Walter Hall





Rank: - Private

Number: - 53003

Regiment: - West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own) 2nd Battalion

Killed in Action: - 27th March 1918 aged 19 years

Memorial: - Pozieres Memorial, Somme, France Panel 26 and 27

Batley News, 27 Apr 1918 (photo)

Family Details

Walter was born in Batley on 26th January 1899 the son of Joseph and Elizabeth Hall (nee Lawton) and was baptised at Batley Parish Church on the 8th March 1899 when his parents lived at Lower Mount Street, Batley and his father was a miner. The couple had married at Batley Parish Church on 3rd September 1892.

Eliza Ann was born in 1893 followed by Edith Emily 1894, Amy Elizabeth 1895, Sarah Ann 1897, Walter, Clifford and Louis 1900,who both died in July 1901, Albert 1903, William 1905 , twins Elsie and Hilda were born in 1907 but were buried at Batley Cemetery on 17th Sept 1907 aged 14 weeks and Doris in 1909.

In 1901 the family was living at 23, Back Beaumont Street, Batley and Walter attended Purlwell Council School and was associated with Gospel Hall Sunday School. In 1911 the family of 10 people was living in a three roomed home at 40, Beaumont Street, Batley.

The family moved to live at 104, Lady Ann Road and Walter became associated with the Congregational Sunday School, Soothill.

Before he enlisted Walter worked for Messrs. J. B. & W. Hirst's Lady Ann Mills having previously worked at Messrs. G. & J. Stubley.

Service Details

Walter was called to the Colours and went to France in January 1918. The 2nd Battalion was in 23rd Brigade 8th Division.

In January 1918 when Walter would have joined his Battalion they were at Passchendaele and at the beginning of February in billets at Steenvoorde. On the 8th February it was reported that the weather was still very bad and the strength of the battalion was 19 officers and 755 other ranks present with them. On the 12th they went into the front line for 5 days and 2 other ranks were killed and 12 wounded.

On the 12th March 1918 they moved by train to Wizernes arriving at Esquerdes about 8 pm. the strength of the battalion being 23 officers and 899 other ranks. They went into training from the 13th until they were given 5 hours notice to move on the 21st. They entrained with transport the next day arriving at Chaulnes at 10pm and after detraining marched to Villers Carbonnel. Arriving at camp west of Villers at 4 am on the 23rd two companies "A and D" were immediately ordered to move forward to occupy front positions east of Brei and by 7am companies "Band C" were occupying positions west of Brei. At 3.15 pm Captain Fox ordered the demolition of the bridge at

Breiand this was completed within 15 minutes. The battalion took up positions for the defence of the bridgehead from Eterpigny to Happlincourt where they remained until being relieved at around midnight on the 24/25th. Soon after the relief at 8 am they received news that Eterpigny Bridge had been crossed and the enemy had to be counterattacked. Before 9.30 am the battalion was in attack but came under heavy machine gun and rifle fire and the attack was smashed. The position was held all day against all odds until they were ordered to withdraw from the entire position starting at 8.15pm. as far as Estrees. The battalion arrived in position at Deniecourt at 2 am on the 26th but at 10 am received orders to withdraw immediately to Rosieres where they arrived at 3.30pm having had to fight all the way.

At 2pm on the 27th the machine gun officer arrived at Battalion H.Q. and reported all troops were retiring on the left and troops were withdrawing through the village. "B" Company who were in reserve and all H.Q. were immediately ordered to the railway west of the station and within half an hour a forward move was in progress, the situation being restored. There was some bombing in the evening on the left but the village remained secure for the night, the 50th Division being in position along the light railway.

His parents received a letter from him dated 12th March saying he was coming out of the trenches for 24 hours rest. It was five weeks later when they received notification that he was killed on March 27th 1918.

Walter was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

He is remembered with Honour at Soothill Congregational Church, Hanging Heaton War Memorial (St. Paul's) and Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group