James Clapham Rymer





Rank: - Private

Number: - 267921

Regiment: - Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment) 1/6th Battalion (formerly 1/7th West Riding Regiment).

Killed in Action: - 13th April 1918 aged 26 years

Memorial: - Tyne Cot Memorial Panels 82-85 and 162A

Batley News, 27 Apr 1918 (photo), 11 May 1918 (photo)



Family Details

James Clapham was born in Gomersal on 26th March 1892, the son of Thomas and Sophia Rymer (nee Clapham). He was baptised at Gomersal Wesleyan Chapel on 15th May 1892. The couple had married at St. Mary's, Gomersal on the 5th March 1892 when Thomas gave his occupation as a quarryman.

Annie was born at Carlinghow in 1894 followed by Frances in 1898.The family lived at 26, Birch Street, Carlinghow, Batley. In 1911 James was working as a cloth finisher.

Before he enlisted he was employed as a finisher at Messrs. J.T. & J. Taylor's, Blakeridge Mills, Batley and he was a member of Cross Bank Wesleyan Church.

Service Details

He enlisted at Dewsbury in February 1916. The 1/6th Battalion of the West Riding Regiment came under the orders of 147th Brigade in 49th ((West Riding) Division.

He went to France but was wounded in July 1916 but returned to France on Christmas Day 1916. He came home on leave in November 1917.

In 1916 his Division fought at the Battles of Albert, Bazentin Ridge, Pozieres Ridge and Flers-Courcelette.

In 1917 they took part in Operations on the Flanders Coast (Hush) and the Battle of Poelcapelle.

In 1918 they took part in the Battles of Estaires 9th -11th April, Messines, 10th - 11th April and Bailleul in which the Division defended Neuve Eglise 13th-15th April.

On the 10th April the battalion were moved by road transport to the vicinity of Neuve Eglise where they had arrived at the Nieppe defences before 1 p.m. It was a fairly quiet night with only a little shelling but the following morning the enemy established his machine guns at the outskirts of Ponte du Nieppe and they became very active. All morning the shelling and T M fire were very intensive especially on the battalion's support and back areas. The Bosche were in their trenches but were finally ejected by about 4 pm and around 20 were dead and one prisoner was taken but not without having casualties themselves. At 7 pm orders were received to withdraw platoons down the Bailleul Road.

On the 12th they were at Cross Roads when they received orders at about 12.15 pm to establish a line at Becque de la Flanche. Throughout the afternoon the line was continuously shelled and T. M's and machine gun fire was put down on it.

Early morning of the 13th was very quiet and rations were delivered but later that morning the Boache approached to within 100-150 yards and suffered very heavy casualties from "D" Company who also lost men. Eventually the enemy worked round both flanks and forced them to withdraw. Two Officers were killed and two wounded.

"B" Company was sent up to reinforce the Troops and with heavy machine gun fire coming at them they pushed into a forward position and managed to hold the enemy who had advanced about 500 yards.

After this the line remained firm and at about 9.45 pm orders were received to withdraw.

His captain wrote to his parents: - *"It is a very real grief to me to have to inform you that Pte. Rymer was killed in action on the 13th by an enemy sniper. He has served with this company sixteen months, and has always been a hard worker and one who could be relied on. All members of this company wish to join with me in expressing our very real sympathy to you in the loss of your son."*

James Clapham was killed in this battle and has no known grave.

In the Batley News of 17th April 1920, the following was printed: -

RYMER.—In ever loving memory of our dear son and brother, Private James Clapham Rymer, 1st-6th Duke of Wellington's Regiment, who was killed in action April 13th, 1918.

From memory's page we shall never blot
Three little words "Forget him not."

From the family.

A loving brother, true and kind,
A beautiful memory left behind.

From sisters Frances and Annie.

James was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

He is remembered with Honour at Batley War Memorial, Tyne Cot Memorial, Cross Bank Wesleyan Chapel and Hanging Heaton War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group