James William Breheney M.M.





Rank: -Sergeant

Number: - 23336

Regiment: - Alexandra, Princess of Wales's Own (Yorkshire Regiment) 13th Battalion

Missing, presumed killed in action: - 22/03/1918 Age: 30 years

Memorial: - Arras Memorial, Pas de Calais, France Bay 5

Batley News, 5 Jan 1918, 27 Apr 1918 (photo), 4 May 1918

Family Details

James William was born in Dewsbury on the 14th July 1887 the son of Patrick and Sarah Breheney (nee Ledgard). The couple had married on the 18th August 1883.

In 1891 the family was living at 20, Nowell's Yard, Vulcan Road, Dewsbury and Sligo born Patrick was employed as a pipe labourer and Sarah was a weaver. Margaret Ann Ledgard was born in July 1883 followed by Mary 1885, James William, Annie 1890, Sarah 1895, John 1897, Patrick 1899-1902, Kathleen 1901, Peter 1903, Nellie 1909.

In 1901 the family was living at Back Webster Street, Dewsbury and James William was employed as a maker of glass bottles and his father was a labourer at the glass works which was probably Kilner's.

In 1911 Patrick and Sarah with five of their younger children were living in a two roomed home at 19, Back Albion Street, Spring fields, Dewsbury and Patrick was employed as a mason's labourer.

In 1908 James William married Mary Ellen Connolly and before 1911 lived at 13, Smith Road, Batley Carr, in a two roomed home and he was employed as a carpet yarn piecener and Mary Ellen was soft rag sorter. Doris was born in December 1915 but sadly died aged seven months and was buried on the 24th June 1916 of 7, Wainwright Buildings, Batley.

James William was an enthusiastic supporter of junior football and played for Dewsbury Celtic and Springfield clubs. He attended St. Paulinus Roman Catholic Church and Schools and was later connected with St. Joseph's Church, Batley Carr.

Before he enlisted James William was employed at Mr. George Wright's Dale Street Mills, Batley Carr.

Service Details

James William enlisted shortly after the outbreak of war and went through a large amount of foreign service unscathed according to local newspapers. The 13th Battalion landed at Le Havre on the 6th June 1916.

In 1916 they took part in: -

The Battle of the Ancre (*a phase of the Battles of the Somme 1916)1st October – 11th November.*

In 1917 The German retreat to the Hindenburg Line (March) 14th March-5th April the capture of Fifteen Ravine, Villers Plouich, Beaucamp and La Vacquerie (April and early May).

The Cambrai Operations, in which the Division participated in the capture of Bourlon Wood (November).

In 1918 The Battle of St Quentin (21-23 March)
which was a *phase of the First Battles of the Somme 1918*

James William was missing on the 22nd March 1918.

He earned the Military Medal on the 23rd November 1917 for capturing some prisoners and working a machine gun single handed and this was awarded January 1918 and published London Gazette on 3rd March 1918.

His wife had moved to live at 4, Pickles Street, Batley Carr.

His younger brother, John, although only 20 years old had been wounded four times and was a drill instructor at an English training camp.

James William was awarded the Military Medal, British War Medal and Victory Medal.

He is remembered with Honour at Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group