Wilfred Hirst





Rank: - Private

Number: - 42557

Regiment/Battalion: - East Yorkshire Regiment 1st Battalion

Killed in Action: - 15th August 1918 aged 18

Remembered with Honour: - Vis-En-Artois Memorial, Pas-de-Calais, France Panel 4

Batley News, 24 Aug 1918 (photo)

Family Details:

Wilfred Hirst was born in Leeds in 1899 the son of Holmfirth born John Willie Hirst and his wife Selina (nee McWilliams).

Winifred was born on 21st November 1888 but sadly died in 1899. Harold (1893) and Reginald (1897) had been born in Farley but by 1901 the family was living at 37, Carlinghow Lane, Batley. Their father John Willie was described as a woollen weaver foreman.

Edith Gertrude was born in 1905 and the 1911 census shows that John Willie was a power loom tuner and the family had moved to 2, Carlinghow Lane, Batley.

Wilfred attended Carlinghow Council School and was a former choir boy at St. John's Church. After leaving school he worked in the drapery department of Batley Co-op. His brother, Harold, had worked in the Official Receiver's Office at Dewsbury and Reginald had worked as a shop assistant.

Service Details.

Wilfred joined the East Yorkshire Regiment at Dewsbury in December 1917 and embarked for France in June 1918. The 1st Battalion of the East Yorkshire's was part of the 64th Brigade, 21st Division.

In July 1918 the battalion was in reserve at Puchvillers but on the 1st August they moved to the front line at Mailly-Mahlet they remained there until the 15th when they moved to Beaumont Hamel.

The War Diaries describe the 15th August as follows: - *The day was fine and very warm. The battalion ordered to take up position at rear of 9th KOYLI and if weak resistance on part of the enemy the battalion was to go through and take up position on Sym (?) and to occupy bridgehead at Ancre.*

Battalion took up position at the rear of the 9th King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry but owing to enemy resistance, did not go through, but B Company was ordered to work round the left flank and did so. Enemy found to be holding the ridge R2 b & d in strength so no further progress.

He had only been in France around 10 weeks when he was killed by a shell whilst taking part in an advance on the 15th August. His brother, Harold, was in the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry and Reginald was in Mesopotamia at this time.

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

He is Remembered with Honour on Batley War Memorial, St. John's Church Carlinghow and Vis-en-Artois, Pas-de-Calais along with another 35 on the same day.

The Vis-en-Artois Memorial contains over 9,000 names of men who fell between 8th August 1918 and the Armistice in the Advance to Victory in Picardy and Artois, between the Somme and Loos and have no known grave.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group