James Critchley Jubb





Rank: - Lieutenant

Regiment: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 1/4th Territorial Battalion

Missing, presumed killed in action: - 23rd July 1916 aged 32 years

Memorial: - Thiepval, Somme, France Pier and Face 11C and 12A

Family Details

James Critchley was born in Batley on 10th April 1884 the only son of Arthur Alma Jubb and his wife Mary Ellen (nee Critchley). He was baptised at St. Thomas's Church on 28th May 1884. His father was a woollen manufacturer and in 1891 the family lived at Southfield House, Upper Batley with two live in servants. His parents had married at St. Thomas's on the 7th July 1880, his father coming from a wealthy manufacturing family and his mother the daughter of James Critchley of Batley Hall who was a wealthy coal proprietor and owned Batley Colliery along with other pits.

James Critchley attended Batley Grammar School.

In the 1901 census Arthur Alma Jubb gave his occupation as a retired woollen manufacturer. He died in January 1904.

On the 1911 census he is described as a solicitor still living with his mother in a nine roomed home at Southfields, Carlinghow Hill, Batley with a live-in cook, Georgina Calvert and a domestic housemaid, Louise Porter. This house was just above Batley Grammar School.

James Critchley served his articles to become a solicitor with Mr. J.H. Craik, Town Hall, Batley.

On the 24th August 1915 he married Gertrude Jane Barnby of Hull whose father was a linseed merchant. A daughter, Joan Mary, was born the following June.

Service Details

James Critchley enlisted in the 2/4th KOYLI almost at the start of the war and was commissioned to a rank of 2nd Lieutenant to start from November 2nd 1914 however in the first instance he only volunteered for Home Defence. The 2/4th was the local Territorial Force and he was sent to France from Gateshead on the 2nd January 1916. The 2/4th served with the 148th Brigade in 49th Division and in early 1916 they moved from the Ypres sector to the Somme. On March 1st they moved to Acheux where they spent the remainder of the month moving to Talmas for training until May.

On March 3rd James Jubb became ill with bronchial catarrh and was taken to hospital in Southampton. It was reported that

" While in the trenches at Albert he started with influenza on February 22nd 1916. He was sent to hospital at Amiens and from there to Le Havre Hospital and on to England. He is now convalescent but very week."

The board granted James leave until March 27th 1916 but this was extended by another board until April 17th 1916. On May 27th 1916 he was ordered to re-join the Expeditionary Force. His regiment was in the Somme sector planning for the first Battle of the Somme which started on July 1st 1916.

They were in reserve at Aveluy Woods at the start of the battle but were ordered forward at 6 pm to take part in the advance on Thiepval Wood. On the 4th July whilst a fierce thunderstorm raged the Germans made the first of a number of bombing attacks against the forward positions of the 1/5th KOYLI and "W" company of the 1/4th moved forward to counter attack. At 2 am on the 7th July the Germans turned their guns on the 1/4th in the "A" line and 50 minutes later shells began landing in the communications and support lines. At 2.50 am enemy bombers advanced down the trenches and furious fighting took place with lots of casualties from bombers and snipers. Captain Fraser was injured and ran out of bombs and had to retire to the original British front line. Casualties were 20 killed 180 wounded. They were relieved at 9 pm and moved back to Martinsart Woods for 4 days rest which was punctuated by the firing of siege howitzers which were in operation nearby.

After four days the 1/4th moved to Hedauville to reorganise and train.

The two KOYLI battalions were transferred back to the 148th Brigade on the 21st July and went into the front line, the 1/4th into the Liepzig Salient with HQ at South Bluff. The salient was one of the high grounds and with trench periscopes they could see across No Man's Land into the Hindenburg Trench. The battalion were ordered to launch an attack on the German lines at 2.30 am on July 23rd on the east side of the Leipzig Salient but when "X" company scrambled out of the trench to advance rifle fire and shrapnel immediately began to cause casualties. Those who did manage to dash across No Man's Land found the German positions were held in strength. A followed a desperate fight in the enemy's trench but with mounting casualties it became obvious the position could not

be held. Captain John Plews and 2 Lt. Allen H. Mountain were so badly injured that they had to be left behind in enemy trenches later it was discovered that 2Lts Eli Townend Archer and James Jubb were missing. Captain Plews did survive but he was taken prisoner.

Eli Townend Archer was the son of Councillor David H. Archer of Runtings Grange, Ossett, Allen H. Mountain was the son of Mr. T.H.Mountain of Bank House, Wakefield and John Plews was the son of the late Mr.H. Plews, Clerk to the Wakefield City Justices.

The first mention of James Jubb being missing was received in Batley from Lance Corporal Harry Parkinson of Upper Commercial Street who was wounded and in hospital at Rouen.

James Critchley Jubb was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

He is remembered with Honour at St. Thomas's Church, St. Saviour's Brownhill and Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group