# Harry Ineson





**Rank: -** Gunner

**Number: -** 295503

**Regiment: -** Royal Garrison Artillery (formerly 5816 149th Wakefield Heavy Battery, RGA) 214th Siege Battery.

**Killed in Action: -** 18th September 1918 aged 21

**Cemetery: -** Savy British Cemetery, Aisne, France 1.Z.10.

**Batley News, 28 Sep 1918, 5 Oct 1918 (photo)**

## Family Details

Harry was born in Batley on the 6th February 1897 the son of Ernest and Jane Elizabeth (nee Thresh) and baptised at Cross bank Wesleyan Chapel on 18th March 1903 on the same day as his brother William who was born in 1894. The couple had married at St. Thomas's Church, Batley in 1886 and a son James Joshua was born later the same year. In 1901 the family were living in Carlinghow Lane, Batley and Ernest was employed as a labourer at a stone quarry whilst Jane worked as a weaver at a mill. Jane died in March 1908 and the family continued to live in Carlinghow Lane with their maternal grand-mother Hannah Mortimer. In 1913 his father, Ernest married widow Sarah Lucy Coldwell.

Harry attended Carlinghow Council School and Cross Bank Wesleyan Sunday School. Before enlisting in November 1915, he worked at Messrs. Blackburn and Gledhill having previously been employed at Messrs. J.T.& J. Taylor's, Cheapside Mills, Batley.

## Service Details

Harry enrolled at Batley in November 1915 and left for France in 1916. At first, he was with the 149th Wakefield Heavy Battery Royal Garrison Artillery before moving to the 214th Siege Battery when they arrived in France on the 23rd January 1917.

Siege Batteries RGA were equipped with heavy howitzers, sending large calibre high explosive shells in high trajectory, plunging fire. The usual armaments were 6 inch, 8 inch and 9.2 inch howitzers, although some had huge railway- or road-mounted 12 inch howitzers. As British artillery tactics developed, the Siege Batteries were most often employed in destroying or neutralising the enemy artillery, as well as putting destructive fire down on strongpoints, dumps, store, roads and railways behind enemy lines.

Savy is a village 6.5 kilometres west of St Quentin. Savy British Cemetery is on the south-western outskirts of the village, on the west side of the road to Roupy.

Savy was taken by the 32nd Division on the 1st April 1917, after hard fighting, and Savy Wood on the 2nd. On the 21st March 1918 Savy and Roupy were successfully defended by the 30th Division, but the line was withdrawn after

nightfall. The village and the wood were retaken on the 17th September 1918 by the 34th French Division, fighting on the right of the British IX Corps.

Seven British soldiers who died on 18th September 1918 are remembered at Savy. Four of those men were Gunners serving with the Royal Garrison Artillery in Siege Batteries. Two of those men were in the 354th Battery and two, including Harry Ineson, were in the 214th Battery.

Of the remaining men killed that day and remembered at Savy, one was in the Army Service Corps and two were infantrymen serving with the 1st battalion Shropshire Light Infantry and the 2nd Sherwood Foresters. Like their colleagues in the Royal Garrison Artillery both of these battalions were fighting with the 6th Division.

By September 1918 the Division, part of IX Corps in the British Fourth Army, took part in the Battle of Épehy, participating in the general attack on St Quentin and The Quadrilateral (an enemy stronghold) that began on 18 September and ended with the Quadrilateral's capture on the 25th September. The village of Epehy was16 miles north of Savy, but part of the same action against the German Hindenburg line. The village was taken on the first day of the battle, 18th September 1918, the day that Gunner Harry Ineson was killed in action.

The Hindenburg Line was a semi-permanent line of defences that Hindenburg ordered be created several miles behind the German front lines in late 1916. The following spring, the German army made a well-planned withdrawal to this heavily fortified defensive zone, burning and looting villages and countryside as they passed, in order to buy themselves time and confuse the Allied plans of attack. By early September 1918, Allied forces had effectively countered the major German spring offensive of that year and had reached the furthest forward positions of the Hindenburg Line, considered by many on both sides to be impregnable.

Very few tanks could be provided for the attack, so heavy artillery was relied upon to prepare the way but in the interests of surprise they would not be able to provide a preliminary bombardment. The 1,488 guns fired concentration shots at zero hour and supported the infantry with a creeping barrage and 300 machine-guns were also made available. All three corps of the Fourth Army were to take part, with V Corps of the Third Army on their left flank and on their right the French Army. The objective consisted of a fortified zone roughly 3 miles (4.8 km) deep and 20 miles (32 km) long, supported by subsidiary trenches and strong points.

On 18 September 1918 at 5.20 am, the attack on the line opened and the troops advanced.under the creeping barrage. The promised French assistance did not arrive, resulting in limited success for IX Corps on that flank. Gunner Harry Ineson fought in this sector of the Battle of Epehy and it is possible that he was killed during this early morning Field and Garrison Artillery barrage.

On the left flank, III Corps also found difficulty when attacking the fortifications erected at "the Knoll", Quennemont and Guillemont farms, which were held determinedly by German troops. The village of Epehy was however captured by the British 12th Eastern Division [7th Norfolk, 9th Essex and 1st Cambridge]. In the centre, two Australian divisions achieved complete and dramatic success.

The attack closed as an Allied victory, with 11,750 prisoners and 100 guns captured.

Harry was killed in action on the 18th September 1918.

An officer wrote to his parents "*Your son has been with the battery since its arrival in France, and I assure you that his comrades feel the loss of a true comrade. "*

In addition to those men remembered at Savy another 218 men who were killed on the same day as Harry Ineson are remembered at Epehy Wood Farm Cemetery, Epehy.

Harry is also remembered on Batley War Memorial, Cross Bank Wesleyan Chapel and St. John's Carlinghow.

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



Researched by members of
Batley History Group