Thomas Lee



Rank: - Able Seaman

Number: - KW/321

Regiment: - Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (Formerly 16483 K.O.Y.L.I.) Anson Bn. R.N. Div.

Missing, presumed Killed in Action: - 04/06/1915 Age: 35 years (OR 20th June 1915)

Memorial: - Helles Memorial, Turkey (including Gallipoli) Panel 8 to 15.

Family Details

Thomas was born in Leeds on 5th November 1879 according to notes found on Ancestry but we cannot find any records to confirm this.

Thomas was born on the 5th January 1882 in Bridlington but again we have nothing to confirm.

Sarah Ann Spurr married Britton Taylor at Holy Trinity Church, Batley Carr on the 9th March 1907. Albert Victor was born in 1907 followed by Christiana in April 1908 who sadly died October 1909 aged 18 months. Britton died in June 1908 when the family lived at 39, King Street, Batley Carr.

In early 1913 Sarah Ann married Thomas Lee and Eva Cecelia was born on the 22nd February 1913. There is no father named on the marriage certificate. Eva eventually received a pension of 17/6 (88p) per week until her 16th birthday because of the loss of her father. Thomas and Sarah Ann lived at 54, King Street, Batley Carr.

Sarah Ann married William H. Pearson in early 1918.

Born 5/11/1879; A Woollen Fettler; Husband of Sarah Ann Lee, of 54 King St., Batley Carr, Batley, Yorks.; ADM/171 = St.V.B. issued to Widow.

Service Details

Thomas enlisted as Private No.16483 King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry on the 2nd September 1914 and transferred to the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve on the 7th September 1914 and into the Anson Battalion on 16th January 1915. 4/6/15 DD.

The division was shipped to Egypt and fought at the Battle of Gallipoli at Anzac Cove and Cape Helles. Casualties before the campaign began included Rupert Brooke, who died at sea from an infected mosquito bite on 23 April 1915. The RND was one of two British divisions (the other being the regular 29th Division) at the Gallipoli landings. Eleven troopships and *Canopus*, *Dartmouth* and *Doris*, two destroyers and trawlers rendezvoused off Bulair before dawn and the warships began a day-long bombardment, just after daybreak. A destroyer made a close pass off the beach and later on, ships' boats were swung out from the troopships and lines of eight cutters pulled by a trawler made as if to land. In the

late afternoon men began to embark on the boats, which headed for the shore just before dark and returned after night fell. During the night Lieutenant-Commander Bernard Freyberg swam ashore and lit flares along the beach, crept inland and observed the Ottoman defences. Freyberg found that the defences were dummies and returned safely to report. Just after dawn, the decoy force sailed south to join the main landings, coming ashore on 30 April.

In the Helles sector, which had been extensively entrenched by both sides, the Allies attacked Krithia and Achi Baba again, in the Third Battle of Krithia on 4 June, with the 29th Division, Royal Naval Division, 42nd Division and two French divisions. The attack was repulsed and with it, the possibility of a decisive breakthrough ended; trench warfare resumed, with objectives being measured in hundreds of yards. Casualties were approximately 25 percent on both sides; the British lost 4,500 from 20,000 men and the French 2,000 casualties from 10,000 troops. Ottoman losses were 9,000 casualties according to the *Turkish Official History* and 10,000 according to another account.

Thomas was officially" Killed or died as a direct result of enemy action"

He was awarded the 1915 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Thomas is remembered with Honour at Batley War Memorial, Addenda.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group