# Wilfred Ernest Earnshaw







**Rank: -** Private

**Number: -** 52653

**Regiment/ Battalion: -** King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 2nd /4th Battalion

**Died of Wounds: -** 7th October 1918 at Taplow Hospital, Bucks., aged 34

**Cemetery: -** Batley Cemetery J 534

Batley News, 26 Oct 1918 (photo)

**Family Details:**

Wilfred Ernest was born in Batley on 16th March 1884 and baptised at Batley Parish Church on 23rd April 1884. He was the son of Ellen Earnshaw, a weaver, who was born in Kirkburton, and father unknown.

In 1891 he is living at 9, Clerk Green, Batley with hs grandparents, Jim and Charlotte Earnshaw, his mum, his widowed Aunt Bessy and his cousins George (grocers assistant) and Sarah E. Parkin (woollen weaver).

In 1901 he was a grocer's assistant and living with his Aunt Betty and his mum Eleanor at 20, Hanover Street, Batley but by 1911 they had all moved to a three roomed house at 18, Dark Lane, Batley and Wilfred continued working as grocer's assistant.

He attended Batley Parish School and was a choir boy at St. Andrew's Church, Purlwell later being employed by Batley Co-operative Society. He worked at most of the grocery branches as well as the Central Store, but at the time of him joining up he was the Manager of the Healey Branch.

Wilfred was a member of Batley Working Men's Clubs and played football for the tradesmen's team.

**Service Details:**

Wilfred did not enrol until April 1918 at Batley, and was sent to France the following August having joined the 2nd/ 4th Kings' Own Yorkshire Light Infantry.

The first battle he would have encountered would have been the Battle of the Scarpe ( 26th- 20th August ) followed by the Battle of the Drocourt –Queant Line ( 2nd September). The Battle of Havrincourt was fought by his Division on 12th September. At 5.20am on 14th September the 185th Brigade attacked north eastwards establishing itself on the Kimber Avenue trench. Throughout the day the Germans kept up an heavy artillery bombardment along the whole of the front line causing some of the 2nd /4th KOYLI posts to be withdrawn into dugouts in Putney trench. Low flying enemy planes bombed and machine gunned the positions and a great deal of gas drenched the area. The 2nd/4th were spread in an arc from the junction of the two railway lines in the village northwest to London trench where it remained until the next night.

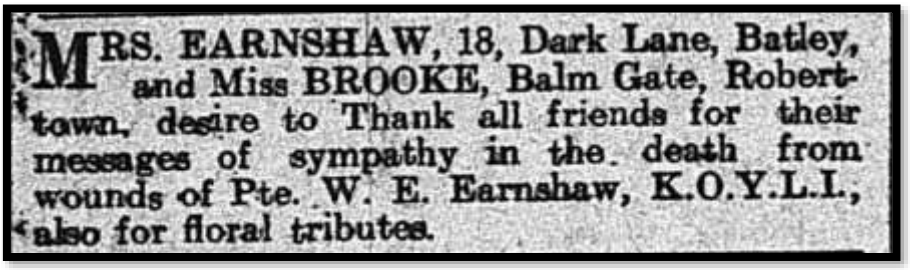
Wilfred was wounded on the 15th September and brought to England. He died on 17th October 1918 as a result of these wounds at Taplow Hospital.

It was reported in the Batley News that he had died of sceptic poisoning after receiving serious wounds to his thigh. The funeral took place at Batley Cemetery on Tuesday 22nd October and was conducted by Rev. C.H. Maggs. The Batley Co-operative Society was represented at the funeral by Messrs. W.H. Childe J.P. (President), Alfred Brown, H. Wheeler, A. Cox (members of committee), J.T. Wilman (secretary), H.H. Fell (cashier), G.B. Popplewell (manager, butchery department), H.E. Schofield, W. Hepworth, J. Holdsworth, J.W. Smith, T. Redick, P.W. Keighley, J.W. Blackburn, George Scargill, J.W. Fenton Norman Naylor, George Jackson, and E.A. Bonfield (branch managers) Miss M.E. Boardman (Healey Branch) and Mr. Allatt manager of Healey Store of Heckmondwike Co-operative Society.

In the same edition his mother of 18, Dark Lane and Miss Brooke, Balm Gate, Robertown thanked all friends for their messages of sympathy and for floral tributes.

Wilfred received the British Medal and Victory Medal.

He is remembered with Honour on Batley War Memorial, St. John's Church, Carlinghow, Batley Working Men's Club, Batley Co-operative Society and Batley Cemetery.


MRS. EARNSHAW, 18, Dark Lane, Batley, and Miss BROOKE, Balm Gate, Robert-town, desire to Thank all friends for their messages of sympathy in the death from wounds of Pte. W. E. Earnshaw, K.O.Y.L.I., also for floral tributes.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group