William Arnold Greenwood Gre(e)aves





Rank: - Private

Number: - 20378

Regiment: - Grenadier Guards 3rd Battalion

Killed in Action: - 15th September 1916 aged 20

Cemetery: - Guards Cemetery, Lesboeufs, France 1 V. R. 7

"TOO DEARLY LOVED TO BE FORGOTTEN FATHER, MOTHER SISTERS AND BROTHER"

Batley News, 14 Oct 1916 (photo)

Family Details

William Arnold Greenwood was born in Rawdon, Leeds in 1896, the son of John Calver and Martha Jane (nee Green) Greaves.

In 1901 John, a woollen warper was living with his family at Carcada Road, Rawdon which included Martha Jane, Clarice M. (1894), Eliza Calver (1895), William, Amy (1898), his widowed aunt, Mary A. Greaves and a lodger William Abberley.

Clara Emma was born in 1904 followed by Beatrice in 1905 and Earnest in 1908 but before 1911 the family had moved to live at 21, Upper Mount Street, Batley. William was working as a moulder in an iron foundry.

After coming to Batley William was an active member of Talbot Street United Methodist Church and was a former Sunday School secretary and teacher. He was a member of the choir and was also connected with the church cricket team.

Previous to enlisting he was an apprentice moulder at Pelapone Engineering Works, Batley Carr.

Service Details

William enlisted at Dewsbury in November 1914 and went to the Front on 26th July 1915.

From the 1st-9th September 1916 the 3rd Battalion was in training at Morloncourt. On the 9th the battalion moved to camp at "Happy Valley". Very little accommodation was available but the weather was fine. The next day they marched to Carnoy and bivouacked there with very little cover for the men. The 14th was a cold, windy day with showers. The assembly point was clear of the village of Ginchy because the enemy was very quick to put down a barrage on it. The battalion was the right front battalion and was formed up in four waves, the 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards was on the left and the 1st Battalion Scots Guards was immediately in the rear. The men had not seen the terrain in front of them where they were assembled and they realised they would have to change their route for the assault because as a place of assault it had every disadvantage except that it was not shelled.

On the 15th zero hour was set for 6.20 am and the battalion was in their positions by about 3 am when they slept until around 5.45am when they were given sandwiches. They were in touch with 6th Division who were on their right and at about 6 am their

artillery fired about 4o rounds in quick succession which woke up the enemy, who put down the usual barrage on Ginchy and started shelling Leuze Wood and the 6th Division. At 6.19 am the whole brigade rose to its feet and advanced. The left front company was met with machine gun fire and its Officers were killed or wounded within minutes. The Grenadier Guards advanced some way but the 6th Division failed to advance, the right flank was completely exposed, the left flank was behind them and owing to the close formation and the irregularity of the assembly trenches all the waves tended to become intermixed. A German trench with machine guns was encountered within 250 yards of them leaving their trenches but every German was either shot or bayoneted. The main casualties were from the right flank.

On the evening of the 15th the Battalion held a small frontage on the right of the first objective. This flank was subjected to repeat bombing attacks and the Germans also attempted to work riflemen round it. Fighting, on a small scale continued throughout the night and resulted in all counter attacks being repulsed. The casualties were four officers killed or died of wounds, 10 wounded, 4 missing. Other ranks 31 killed, 155 wounded, 209 missing.

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

He is remembered with Honour at Holy Trinity Church, Batley Carr, Talbot Street United Methodist Church, Batley Carr Primitive Methodist Sunday School and Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group