John Smith





Rank: - Private

Number: - 20785

Regiment: - King's Own Scottish Borderers 2nd Battalion

Killed in Action: - 08/11/1917 Age: 23 years

Memorial: - Tyne Cot Memorial, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium Panel 66 to 68

Batley News, 1 Dec 1917 (photo**)**

Family Details

John was born in Batley in c.1895 the son of John William and Julia Ann Smith nee Dawson who had married on the 27th August 1887 at Christ Church, Staincliffe, Batley.

In 1901 John William and Julia Ann were living with their children, Hannah Jane 1891, Joseph Henry 1892, John, William1897 and Sarah Emma 1898 at 13, Oxford Street, Mount Pleasant, Batley. John William was a general labourer.

Fred was born in 1901 followed by Cecil 1904. John attended Purlwell and Staincliffe Church Day Schools and when he was a boy was connected with Staincliffe Baptist Church.

In 1911 the family lived at 27a, Staincliffe Hall Road, Batley and John worked for the Borough Council in the scavenging department. John worked there for four years before moving to work for Messrs. J.T. & J. Taylor 's at Cheapside and Blakeridge Mills before he enlisted. The family moved to live at 6, Wood Street, off Wellington Street, Batley.

Hannah Jane 1888 sadly died October 1890 and Elfrida 1891 died in March 1896.

Service Details

John enlisted in July 1915 and went to France in October 1915. He was wounded in May 1916 and last came home on leave around November 1916.

March 1916 saw a move, with 5th Division taking over a section of front line between St Laurent Blangy and the southern edge of Vimy Ridge, in front of Arras. This was a lively time, with many trench raids, sniping and mining activities in the front lines. This is when John would have been injured.

In 1917 they action at: -
The Battle of Vimy (9-14 April)
The Attack on La Coulotte
The Third Battle of the Scarpe (3-4 May) including the Capture by the Division of Oppy Wood,
which were phases of the Battles of Arras 1917.
On 7 September 1917 the Division was relieved and moved out of the line for a period, being sent next to join the great offensive in Flanders.

The Battle of Polygon Wood (26 Sept- 3 Oct)
The Battle of Broodseinde (4 Oct)
The Battle of Poelcapelle (9 Oct-12 Oct)
The Second Battle of Passchendaele (26 October -10 November)
which were phases of the Third Battle of Ypres.

Official news arrived to his parents that John had been killed in action on November 8th 1917.

His brother William was in France with the Labour Battalion of the Notts. and Derby Regiment.

John was awarded the 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

John is remembered with Honour at Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group