William Henry Clough





Rank: - Private

Number: - 775464

Regiment: - Canadian Infantry 87th Battalion

Died of Wounds: - 16th November 1917 aged 40 years

Cemetery: - Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, West Vlaanderen, Belgium XX11.GG.13A

Batley News, 1 Dec 1917. Batley Reporter, 30 Nov 1917 (photo)

Family Details

William Henry was born in Batley on the 19th December 1876 the son of John Henry and Anna Maria Clough (nee Ineson) who had married at Batley Parish Church on 2nd February 1870. He was baptised at Batley Parish Church on the 4th February 1877 when the family lived at Peel Street, Batley and his father was a dyer. He had an older sister Annie who was born in Soothill in 1870.

Arthur was born in 1882 followed by Frederick in 1890 and Beatrice in 1894.

Lavinia was born in 1872 but sadly died aged 3yrs 11 months in August 1876, Isaac was born in 1874 but died aged 10 months, and Gertrude was born in 1879 but sadly died aged 1 year and 5 months in October 1880.

In 1891 William Henry was working as a piecer at a woollen mill but before 1901 he had changed his occupation to become a goods porter.

As a boy he attended Wellington Street Primitive Methodist Chapel.

On the 21st December 1902 he married Jane Peel at Dewsbury Parish Church giving his occupation as a shunter.

This marriage did not seem to last because in 1911 she was a boarder at the home of Albert Winsbury of 3, East Parade, Dewsbury. Jane Clough married Albert Winsbury in December 1917 in Dewsbury District.

William Henry worked at Dewsbury Great Northern Railway Goods Yard before emigrating to Ontario, Canada. He sailed on the 'Tunisian' on the 10th April 1907 giving his trade as a shunter.

His father died in May 1917 and his mother moved to live at 84, Willow Terrace, Soothill.

Service Details

William Henry was working on a farm at Brampton, Ontario before he joined the Colours. On his Canadian Attestation papers, he was described as being 5ft. 6 inches tall with dark complexion, grey eyes, brown hair and his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was given as his mother Anna Maria Clough.

The 87th (Canadian Grenadier Guards) Battalion, CEF was a unit in the Canadian Expeditionary Force during the First World War. Based in Montreal, Quebec, the unit began recruiting in September 1915 in Montreal, the surrounding districts, and also in mining districts elsewhere in the province. After sailing to England in April 1916, the battalion was stationed there as part of the 12th Infantry Brigade (until June) and then 11th Infantry Brigade of the 4th Canadian Infantry Division until August of the same year. The Division assembled at Bramshott and crossed to France on August 11/12, and served the duration of the war as part of the 11th Infantry Brigade, 4th Canadian Infantry Division.

He visited his family and many friends before going to France.

As with other Canadian Divisions, lack of artillery was the constraint and the Division was initially joined by the former artillery of 3rd (Lahore) Division, recently attached to 3rd Canadian Division. Once overseas the Division fought in many of the major actions of the war, including:

1916
The Battle of Le Transloy (1-18 October)
The Battle of the Ancre Heights
The Battle of the Ancre (13-18 November)
which were phases of the Battles of the Somme 1916

1917
The Battle of Vimy (9-14 April)
Operations towards Lens (3 June -26 August)
the affairs south of Souchez river (3 June-25 August)
the capture of Avion (26-29 June)
The Battle of Hill 70 (15-25 August)
the battles being phases of the Arras Offensive

The Second Battle of Passchendaele was the culminating attack during the Third Battle of Ypres of the First World War. The battle took place in the Ypres Salient area of the Western Front, in and around the Belgian village of Passchendaele, between 26 October and 10 November 1917.

The Canadian Corps relieved the exhausted 11Anzac Corps, continuing the advance started with the First Battle of Passchendaele and ultimately capturing

the village. Beyond gaining favourable observation positions, the battle was intended to gain drier winter positions on higher ground.

The assault position was directly south of the inter-army boundary between the British Fifth and Second Armies. As a result, the Canadian Corps was to attack with support of formations from the British Fifth Army to the north and the 1 Anzac Corps and X Corps to the south. The offensive was executed in a series of attacks each with limited objectives, delivered at intervals of three or more days. The execution dates of the phases were tentatively given as 26 October, 30 October and 6 November with a final smaller action on 10 November. To permit time to facilitate inter-divisional relief, there was a planned seven-day pause between the second and third stages, during which the Second Army took over the XVIII Corps area, north of the Canadian Corps, from the Fifth Army with the II Corps on 2 November, to assure unity of command over the central part of the attack front.

The attacks captured the German-held high ground along the Passchendaele–Westrozebeke ridge but the campaign ended just short of Westrozebeke. The victory of the Austro-German forces against the Italian Army at the Battle of Caporetto and the forthcoming Battle of Cambrai forced the British into a parallel diversion of resources from the Ypres Salient. II Corps asked for a delay until 19 November to move artillery forward, five British divisions was transferred to Italy and four British divisions on the coast were sent to take over French positions south of the Somme. On 20 November, Haig ended the offensive, except for local attacks in December for better defensive positions.

He last came home on leave in October 1917 in the best of health and spirits.

A Chaplain wrote to his family: -

"*I saw him and talked with him and he said I was to send his love to his mother and sister and request that you are not to worry about him."*

The Chaplain explained that he had multiple shell wounds and died on November 16th at Casualty Clearing Station No.10 and he was buried in a British Cemetery.

Official news arrived a few days later from the Canadian Record Office, London.

His brother Fred, who lived in Gregory Street, and enlisted in 1914, was serving with the Royal Munster Fusiliers in France and had been wounded twice.

William Henry is remembered with Honour at Wellington Street Primitive Methodist Chapel and Batley War Memorial.

CLOUGH.—Private W. H. Clough, 775464, 87th Canadians, died of shrapnel wounds on the 16th day of November, in France, aged 40 years.

So sad, but so true, we cannot tell why
The best are the first that are called on to die;
'Tis only those who have lost can tell
The pain of parting without a farewell.

From his sorrowing brother Fred (who is serving in France), and his Sister-in-law Alice and Nephew Cyril.

Batley News 1st December 1917.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group