John Thomas Lynch





Rank: - Sergeant

Number: - 4/6203

Regiment: - West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own) 1/5th Battalion

Killed in Action: - 21 July 1917

Cemetery: - Ramscappelle Road Military Cemetery, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium 1.B.7

Sligo-born Patrick Lynch married Rose Adams, also from Ireland, at St. Mary of the Angels, on 18 December 1883. They made their home at Ambler Street, with Patrick working as a rag grinder and Rose, a rag sorter.

Their first-born son names James was born in May 1884 but sadly died on 17 January 1885. At the end of 1885 another son, named James was born but he only

survived until 3 July 1886. Their third son, John Thomas was born in Batley on 6 June 1887. He was followed by Joseph in March 1890.

In May 1893 their son William was born, but he died later that year on 19 October at the age of five months. Mary Ann, was born in early June 1897, but died on 20 March 1901, aged three.

By 1901, 13-year-old John was working as a hurrier in a coal mine, but there were also indications he did for a time enlist with the army in around 1905.

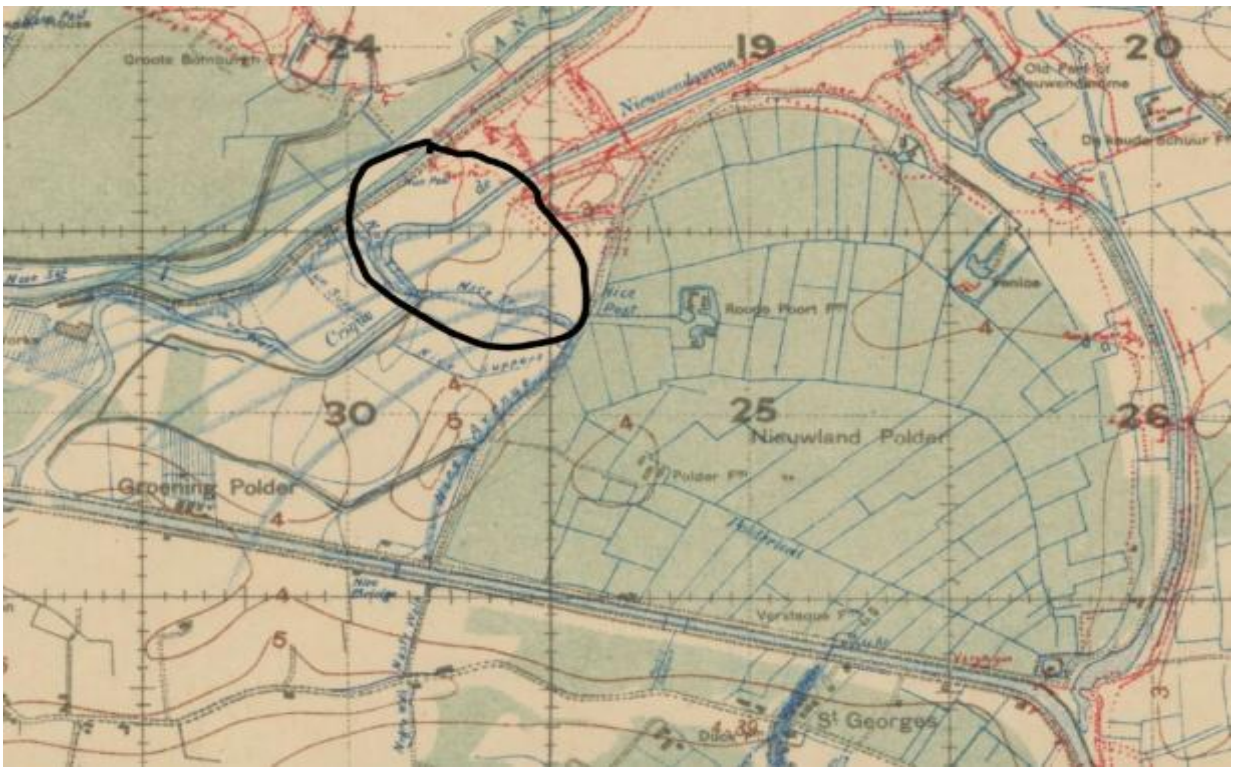
On 1 February 1908 he married Alice Cawthorne at St. Mary of the Angels, Batley. She was the daughter of colliery worker John William Cawthorne. They started married life in the Taylor Street area of Batley. Their first son, James Patrick was born but survived only three days and was buried at Batley Cemetery on 4 January 1909. Edward was born on 21 March 1911 at 5 Yard, 2 Taylor Street. The couple's third son, John, was born in October 1912, but only survived 2 days. Sometime after John's death, the family moved to Timothy Lane, Upper Batley.

The 1911 census records J.T. Lynch's occupation as a hewer working in a coal mine, with his place of employment in August 1914 confirmed as Batley's West End Colliery. When war was declared John was taking part in the West Yorkshire's annual summer camp. He stayed with his regiment and from August to December 1915 he was undertaking defensive duties in Cornwall, with the 4th (Extra Reserve) Battalion of The Prince of Wales's Own (West Yorkshire Regiment). The 4th West Yorkshire Regiment stayed in Cornwall until December 1915 when the moved to Redcar and then in April 1916 to West Hartlepool as part of the Tees Garrison coastal defences. He was now a sergeant and at Whitsuntide 1917 he was posted to the Western Front, amongst the reinforcements for the regiment's 1/5th Battalion.

The 1/5th West Yorkshires were involved in operations in the coastal area of Flanders, near Nieuwpoort (or Nieuport). Overnight on the 18/19 July 1917 they moved into trenches in what was left subsector of St George's around a mile and a half north west of Nieuwpoort. "C" Company was deployed on the left in Nun Trench: "A" Company on the right in Nice Trench; "D" Company was in support, whilst "B" Company was in reserve at Nieuwpoort.

The area in which Nun Trench, Nice Trench and Rat Post were located is encircled in black on the map below. The blue lines indicate British trenches, and red ones

the German positions. Rat Post was an ideal location from which to observe the activities and listen into the conversations going on in enemy trenches.



Trench Map, Sheet:12 SW, Scale: 1:20000, Edition 2A. Publishes July 1917. Trenches corrected to 3 July 1917. Circled is the area containing Nun and Nice Trenches, and Rat Post—where John Thomas Lynch was killed. Re-use; CC-BY (NLS)

From the Unit War Diary, it appears John was in "A" Company. This read: -

Patrols out during morning of 20th -21st. The Patrol from Right Coy encountered a BOSCH patrol which scattered and fled to the lines. The patrol from Left Coy listened by Rat Post for a considerable time. Nothing was seen or heard of of the enemy. At 6 am the enemy opened a heavy barrage on our front line, support lines.. No enemy infantry attack materialised and the barrage ceased around 7 am Casualties 2/Lt W RUSHFORTH wounded, 1 other rank killed, 4 wounded. 1/5th West Yorkshire Regiment Unit War Diary. The National Archives (TNA). Ref: WO95/2794/1

Alice received news of his death from three sources, a Captain, a Sergeant- Major and a Chaplain. These stated he was killed at around 7.30 am on 21 July 1917. The Captain and Sergeant-Major each bore testimony to John's popularity with both officers and men, and expressed their regret at his death.

John was awarded the Victory Medal and the British War Medal. He is remembered on Batley War Memorial, St. Mary's Church and Carlinghow Working Men's Club.

His son, Edward, served in the Second World War and died in March 1944.



Research thanks to Jane Roberts for further information see

https://pasttopresentgenealogy.co.uk