John Bailey Dixon M.M.





Rank: - Private

Number: - 39756

Regiment: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 9th Battalion

Missing, presumed Killed in Action: - 27th May 1918 aged 36 years

Memorial: - Soissons Memorial, Aisne, France

Batley News, 13 Jul 1918 (photo). Dewsbury Reporter, 13 Jul 1918

Family Details

John Bailey was born in Hanging Heaton on the 27th March 1882 the son of Benjamin and Emily Dixon nee Allatt, who had married on the 15th March 1873 at St. Paul's Church, Hanging Heaton, Batley. He was baptised at St. Paul's Church on the 3rd December 1893 at the same time as his siblings Eliza born 24th February 1880, Allatt 29th October 1886, Sam 2nd December 1888 and Eli born 3rd December 1890. His father gave his occupation as being a labourer at a brewery. Laura born 1884 had died in November 1893 and this probably prompted them to have their children baptised. The Dixon in his name came from the maiden name of his maternal grandmother Ann Dixon who married in 1844.

The older siblings were Ann 1873-1904 followed by Alfred 1875 and Jane 1877-1895. Rebecca was born in July 1894.

In 1891 the family was living at High Street, Hanging Heaton and Benjamin was employed as a gardener. Sadly, a decade later when the census was taken Benjamin was unemployed but John Bailey was employed as a coal miner hewer and his brother 14-year-old Allatt was a hurrier but they had taken two boarders to try help their finances.

On the 23rd July 1910 he married Chidswell born Grace Ladyman Bramley at St. Paul's Church, Hanging Heaton. His brother Sam was a witness. The couple went to live at 12, Highgate, Hanging Heaton which was a five roomed home. John Bailey was employed at an artificial manure works.

He was a sidesman and an active Sunday School worker at St. Paul's Church before he moved to become verger at Holy Innocents Church, Thornhill Lees.

His mother died in March 1911 followed by his father in May 1916.

Norman Bramley was born in May 1911 followed by Laura Elizabeth in August 1916. John Bailey worked in the rag department at Mr. Mark Day's, Wellington Mills, Dewsbury before enlisting. The family moved to live at 403, Sunny Bank, Leeds Road, Dewsbury.

Service Details

John Bailey enlisted at Dewsbury in September 1916 and disembarked in France in January 1917.

He wrote many letters home and to the Vicar at St. Paul's Hanging Heaton and some are shown below with the kind permission of his family.

In 1917 the 9th Battalion took part in: -
The German retreat to the Hindenburg Line
The First Battle of the Scarpe**
The Third Battle of the Scarpe**
The flanking operations around Bullecourt**
*The battles marked ** are phases of the Arras offensive 1917*

The Battle of Polygon Wood (26 Sept-3 October)
The Battle of Broodseinde (4 October)
The Second Battle of Passchendaele (26 Oct-10 Nov)
which were phases of the Third Battles of Ypres
The Cambrai Operations
In 1918: -
The Battle of St Quentin (21-23 March)
The First Battle of Bapaume (24-25 March)
which were phases of the First Battles of the Somme 1918
It was at one of these battles that he won his Military Medal.

John Bailey was awarded the Military medal the British War Medal and Victory Medal.

He is remembered with Honour at St. Paul's Church, Hanging Heaton, Hanging Heaton War Memorial, Dewsbury War Memorial and Batley War Memorial Addenda.



Mr J.B. Dixon 39756
9th Bn. C Coy. KOYLI.

The Vicarage,
Hanging Heaton,
DEWSBURY.

Dear Bailey,

I was very pleased to have your letter of the 28th July and to know that you are in good health, and Mrs Cleworth also was glad to have your message and to hear about you.. My health has improved and I am able to get about again but we have had rather a sick house lately with colds and other ailments. Many thanks for asking after us. We are all interested in your experiences and are thankful that you have been preserved so far from wounds and sickness. I am glad indeed that you have such pleasant memories of the old Church and School and Services. It is an advantage to regular attenders at Church and one of great value, when they have to live in different circumstances and surroundings, to call back the old and pleasant memories. All this is lost by those who neglect Church and they have very little to fall back upon in loneliness and danger. Yes, I think you are right about your service abroad. You are taking your part in a work of necessity which is also a work of honour in the cause of justice and righteousness. I am extremely glad to know that you can attend Holy Communion. You will remember what I have often said- 'the Christian who is prepared for Holy Communion is prepared for death' - so it is. Death may be far away but we should be ready for the change and our Church prepares us at all times. I am sure that you feel the comfort of this and I am glad. We do not forget you in our Services and we always say the prayer for our Fleet every Sunday morning in the School, the scholars joining aloud with me. With every good wish and our kind regards,

I am, Yours faithfully,

W.E. Cleworth

I had a letter from our Rebecca this week. For all xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

May 4th 1918

My Dear Wife and Children and Sister,

I was just going to write you this letter when the mail came up. I was feeling disappointed because I had not a letter this morning when the first mail came. It is not oft we get two mails a day. I thank you very much for your long and welcome letter. I had one from our Lizzie tonight.

I have been decorated today with my Military Medal ribbon. I shall not get the medal 'till I come to Blighty so I shall have to wait for that. They was very proud today when I had it pinned on me after the parade. They came shaking hands with me and wished me the best of luck. I told them it would be no good to me if it did not bring me luck. Dear Wife it was hard earned. I will not say what I got it for because I do not want a lot of paper talk. You can tell the Vicar I got the Military Medal for good work on the Battle of the Somme. I should like the Vicar to know but I do not want my photo to get in the paper. I am satisfied with what I have got without a lot of talk.

My arm 'as taken longer than I thought it. They gave me light duty today. It is not much more than a pin point. There is a bit of poison in it. If I had thought it would have taken so long I would have gone down to the Base but I wanted to stop with them 'till I got my ribbon. There should have been another three with us today but they are gassed and wounded. I am very well on myself and can eat like a Lord. We are where we can get something to eat. It is a very nice place where there are some lovely walks. I wish I had you last night; I went for a walk. The lads said I was having a nice walk by myself but I was thinking how nice it would be if you had been by my side. I thought about our walk down Hey Beck.

I am glad you got my letter all right. I do thank God you are all right and I hope the Lord will be good enough to watch over you and give you health. You wonder if the King would give me my medal. I