John Herbert Blackburn





Rank: - Lieutenant

Regiment: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 9th Battalion (formerly 1/4th K.O.Y.L.I.)

Died of pneumonia at No.10 CCS: - 8th February 1917 aged 21

Cemetery: - Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, West Vlaanderen, Belgium X.A.6.

"ONLY SON OF JOHN AND EMMA BLACKBURN OF BATLEY, YORKSHIRE."

Batley News, 9 Sep 1916 (photo), 17 Feb 1917 (photo)

Family Details

John Herbert was born in Batley on June 22nd 1895 the eldest child of John Sheard Blackburn and Birstall born Emma Blackburn (nee Wilson). His grandfather John William Blackburn J.P. was the owner of Blackburn's Old Mill, Batley and also an Alderman on Batley Council. He was his eldest grandson. His parents had married in 1894 and his sister Joyce Sheard Blackburn was born in 1900. His father lived at the family home at 3, Lamplands, Upper Batley before his marriage, moving to Ivy Dene, Upper Batley after his marriage.

John Sheard Blackburn followed his father into the shoddy manufacturing industry as did John Herbert. John Herbert received his early education at Batley Grammar School starting in 1904 and then Giggleswick School, Settle which is where he was when the 1911 census was taken. He was very popular and distinguished himself at cricket and other games.

Service Details

John Herbert "Jack" enlisted on the 6th February 1915 at Wakefield and Lieutenant Jack Blackburn secured a commission in the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry and for a long time before going to the Front he did duty as a musketry officer.

He went to the Front on 15th August 1916 when the 1/4th were near the Leipzig Salient and on the 31st was wounded in the left leg and shoulder by shell fire and returned to England to be treated at Guy's Hospital, London. Second Lieutenant J.H. Bates of the 4th Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry who was with him in the trenches was killed.

The first intimation was received by his parents by the authorities in York saying he was severely wounded but messages from Jack followed which were far more optimistic. His parents and sister visited him in London on Wednesday 6th September. The wound was not very serious and for a time he was engaged in home duties.

Before returning to the Front his wounds were examined and the results were:-

1) *Shrapnel wound in the scapular region, left superficial and healed.*

2) *A superficial wound in the enternal aspect of the left knee joint. Not permanent.*

He returned to the Front on 5th January 1917 with the 9th Battalion of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. The Battalion was at Noeux-les-Mines until the 28th January when they de trained at Esquelbecq and marched to Ledringhem. The Battalion was at the disposal of Company Officers for training.

On the 6th February a letter was received by his parents from a Battalion doctor saying Jack was in hospital with bronchitis and pleurisy but hoped there would be an improvement in the next few days. Jack also sent a postcard which he had asked someone to write saying he would hopefully be out of hospital in the next few days.

A further letter was received that he had taken a turn for the better but it was followed by a telegram on Friday night 9th February saying he had become worse and died on the Thursday morning. He died at No.10 Casualty Clearing Station at Poperingue which was at Remy Sidings.

This telegram was followed by a letter from the Colonel of the Battalion saying that although Jack had been only there for a short time he had made himself very popular with the Battalion and his death was a great shock to them.

The War Diary states that the 9th Battalion was in training adding that 2Lt Blackburn had died in No.10 C.C.S. from pneumonia.

At the time of his death his grandparents Alderman and Mrs. J.W. Blackburn were the Mayor and Mayoress of Batley.

During the First World War, the village of Lijssenthoek was situated on the main communication line between the Allied military bases in the rear and the Ypres battlefields. Close to the Front, but out of the extreme range of most German field artillery, it became a natural place to establish casualty clearing stations. The cemetery was first used by the French 15th Hopital D'Evacuation and in June 1915, it began to be used by casualty clearing stations of the Commonwealth forces.

John Herbert was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

He is remembered with Honour on Batley War Memorial, Zion Chapel, Batley, Batley Grammar School, Giggleswick School and Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery.

Author's Note. Medal Index states 4th Battalion and C.W.G.C. and War Diary in 9th Battalion.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group