John Leach





Rank: - Gunner

Number: - 104210

Regiment: - Royal Garrison Artillery 154th Siege Bty.

Killed in Action: - 06/04/1917 Age: 33 years

Cemetery: - Anzin-St Aubin British Cemetery, Pas-de-Calais, France. 1. A. 14

Batley News, 21 Apr 1917, 28 Apr 1917 (photo)

Family Details

John was born in Batley in March1884 the son of George Robert and Eliza Leach nee Kellington. The couple had married in 1882 and it would appear that two brothers had married two sisters and both couples went to reside near each other in Coal Pit Lane.

John was baptised at St. John's Church, Carlinghow on 31st July 1892 on the same day as his sister Maud born 1886 and Brother George Kellington born June 1892 but who sadly died January 1893 aged 6 months.

In 1891 the family including his paternal grandmother was living at 8, Coal Pit Lane, Batley and York born George was employed as a cloth fuller. His Heckmondwike born mother worked as a weaver. Maud was born in Glasgow in March 1886 but the family was still at 8, Coal Pit Lane, Carlinghow in 1901.

John attended Cross Bank Wesleyan Chapel and later was a member of Soothill Working Men's Club.

The family had moved to Hanging Heaton before John married Frances Ann Messenger at St. Paul's Church, Hanging Heaton on 17th September 1910.

In 1911 the couple was living with his family at 30, Upper West Street, Soothill, Batley. The census shows that another sibling had died in infancy. Both John and his father were working as cloth fuller's and Eliza and Frances were weavers.

Phyllis was born on 28th December 1914 followed by George Alfred on 13th September 1916.

Before joining the Forces John worked at Messrs. G. & J. Stubley's, Bottoms Mill, Batley.

Service Details

John was called up in 1916 and signed up as a recruit on 13th July 1916 giving his address as 115, Soothill Lane, Batley. His height was recorded as being 5ft.7inches and a chest measurement of 37 inches. He was posted to No.4 Depot Royal Garrison Artillery.

John joined the British Expeditionary Force in France on the 8th January 1917 and was posted to 154th Siege Battery on the 19th January 1917. On the 18th February he was wounded in the thigh but not seriously and remained on duty. He was very lucky because the shell had burst only 5 yards away and caused a number of other casualties.

A letter was received by his wife from the Battery Captain which read

"I very much regret to inform you that your husband was killed in action last evening (April 6th) whilst on duty as a sentry. The medical officer says death was instantaneous and he suffered no pain. I always found your husband a good soldier, who took every interest in his work. He was buried today with military honours by a Church of England Chaplain. The exact burial place will be notified to you officially later. Please accept the sincere sympathy of the officers, N.C.O.'s and men of the Battery in your great loss."

His effects which included a notebook, note case, Gospel, letters, purse, coin (1d.) and disc were returned to his wife in August 1917.

His parents had moved to live in Grace Leather Lane, Soothill.

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

He is remembered with Honour at St. Paul's Church, Hanging Heaton, Hanging Heaton War Memorial, Soothill Working Men's Club and Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group