Arthur Eagleton





Rank: -Private

Number: -7145

Regiment: -York and Lancaster 1st Battalion (formerly 2nd Battalion)

Killed in Action: -11th April 1915 aged 36 years

Memorial: - Menin Gate (Ypres), West Vlaanderen, Belgium panel 36 and 55

Batley News, 24 Apr 1915 (photo)

Family Details

Arthur was born in Leeds in 1879 the son of Stephen John and Clara Eagleton (nee Kay) and was baptised at St. Matthew's Church, Leeds on the 16th August 1879 when his parents gave their address as 23, Primrose Street and his father's occupation as a tailor.

In 1881 his father was a soldier at Fulford Barracks, York and Clara and Arthur were visitors in Leeds.

In 1891 the family including Catherine born 1884 was living at 4, Thackray Street, Leeds and Stephen was once again employed as a tailor. Catherine sadly died in 1892.

Within the next decade Arthur had become a tailor's presser and he was visiting Batley at the home of William Ryan who was also born in Leeds and was a journeyman tailor living at 37, Clerk Green, Batley.

His parents and young sister Eliza Jane born 1897 in Leeds had also moved to Batley and were living at 11, James Street.

In 1911 his parents were living at 7, Rock Mount, Oaks Road, Batley and the census shows that another child had died in infancy.

On 4th June 1911 at St. Andrew's Church, Bordesley, Birmingham he married 20 year old Edith Hewins. He gave his address as 7, Beech Avenue, Grange Road, Birmingham and was a tailor's presser.

Service Details

When Arthur was 23 years and 4 months on the 30th October 1902, he joined the 3rd York and Lancaster Regiment saying that he was already in the militia. Arthur served for more than 7 years in India.

He was described as being 5 feet 6 inches tall, weighing 126 lbs., fresh complexion, grey eyes and fair hair. He appears to have had several tattoos on his arms and fingers and a scar on his forehead. He sprained his back on the 6th August 1906 and spent 8 days in hospital.

He rejoined the regiment on 2nd August 1914 giving his address as 10, Court 4 House, Heathmill Lane, Birmingham and went for training at Grantchester and

his records show he broke out of camp on the 30th August and was found to be drunk and disorderly at 6.30 pm in the "Red Lion." For this he was given 7 days Confined to Camp. On the 4th September 1914 he did not appear for roll call on 6 separate occasions and was given 8 days Confined to Camp.

He was sent to France early in the war but according to newspaper reports was rendered "hors de combat" by wounds received near Lille. He returned to hospital in England where his father visited him but could not say exactly where because*" the soldiers have been in so many places that it is almost impossible to remember them all and in what village any particular incident occurs."*

On 22nd January 1915 he was found to be drunk in his billets at 3.15 pm. whilst on active service. On the 11th February he overstayed his leave from 9 pm until 18th February at midnight which was 7 days and 3 hours whilst on active service. On the 7th April at West Outré, he refused to have his hair cut so he was punished for not complying with an order whilst on active service.

The 2nd Battalion was in 16th Brigade 6th Division and the first action the 2nd Battalion was involved in was during the Race to the Sea when they fought at the Battle of Armentieres (19th October - 2nd November 1914). Arthur was wounded on the 30th October 1914 and sent back to England. He was transferred to the 1st Battalion on 11th March 1915 which was in 83rd Brigade 28th Division.

Arthur joined them here after his stay in hospital. On the eve of his departure he wrote to his father *"I am going to France and shall be glad to get there in the thick of it just to see what stuff I am made of. If I come back with my lower region full of bullets I shall have nothing to grumble at."*

Writing later from France to his father he said: -"*I am on the track once more and I am going to get my own back. I am enjoying soldiering more now than when I was at home."*

From the 3rd March -6th April the Brigade was temporarily attached to the 5th Division.

On the 2nd April the battalion was at Bailleul near Ypres and going on church parade on the 4th at West Outré. They went into the trenches near Zonnebeke on the morning of the 9th April and on the 11th the war diary reports that at 11.20 am the enemy fire bombed the left trench causing several casualties but ceased

firing when they were shelled. At 12 noon no movement by the enemy could be seen but the enemy's artillery set a house on fire to the south west of the battalion. The casualties for the previous 24 hours were 6 other ranks killed and 12 wounded.

His Company Officer wrote to his wife: -

"I am very sorry to inform you that your husband was killed on duty in the trenches on Sunday. I am glad to say he suffered no pain as he was shot straight through the head. We shall miss him very much for he was so jolly in the company. Please accept my sincere sympathy in your great loss."

His father, Stephen, was a respected employee of Messrs. George Jessop and Son, clothing manufacturers.

Arthur was awarded the 1914 Star and clasp, British War Medal and the Victory Medal. He was also awarded the 3rd Class Russian Cross of St. George where the announcement appeared on the 25th August 1915 in the London Gazette. This was an award from Imperial Russia in WW1.

Arthur is remembered with Honour at St Luke's Church, Soothill; St Paul's Church, Hanging Heaton; Hanging Heaton War Memorial (St Paul's) and Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group