William Rothery





Rank: - Private

Number: - 17469

Regiment: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 10th Battalion

Missing, presumed Killed in Action: - 27th September 1915 aged 29 years

Memorial: - Loos Memorial, Pas-de-Calais, France Panel 97 and 98

BR 30 Dec 1915

Batley News, 30 Oct 1915. Batley Reporter, 23 Dec 1915, 31 Dec 1915 (photo)

Family Details

William was born in Batley in 1886 the youngest son of Joseph and Maria Rothery (nee Walker). The couple had married at St. Peter's, Birstall on 4th March 1871 when they both stated they lived in Heckmondwike and Joseph was a cloth finisher.

Emma was born in 1875 followed by James S (1877), Martha (1883) and Amoury (1885).

In 1891 the family was living at 48, Back Brierley Street, Batley

Within the next decade the family had moved to 45, Wellington Street, Batley and William was working as a woollen piecener. Joseph died in 1905.

William married Ellen Turton at Cross Bank Wesleyan Chapel on 25th December 1909. The address he gave was 43A, Havercroft Terrace, Wellington Street, Batley and his occupation was a woollen mill hand.

They went to live with her parents Joseph and Eliza Ann Turton at 32, Kent Street, Batley.

Before he enlisted, he was a willeyer at Messrs. J.T. & J. Taylor's, Blakeridge Mill, Batley. They had moved to live at 6, Knowles Street, Dark Lane, Batley.

William attended Gospel Hall from childhood but later attended Hanover Street Congregational Church. Whilst serving in the army he sent a letter to Rev. Hugh Jenkins, M.A. pastor of Hanover Street: -

"It *gives me the greatest pleasure to write to you as a private soldier, serving for his God, his King and country. I may say that while I remain in the Army whether it is at home or abroad. I shall always look and pray to God to protect me in my daily life, because there are so many temptations that one needs a friend and I found Him to be my best friend when I was in the sickness and now, I am in health and strength. He will be mine still and forever. Just pray for me and others who are serving in the same way – I remain a God fearing private. "*

Service Details

William was a reservist and enlisted in September 1914 and embarked for France on the 11th September 1915. He had at one time been connected to the old Volunteer movement.

He was at Witley Camp and left Milford Station to go to Southampton on the 11th September 1915 at 4.30 am. By 8.30 pm the battalion had embarked either on the S/S California and the rest on the S/S Empress Queen. They arrived at Le Havre at 9.30am the following morning.

On the 14th the battalion moved to Zutkerque staying there until 5.15 pm on the 20th when they marched about 16 miles to Arques arriving at midnight. In the evening of the next day, they marched another 12 miles to Pontes and the following day they went from Pontes to Ames arriving at 9.30 pm.

It was reported that the weather had been fine since their arrival in France and seven soldiers had been taken to hospital.

On the 27th the battalion arrived at Loos to find the German trenches were about ¾ mile N. W. Of Loos with the 9th KOYLI on the left and the Durham Light Infantry dug in on the left front. The trenches were under shell fire all day and at 1 pm, because others had failed, the 10th Battalion was ordered to advance to the road at the bottom of the valley facing the German redoubt and to take up a position there to support the 9th KOYLI who were assaulting the redoubt. The assault was unsuccessful and from the evening they retired under very heavy shell fire to a line of old German trenches in rear of the original line taken the night before.

At 1 am on the 27th the battalion was relieved by the Guards Division and they marched back in scattered attachments to bivouac at Philosophie three miles behind the enemy lines.

In late October when his wife had not heard from him for five weeks she received notification from the War Office giving intimation that William had been wounded in action on the 27th September but not giving the place.

After about two months his wife received a letter from Capt. J.W. Thomas, Infantry Record Office, York stating: -

"It is my painful duty to inform you that a report has this day December 20th been received from the War Office notifying the death of Pte. William Rothery 17469 10th Battalion K.O.Y.L.I. which occurred in France on the 27th September 1915 and I am to express to you the sympathy and regret of the Army Council at your loss. Pte. Rothery Rothery was killed in action. "

Mr. Jenkins received a letter from Mr. J.W.Simpson who was the head of the willeying department at J.T& J. Taylor's:-

"I am very sorry to tell you that news arrived this morning of the death of Pte. William Rothery who was machine gunner in the 10th Battalion K.O.Y.L.I. He took part in the great push at Loos in September last and was wounded to what extent we cannot ascertain. In fact the whole business has been a mystery until this morning when news came saying he died three days after receiving the wounds. I have known Willie Rothery for years. He was a real good fellow with absolutely no show or pretence an excellent workman and was much respected by all his workmates. The news of his death in such a noble cause has had a great effect on all his old workmates and I feel it more than I care to confess. His poor wife has been in suspense for long weary weeks what affect will that have I cannot imagine. This makes the fifth from Hanover Street to lay down his life for King and country. The brave fellows are: Ernest Teale, Scots Guards: Pte Thomas Thompson, Coldstream Guards: Pte George Roberts, /4th K.O.Y.L.I. and Pte George Armitage, 10th K.O.Y.L.I. "

William is remembered with Honour at Cross Bank Wesleyan Chapel, Loos Memorial and Batley War Memorial.

He was awarded the 1915 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group