George Henry Ryan





Rank: - Private

Number: - 12/1469

Regiment: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 12th Battalion

Missing, Killed in Action: - 1st July 1916 aged 40 years

Memorial: - Thiepval Memorial, Belgium Pier and Face 11C and 12 A

Family Details

George Henry was born in Batley in c1876 the only son of Edwin and Ann Eliza Ryan (nee Spencer). The couple had married at St. Thomas's Church the 21st August 1875 on the same day as Thomas Spencer who was Ann's elder brother. Their father John was described a s a gentleman although Ann Eliza worked as a weaver. In 1881 they were living in Back Upton Street, Batley and Edward was a cloth dresser. Within the next decade the family had moved to live at the Albion Hotel, Cross Bank Road, Batley where Edward was described as a beer house keeper and 15-year-old George Henry was his assistant whilst his Aunt Ann E. Ryan was a general servant living with them.

George Henry married Grace Ann Braime at Batley Parish Church on 13th April 1895 when they were both 19 years old. He gave his occupation as a mason.

Lawrence was born the same year followed by Ann Eliza 1897, Edwin 1899, Harry 1900 and Georgie in 1903.

In 1901 the family was living at 29, North Street, Batley.

His father had moved from Carlinghow to Bankfoot and was described as a beer house keeper (pub) in 1901. His mother died in January 1903 and his father married Widow Eliza Ann Haigh in 1905 and they lived in Mount Street, Batley. Willie was born in September 1907 and baptised at Taylor Street Chapel on 10th October 1907.He sadly died in October 1908 aged 13 months.

George Henry worked for Mr. Joe Crosland, contractor, Dewsbury and was a member of Dewsbury Socialist Club.

Hi son, Lawrence enlisted and was killed in action on 24th April 1915 and his father enlisted to avenge the death of his son enlisting immediately he received the news of his death. The family lived at 141, North Bank Road, Cross Bank, Batley.

Service Details

George Henry enlisted in June 1915 at Dewsbury after receiving the news of the death of his son. He went to Egypt on 22nd December 1915 but returned to fight in France. The 12th Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry was in 31st Division. The Divisional HQ was established at Port Said on Christmas Eve and

the last units arrived in Egypt on 23rd January 1916, The Division took over No.3 Sector of the Suez Canal defences and the Divisional H Q moved to Kanatara on the 23rd January 1916. The stay in Egypt was short and the battalion left Kantara, Egypt for Marseilles on the 1st March 1916 arriving at 7 am on the 8th March. They travelled north by train arriving at Pont Remy and Hallencourt on the 11th March 1916.

On the 1st July the battalion was at the assembly points at 5.50 am reassembling at 4.30 pm. The War Diaries reports that approximately 197 all ranks including one officer had been killed and three wounded. (Page 47)

He was reported killed in action by two Batley comrades but officially he was reported as wounded.

He was posted missing on the first day of the Somme offensive and it was almost a year before his wife received official news that her husband was" *missing, presumed killed in action"*

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

He is remembered with Honour at Cross Bank Wesleyan Chapel, Batley War Memorial and Thiepval Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group