George Herbert Johnson



Rank: - Private

Number: - 29578

Regiment: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 1st Battalion

Killed in Action: - 3rd October 1918 aged 26

Cemetery: - Bellicourt British Cemetery, Aisne, France 1V.N.8

Family Details:

George Herbert was born in 1891 in Batley to Elizabeth Johnson who was born in Holtby. She had moved to Batley with her parents and two sisters before 1881 and James was working as a coachman for the Jubb family living at the Porter's Lodge at Lamplands.

In the 1891 census Elizabeth was living with her parents James and Mary Ellen Johnson at Yd 1, 11, Park Road, Batley together with Hilda Clark Johnson born 1889 and Albert aged one week. She must have changed her mind later naming him George Herbert before registering his birth.

Elizabeth married George William Clark on 17th October 1896 at St. Peter's, Birstall.

In 1901 George was living with his mother and paternal grandmother at Partington Place, Birstall and Hilda was living with her maternal grandparents in Park Road. Mary Ellen Johnson died in 1903 and James in 1910 and by 1911 the family are living together at 109, Lawrenson 's Buildings, White Lee. George William was working as a teamster and George Herbert was a printer's labourer.

In 1916 he married Ellen Barber.

Service Details.

George Herbert's war details have not survived but it is known that the 1st K.O.Y.L.I. was at Martin Eglise at the beginning of September 1918 where they spent time training. The 1st Battalion came under the command of 83rd Brigade in 28th Division. The Division had been in Salonika from 7th December 1915 until July 1918 when they left the Division for service in France and from 16th July 1918, they were attached to 151st Brigade, in 50th (Northumbrian) Division.

On the 29th /30th September they remained in bivouacs at Boomerang Wood near Nurlu awaiting orders.

On the 1st October the battalion marched to Epehy arriving at Vaughan's Bank, at 8.30 pm.

At 5.30pm on the 2nd they moved to support 149th Infantry Brigade on the Hindenburg Line. They relieved the 37th/39th Battalions Australian I.F.

Unfortunately, two other ranks were killed and another two wounded by a shell on the Lempire-Bony Road.

On the 3rd the battalion moved to the "jumping off" point to attack the enemy which was Prospect Hill and the objective was gained. At 10 am they encountered heavy 5.9 artillery barrages N.E. of Bony. Lt. J.G.V. Ewing and 2 Lt. P. J. Hill and 42 other ranks were killed and seven officers and 143 other ranks were wounded. However, they did capture three officers and 206 other ranks.

George Herbert was one of these 42 other ranks who were killed trying to break the Hindenburg Line.

George Herbert is remembered with Honour at St. John's Church Carlinghow, Batley War Memorial and Bellicourt Military Cemetery.

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



Researched by members of
Batley History Group