Ernest Ellis





Rank: - Private

Number: - 6794

Regiment: - Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment) 1/7th Battalion (formerly K.O.Y.L.I.)

Died of Wounds: - 27th April 1918 aged 37

Cemetery: - Haringhe (Bandaghem) Military Cemetery, Belgium V.A.10

"WE LIVE IN HOPES OF THE PROMISE GIVEN TO MEET AND PART NO MORE IN OUR HOME IN HEAVEN"

Batley News, 18 May 1918 (photo)

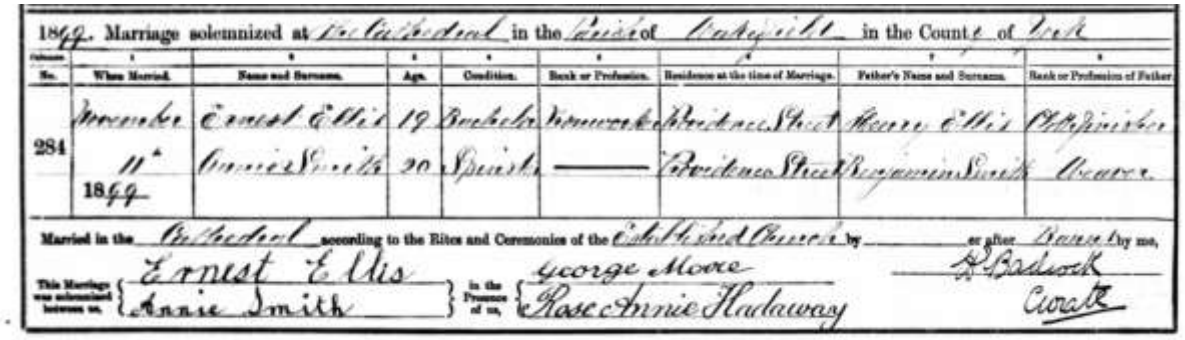
Family Details

Ernest was born in Batley Carr on 3rd October 1881 the son of Henry and Sarah Ellis nee Walker and was baptised on 26th February 1882 at St Matthew's, West Town, Dewsbury.

In 1891 he was living with his family at 6, Carr Street, Batley Carr and his siblings were John Edward 1873, Arthur 1875, George 1878, Percy 1884, Walker 1885, Lionel 1889. His older siblings Charles Henry c1862, Fred c1866 and William c.1868 had already left the family home.

Sadly his father whose occupation was a cloth finisher died in the summer of 1891.

On 11th November 1899 he married Annie Smith at Wakefield Cathedral.



1899. Marriage solemnized at the Cathedral in the Parish of Wakefield in the County of York

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
284	November 11th 1899	Ernest Ellis	19	Bachelor	Ironworker	Bright Street	Henry Ellis	Cloth Finisher
		Annie Smith	20	Spinster	—	Providence Street	Benjamin Smith	Weaver

Married in the Cathedral according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church by ____ or after Banns by me, D. Badcock Curate

This Marriage was solemnized between us, Ernest Ellis, Annie Smith. In the Presence of us, George Moore, Rose Annie Hadaway.

Joseph William Ellis was born on 31st August 1900 and baptised at Dewsbury Parish Church on 21st October 1900 when the address given was Bright Street. Joseph William died in 1901 aged 17 months.

In 1901 when the census was taken, Ernest was staying with his elder brother John Edward at Shady Nook, Marsden, Huddersfield and as working as an iron roller at a forge. His wife Annie and son were living at 72, Dale Street, Batley Carr. They must have gone their separate ways because he was in Wakefield prison on2nd November 1901 because he had not paid her maintenance.

In 1902 Ernest had to serve one month at His Majesty's pleasure at Wakefield because of "wife's debts". Debt was a problem in every year between1901-1907. Florence was born on the 5th June 1904 when the address given was 41, Back Bright Street, Dewsbury. She sadly died in March 1905 aged 9 months when the family was living at 9, Back Commercial Road, Dewsbury.

