Peter Dougherty



Rank: - Private

Number: - 56091

Regiment: - The Prince of Wales's Own (West Yorkshire Regiment), 10th Service Battalion

Died: - Killed in Action, 20 October 1918.

Cemetery: - Montay-Neuvilly Road Cemetery, Montay, Nord, France.

Peter birth was registered in Huddersfield in the June quarter of 1892. His parents were Sligo-born John Doherty and his Huddersfield-born wife Mary (nee Quinn). The couple's marriage was recorded in the Dewsbury registration district in the March quarter of 1886.

John Doherty worked in labouring jobs and the family had links to Darwen and Blackburn in Lancashire as well as Batley and Huddersfield. In addition to Peter the other two children who survived to adulthood were Mary born Batley in February 1891 and Elizabeth born Darwen in February 1897.

In 1891 John, Mary and daughter Mary were lodging with Thomas Doherty at Ellen Street, Darwen and John was described as a general labourer. By 1901 they were in Picton Road, Blackburn with John working as a navvy.

Before 1907, the Doherty's were back in Batley living in Skelsey Row. On Tuesday 12 March 1907, Peter, who worked at West End Colliery, was admitted to Batley Hospital after breaking a leg at work. Two days later his father, who worked at Soothill Wood Colliery, was injured during a roof fall and taken to Batley Hospital with nasty head and face wounds.

In 1911 the family are living at 6, Villiers Street, Batley, John states he is working for Batley Corporation as a labourer and Peter is a hewer in a coal mine. His mother, Mary, died in April 1912.

Peter served as a Private in the 10th Battalion, West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own) enlisting in Leeds. They were part of 17th (Northern) Division, in the 50th Infantry Brigade. From his number it would appear he was called up for service in around April 1918 initially joining the 3rd (Reserve) battalion at Whitley Bay. Within months he was posted overseas an on 20 October 1918 he was killed in action whilst his Battalion was involved with the Battle of Selle, which took place in the Picardy region between 17 and 25 October.

On the day of Peter's death, the West Yorkshire men, along with the 7th East Yorkshires and 6th Dorsets, were engaged in operations to clear the Germans from Neuvilly village and areas across to the east. The advance began at 2 am in heavy rain, with the West Yorkshire men initially supporting the two attacking battalions, following them closely on either side of the village. The battle took place under intense enemy fire from machine guns and trench mortars. The Yorkshire men were also involved in hand-to-hand fighting to clear a small copse to the south of the village.

Once Neuvilly was entered, the West Yorkshire men rushed to the remaining enemy machine guns embedded in the houses. By now the enemy were surrendering freely. 35 Germans were extracted from one cellar, another party of around 100 with hands above their heads gave themselves up rushing terror-stricken towards the river and the prisoners' cages. By 5 am the village was cleared of the enemy. The 10th West Yorkshires then re-organised and took central position east of Neuvilly in support of the two attacking Battalions.

In total, the 10th West Yorkshires captured 84 prisoners, in addition to the 100 or so who gave themselves up. They also took 34 machine guns, six trench mortars, three German General Service wagons and two horses. They also killed around 100 Germans. The History of the 50th Infantry Brigade1914-1919 states that "The *Battle on October 20th was probably the fiercest ever fought by the Brigade."*

It cost the 10th West Yorkshires one officer killed, two wounded, and in other ranks 13 killed, 66 wounded and two missing. Subsequent analysis of CWGC data for the day shows 18 other ranks killed, amongst them Peter Doherty.

Peter was originally buried in a plot marked with a temporary cross just outside Neuvilly, where he died, After the war his body was re-buried in its final resting place at Montay-Neuvilly Road Cemetery, Montay.

Exactly one year later his father John died.

Peter is remembered with Honour at St. Mary's Church, Batley and Batley War Memorial.



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