John William Firth



Rank: - Private

Number: - 11043

Regiment: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 2nd Battalion

Killed in Action: - 1st November 1914 aged 20 years

Memorial: - Le Touret Memorial, Pas de Calais, France Panel 31

Batley News, 12 Dec 1914

Family Details

John William was born in Tong in c.1894 the eldest son of Joseph and Elizabeth Firth nee Graham who had married in 1893(registered Bradford).

Joseph was born in Tong and Elizabeth in Bowling and their eldest three children John William, Albert 1895-1895, and Walter 1897 were also born in Tong. In 1901 the family was living at Bruntcliffe Road, Morley and Joseph was employed as a hewer in a coal mine.

The family moved around the area probably for work Rennie was born in Bruntcliffe in 1901 followed by William Henry 1903 at Low Moor, Sarah Ann 1905 at Tong, Harold 1908 and Dora 1910 both born Morley.

In 1911 the family lived at Robinson's Yard, Earlsheaton in a three roomed home and Joseph was a hewer whilst both John William and Walter were working as hurriers. The census shows that another child had died in infancy and this would have been Florence 1893-1893.

It would appear Joseph died and Elizabeth moved to live in Dale Street, Batley Carr.

John William was connected with the Salvation Army in Batley, Dewsbury and Birstall.

Service Details

John William enlisted in 1914 and went to the Front on 16th August landing at Le Havre. The 2nd Battalion was part of 13th Brigade in 5th Division.

They fought hard at the following: -

The Battle of Mons and subsequent retreat, including the Action of Elouges (23-24 August)
The Battle of Le Cateau and the Affair of Crepy-en-Valois (26 August)
The Battle of the Marne (7-10 September)
The Battle of the Aisne (12-15 September)

The Battles of La Bassee and Messines 1914 (10 October-2 November).

Sadly, his mother received the news that he had been killed in action almost at the same time as the parents of George Whittaker received the news that their son had been killed. They lived only a few days away from each other in Dale Street.

John William was awarded the 1914-15 Star and Clasp, British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

He is remembered with Honour on Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group