Harry Raine



Rank: - Sapper

Number: - 112777

Regiment: - Royal Engineers 175th Tunnelling Coy.

Killed in Action: - 22/12/1917 Age: 27 years

Cemetery: - La Clytte Military Cemetery, West- Vlaanderen, Belgium 1V.A.8

"FONDLY REMEMBERED"

Family Details

Harry was born in Shildon, Co. Durham in c.1889 the twin son of John Philip and Sarah Raine (nee Lonsdale, m. 1886, registered Auckland, Co. Durham).

In 1891 the family was living at 23, Garbrite Street, Shildon, Co. Durham.

John Philip was a coal miner and appears to have brought his family to Batley in the mid 1890's after the family had moved around the Durham and Yorkshire Coalfields. The family was living at 180, Carlinghow Lane in 1901 and John Philip was employed as an underground manager of a coal mine.

Ethel was born in January 1882 and George in 1884 the children of Sarah Lonsdale, she then married and they were brought up as his children. John Philip and Sarah went on to have six children, Isabella Craig in November 1887, John Douglas and his twin Harry 1889, Thomas Lonsdale 1890, Alfred 1894, Elizabeth Gertrude 1898 in Batley. All their sons followed their father into the mines.

Before 1911 John Philip had retired from the mines and had become a tobacconist (shop keeper) at 6, Bank Street, Horbury. The four youngest boys who were still at home were all coal miners.

In 1917 he married Mahala England Allsop at Belper, Derbyshire. They lived at Heath Road, Ripley, Derbyshire.

Service Details

Harry enlisted at Blackwell, Derbyshire.

The 175th Tunnelling Company was one of the tunnelling companies of the Royal Engineers created by the British Army during World War 1. The tunnelling units were occupied in offensive and defensive mining involving the placing and maintaining of mines under enemy lines, as well as other underground work such as the construction of deep dugouts for troop accommodation, the digging of subways, saps (a narrow trench dug to approach enemy trenches), cable trenches and underground chambers for signals and medical services.

As part of their continued operations against the Ypres Salient after the Second Battle of Ypres and the Battle of Bellewaarde, the German forces kept seeking

to gain the village of Hooge between 24 May and 3 June 1915. In the grounds of the Château de Hooge was a German strongpoint which was proving particularly troublesome to the British forces defending the area. The redoubt had in fact been started by the British but had fallen into German hands.

In order to break the stalemate, the 175th Tunnelling Company (which was at the time operating with the 3rd Division) dug a tunnel about 66 yards (60 m) long under the German position and placed a mine there. This occurred during a time of relative quiet on the British part of the Western Front, when few major assaults were made. Nonetheless, the average casualty rate for the British and Commonwealth forces was around 300 per day.

They were moved to dig mines before the Battle of Messines and then to Vimy Ridge. In October 1916 they moved from Vimy and returned to the Ypres Salient. They were then deployed to Loker, about two miles west of Kemmel and near Wijtschate, where it constructed bunkers. Known as the Lettenberg Bunkers, they are located at the edge of a woodland along the road from Kemmel, climbing up a hill towards Loker. These fortifications were constructed in the spring of 1917, although the 175th Tunnelling Company had been digging to create underground headquarters here for some months before that.

Harry was killed in Action on the 22nd December 1917.

He was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and Victory Medal.

He is remembered with Honour at Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group