Leonard Smith





Rank: - Private

Number: - 13999

Regiment: - Machine Gun Corps (Infantry)

Killed in Action: - 14th April 1918 aged 29 years

Memorial: - Ploegsteert Memorial, Hainault, Belgium Panel 11

Batley Reporter, 26 Oct 1917

Family Details

Leonard was born in Batley in c. January 1889 the son of James Henry and Alice Maud Smith nee Goodall. His father was an iron moulder and in 1891 the family was living at 12, Kent Street, Batley. The couple had married at St. Mary's, Gomersal on 11th September 1882.

Nellie was born in 1892 and in 1901 they were living at 8, Kent Street and James Henry was described as a foreman iron moulder.

In 1911 the family was living at 40, Purlwell Hall Road, Mount Pleasant, Batley and 23-year-old Leonard was a journeyman butcher.

Leonard did work for the Batley Co-operative Society for 15 years in the butchery department and before joining up was the manager of the Cross Bank butchery department.

On the 9th August 1915 Leonard married Minerva Middlebrook at St. Andrew's, Bruntcliffe. Before his marriage he lived at 40, Liberty Terrace, Purlwell Hall Road, Mount Pleasant, Batley but later went to live at 46, Ash Terrace, Mount Pleasant.

Service Details

Leonard enlisted in December 1916 and went to the Front where he was wounded in the thigh. He recovered and was sent to Italy before Christmas 1917. He returned to France in April 1918 and had only been there 4 or 5 days when he was killed. A Captain wrote to his wife: -

"Your husband was killed in action; it now appears on the 13th inst. The enemy had made repeated attacks in mass against our position and the guns of this Company were largely instrumental in driving them off with great loss. During the fight the gun on which your husband was serving was hit by a shell and the whole team killed or wounded.

It is not until yesterday it was ascertained your husband was killed as he was reported missing by the survivors of his team. He has been buried by men of the Division and a cross marks the spot." The Captain offered his sympathy and concluded: -" We *hope you will remember he died as bravely as anyone could, doing great work in a great cause, fighting for right and freedom."*

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

He is remembered with Honour at Batley War Memorial, Batley Co-operative Society Roll of Honour and Purlwell Wesleyan Chapel.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group