William Beaumont





Rank: - Lance Corporal

Number: - 19736

Regiment: - West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales Own) 9th Battalion

Died of Wounds: - 18th September 1916 aged 27 years

Cemetery: - Bois-Guillaume Communal Cemetery, Seine-Maritime, France 1.B.1

"GONE BUT WE SHALL NEVER FORGET HIM THY WILL BE DONE"

Batley News, 23 Sept 1916 (photo)

Family Details

William was born in Batley on 15th March 1889 the son of George and Eliza Kezia Beaumont (nee Thorp). He was baptised at Batley Parish Church on 24th April 1889 when George gave his occupation as a fish monger and the family address as Hume Street, Batley.

His parents had married at Batley Parish Church on 29th May 1882. Benjamin Thomas was born in 1883 but died aged 3 weeks followed by George William who died in August 1884 aged 5 weeks, Edmund Thorpe who was born 17th September 1885 but sadly died January 1886 aged 4 months.

Grace Ellen was born in October 1886 followed by William, Benjamin born in November 1891 but died aged 10 months in September 1892, Alice 1893, John Andrew May 1895 died aged 6 months, Thomas 1897, Ernest born March 1898 who died July 1898, George Henry in 1900 died in April 1901 and Gertrude born in 1901.

In 1891 Batley born George Beaumont was living with his family at 36, Sheard Place, Mill Lane, Batley but within the next decade they had moved to live at 24, Cobden Street, Batley. George gave his occupation as a fish dealer in 1901.

On 18th December 1909 William married Annie Walker at Batley Parish Church and Elsie was born in 1910 followed by George W in 1913.

In 1911 the family was living at Clerk Green but moved to 30, Cobden Street, Batley before William died of his wounds.

Before he enlisted, he was employed at Messrs. G. & J. Stubley, Bottoms Mills, as a hop minder. He was also a member of the Committee of Batley Albion Football Club.

Service Details

William enlisted at Bradford in March 1915. The 9th Battalion was part of 32nd Brigade in 11th (Northern) Division.

He disembarked in the Balkans on 13th September 1915. The battalion fought in Gallipoli, suffering high casualties, until the evacuation of Suvla in December 1915 and moved to Imbros.

On 26 January the Division began to move to Egypt, landing at Alexandria on 2nd February and concentrating at Sidi Bishr six days later. 19 February saw the Division take over a section of the Suez Canal defences.

The Division received orders on 17 June 1916 for a move to France. Embarkation at Alexandria was completed on 3rd July and by 7th of that month Divisional HQ had been set up at Flesselles. By 27 July, the Division had taken over part of the front in Third Army sector. The Division then took part in the following operations:

The capture of the Wundt-Werk (Wonder Work)
The Battle of Flers-Courcelette which took place between between 15th-22nd September 1916.

This was a large-scale general renewal of the offensive after the weeks of attritional fighting for the third German system at Pozieres, High Wood, Delville Wood, Guillemont and Ginchy. It is historically noteworthy for being the first time that tanks were used in battle. Few in number, mechanically unreliable and as yet without proven tactics for their best use, the small numbers of tanks that actually went into action had an important positive effect. High Wood and Delville Wood were finally cleared and a deep advance was made to Flers and towards Combles. The Canadian Corps entered the Somme fighting for the first time.

The last letter received from him was dated 12th September 1916 when he said: -

"*Well dear wife I hope you are getting on all right and our Elsie and George too. Keep smiling until I see you all again which I hope will be before long. God bless you all".*

His wife received a letter from a sister in charge of a ward in a general hospital at the front.

"I regret very much to inform you that your husband was admitted to the hospital today with a very severe wound in his head and also a severe one in his left arm. He is dangerously ill and the medical officer is afraid he will not recover. Everything possible is being done for him and I will let you know in a day or so of his progress."

William died from these wounds on 18th September 1916.

He was awarded the 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

William is remembered with Honour at Bois- Guilliemme Communal Cemetery, Batley Town Mission and Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group