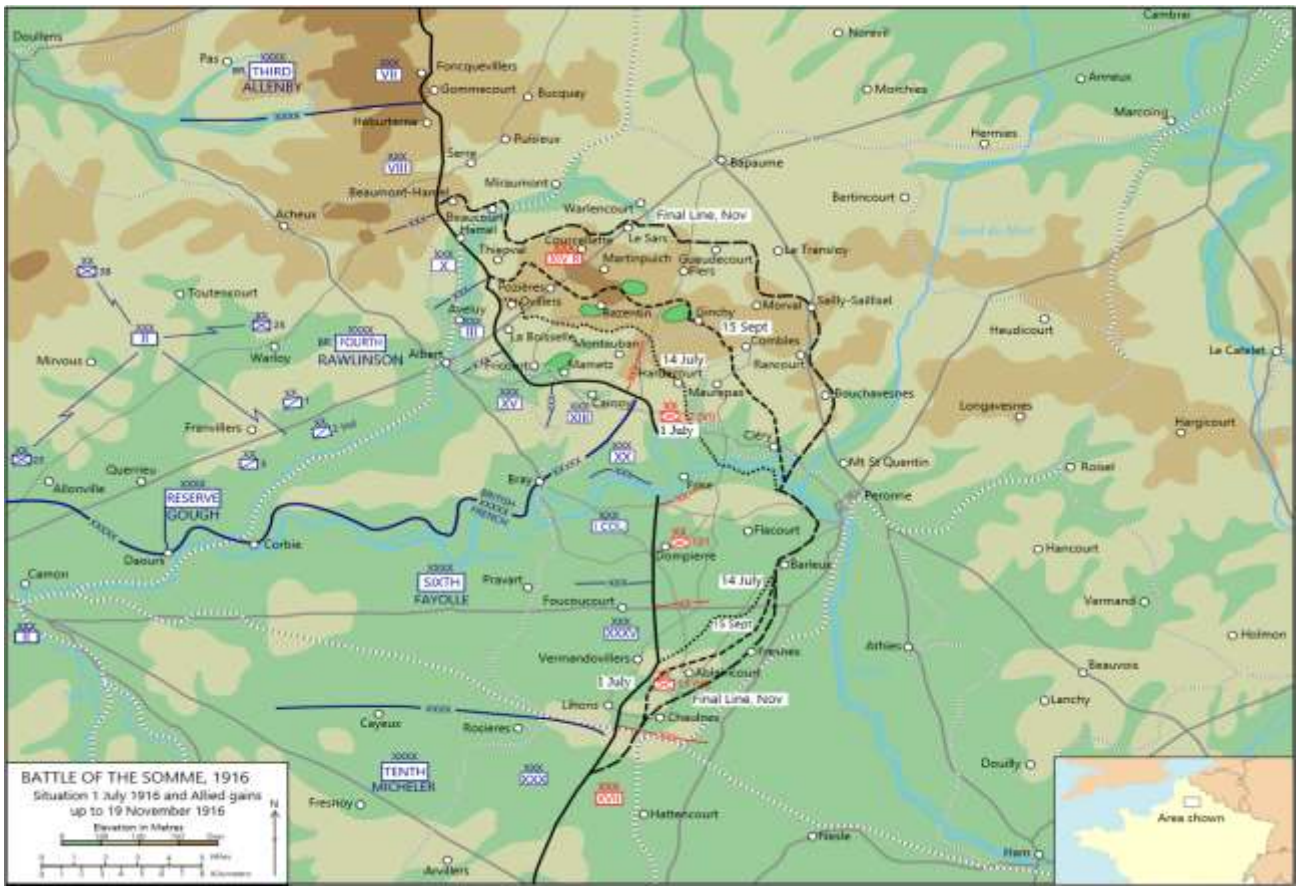
The Battle of Morval (25th - 28th September 1916).

The Battle of Morval, 25th –28th September 1916, was an attack during the Battle of the Somme by the British Fourth Army on the villages of Morval, Gueudecourt, and Lesboeufs held by the German 1st Army, which had been the final objectives of the Battle of Flers – Courcelette (15th –22nd September). The main British attack was postponed to combine with attacks by the French Sixth Army on the village of Combles, south of Morval, which were intended to bring the Sixth Army closer to the German defences between Moislains and Le Transloy, near the Péronne–Bapaume road (N.17). The combined attack from the Somme river north to Martinpuich on the Albert–Bapaume road, was also intended to deprive the German defender's further west near Thiepval of reinforcements, before an attack by the Reserve Army, due on 26 September. The postponement was extended from 21–25 September because of rain, which affected operations more frequently during September.

Combles, Morval, Lesboeufs and Gueudecourt were captured and many casualties inflicted on the Germans. The French made slower progress near the inter-army boundary, due to the obstruction of St Pierre Vaast Wood to the French attack north towards Sailly and Sailly-Saillisel. The inter-army boundary was moved north from 27–28 September to allow the French more room to deploy their forces but the great quantity of German artillery fire limited the French advance. The Fourth Army advance on 25 September was its deepest since 14 July and left the Germans in severe difficulties, particularly in a salient which developed to the north-east of Combles, although tiredness and lack of reserves prevented the Fourth Army exploiting its success beyond patrolling and cavalry probes. The Reserve Army attack began on 26 September in the Battle of Thiepval Ridge. Deteriorating weather and the shorter days greatly increased British and French transport difficulties. Rain and fog grounded aircraft and impeded artillery observation. Mud reduced the blast effect of shells and immobilised infantry, which favoured the defenders. A small number of tanks joined in the battle later in the afternoon, after having been held back because of the later start and reduced a number of German strongpoint's, which had withstood earlier attacks.

Monday, 25th September was bright and cloudless with ground haze.The 6th Division attacked from north of Morval on the road through the middle of Lesboeufs with the 5th Division on their left. They consolidated on spurs east and north east of Morval.

The 5th Division suffered 1,749 losses between 19 September and 26 September 1916.



Henry is commemorated on Batley Parish Church, Wellington Street Chapel, Up Lane Sunday School, Batley War Memorial and Thiepval Memorial. There are 1,248 soldiers missing or killed on the same day who are commemorated on Thiepval Memorial.

Henry was awarded the British Medal and the Allied Victory Medal.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group