George Davis.





Rank: - Private

Number: - 42220

Regiment: - Royal Scots (Lothian) Regiment (formerly 242000 Highland Light Infantry) 16th Battalion

Killed in Action: - 22nd March 1918 aged 20

Remembered with Honour: - Arras Memorial, Pas-de-Calais. Bay 1&2

Batley News, 20 Apr 1918 (photo)

Family Details.

George was born in Batley in c.1897 the son of Jane Davis who came from Awkley in south Yorkshire. In 1901 he was living at 128, Purlwell Lane with his mother, aunt and siblings John (1885), Sarah (1886), Ethel (1889), Harry (1891) and Annie 1900 who sadly died in June 1901 aged 15 months. The three elder siblings were born in Wath-on-Dearne or West Melton.

In 1911 he was living with his mother at Clerk Green House, Batley along with siblings Eliza (1884), Sarah (1889), Ethel (1891) and Harry (1894). Please note different ages from 10 years previously.

He attended Purlwell Council Schools, was associated with Hanover Street Congregational Church and worked as a piecener at Messrs. J.T. and J. Taylor's Cheapside Mill prior to joining up in 1916.

Service Details

George enlisted at Pontefract in August 1916 originally into the Highland Light Infantry as Private 242000 later transferring to the 16th Battalion Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment). He arrived in France in May 1917.

The 16th Royal Scots reported quiet days at the start of March 1918 on the 11th March after a few quiet days they were relieved by the 11th Suffolk Regiment. On the 12th he men were resting and cleaning up before going out on a digging party at night at Croiselles. The 13th, 14th and 15th was trench routine but on the 16th although it had been a quiet day there was heavy artillery bombardment in the evening, but no casualties.

It was quiet on the 16th and 17th but the artillery was active on the 18th although the enemy fire was quiet. A special reconnaissance patrol was sent out to investigate the state of wire at "Rotten Trench". There was considerable enemy movement seen behind enemy lines by their observers on the 19th although nothing unusual happened. The battalion was relieved by the 11th Suffolk Regiment and withdrew.

The morning of the 21st was very misty and at 4 .45 am intense enemy bombardment opened on the south of their area and soon moved to their area. Gas shelling was severe. By 11am enemy fire had become fairly quiet and at

noon the battalion that had “stood to” since 4.30am was ordered by the Brigade to return to bivouacs except for one platoon of each company who stayed in position and remain ready for immediate action.

At 3 pm a strong party of the enemy were seen advancing from map reference U35C to T30 b and c and two platoons on the right company were moved to the line of the railway to meet the attack. At 10pm as the hostile attacks developed the Brigade was moved to the Croisilles Switch (north) resting its left on Farmers Lane. The night was quiet until about 5 am when the enemy opened a heavy bombardment. The enemy attacked at 12 .30 pm and after severe fighting drove in on their centre. A new line was established in the 3rd line trench and a line formed with the 15th Royal Scots. One platoon was in its original position for most of the day but by evening found itself isolated and had to fight its way back to the battalion. The day passed with many minor attacks by the enemy and at night was withdrawn to reserve and quartered at Armagh Camp, Hamelincourt. Casualties during the Croisilles action were 3 officers killed, 3 wounded and 3 missing with 11 other ranks killed, 138 wounded and 62 missing.

At the time of his death his brother Harry was serving in Mesopotamia with the Royal Army Medical Corps.

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

He is remembered with Honour at St. Andrew’s, Purlwell, Batley War memorial and the Arras Memorial, Pas-de-Calais.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group