Robert Best





Rank: - Private

Number: - 50282

Regiment: - Northumberland Fusiliers 1/4th Battalion

Missing since 27 May 1918 found as POW died in hospital France/Belgium: - 27/09/1918 Age: 28 years

Cemetery: - Glageon Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord, France II. K. 9.

Batley News, 29 Jun 1918, 6 Jul 1918 (photo). Batley Reporter, 28 Jun 1918, 2 Aug 1918, 27 Dec 1918, 28 Feb 1919

Family Details

Robert (Bob) was born in Dewsbury in c. 1889 the son of Joseph and Sarah Best nee Exley.

His siblings were Hannah 1881, Martha 1883, Herbert 1885 and Marshall 1887.

Liversdege born Joseph was a carpet weaver in 1891 and the family lived at 6, Moorend Lane, Dewsbury moving to 163, Moorend Lane, Dewsbury and changing his occupation to become a blender at a woollen mill within the next decade.

Bob attended Dewsbury Moor Council School and later worked for a Leeds firm of motor car proprietors. He was a member of Staincliffe Liberal Club and was a regular attended at Upper Independent Chapel, Heckmondwike.

In 1915 Bob married Florence Hitchin.

Service Details

Bob enlisted in December 1916 and went to France in March 1917. In August 1917 he was wounded by shrapnel in the side but returned to the firing line in February 1918.

From May 1915 the 1/4th Battalion was attached to 49th Brigade, 50th (Northumbrian) Division.

In 1917 they fought at: -

The First Battle of the Scarpe (9-14 April)
The Capture of Wancourt Ridge
The Second Battle of the Scarpe (23-24 April)
which were phases of the Arras Offensive
The Second Battle of Passchendaele (26 October –10 November) which Bob would have missed.

In 1918 they fought at: -

The Battle of St Quentin (21-23 March) The Actions at the Somme Crossings
The Battle of Rosieres (26-27 March)
which were phases of the First Battles of the Somme 1918

The Battle of Estaires (9-11 April)
The Battle of Hazebrouck (12-15 April)

which were phases of the Battle of the Lys

Battle of the Aisne (27 May - 6 June) A small and tired British force, sent to the Chemin des Dames in exchange for fresh French divisions that went north, was struck and virtually destroyed as part of another German offensive, Operation Bluecher.

Bob was captured on the first day of this battle and later died as a prisoner of war.

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

He is remembered with Honour at Upper Chapel, Heckmondwike and Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group