Willie Hinchliffe





Rank: - Private/Bandsman

Number: - 41367

Regiment: - Alexandra, Princess of Wales's Own (Yorkshire Regiment) 2nd Battalion

Died of Influenza: - 4th March 1919 aged 27

Cemetery: - Valenciennes (St. Roch) Communal Cemetery, Nord, France 11.C.21

Batley News, 22 Mar 1919 (photo)

Family Details:

Willie was born in West Ardsley in 1892 son of John William Hinchliffe and his Batley born wife Elizabeth (Nee Pickering). The couple had married at Batley Parish Church on 30th November 1889 and both were living in Batley. Gildersome born John William was an engine man and Elizabeth was a weaver.

Willie was baptised at Woodkirk, St.Mary's on the 31st July 1892 when they lived at New Scarboro' and John William was described as an engine tenter.

Although Willie was born in West Ardsley the couple were back in Batley before the birth of Jessie in 1897 and were living at 15, Providence Street, Batley in 1901 with the 2 children and Elizabeth's sister, Hannah Maria Woffenden. John William was working as a Debt Collector whilst Elizabeth was a woollen cloth weaver.

In 1911 the family had moved to a 3 roomed house at 140, Hollies Buildings, Batley and Hannah Maria was still living with them. The census shows that there had been another child who had died in infancy.

Willie attended Batley Parish Church Day School but was connected to Talbot Street United Methodist Church and Hanover Congregational Sunday School. He was a member of the young men's class at Hanover Street. After leaving school he was apprenticed as a tailor to Mr. T.Hull, Commercial Street, Batley and later went to work at the Heckmondwike branch.

He was an excellent clarinet player and was a member of the Dewsbury Military Band and also connected with Batley and Hanging Heaton Orchestral Societies. He married Martha Ann Almond of Grange House, Soothill in 1918.

Service Details:

Willie enlisted in 1916 and disembarked in 1917.

The Princess of Wales Own (Yorkshire Regiment) also known as the Green Howards was an infantry regiment of the British Army in the King's Division and was commonly known as the Yorkshire Regiment until the 1920's.

The 2nd Battalion Yorkshire Regiment in 1917 was attached to 21st Brigade, 30th Division. They fought in the following battles—

The First Battle of the Scarpe 9th -14th April 1917
Second Battle of Scarpe 23rd -24th April 1917
Battle of Pilkem Ridge 31st -2nd August 1917
Battle of St Quentin 21st-23 March 1918
Battle of Rozieres 26th-27th March 1918
First and Second Battles of Kemmel Ridge 17th-19th and 25th-26th April 1918 and the Battle of the Scherpenberg 29th April 1918

On the 11th May 1918 they transferred to 32nd Brigade 11th (Northern) Division.

They fought at:-
The Battle of the Drocourt-Quant Line (2nd -3rd September 1918)
The Battle of the Canal du Nord^(27th September -1st October)
The Battle of Cambrai (8th -9th October 1918)
The pursuit to the Selle (17th – 25th October 1918)
The Battle of the Sambre including the passage of the Grand Honelle.

When the Armistice halted the fighting, the Division was on high ground east of Havay.

Between 26th -28thNovember the Division was moved back behind the River Scheldt.

Demobilisation began in January 1919 and ended in June 1919.

He died of influenza at Valenciennes on the same day he had been admitted to hospital. His friend from the Dewsbury Military Band, Bandsman H.A. Smith wrote to tell his family that he had been buried with full Military Honours in the presence of his comrades.

Valenciennes remained in German hands from the early days of the First World War until1-2 November 1918, when it was entered and cleared by Canadian Corps 5,000 civilians were found in the town, In November and December 1918, the 2nd, 57th, 4th Canadian and 32nd Casualty Clearing Stations were posted at Valenciennes and the last of them did not leave until October 1919.

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

He is commemorated on Batley War Memorial, Batley Parish Church, Talbot Street United Methodist Church, Hanover Street Congregational Church, Christ Church, Staincliffe, Batley and Valenciennes (St.Roch) Communal Cemetery.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group