John Walter Hanstock





Rank: - 2nd Lieutenant

Regiment: - Royal Engineers 12th Field Company (formerly Private TR5/18233, L/Cpl. TR6/3955, L/Cpl. 6055 West Yorkshire Regiment)

Died of Wounds: - 30th October 1918 aged 19 years

Cemetery: - Saint Souplet British Cemetery, Nord, France 1.B.36

"DEEPER THAN SPEECH OUR LOVE STRONGER THAN LIFE OUR TETHER"

Batley News, 2 Nov 1918, 9 Nov 1918 (photo)

Family Details

John Walter was born in Batley on 2nd April 1899 the eldest son of Arthur Walter and Alice Maude Hanstock (nee Jubb) who had married on 14th July 1898 at St. Thomas's Church, Batley. He was baptised on 26th April 1899 at St. Thomas's. His father gave his occupation as an architect living at Dun Leith? Villa, Batley but he was also the Land Agent for the Earl of Wilton who was a large landowner. His grandfather Walter Hanstock had been made a partner in the practice of Michael Sheard in 1864 and he had designed many local landmarks including St. Thomas's Church 1867, Zion Methodist Chapel and Batley Library. Michael Sheard and Walter Hanstock had designed Batley Grammar School in 1871.

Walter went on to design many buildings in Batley and the surrounding area including St. Thomas's Church 1867, Batley Cottage Hospital 1883, Batley Baths and Technical and Art College. Walter later worked with Arthur Walter and designed Batley Library 1903, Horbury Town Hall c.1900,

Doris was born in 1905 when the family lived at The Gables, York Road, Batley followed by Arthur Gilbert on 28th October 1910.

In 1911 the family lived in a nine roomed home at The Gables, Upper Batley with one live in servant.

His maternal grandmother was from the well known Sheard family and his maternal grandfather was John Joseph Jubb of Blenheim House, Batley.

John Walter attended Batley Grammar School before joining the family firm of architects and surveyors in Branch Road, Batley.

He was the nephew of Joseph Sheard Jubb who was killed in action on 2nd August 1916 and second cousin once removed of John H. Blackburn who died 7th February 1917.

Service Details

John medal card shows that he was first with the 5th Training Reserves Battalion before moving to the 11th Training Reserves and then moving to the 7th Training Reserves.

John signed his attestation papers on March 19th 1917 when he was 17 years old and was mobilised until May 3rd and was sent to the Training Reserve Battalion on May 5th 1917. The 7th Training Reserve which he eventually joined was a feeder battalion for the 7th West Yorkshire Regiment.

According to his medal record he took up a commission with the Royal Engineers in June 1918. Although he was young, he was a well-connected young man and had applied for a commission on September 13th 1917 and the town clerk of Batley gave him a reference that he was a person of good character. His father had written to the War Office whilst John was in training trying to use his influence to get his son accepted for a commission in the Royal Engineers. On the forms of application, he was shown to be 5' 11" in height and weighed 145 lbs.

He joined the Royal Engineers in France on October 12th 1918 where the engineers were engaged in road mending around craters and diverting roads so that troops could get through. He may have been overseas before this date.

An entry in the war diary for the 12th Field Company records on October 30th that: - *"Lt. J.W. Hanstock wounded in billets and died upon admission to field dressing station."*

On his file in the National Archives there is a death certificate which records:

"Certified that according to the records of this office, Second Lieutenant John Walter Hanstock, Royal Engineers Territorial Force, died in the 91st Field Ambulance, France on the 30th October 1918, from wounds received in action."

Considering the Engineers were mending roads far away from enemy action he would not have been "killed in action" and we shall probably never know the true details.

His father placed a stain glass window at Batley Grammar School in his memory.

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

He is remembered with Honour at St. Thomas's Church, St. Saviour's Church, Brownhill, Batley Grammar School and Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group