Tom Robinson Handley





Rank: - Private

Number: - 52330

Regiment: - North Staffordshire Regiment 1/6th Battalion (formerly 301464 Staffordshire Yeomanry)

Killed in Action: - 29th September 1918 aged 20

Cemetery: - Bellicourt Military Cemetery, Aisne, France 111.D.7

Batley News, 26 Oct 1918. Batley Reporter, 25 Oct 1918 (photo) Dewsbury Reporter, 26 Oct 1918 (photo)

Family Details

Tom Robinson was born on 29th September 1898 in Batley the son of Thomas who came from Messingham, Lincolnshire and Annie Louisa Handley (nee Brook). He was baptised at the Non-Conformist Chapel at Batley Carr on 27th October 1898 when the address given was Barton Place, Batley and Thomas was a dyer.

Alfred had been born on 12th January 1887. They were the only children of this couple.

In 1901 the family was living at 48, East Bath Street before moving to Carlton Road and before 1911 they had moved again to a four roomed home at 7, Mount Avenue, Batley. At first, Tom attended Park Road but when the family went to live at the bottom of Carlton Road, he attended Carlton Road School and before enlisting worked in the "press shop" at John Fenton and Sons, woollen manufacturers, Batley Carr. His father also worked for John Fenton's but as a dyer at Headfield Mills. He was connected to the Batley Carr Church.

His brother, Alfred, died of pneumonia at Staincliffe in February 1919 and his mother died in June 1919.

Service Details

Tom enlisted on the 24th March 1917. His army records show he was 5 feet and 9 ½ inches tall. He was transferred to the North Staffordshire Regiment prior to going to France on the 19th December 1917.

Newspaper reports say he was a strong daring fellow and from letters written home he was buried by debris twice, wounded once and gassed twice.

The 1/6th Battalion was part of the 137th Brigade in 46th (North Midland) Division.

His army records show he was gassed on the 25th August 1918. His religion was Church of England.

On the 29th September the 46th Division crossed the St. Quentin Canal (defended by fortified machine gun positions) capturing 4,200 German prisoners (out of a total for the army of 5,300). Men of the 1/6th Battalion, North Staffordshire Regiment led by Captain A.H. Charlton, seized the Riqueval Bridge over the canal

before the Germans could fire the explosive charges. Tom was killed in action during this offensive.

His army records show he was gassed on the 25th August 1918. His religion was Church of England. He was killed on his 20th birthday.

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

Tom is remembered with Honour at Holy Trinity Church, Batley Carr, Batley War Memorial and Bellicourt Military Cemetery.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group