The marriage seems to have failed and by 1911 Ernest was co-habiting with Ada Dickinson and was living in a two roomed home at Tong Buildings, Earlsheaton and changed his occupation to become a domestic gardener.

According to newspaper reports before he enlisted, he worked for Don Leo, gardener, of Batley Carr and attended Dewsbury Parish Church. A son, Ernest Dickinson Ellis was born in c1914 but died 22nd January 1916 of bronchio pneumonia and Ernest was present at his death. Leonard Dickinson, was born on 17th December 1917 and the couple had gone to live at 15, Jack Lane, Commonside, Hanging Heaton.

Ada Dickinson married Harry Moffatt in 1922 and had three more children.

Service Details

Ernest had several years' service with the regular army before the outbreak of war and was called up as a Reservist in 1914.

He enlisted into the West Riding Regiment (Special Reserve) and had a medical examination on 9th July 1908 at Strensall. He was 5' 3" tall, had green eyes, dark brown hair and weighed 128 lbs. He did say he had been previously in the militia.

The 1/7th Battalion were formed in Halifax in August 1914 as part of the 2nd West Riding Brigade, West Riding Division. They moved on mobilisation to coastal defences near Hull and Grimsby. On 5th November 1914 they moved to billets in Doncaster, finally landing in Boulogne on 14th April 1915. On the 15th May 1915 the formation became 147th Brigade in 49th (West Riding Division).

The 49th Division took part in the defence against the first Phosgene attack (19 December 1915).

In 1916 they were on the Somme fighting at**: -**

The Battle of Albert (1-13 July)
The Battle of Bazentin Ridge (14-17 July)
The Battle of Pozieres Ridge (23 July-3 September)
The Battle of Flers-Courcelette (15-22September)

In 1917 they took part in:-
Operations on the Flanders Coast (Hush)
The Battle of Poelcapelle (9 -12 October) a phase of the Third Battle of Ypres

In 1918 they fought in Flanders near the Lys at

The Battle of Estaires (9-11 April)
The Battle of Messines (10-11 April)
The Battle of Bailleul in which the Division defended Neuve Eglise (13-15 April)
The First Battle of Kemmel Ridge (17-19 April)
The Second Battle of Kemmel Ridge (25-26 April)

On 16 April 1918 Meteren and Wijtschate fell and the Germans came to the foot of Mont Kemmel. At dawn on 17 April the Germans launched a thunderous aassault from Houthulst Forest against the Belgium Front Lineat Merkem and Kippe. Just in front of the village they succeeded in breaking through and for a tantalising moment for the German High Command it looked as though they were going to achieve what all sides had been attempting since those heady days of "glory" in 1914 – the ability to out flank and roll up the enemy's line.

The Belgians were fighting for the last few kilometres of their country and were not going to be easily dealt with. They tenaciously held the remainder of their front line and counter attacked with such vigour that they drove the Germans back and re-established their front line. The Belgians took nearly 800 prisoners and 60 machine guns. Because the Belgians held the front line it released British Divisions which would prove vital.

Between the 19th and 24th the Germans were quiet but they were planning the assault on Mont Kemmel.

At 2.30 am on the 25th April over 250 batteries of German guns opened up on Allied artillery positions with gas and high explosive. For the next two hours they concentrated solely on destroying gun emplacements before switching to the French front line at 5 am. By 7.10am Kemmel Ridge was theirs and by 10.30 am it was all over.

The fighting continued but the Germans made no further advances.

Whilst he was in France it was reported that Ernest won an award for skill with a rifle and was promoted to Sergeant in June 1915 but was reduced to the rank of Corporal on 3rd April 1916. He had been injured by gunshot wounds in his right

arm on 1st July 1916 but it was not serious and he quickly returned to his unit. It was also reported locally that he had been wounded and gassed and died of his wounds on 27th April 1918.

Ernest was awarded the 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

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



Researched by members of
Batley History Group