Ernest Newsome





Rank: - Gunner

Number: - 222480

Regiment: - Royal Field Artillery "Y" 74th Trench Mortar Bty

Drowned when ship sunk "H.M.S. Osmanieh" off Alexandria by enemy action (mine explosion): - 31st December 1917 aged 31 years

Memorial: - Alexandria (Hadra) War Memorial Cemetery G 91

"DEARLY LOVED, DEEPLY MOURNED FROM HIS LOVING WIFE MYRA"

Batley News, 19 Jan 1918 (photo), 16 Mar 1918 (photo). Batley Reporter, 22 Mar 1918

Family Details

Ernest was born in1883 the son of Joseph and Agnes Newsome nee Crowther who had married at All Saints Church, Dewsbury on 21st April 1883.

Ernest was born in 1883 followed by Albert in 1884.

In 1891 Ernest was living with his father and paternal grandparents at 3, Lower Chapel Fold, Staincliffe whilst his mother and Albert were living with his maternal grandparents at Healds Road, Dewsbury.

His mother, Agnes died in September 1897 and his father in early April 1901 when he lived at 3, Low Chapel Fold, Staincliffe.

Ernest attended St. Josephs'Catholic School and was also associated with St. Joseph's Church where as a boy he was in the choir.

He lived with his paternal aunt, Miss Newsome at 3, Thorncliffe Road, Batley before his marriage.

In January 1917 he married Myra Wilkinson who was the daughter of the late Councillor Joseph Wilkinson, Coniston House, Morley. His wife Myra lived at 18, Greenburg Terrace, Knowles Hill Road, Dewsbury Moor. She later went to live at 3, Mulgrave Place, West Cliff, Whitby.

Before enlisting he worked as a fettler for the Staincliffe Mill Company.

Service Details

Ernest enlisted at Heckmondwike in c February 1917 and was last home on leave in October 1917 before he departed for Egypt. He sent postcards home from various rest camps, his last being sent from France, but in January 1918 his wife received official notice that *"not having joined his regiment since December 31st is believed to have been drowned".*

Official notice that he had drowned was received in March 1918. He was buried at Alexandria War Memorial Cemetery.

On 17 December 1917, *Osmanieh* under the command of 38-year-old Lieutenant Commander David Richard Mason with soldiers and medical personnel left Southampton and set a course for Alexandria with a stopover in the southern Italian port city of Taranto. Taranto was reached on 28 December

and Alexandria on 31 December. Even before the harbour entrance, the steamer was struck amidships on the starboard side at the position: - 31°10′8″N 29°48′3″E by a naval mine from a minefield left a few days earlier by the German submarine SM UC -34 commanded by *Oberleutnant zur See* Horst Obermueller.

The ship sank in five to seven minutes, killing 209 people, including Lt. Commander Mason, two ship officers, 21 crew members, a Royal Navy officer, 166 other ranks and the eight nurses of Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service.

The day before, the troop-carrier HMT Aragon and the destroyer HMS Attack had been sunk with torpedoes at about the same spot by *UC-34*. 610 people died on *Aragon* and 10 on *Attack*. Some of the victims of these sinkings are buried at the Alexandria Hadra War Memorial Cemetery, where nameplates remain. However, several hundred were never found.

H.M.S. Osmanieh



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

He is remembered with Honour at Christ Church, Staincliffe, Batley War Memorial and Dewsbury War Memorial.

Researched by members of
Batley History Group