Joseph Edward Smith





Rank: - L/Cpl.

Number: - 43421

Regiment: - West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own) (Formerly 15602, York and Lancs. Regt.) 10th Battalion

Killed in Action, Lesboeufs, Somme, France: - 25/12/1916 Age: 37 years

Memorial: - Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France Pier and Face 2 A 2 C and 2 D.

Batley News, 3 Feb 1917 (photo)

Family Details

Joseph Edward was born on the 30th April 1879 at Flockton near Wakefield the youngest child of George Smith and his wife Eliza nee Heeley. He was baptised at a Flockton non-conformist church on 20th April 1880. The couple had married on the 1st March 1862 at St. Michael's Church, Emley.

In 1871 George who came from Clayton West was living with his Skelmanthorpe born wife and children, Mary Ann 1861, Emma 1863, John 1865 and Allen 1871 at 163, Top of Town, Cumberworth.

Ada was born in Flockton in 1874 followed by Herman in 1877. Their father, George died, when Joseph was three months old, in August 1879 and was buried on the 9th August aged 37 years. Eliza was living at Flockton in 1881 with seven children plus a grandchild. In early 1885 Eliza married Barnsley born coal miner Walter Swift and before 1891 they moved to live at 44, Queen Street, Batley with her four youngest children. However, within the next decade Eliza was living at 21, Carr Street, Birstall with her daughter Ada saying she was a widow. Eliza died in the West Riding Asylum, Wakefield in July 1907 and was buried in Batley Cemetery.

In September 1899 he married Dublin born Ellen Donnelly at St. Joseph's Church, Queen's Road, Aldershot. Eileen Margaret was born in 1904 in Aldershot followed by Eliza in Flockton in 1907 and Edward in Horbury in 1908. In 1911 Joseph was working as coal filler at Dalton and he and his family was living at 17, Norwood Street, Dalton Brook in a two roomed house. Henry was born in October 1912 at Healds Road, Dewsbury. Probably this was the hospital because at this period in history this was the address put on documents such as death certificates.

A report in the Batley News states that in August 1914 he lived in Queen Street, Batley and worked at Featherstone. In August 1914 he enlisted in his old regiment and his wife went to live at 26, Little Town End Ossett.

Service Details

Joseph enlisted in 1896 into the West Yorkshire Regiment and served through the South African War.

He served with his Regiment and with *Brabant's Horse* during the 2nd Boer War. Major-General Sir Edward Yewd Brabant KCB CMG (born 1839), was a South African colonial military commander. During the Second Boer War (1899–1902), he commanded the Colonial Division in 1900, and the Colonial Defence Force of Cape

Colony in 1901.On 5 November 1899, Brabant raised the Light Horse regiment known as Brabant's Horse. The top strength of the unit was 600, all ranks, including South African colonials, Australians, British, Canadians. The unit saw much action against Boer commandos. Brabant's Horse was disbanded in Cape Town on 31 December 1901.

The 10th Battalion of the West Yorkshire's were part of 17th (Northern) Division and went to France in July 1915.

They moved into the Southern Ypres salient for trench familiarisation and then took over the front lines in that area. In the spring of 1916, they were in action at the Bluff, south east of Ypres on the Comines canal then moved south to The Somme seeing action during The Battle of Albert in which the Division captured Fricourt and The Battle of Delville Wood. Joseph Smith would have fought with his Regiment on 1st July 1916.

The *"Batley News"* had this report of his death:

"Killed on Christmas Day - A Batley Man Who Fought in the South African War - Corporal Joseph Smith, killed in action on Christmas Day, at the age of 37, joined the West Yorkshires when a boy, and served through the South African War. In August 1914 he was living in Queen Street, Batley and working at Featherstone. He promptly enlisted in his old regiment and is wife went to live at 26, Little Town End, Ossett.

'Please accept deepest and heartfelt sympathy from myself and my Company' writes an officer to Mrs. Smith. 'He fell doing his duty, the noblest death any man can wish for. To you and your children in your loss, I offer my sincere sympathy, and pray that you may be given strength to bear this great trouble."

He was Batley bred moving from Flockton when very young, going to school in Batley and returning when not fighting.
He was awarded the 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal.

Joseph Edward is remembered with Honour at Ossett (2018) and Batley War Memorial Addenda 2019.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group