Joseph Whitworth Dews





Rank: - Able Seaman

Number: - KW/364

Regiment: - Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve Hawke Bn. R.N. Div. (Previously 16434 KOYLI)

Killed in Action (Dardanelles): - 19/06/1915 Age: 20 years

Memorial: - Helles Memorial, Turkey (including Gallipoli) Panel 8 to 15

Batley News, 10 July 1915

Family Details

Joseph was born at Cross Jacob Street, Batley in April 1895 the son of Joe and Maria Dews nee Howden who had married on the 11th October 1890 at Batley Parish Church. Fred Howden born 1888 was brought up as their son but sadly died April 1896.

In 1901 he was living at 4, Jacob Street, with his parents and siblings John 1890, Jane Ann 1897 and Harry 1901 who sadly died in infancy. Joe was a coal miner hewer. When the 1911 census was taken Joe had changed his occupation to become a sewing machine agent but was a patient at Cookridge Convalescent Hospital, Leeds. The family was still living at Jacob Street when Thomas was born in 1902 before moving to 4, Woodwell Street, Batley which was a three roomed home. Herbert Whitworth was born in 1905 followed by Polly 1907. Two children had not survived very long, Jim born 1893 died aged 15 months, Mary born November 1899 died aged 14 days. In 1911 Joseph was working as a scale picker, above ground at a coal mine.

Joseph was always an enthusiast in all kinds of sport, including boxing, wrestling, football and running. He won several prizes for *pedestrianism and until he enlisted was a playing member of Healey Association Football Club. He was associated for about eight years with Batley Troops of Boy Scouts and was awarded six efficiency badges. A member of Captain the Reverend F. W. Butt - Thompson's Scouts. Dews attended Park Road Baptist School and visited London and Birmingham with the Scouts. He worked at Messrs. J. Critchley and Sons, West End Colliery, as a surface - hand."

*Pedestrianism was a 19th-century form of competitive walking, often professional and funded by wagering from which the modern sport of race walking developed.

Service Details

Joseph William Dews enlisted in King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry on the 2nd September 1914 but then transferred to the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserves on the 7th September 1914. He embarked for the Dardenelles in April 1915. He died on the 19th of June, 1915 and the following report appeared in the Batley News: -

"*The parents of Able Seaman J W Dews, Woodwell Street, Batley have been informed by the War Office that he was killed in action on June 19th in the Dardanelles after being there about two months. He joined the Army soon after war broke out, enlisting in the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry but was soon transferred to the Naval*

Division (Hawk Battalion). He spent eight months in training in England at various places, including the Crystal Palace, Walmer and Deal. Writing on June 9th from the Dardanelles, Dews said, 'Just a letter, hoping you are in the best of health, as I am. We have just had a terrible battle, but I have come out safe. I should have been better pleased, however, if John Gill (his friend) had come out as well as I have.'

The Allied landing on Gallipoli, which took place on April 25, 1915, met with a fierce Turkish defence inspired by Turkish leader Mustafa Kemal (1881-1938), who was the future president of Turkey and later known as Ataturk, and directed skillfully by the German commander Otto Liman von Sanders. For the remainder of the year, Allied forces, including large contingents from Australia and New Zealand, were effectively held at the beaches where they had landed, hampered by cautious and ineffective leadership from their British commander, Sir Ian Hamilton. Hamilton was replaced near the end of 1915 by Charles Monro, who recommended that the Allies abandon the operation. The armies were fully evacuated by the end of January 1916.

Joseph was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and Victory Medal.

He is remembered with Honour at Batley War Memorial.



Thanks to Susan White of Batley History Group