George Leather





Rank: - Private

Number: - 3/1527

Regiment: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 9th Battalion

Killed in Action: - 1st July 1916 aged 19

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

Batley Reporter, 28 Jul 1916 (photo). Batley News, 15 Aug 1916

Family Details

George was born in Batley in 1896 the son of William Henry & Harriett Leather (nee Haley), who had married on the 25th December 1891 at Batley Parish Church. In 1901 he was living with his parents and younger brother Harry born 1900 at 17, Cobden Street, Batley. Sadly harry died aged 10 months in August 1901. Flockton born William Henry was a coal miner and whilst George lived at this address, he attended Park Road Council School.

James had died in December 1893 aged 5 months, Tom was born in February 1896 and died when only 11 hours old and Fred was born in August 1898 but died aged 14 months in October 1899.

Scott was born in 1902 in Batley but the family moved to Crigglestone some time before the birth of Elizabeth in 1910. In 1911 George was 14 years old and was working at the bottom of a pit and living with his family and a lodger at Painthorpe Terrace, Crigglestone.

The family returned to live at 5, Back Albion Street, Springfield, Dewsbury and he became a scholar at Leeds Road Baptist Sunday School and was highly thought of there. He was employed as a rope lad down a pit. He was a teetotaller and a non-smoker. In his last letter home, he said: -

"I should like to have been there at the anniversary but I am here and trying to do a bit for my country."

His parents later lived at 126, Linwood Terrace, Dewsbury.

Service Details

George enlisted under age on the 13th August 1914 and went to France on October 12th 1915.

The 9th Battalion was formed at Pontefract 1914 as part of K3 and came under command of 64th Brigade in 21st Division. They moved to Berkhamstead and then to Halton Park (Tring) in October 1914, going on to billets in Maidenhead in November, they returned to Halton Park in April 1915 and went on to Witley in August. They landed in France in September 1915, George following in October. The Battalion fought at the Battle of Loos (25 September – 15 0ctober 1915).

In 1916 they took part on the Somme at the Battle of Albert which began on the 1st July 1916.

In this opening phase, the French and British assault broke into and gradually moved beyond the first of the German defensive systems. For the British, the attack on 1 July proved to be the worst day in the nation's military history in terms of casualties sustained. It is the aspect of the battle that is most remembered and most written about, and for good reason – but to concentrate on the failures is to entirely miss the point of the Somme and why the battle developed into an epic period of the Great War. On the first day, British forces at the southern end of the British line made an impressive advance alongside the French Sixth Army, capturing the villages of Montauban and Mametz and breaking through the enemy's defensive system. North of Mametz the attack was an almost unmitigated failure.

George was one of the many missing men who were killed on this first day of fighting on the Somme.

George was awarded the 1914-15Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

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



Researched by members of
Batley History Group