Joseph Wilfred Fox





Rank: - Private

Number: - 17879

Regiment/Battalion: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 10th Battalion

Missing, presumed Killed in Action: - 1st July 1916 age 33

Remembered with Honour: - Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France Pier and Face 11C and 12A.France.

Batley News, 21 Oct 1916 (photo) Batley Reporter, 22 Sep 1916

Family Details:

Joseph Wilfred was born on 4th March 1882 the son of Batley born Benjamin and Ruth Ann Fox (nee Kaye) who came from Tingley. He was baptised at Batley Parish Church on 9th April 1882.

In 1891 the family was living at 46, Albion Street, Batley and Benjamin was a rag grinder whilst Ruth worked as a woollen weaver. A decade later his parents were still working at the same jobs but had moved to live at 47, King Street and Joseph was working as a piecener at a woollen mill.

In late 1905 he married Edith Ellen Rothery and they had one child, Ruth Ann, born on 25th June 1908, who was named after her paternal grandmother.

Joseph and Edith were living at 1, Whitaker Square when Ruth Ann was baptised at Batley Parish Church on 19th July 1908. In 1911 they were living at 6, Yard 2, Oxford Street, Batley but Ruth Ann was staying with her grandmother at 1, Whitaker Square, Batley, Benjamin having recently died in March 1911.

It would appear that Ruth and his daughter, Ruth Ann, moved yet again to Albion Yard, Cross Bank Road before 1916 and continued to live together until Ruth died in 1932 and his daughter Ruth Ann married Albert Hargreaves at St. John's Carlinghow on 4th February 1933 still living at Albion Yard, Cross Bank.

Joseph attended Hick Lane Wesleyan Chapel and Sunday School but latterly attended Cross Bank Wesleyan Chapel and was employed by Messrs. Brooke, Wilford and Co. at Carlinghow as a piecener.

Service Details:

Joseph enlisted in September 1914 and joined the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 10th Battalion (Service) which was formed in Pontefract in September 1914. They came under the command of 64th Brigade in 21st Division. They left for Berkhamsted and then Halton Park (Tring) in October 1914 moving to billets in Maidenhead in November, returning to Halton Park in April 1915 and to Witley in August arriving in France on the 11th September.

The Division he was in fought at the Battle of Loos from 25th September 1915 to 8th October 1915 along with another five Divisions. This took place on land not of their choosing and before stocks of ammunition and heavy artillery could be brought in. This was the first battle where the British Army used poison gas.

There were other skirmishes before the Battle of Albert which was part of the Battles of the Somme.

On the 28th June the 10th Battalion moved up to the assembly trenches at Buire for the start of the battle but at 2p.m. the assault was cancelled because of heavy rain. On the 30th they once again moved into the trenches and they had been bombarding the enemy for four days with smoke and gas although the enemy had not been very active.

On the 1st July the 64th Brigade was led by the 10th K.O.Y.L.I. They left the trenches at 7.30 a.m. and took the Crucifix Trench and held it until early the next day when they were relieved by the 1st Lincolns. They reported that nine Officers were killed and 16 wounded with 53 other ranks killed and 292 wounded.

Joseph was reported missing, presumed killed in action. It was not until October that his mother received official notification and the King and Queen's sympathy was tendered to her.

He left his effects to his mother and daughter.

He was awarded the 1915 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Joseph is remembered with Honour on Batley War Memorial, St. John's Church, Carlinghow and Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group