William Anthony Rock



Rank: - Private

Number: - 242977 (formerly 6244)

Regiment: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 1/5th Battalion

Killed in Action: - 28th March 1917 aged 27 years

Cemetery: - Pont-du-Hem Military Cemetery, La Gorgue, Nord, France 111.A.14

Batley Reporter, 13 Apr 1917, 28 Mar 1919 (classified)

Family Details

William Anthony was born in Dewsbury in 1889 the son of Patrick and Mary Rock nee Smith who both came from Ireland. In 1891 the family which included Patrick, Mary and siblings John Thomas 1878, Michael 1870, Catherine 1882, Mary Elizabeth 1883, Joseph 1884 and two boarders Ellen Walsh and Helen Calgin were living at 35, Back Victoria Road, Dewsbury. Both parents worked as mill hands. The other children were Timothy 1881-March 1882 aged 14 months, James and Peter 1886 - October 1886 aged 5 weeks, Margaret Ann 1887 - April 1888 aged 7 months, Ann, Sept 1890 - October 1890 aged 3 weeks.

A decade later the family was still at the same address but Patrick and Mary had no occupation but four eldest children were working and William was still at school.

William attended St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church and Day School at Batley Carr. Until his marriage he officiated at the altar at the church. He was an ardent admirer of Dewsbury Northern Union Football Club and followed the team for several years.

Patrick died in February 1908 and Mary a year later in February 1909 of Victoria Road, Dewsbury.

In early 1911 William married Sarah Elizabeth Redgwick and the couple went to live at 3, High Street, Batley Carr and William worked as a piecer whilst his wife was a rag sorter.

Margaret Elizabeth was born on December 1911 followed by Mary Ann 1914 and Catherine 1916 but she sadly she died aged one month.

Before he enlisted William was a piecener at Dale Street Mills, Batley Carr.

Service Details

William enlisted on 16th September 1916 and after four months training at Clipstone Camp embarked for France.

His last letter to his wife was dated 24th March when he said he was well.

Second Lieut. Robert Pringle wrote to his wife: -

"It is with much sympathy and deep regret that I write this note to you. On the evening of the 29th March your husband was one of the men who were working with me on military duties. He and another private were working at a particular job and I went up to see how they were getting on. He was close to my side when a German shell pierced him and killed him instantaneously. His mate and I with the assistance of a corporal succeeded in bringing him away under heavy rifle fire. He was a keen and faithful soldier and attended to his duties well and is much missed by officers and men. He died a soldier's death being true to King and country. You will be pleased to know we gave him a Christian burial and his own chaplain performed the ceremony. I know the loss will be great as I have had a similar experience but try to bear up and realise that he has died a glorious death."

Sarah had lost her father, Arthur Redgwick (Commonwealth War Grave at St. Paul's, Hanging Heaton) the previous month and her brother Thomas was killed in action on 1st July 1916. Her brother John Thomas, who had been wounded three times, was serving in France.

In 1919 his brothers, sisters and cousin Joe placed a Memorial in the Reporter newspaper on the 28th March.

William Antony was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

He is remembered with Honour at Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group