James Aner Moorhouse





Rank: - Gunner

Number: - 74097

Regiment: - Royal Garrison Artillery 51st Siege Battery

Killed in Action: - 30th September 1916 aged 21

Cemetery: - Bernafay Wood British Cemetery, Montaubin A.13

Bernafay Wood British Cemetery is 10 kilometres east of Albert and 2 kilometres south of Longueval on the D197, in the direction of Maricourt.

Batley News, 14 Oct 1916. Batley Reporter, 13 Oct 1916 (photo)

Family Details

James Aner was the only child of William and Mary Alice Moorhouse (nee Armitage). He was born in Batley Carr on 26th August 1895 and baptised at Holy Trinity on 18th December 1895.

In 1901 the family was living at 11, Trinity Mount, with Mary Alice's brother, widowed Sheard Armitage. Fulstone born, William was described as a rag and waste merchant who was an employer. Within the next decade the family had moved into a four roomed home at 33, Grange View, Hanging Heaton. William was described as a woollen rag merchant.

James attended Batley Carr Schools and Wheelwright Grammar School, Dewsbury.

William was for many years a member and chairman of Batley School Board and a warder at Hanging Heaton Church. James was also an active worker at Hanging Heaton Church where he was in the choir, Young Men's Bible Class and St. Paul's Musical and Dramatic Society.

William died on 5th April 1915 and was buried at St. Paul's Hanging Heaton. The service was conducted by the Vicar of Holy Trinity, Batley Carr. The address was Albert House, Bradford Road, Batley Carr.

James continued with his father's business until he joined the Forces.

Service Details

James enlisted in April 1916 and his mother left Batley Carr to stay with her sister, Mrs. Hartley of Huddersfield.

One of the last letters James wrote was to Mrs. Milnes, wife of Councillor Alfred Milnes, butcher, Batley Carr. Mrs. Milnes was a friend of Mrs. Moorhouse and sent parcels to France. The letter dated 28th September 1916 said: -

"I am still alive and kicking and that is the most important thing out here, one of our sergeants had the misfortune to be hit this morning. The Germans gave us a good shelling, but we escaped with one casualty. One of our sergeants had the misfortune to be hit with a piece of shell in the foot. I thought at first that Fritz had located us, but he has not sent any more souvenirs over since this morning.

I thought he was just doing a sweep round without any particular object in view except to worry someone. He is very fond of shelling a cross road not very far from our position. Naturally it is a very dangerous place and everybody runs past it in a hurry. The other day one shell killed about eight and wounded several more fellows. They were unloading a motor lorry when a shell burst amongst them. I was up that way yesterday with a working party. We had quite an exciting afternoon. It was a case of dodging shells and making for cover every two minutes. I can assure you that we were by no means sorry when we got orders to "fall in" and return to our position. Our present village has at one time been a fairly large one and a very pretty one too I should imagine. It is now a heap of dust and wreckage, and the only means of identification of a former village is the amount of wood and bricks strewn about everywhere. There were a good amount of bodies too when we came to this position, but these have since been removed. There has been much heavy fighting round this district lately and it has resulted in a great many successes for us. Prisoners have been captured in abundance. I have seen crowds of them during these last few days. They all tell the same story viz. they are fed up with the war and they are more than glad to be taken prisoners. I am not surprised because it must be horrible in the German trenches, when our guns bombard them. We are giving them no rest either. They are shelled constantly day and night. "

The official notification of his death said simply "Killed in Action on September 30th "

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

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



Researched by members of
Batley History Group