Willie Jessop





Rank: - Private

Number: - 35766 (some sources 35706)

Regiment: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 2nd Battalion

Killed in Action: - 28th June 1917 by explosive shell, aged 33

Cemetery: - Ramscappelle Road Military Cemetery, West Vlaanderen, Belgium

Batley Reporter, 13 Jul 1917 (photo)

Family Details

Willie was born in Batley in 1884 the son of William and Margaret Lillie Jessop (formerly Swallow).

In 1891 the family which included his parents and siblings Fred (1878), Arthur (1881), Tom (1882), Willie and Alexander (1887) was living in Stocks Lane, Batley. William was a deputy and 13-year-old Fred was working as a hurrier. His mother died in 1896 and before 1901 the family had moved to live at 147, Commercial Street, Batley with a live in house keeper, 36-year-old, Elizabeth Jackson.

Willie moved to live at Batley Carr in around 1903 and was a member of Batley Carr Working Men's Club and Batley Football Club.

In the summer of 1909 he married Sophia Colbeck, who came from Batley Carr, and in 1911 he was living with her family at 123, Lidgate Lane, Batley Carr in a four roomed home and he was working as a house painter.

Before enlisting in 1916 he was employed by Messrs. A & H. Ruddlesden, Bradford Road, Dewsbury.

Service Details

Willie joined the army on 7th August 1916 and went to France on November 9th 1916.

The 2nd Battalion of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry was in the 32nd Division. They were involved with operations on the Ancre and the pursuit of the Germans to the Hindenburg Line.

The last letter to his wife was dated 25th June 1917 and it stated he was in good health and he had emerged from five engagements unscathed.

On the 28th June 1917 they were in the Lombartzyde Sector

A soldier named Stubbs was the first to inform Sophia that her husband had been killed. Private Herbert Stubley of Hanging Heaton who was a friend of Willie's supplied her with more details. He said: -

"*He was in the second line of trenches with three other men. They were washing and shaving when a shell dropped and killed them all. Death was instantaneous.*

He was buried near where they were billeted and also erected a cross over his grave."

Private John Micklethwaite of Leadley Buildings, Warwick Road, wrote to his mother also confirming his death.

His brother Alexander is also on Batley War Memorial.

Willie is remembered with Honour at Holy Trinity Church, Batley War Memorial.

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



Researched by members of
Batley History Group