Horace Rhodes







Rank: - Private

Number: - 39946

Regiment: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 9th Battalion

Died of Wounds at Stobhill Hospital, Glasgow, wounds sustained 4th Aug, France: - 30/12/1917 Age: 27 years

Cemetery: - Batley Cemetery, Yorkshire, England A 521

"HE GAVE HIS LIFE FOR HIS COUNTRY"

Batley News, 5 Jan 1918 (photo), 17 Mar 1917, Dewsbury District News, 5 Jan 1918 (photo)

Family Details

Horace was born in Batley on the 3rd November 1890 the son of Jesse and Emma Rhodes nee Walker who had married on the 27th June 1888 at St. Peter's Church, Birstall.

In 1891 the family was living at 26, Healey Place, Batley and Jesse gave his occupation as a flock manufacturer.

Horace was baptised at St. Peter's Church, Birstall on the 22nd October 1893 aged 2 years when his father's occupation was a flock maker.

In 1901 with the addition of his sister Lucy born 1895 the family was living at 45, Wilson's Buildings, Bradford Road, Batley and Jesse was described as a woollen flock mill manager. Living with them was a boarder John A. Mitchell a woollen mill manager who was born in London. Horace attended Park Road School and afterwards was employed by Messrs. J. Newsome and Sons, Batley Carr.

In 1911 the family was living in a five roomed house at 53, Bradford Road Central, Batley. Horace was working as a card cleaner at a woollen mill. Bessie was born in July 1889 but sadly only lived 3 days.

Horace was connected to Hick Lane Wesleyan Chapel being actively connected with the Band of Hope and was a Sunday School teacher. He was also was a member of Batley Liberal Club. Before enlisting he was an overlooker for Messrs. Pyrah, Heckmondwike.

Service Details

Horace went to France in January 1917 but on the 13th February he was wounded as he came out of the trenches when a shell burst overhead and a piece of shrapnel injured the calf of one leg and but after being in a casualty clearing station for some time he was able to rejoin his regiment. In March 1917 he was wounded again in his right shoulder and thigh and was brought to England. He wrote to his parents: -

"*I got wounded by a high explosive shell which burst in the air and flew into pieces. One piece struck me in the right arm, near the shoulder, and another on the right thigh and several pieces struck my steel helmet, which saved my head, I can assure you. They are the Prussian Guards who are opposite us. One sergeant and one of my pals got wounded with the same shell and my friend is very badly hurt. We travelled from the*

clearing station to Rouen in a hospital train and it was very nice. We left Rouen the same day aboard a steamer. It is very pleasant scenery up the River Seine by Rouen. All went well until we got within two miles of the Isle of Wight and then our hospital ship struck a collier that was anchored and caused it to take water. A fog was running at the time and we had to stop by her for four hours until a relief ship came to assistance of the collier. It is grand to be in "Blighty" again."

His Division fought at: -

The German retreat to the Hindenburg Line (14th March -5 April)
The First Battle of the Scarpe (9-14 April)
The Third Battle of the Scarpe (3-4 May)
The flanking operations around Bullecourt (3-17 May)
which were phases of the Arras offensive 1917
Polygon Wood near Ypres (26 Sept-3 October), the Battle of Broodseinde (4th October) the Second Battle of Passchendaele (26 October-10 November)
which were phases of the Third Battles of Ypres.

He once more returned to his unit and was seriously wounded in the head during one of the advances in October and also received eight flesh wounds in different parts of the right shoulder, arm and leg. His condition at one time was so serious that his mother was allowed to visit him whilst he was in a hospital in Rouen but although his arm became paralysed, he recovered sufficiently to be removed to Scotland. His parents were sent for the week before he died and he passed away on the Sunday evening. The body was brought back to Batley on the Wednesday evening and the funeral on Thursday afternoon was preceded by a service at Hick Lane Chapel conducted by Rev. Evan Lloyd. At the request of the family the usual military honours were dispensed with.

Horace was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal and is remembered with Honour at Temperance Hall – Smithies Lane, Birstall; Independent Order of Rechabites, Hope of Birstall Lodge and Batley War Memorial.

Researched by members of
Batley History Group