John William Goddard





Rank: - Private

Number: - 31240

Regiment: - East Yorkshire Regiment (formerly 26020 Duke of Wellington's) 1st Battalion

Killed in Action: - 25th September 1916 aged 28

Memorial: - Thiepval, Somme, France Pier and Face 2 C

Batley News, 21 Oct 1916 (photo)

Family Details

John William was born in Greenburg, Germany in c 1888 the son of George Batty and Julia (Judith) Goddard (nee Lancaster). George came from Holmfirth whilst Judith was born in Gomersal. They married at Batley Parish on 30th November 1872. George was a cloth finisher.

Ruth was born in Soothill in 1874 followed by Ada born in White Lee in 1877 and Emily in Soothill in 1881. In 1881 the family was living in Clutton Street.

Shortly after the family left Batley to live in Germany where Ethel Annie 1893, Carrie 1886, George Holdsworth 1887 and John William were born before the family returned before 1891 to live in Farsley. The family moved back to Batley before the birth of Norman in 1897. In 1901 the family was living at 62, Purlwell Lane where George was working as a woollen press setter and John William was a piecer.

Judith died in November 1909 when the family was living at Purlwell Hall Road.

On the 16th December 1910 George, Carrie John William and Norman left Liverpool arriving at New Brunswick on the 23rd December. John William arrived in Detroit, Michigan on the 31st December 1910 giving his father's address as Coyeau, Windsor. He was described as being 5 feet 2 inches in height, ruddy complexion, auburn hair and blue eyes. It is not known when the family returned to Batley but a report in the Batley Reporter says he was in Canada for three years and he was well known in the Mount Pleasant area. Before he enlisted John William worked at Messrs John Fenton and Sons at Headfield Mills, Savile Town.

On the 27th May 1916 John William married Ellen Jones at Thornhill Lees Parish Church giving his occupation as a soldier living at Vicarage Field Camp, Seaton Denard, Northumberland.

They lived at 3, Kaye Street, Savile Town.

Service Details

John William enlisted at Heckmondwike in February 1916 when the 1st Battalion of the East Yorkshire Regiment was in 64th Brigade, 21st Division.

It is not known exactly when John William went to France but his battalion fought at the Battles of Albert on 1st - 13th July, Bazentin,14 - 17th July and the Battle of Flers-Courcelette 15th-22nd September where they attacked the village of Gueudecourt, and the Battle of Morval 25th - 28th September 1916.

After fighting continuously for a few days, the battalion rested and reorganised on the 19th which was a wet and stormy day. They were at Fricourt Camp until the 23rd when they moved to Longueval before taking up action positions on the 25th near Gueudecourt. The plan of the attack was that 21st Division would attack and take the enemy position in front of and behind Gueudecourt as well as the village itself. The Guards Division was to be to the right and the 55th Division to the left.After an artillery bombardment commencing at 9 am and becoming more intense hourly until it became a hurricane bombardment between 12 noon and 12.30 pm the battalion left its trenches at 12.35 pm. The battalion immediately came under very heavy shell, rifle and machine gun fire but continued to advance to the first objective where they found the German barbed wire untouched by their artillery fire. The battalion was held up and there were many casualties and took cover in shell holes near the barbed wire firing at the enemy whenever they showed their heads above the parapet of Gird Trench. The battalion withdrew at nightfall and returned to the Sunken Road and from there marched back about 1,000 yards to an old trench, named Switch Trench, where it rested and reorganised. The total numbers left in the battalion were 5 Officers and 118 other ranks.

This is where John William most probably lost his life.

His brother, Norman, was killed on 31st October 1918 when he was struck by a motor lorry in France.

John William was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. He is remembered with Honour at Purlwell Wesleyan Church, Batley and Dewsbury War Memorial



Researched by members of
Batley History Group