John Herbert Clarkson Driver





Rank: - Lance Corporal

Number: - 242008 (formerly 5095)

Regiment: - Kings' Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 2nd/5th Battalion

Missing, presumed Killed in action: - 3rd May 1917

Memorial: - Arras Memorial Bay 7

Batley Reporter, 1 Jun 1917 (photo) Dewsbury Reporter, 26 May 1917, 2 Jun 1917 (photo)

Family Details

John Herbert was born in Lincoln around 1895 the only child of Ossett born Alfred Ward and Eliza Ann Driver (nee Ellis).

Alfred had previously married Rachel Wharton in 1875 but sadly she died in 1887. Sam Wilby Driver was born in 1878 the only child of this marriage who survived childhood.

In 1891 Alfred Ward Driver married Eliza Ann Ellis and they were living with Sam in Batley Carr. A decade later the couple had separated and Eliza Ann was a live in servant for Benjamin Stringer at 1, Top O' Carr and John Herbert was living with them. Alfred and Sam were living at Bottoms Yard, Batley Carr.

Eliza Ann died in January 1916 and he went to live with his Aunt and Uncle Edward and Elizabeth Clarkson (nee Ellis), who was his mum's younger sister at Ellis Buildings, Carr Top, Batley Carr.

He was an old boy of Batley Carr Church Day and Sunday school and also an enthusiastic member of the Boy Scouts there.

Before receiving his "calling up" papers in 1916 he worked for Mr. Samuel Gill's grocery and provision establishment, Westtown, Dewsbury.

His cousins were Fred Clarkson missing, presumed killed, 28th April 1917 and James, killed in action, 16th August 1917.

Service Details

John Herbert received his "calling up papers in 1916 and would have been in training at Wellingborough in October 1916 landing in Le Havre on 15th January 1917. They were attached to the 187th Brigade, in 62nd (2nd West Riding) Division.

The Battalion took part in Operations on the Ancre (15th February-13th March)

German retreat to the Hindenburg Line (14th -19th March)

First attack on Bullecourt (part of the Arras offensive) 11th April

German attack on Lagnicourt (part of the Arras offensive) 15th April

Battle of Bullecourt (part of the flanking operations round Arras) 3rd-17th May

On the night of the 2nd May all the battalions of the 187th Brigade went into the line and at 3.45 am on the 3rd they advanced trying to occupy the Hindenburg Line with the 2/4th KOYLI's immediately in front. It was only occupied in certain parts and other parts being established in shell holes near the front line of trenches. The Brigade had to subsequently withdraw due to severe casualties. A further attack was made at 9 am by the 2/5th and 2/4th under Major Watson of the 2/5th but it was found impossible to advance further than the Sunken Road and the attacking troops had to eventually retire to the railway cutting.

On Wednesday evening, May 23rd 1917 his aunt received official intimation that John Herbert had been killed in action, in France, on the 3rd May.

John Herbert was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

He is remembered with Honour at Holy Trinity Church and Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group