Alfred Mosley





Rank: - Private

Number: - 2875

Regiment: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 1/4th Battalion

Died of Wounds: - 20th December 1915 aged 35

Cemetery: - Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, West Vlaanderen, Belgium 11.B

"MAY HIS REWARD BE AS GREAT AS HIS SACRIFICE"

News, 12 Aug 1916 (photo), 19 Aug 1916 Batley

Family Details: -

Alfred was born in White Lee in October 1880 to Eliza Ann Mosley and unknown father. On the 1881 census, at the age of six months, he was living with his mother and maternal grandmother Eliza (formerly Harrison nee Slack) and John Denison in Carlinghow Lane, Batley.

In 1891 the family had moved to Yard No 9, 19, Cross Bank Street, Batley. John Dennison is a carter born Birstall 1834 with his wife Liza Dennison born Doncaster and Liza Ann Mosley born Holbeck was described as single with children Alfred (1880), Harry (1882), Lizzie (1882), Liza (1884) and Mary Edith (1886). Please note change of name from Eliza Ann to Liza Ann.

Sometime during the next 10 years Eliza Ann moved with her growing family to 106, New Street, Batley and she was described as being 37 years old a woollen cloth weaver born Leeds. There was now sister Kitty (Ruth) aged 2 and two children have died William b 1897 and Edward b 1893. Alfred was working as a coal carter for a pit. We have found no record as to who the father of the children could be.

His brother Harry, a Batley footballer, had married in 1901 and there is no father named on the marriage certificate.

In late 1901 his mother married widower Arthur Preston and she died in September 1907.

Alfred was working as a teamer and was boarding with John Daley and his wife and 2 children at 7, Back Henrietta Street in a 2 roomed house on the 1911 census. His 3 eldest sisters were living at Richmond Street, Cross Bank, Batley.

By the time Alfred joined the Army he was living with his sisters at 20, Richmond Street, Batley.

Service Records:

Alfred enlisted at Wakefield in October 1914 and joined the 1st/4th Battalion of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry and went for training to Doncaster and Gainsborough.

He departed on 13th April 1915 from York Railway Station about midday for a night crossing from Folkestone to Boulogne. The soldiers were full of optimism about going to the Front. They had their first taste of trench warfare on the night of 28th April 1915.

The trench warfare continued and by late October trench foot was reported in the battalion. This is very similar to frostbite and was the result of getting the feet wet and not being able to dry them for hours or even days on end. The feet went numb, turned purple and in extreme cases the nerves died off and gangrene set in.

A German NCO, captured near Ypres revealed that gas cylinders had been placed along the whole of the German XXV1 Reserve Corps front to the northeast in the area between the Ypres-Staden and Ypres-Roulers railway lines.

Procedures were given to all ranks in case of a gas attack. On the night of the 18th December a patrol sent from E27 reported "Enemy heard pumping. "The 1st / 4th K.O.Y.L.I. 's was in the front line when in the early hours of 19th December sentries alerted their officers to unusual rocket signals being put up by the enemy. At 4.50 am a hissing like a fast running motor car was heard in the German lines Very shortly after the presence of cylinder gas said to be Fossgene was detected in the air. Warning was given, tube helmets were put on and rapid fire opened on the enemy's parapet with rifle and machine guns. 1 Officer and 23 men were killed and 2 Officers and 149 men were affected to a greater or lesser extent. Following the release of the gas (chlorine + 20% phosgene) about 20 patrols left the German lines to "discover the effect of the discharge, and also to bring in prisoners "but only 2 reached the British trenches. A German patrol of about 10 men approached the 1st /4th line only to be driven off by rapid rifle and machine gun fire. Following the fierce small arms fire, the Germans began a sustained artillery bombardment during which 1st /4th sustained further casualties losing six men killed and 19 wounded.

It was reported that Alfred died from serious wounds having his head fractured, a leg broken and an arm blown off.

There were several men killed and wounded from the Batley area at this time. On the Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery Memorial there were 42 soldiers who died the same day.

In December 1917 his sisters Eliza and Edith placed memoriam in the Batley News "*Gone but not forgotten*."

Medals awarded: - The 1914-15 Star, British War Medal 1914-1920 and the Victory Medal.

Commemorated at: - Batley War Memorial, Batley Parish Church, and Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Belgium.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group