Reuben Hepworth





Rank: - Private

Number: - 205497

Regiment: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 8th Battalion

Killed in Action: - 11th December 1917 aged 24 years

Cemetery: - Giavera British Cemetery, Arcade, Italy Plot 2. Row B. Grave 9.

Batley News, 29 Dec 1917,

Family Details

Reuben was born in Batley on the 25th September 1893, the son of Henry (Harry) and Hannah Hepworth nee Brook and was baptised at St. Peter's Church, Birstall on the 29thOctober 1893.

He had older siblings John Henry born 1888 and Mary Hannah 1890 and a younger brother George born 1896. In 1901 the family was living at 9, Thornton Street, off Common Road, Batley and Harry was employed as a teamer.

His father, Harry, died in May 1910. In 1911 Reuben was still living in the 3 roomed family home with his mother and three siblings and was working as a piecer.

Reuben attended Healey Council Schools and was connected with Staincliffe Parish Church where he was in the choir when he was a boy. After leaving school he worked as a spinner at Messrs. Brooke Wilford and Co. and Messrs. C. Robinson and Sons, Carlinghow before working at Messrs. J.E. Oldroyd & Co. Staincliffe, rag merchants before he enlisted. He was a member of Moorend Working Men's Club.

Service Details

Reuben enlisted at Dewsbury in the 8th Battalion of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry.

This Battalion came under the command of 70th Brigade in the 23rd Division. They landed in Boulogne in August 1915 and remained in France until moving to Italy in November 1917.

Reuben was one of the first men to fall in action on this front. His parents received a letter from one of his comrades: -

"Your son, my best pal was killed in action on Tuesday morning (December 11th) and I thought it was my duty to let you know what I could. We first met on June 20th the day of our enlistment and had been pals ever since—slept together, gone out together and hardly went anywhere without being together. On Tuesday we had just had our breakfast and were enjoying ourselves the best way we could in the trenches when a terrible bombardment was started which caused us to part

till it was over. I had no sooner left him than a sergeant came running to me to say my pal had just got hit. I ran down to him to try my best to help him but unfortunately a shell had killed him instantly. There are some others who came out with us who have met death."

The Battalion went on to Mantua and Marcaria on the 16th November and took over the front line at the Montello on the 4th December 1917.

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

He is remembered with Honour at Christ Church, Staincliffe, Common Road Working Men's Club and Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group