Herbert Childe





Rank: - Private

Number: - 42518

Regiment: - South Staffordshire Regiment (Formerly 46120 KOYLI) 2/6th Battalion

Missing, presumed Killed in Action: - 15/04/1918 Age: 30 years

Memorial: - Ploegsteert Memorial, Hainault, Belgium Panel 6

Batley Reporter, 3 Jan 1919 (photo) Dewsbury Reporter, 4 Jan 1919 (photo)

Family Details

Herbert was born in Batley on the 15th August 1886 the son of Edward and Sarah Elizabeth Childe nee Blackburn and was baptised on 24th October 1886 at the Non-Conformist Church, Staincliffe. His parents had married on the 7th November 1885 at St. Peter's Church, Birstall. In 1891 the family was living at 46, Common Road, Staincliffe, Batley and Edward was working as a wool sorter and Sarah as a rag picker. Ernest was born in 1895 followed by Lily 1896. In 1901 the family was living at 19, Common Road, Staincliffe in a three roomed home. A decade later Edward was working as a teamer for a waste dealer and Herbert as a willeyer for carpet yarns.

Reuben 22nd December1899 and died in 1st Qtr 1890. Jane was born late 1891 and died 2nd qtr 1896 aged 4 years. The couple still lived of 19 Common Road, Staincliffe.

Herbert married Harriet Thornton on the 6th May 1911 at Primitive Methodist Chapel, Healey Lane End, Batley. Gladys was born later that year

Before he enlisted in July 1916 Herbert worked for Mr. Parker Hemingway, rag merchants, Heckmondwike.

Service Details

Herbert enlisted in July 1916. In April 1916 the 2/6th Battalion had gone to Ireland to quell the disturbances. In January 1917 they moved to Favont and landed at Le Havre on 25th February 1917. Reports said that the Division could not be considered properly trained (largely as it had been split up in Ireland) but it did not have any opportunity to add to its training before it was thrown into the front-line south of the Somme, near Estrees. The Division then remained in France and Flanders and took part in the following: - *The pursuit of the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line (17-5 April).*

When the enemy began his strategic withdrawal east from the Somme area, 59th Division was among the formations that followed up in cautious pursuit. The lack of training began to be felt in this difficult tactical situation. Units of the Division captured Jeancourt but met a bloody repluse at Le Verguier.

Divisional HQ was established at Bouvincourt in April 1917. Further attacks took place at Villeret and Hargicourt quarries.

May 1917: Division relieved by the cavalry and moved for rest but after a matter of days moved back into the Cambrai front line at Havrincourt and Flesquieres, Divisional HQ being set up at to Equancourt.

June 1917: relieved and moved for rest at Barastre. A lengthy spell here, being "fattened up" for the Flanders offensive. Received orders to move in late August and thence by train from Acheux to Winnezeele, arriving 1st September.

The Battle of the Menin Road Ridge (23-25 September)
The Battle of Polygon Wood (26-30 September)
which were phases of the Third Battles of the Ypres

October 1917: relieved 1st Canadian Division in front line in the Lens sector, with Divisional HQ being at Chateau-de-la-Haie. Warned that it would be used to exploit the success expected in the forthcoming attack at Cambrai, the Division was relieved by the Canadians and began to move to Bapaume on 17 November. Divisional HQ set up at Basseux three days later.

The capture of Bourlon Wood (28 November)
The German counter attacks (30 November – 3 December)
which were phases of the Cambrai Operations

On 16 December, Divisional HQ moved to Ytres.

23 December: moved out for rest at Le Cauroy, where Chistmas and all of January 1918 was spent.

In 1918:-

After a long period of rest and training, the Division took over the front line at Bullecourt on 11 February 1918, with HQ being established at Behagnies. Much work was done of strengthening the line for defence against expected enemy attack.

The Battle of St Quentin (21-23 March)

After suffering heavy casualties from German shellfire on 21 March, the enemy infantry succeeded in breaking through the Division's position where it met that of 6th Division in the valley of the River Hirondelle. Parties held on and continued to resist but were gradually destroyed and "mopped up". Fewer than 100 men of the 176th and 178th Brigades which had been holding the front line before the attack were assembled at roll call. Two battalion commanding officers were killed in action. At 7pm,

the Division was officially relieved but 177th Brigade and various parties of ancillary units remained to take part in the continued defence.

The Battle of Bapaume (24-25 March)

The next ten days were chaotic, as parties and individuals reassembled and the location of HQ meandered west, going via Bucquoy, Bouzincourt, Contay and Fienvillers to Villers-Chatel. On 1 April, the remnants of the Division moved by train to the Poperinge area in Flanders, leaving its artillery behind. New drafts of men arrived and on 5 April the Division took over the front line at Passchendaele, without having had any real opportunity to assimilate these drafts let alone train them.

Which were phases of the First Battles of the Somme 1918

The Battle of Bailleul (14-15 April)

On 13 April, the Division was ordered to reinforce the Lys area that was under terrific enemy attack. 177th Brigade was split off to reinforce 19th (Western) Division north of Neuve Eglise (Nieuwkerke), while the rest moved to Westouter. A 6000-yard-long line (that is, very thinly held) was taken over near Loker and here in the middle of 14 April, the units came under violent attack.

The enemy broke through on the left and the British line crumbled. Bailleul fell and 176th and 178th Brigades fell back in disarray on Mont Noir (Zwarteberg). Losses had been heavy.

Herbert was not heard from since the 15th April and his wife was still appealing for news in the local papers in January 1919.

Herbert was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal and is remembered with Honour at Staincliffe C of E Junior School; Batley Rugby League Club and Batley War Memorial.

