John Robert Bragg





Rank: - Private

Number: - 30284

Regiment/Battalion: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 7th (Service) Battalion

Killed in Action: - 20th November 1917 aged 22

Cemetery: - Cambrai Memorial, Louverval, France Panel 8

Batley News, 29 Dec 1917 (photo)

Family Details:

John Robert was born in 1894 the only child of Batley born Arthur Bragg and his wife Sarah Jane (Nee Schofield) who came from Saddleworth.

The couple had married at St. John's Church, Carlinghow on 19th August 1893.

In 1901 the family was living at 5, Fielden's Place, Cross Bank Road where Arthur' s occupation was a woollen spinner and Sarah was a weaver. A decade later they had moved to 68, Cross Bank Road, Batley and Arthur was a woollen card fettler and John was a piecener.

John Robert as a child attended Carlinghow Council School and later was a spinner at G.& J. Stubley's, He was also a member of Carlinghow Working Men's Club and the flag was flown at half-mast for a week after his death became known.

Service Details:

John enrolled in May 1916 at Dewsbury and left for France in September 1916.

The 7th (Service) Battalion of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry was formed at Pontefract in September 1914 and had been in France since July 1915. They came under the command of 61st Brigade 20th (Light) Division.

The first battle he would have been in was probably the Battle of Flers-Courcelette which started on the 15th September and was the first battle where tanks were used.

John would then have fought at the Battles of Morval and Transloy.

In 1917 the 61st Brigade took part in the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line and fought at the Battles of Langemarck, Menin Road Ridge and Polygon Wood before taking part in the Battle for Cambrai.

The Battle of Cambrai began at dawn, at approximately 06.00 on 20th November 1917 with a predicted bombardment by 1,003 guns on German defences, followed by smoke and creeping barrage at 300yards ahead to cover the first advances. Despite efforts to preserve secrecy, the Germans had received sufficient intelligence to be on moderate alert, an attack on Havrincourt was anticipated, as was the use of tanks. The attacking force was six infantry divisions

of the 111 corps and on the right 1V corps on the left, supported by nine battalions of the Tank Corps with about 437 tanks. In reserve was one infantry division in 1V Corps and the three divisions of the Cavalry Corps. Initially, there was considerable success in most areas and it seemed as if a great victory was within reach, the Hindenburg had been penetrated with advances of up to 5 miles. The 20th Light Division forced a way through La Vacquerie and then advanced to capture a bridge across St.Quentin Canal at Masnieries. The bridge collapsed under the weight of a tank halting the hopes for an advance across the canal.

John Robert was killed in action on the first day of this offensive.

He is remembered with honour on St. John's Church, Carlinghow, Batley War Memorial and the Cambrai Memorial at Louverval, France.

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



Researched by members of
Batley History Group