James Ewart







Rank: - Gunner

Number: - 34518

Regiment: - Royal Field Artillery.

Battalion: - "C" Battery 58th Brigade

Died of Wounds: - 9th October 1917 aged 23

Cemetery: - Dozinghem Military Cemetery, West Vlaanderen, Belgium.

"REST IN PEACE"

Batley News, 20 Oct 1917 (photo)

Family Details

James was born in Settle in 1894 the son of William born in Eskdalemuir, Dumfriesshire and Janet (nee Maxwell) who came from Lanarkshire.

He had two older brothers Robert (1891) and Thomas Maxwell (1893) and he was followed by William (1896), John Graham (1897), George Edward (1898) Alexander (1900), Balfour Hislop (1903) and Edgar (1904). The 1911 census shows there was another child who did not survive infancy.

In 1901 the family was living at New Road, Settle and William's occupation was a police constable. Before 1911 William had become a police sergeant working for the West Riding Constabulary and moved to live at 69, Warwick Road, Batley Carr. James was working as a cloth finisher in a woollen mill. Before enlisting he was working in the finishing department of Messrs. G. & J. Stubley, Bottoms Mill, Batley.

At the time of his death he was living at 9, Thornfield, Savile Town, Dewsbury.

Service Details

James joined the Royal Field Artillery in January 1915 and was posted to France on the 22nd May 1915. He was wounded in the arm and was back in England by September. After recovering he was sent to Egypt where he served for six months before being transferred to France in July 1916.

The Brigade was part of 11th (Northern) Division.

The Division received orders on 17th June 1916 for a move to France. Embarkation at Alexandria was completed on 3rd July and by the 7th July Divisional H Q had been set up at Flesselelles. By 27th July, the Division had taken over part of the front in Third Army sector. The Division then took part in the following operations: -

The capture of the Wundt-Werk (Wonder Work), Battle of Flers-Courcelette and the Battle of Thiepval.

In 1917 they were in operations on the Ancre taking part in the Battles of Messines, Langemarck, Polygon Wood, Broodseinde and Poelcapelle.

The Battle of Broodseinde was fought on the 4th October 1917 near Ypres in Flanders, at the east end of the Gheluvelt plateau. The Allied attack used "bite –and-hold" tactics, with objectives limited to what could be held against German counter-attacks

and was the most successful of the Battle of Passchendaele. The British devastated the German defence, which prompted a crisis among German commanders and caused a severe loss of morale in the German 4th Army. The strategic aim was for the Germans to lose the Belgian coast.

Heavy rain began on 4th October, working more to the advantage of the German defenders. The British had to move their artillery forward into the area devastated by shellfire and soaked by the heavy rain. The next British attack took place on 9th October after several days of heavy rain. James never saw this attack because he was severely wounded with shell wounds on the 6th October.

Intimation was received from a Chaplain that James was severely wounded in the right arm and leg and had been moved to a casualty clearing station. An official telegram was received saying that he was dangerously ill and could not be visited.

On Tuesday a letter was received from the sister in charge in charge of the station

"Your son was admitted here on October 6th suffering from shell wounds in both legs. On admittance his condition was most critical, but after treatment, he appeared to rally. He became worse on the following day and died on the 9th inst."

At the time of his death Tom Ewart R.F.A. was in India recovering from a fever he had contracted in Mesopotamia after serving in France. John Ewart was in France with the KOYLI's , Robert Ewart R.G.A. and George Edward, Queen's Yorkshire Dragoons were in training in England.William had been killed in France the previous year.

James was awarded the 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal.He is Remembered with Honour at Holy Trinity,Batley Carr, St.Andrew's Purlwell, Batley War Memorial and Dozinghem Military Cemetery ,Belgium.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group