Louis Joseph Fox





Rank: - Sergeant

Number: - 286607

Regiment: - Royal Garrison Artillery 55th AA Company (Anti-Aircraft Defences St. Albans)

Died of Bronchial Pneumonia: - 18th August 1918 aged 50 years

Cemetery: - St. Albans (Hatfield Road) Mil.F.4

Batley News, 27 Apr 1918 (photo)

Family Details

Joseph Louis was born in Staincliffe, Batley in c.1867 the youngest son of George and Mary Fox nee Hemingway of Thorncliffe House, Batley. He was baptised at Christ Church, Staincliffe on 7th December 1867 living at Thorncliffe and his father was described as a merchant.

The 1871 census shows he was living at Thorncliffe House with his parents and siblings John Henry 1853, Sarah Ellen 1859, George William 1860, Charles Edward 1862, 4-month Harold Hemingway and three servants. His father was described as a cotton spinner and shoddy merchant. Sadly, Harold died in December 1871 and was buried at Dewsbury Moor on Christmas Day. At Thorncliffe House there was also a Gardeners House and Porters Lodge where the servants lived.

The 1881 census tells us that his father was employing 450 people and his eldest two sons were employed as clerks in a warehouse. Louis was a scholar attending Batley Grammar School.

In 1891 George was a J.P. and he and his sons Charles Edward and Louis were described as cotton spinners. The family owned Messrs. G. Fox and Sons Ltd. Staincliffe Mills.

His father died on the 18th July 1900. In 1901 Louis was still living in the family home at Thorncliffe House with his mother and their servants. He was described on the census as a cotton spinner, employer.

Louis married Sarah Hirst daughter of on John Wales Hirst of Uplands, Dewsbury at Christ Church, Staincliffe on 29th April 1903. They moved to Follingworth, Gomersal where Nancy Beryl was born the following year on 11th March 1904. The family later moved to Dryfield House, Healey Lane, Batley which had originally been built for another mill owning family, the Sheards of Batley.

In 1907 he was elected as a member of Batley Town Council and served for three years in which time he presented the K.O.Y.L.I. Colours which hung in a frame behind the Mayoral chair in the Council Chamber.

Service Details

Louis attained the rank of Major at the Heckmondwike Battery of the Royal Field Artillery.

He moved his family to live at Brunswick House, West Park, Harrogate before enlisting at Pontefract in October 1917, joining the ranks and went into training with the R.G.A.

His records show he was 5’ 8” tall and weighed about 13 stones. His occupation was shown as a retired master cotton spinner.

He went to St. Albans in December 1917 after being made a Sergeant. Other officers and his men had great respect for him.

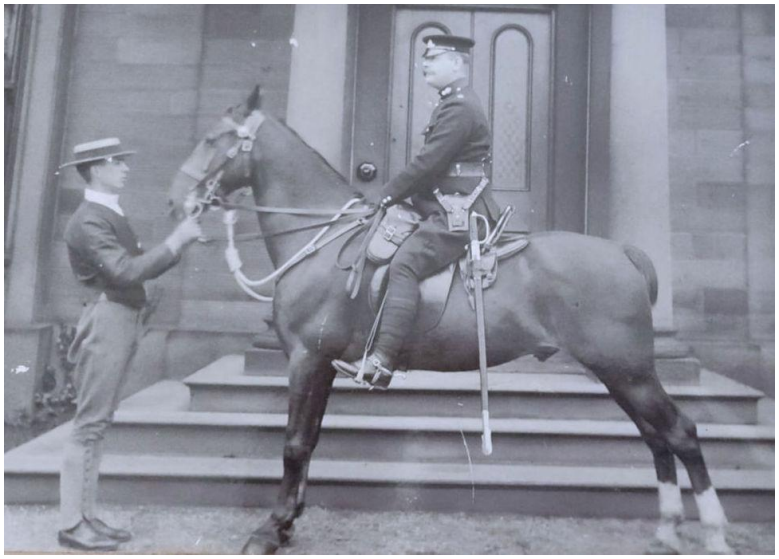

Photo courtesy of James Green (his Great Grandson)

He became ill and was moved to Bricket House Voluntary Aid Detachment Hospital, St. Alban’s where he died after being ill for four days with bronchial pneumonia.

His coffin, draped with a Union Jack, was drawn from the hospital to St. Alban’s Cemetery drawn by a gun carriage, eight sergeants of the deceased’s Company acting as bearers. The Dean of St. Alban’s conducted the last rites very impressively. A firing party delivered three volleys over the open grave and buglers sounded the “Last Post”. There were three wreaths from relatives, and the mourners were Mrs. L. J. Fox, (his wife), Mr. George Robert Critchley Fox (Staincliffe Hall) nephew and Mr. J.W. Hirst (father-in-law).

He is remembered with Honour at Batley War Memorial Addenda 2019.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group