John Kilkenny





Rank: - Sergeant

Number: - 1418

Regiment: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 12th Battalion

Died of Wounds: - 11/12/1917 Age: 35 years

Cemetery: - Etaples Military Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France XXXI. C. 8.

"THY WILL BE DONE R.I.P."

Batley News, 22 Dec 1917 (photo)

Family Details

John was born in Batley in c. 1882 the son of Thomas and Bridget Kilkenny (nee Brannan, m. 1872, registered Dewsbury). Thomas and Bridget were both from County Mayo, Ireland, Anthony 1873 was born Ireland but were both living in Batley before the birth of their children, Mary Ann 1873, Thomas 1875, James 1878-1882, John, Kate Annie, Bridget 1880-July 1887, Catherine 1885, Annie Elizabeth 1888, Francis 1890-Jan1891, Agnes 1893- Dec 1906.

In 1881 the family was living at Leeds Old Road, Heckmondwike moving shortly after to Batley and by 1891 the family was living at Tweedale Cottages, Morley although most of the children had been born in Batley. In 1901 Thomas who was a gas stoker had moved his family to live at Cross Street, Birstall. Thomas died in March 1902 and Bridget moved to live in a 2 roomed home at 33, Cobbler Hill, Birstall. In December 1908 John was detained at Wakefield for bastardy arrears and from this we learn he was 5 ft. 5 inches, tall with brown hair and his religion was Roman Catholic.

John married Margaret Jessie Richardson in 1909. Agnes was born in 1908, Thomas 1910-1911, Bridget 1912, John Patrick 1914, Margaret 1915 and Veronica 1916-1919.

In 1911 John, Margaret, Agnes and Thomas were living at 15, Cobbler Hill, Birstall in a one roomed home. John was working as coal miner (byeworker) and Margaret, who came from Reading Berks. worked as a rag sorter.

Before he enlisted John worked for Messrs. Critchley's, West End Colliery. He was a well-known member of Birstall Irish National League Club. The family lived at 1a, Leeds Road, Birstall.

Service Details

John joined the 12th (Service) Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry (Miners) (Pioneers) in May 1915 and went to France in July 1916.

The Somme Offensive was still going on at the end of October when the 31st Division returned to the sector for the Battle of the Ancre, which was to be the last big operation of the year.

In 1917 they took part in: -

Operations on the Ancre (11th January -3rd March)
The Third Battle of the Scarpe (3rd May)

The Capture of Oppy Wood (28th June)

John was wounded on the 8th November 1917 and was taken to Etaples Military Hospital. His wife was informed by a Chaplain that he was seriously injured. Official notice came in December that he had died of his wounds on December 12th 1917. A nurse also wrote: -

"I hardly know how to write to tell you about your husband. He took a bad turn just after we had made all the arrangements to send him home. He was getting over it splendidly and we thought the little turn would soon pass but his heart failed. He spoke very frequently about you and the children, and was very anxious to see you. He was good and brave to the last."

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

He is remembered with Honour at St Saviour's Church, Brownhill; Birstall and Batley War Memorials.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group

