Mark Lumb



Rank: - Private

Number: - 43764

Regiment: - West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own) 16th Battalion (Formerly K.O.Y.L.I. 28326)

Presumed Killed in Action: - 3rd May 1917 aged 24 years

Memorial: - Arras Memorial, Pas-de-Calais, France Bay 4

Family Details

Mark was born in Batley Carr in the latter part of 1892 the son of Joseph and Harriett Lumb (nee Marston).

Mark, Elsie born 1884 and Jesse born 1891 were the only three surviving children of nine born to the couple.

In 1911 the parents and two boys were living at 9, Albert Square, Batley Carr in a two roomed home. Mark was employed as a labourer in a dyehouse.

Service Details

Mark's service records have not survived but we know he did not serve in France before 1916.

The 16th Battalion of the West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales' Own) came under the command of 93rd Brigade, 31st Division.

The Division was sent to Egypt in December 1915 but returned to France in March 1916. In 1916 they fought in the Battles of Albert and the Ancre.

In 1917 they fought at Operations on the Ancre, Third Battle of Scarpe and the capture of Oppy Wood.

On the 3rd May the Division was at Gavrelle-Oppy Sector and an attack was planned for 3.45am and the objective of the 31st Division was from a point where Oppy Support Trench crosses the road to Crucifix then along Oppy Support Trench crossing Oppy-Neuvirevil road and along the trench system to Gavrelle-Fresnes Road. The battalion on the right was the 18th West Yorks and to the left the 10th East Yorkshire 92nd Brigade.

At 2 am the enemy put up a heavy barrage on the front lines which lasted for 20 minutes. Heavy shelling also followed with another heavy bombardment at 3 am on their front lines which lasted for 17 minutes.

Promptly at 3.45 am the British barrage opened and the men were seen going forward, well extended in good order and in four waves. It was evident the enemy had strong points around Link Maze and 2nd Lt. Tucker had been detailed to deal with them. At 3.49 am a heavy hostile barrage opened all along the front line and very heavy machine gun fire and rifle fire from the left flank and

immediate front. At about 4 am the first objective was reached and several prisoners were taken. At about 4.20am the second objective was reached with the enemy seen to leave the trenches in large numbers. It was not possible to see very far because of the smoke from their own barrage. It was estimated that there were around 80 men.

At around 5 am the enemy was seen approaching the trench in three waves of around 100 men. It was thought they were going to surrender but they opened fire as they approached but were fired on by Lewis guns and rifle fire and they fell back at 6 am two enemy aeroplanes flying low hovered over. Shells were then dropped. Very shortly after 7.30 am it was reported the enemy was advancing and there were several casualties including Captain Illingworth. At first the enemy was held back but it was then noticed that the enemy of around 500 strong was working round them and very shortly they would be cut off. It was decided to withdraw from the left flank and they tried to return to their original front lines. During the withdrawal many men were killed or wounded because of trenches being blown in which gave the enemy machine gunners a very good target. Hostile artillery continued to be active throughout the remainder of the day.

The total casualties for the battalion on 3rd May was 11 Officers killed or wounded, Other ranks: - 18 killed in action, 104 wounded, 181 not accounted for.

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

He is remembered with Honour at Batley Carr Wesleyan Church, Warwick Road School and Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group