William Edgar Freeman





Rank: - Private

Number: - 44739

Regiment: - Machine Gun Corps (Infantry), (Formerly 21614 West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own)) 17th Coy.

Missing, presumed Killed in Action: - (14 Jan 1917 – 14 Jun 1917)

Memorial: - Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium Panel 56

Batley News, 24 Aug 1918 (photo)

Family Details

William Edgar was born in Retford in c.1883 the son of the late William Roland Freeman and Ann Elizabeth Freeman nee Rollinson, m. 1869, registered East Retford.

In 1891 he was living with his parents and siblings George James 1881 and Annie 1886 at Wool Pack Street, Moorgate, Clarborough, East Retford. William Roland gave his occupation as a bricklayer. His father died in January 1900.

Before September 1900 he came to Batley and met and married Jane Ann Haigh when he was only 17 years old to her 25 years when they married on 15th September 1900 at Batley Parish Church. He gave his occupation as a miner and she was a weaver.

In 1901 he lived in Grafton Street, Batley with his wife, Jane Ann and daughter Annie who was born on 17th April 1901.

However, in 1911 he lived in Oldroyd Square, Batley Carr with Lizzie Hornsby (servant) age 31 and single. To date we have not found where his wife and child were in 1911.

Before enlisting he worked at Wrenthorpe Colliery, Wakefield. His wife and child lived at 4, Broomhill Terrace, Batley.

Service Details

William Edgar enlisted at Dewsbury (Batley) on 14th June 1915 and went to France on the 9th August 1916.The 17th Coy Machine Guns were attached to 24th Division. He was posted missing on the 14th January 1917.

The 24th Division saw conflict at: -

The Battle of Vimy Ridge, a phase of the Arras offensive 1917 9-14 April, the Battle of Messines (7-14 June)

This was a brilliantly planned and executed attack that resulted in the capture of the Wytschaete-Messines ridge south of Ypres, a feature that had given the British problems since 1914 and which was important to hold for future offensive operations in Flanders. It commenced with one of the heaviest artillery bombardments of the war and the explosion of nineteen enormous and long-prepared underground mines.

It is not known when William went missing but the Division was in reserve in January 1917. He was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. He is remembered with Honour at Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group