James Clarkson





Rank: - Lance Corporal

Number: - 27811

Regiment: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 7th Battalion

Killed in Action: - 16th August 1917 aged 31

Memorial: - Tyne Cot, West Vlaanderen, Belgium. Panel 108-111

Family Details

James was born in Thornhill in 1887 the eldest son of Edward and Elizabeth Clarkson (nee Ellis). The couple had married at Holy Innocents, Thornhill Lees on 31st October 1885.

Edward came from Thornhill and Elizabeth from Whitley and in 1901 the family was living at 6, Top of Carr, Batley Carr. James was followed by John 1888, Edward 1892 and Fred 1895. Edward and James were working as shoemakers and thirteen-year-old John was an errand boy.

In 1911 when the census was taken the family was still in the two roomed home but John had left. The census shows that Edward and James were working for the Co-operative Society as boot repairers. Edward (jnr.) was working as a joiner and Fred was working as a news boy.

Service Details.

The 7th Battalion of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry was formed in Pontefract in 1914 and came under the orders of the 61st Brigade, 20th Light Division.

James did not see service abroad before 1916 because he did not receive the 1915 Star.

In 1916 the Division took part in The Battles of Mount Sorrel, Delville Wood, Guillemont, Flers- Courcelette, and Morval and of Le Transloy.

In 1917 they took part in the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line and the Battle of Langemarck (16th -18th August).

The Battle of Langemarck from 16–18 August 1917 was the second Allied general attack of the Third Battle of Ypres, during the First World War. The battle took place near Ypres in Belgian Flanders, on the Western Front against the German 4th Army.

The French had a big success on the northern flank and the main British gain of ground occurred near Langemark, adjacent to the French. The Allied attack succeeded from Langemarck to Drie Grachten (Three Canals) but early advances in the south on the Gheluvelt Plateau were forced back by powerful German counter-attacks.

Both sides were hampered by rain, which had a greater effect on the British and French, who occupied lower-lying areas and advanced onto ground which had been frequently and severely bombarded. The effect of the battle, the unseasonable August downpours and the successful but costly German defence of the Gheluvelt Plateau during the rest of August, which the British attacked several times, led the British to stop the offensive for three weeks. The ground dried in early September, as the British rebuilt roads and tracks for supply, transferred more artillery from the armies further south and revised further their tactics. The British shifted the main offensive effort southwards, which led to the three big British successes on the Gheluvelt Plateau on 20, 26 September and 4 October.

James is remembered with Honour at Holy Trinity Church, Batley Carr Working Men's Club, Tyne Cot Memorial and Batley War Memorial.

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



Researched by members of
Batley History Group