John Benjamin Spedding





Rank: - Private/L/Cpl

Number: - 54101

Regiment: - Durham Light Infantry (formerly 28763 Yorkshire Regiment)

18th Battalion

Died of Wounds: - 7th May 1917 aged 29 years

Cemetery: - Nesle Communal Cemetery, Somme, France A.4

Batley News, 19 May 1917 (photo)

Family Details

John Benjamin was born in Batley in c1889 the son of Edward and Elizabeth France Spedding nee Fell and in 1891 the family was living at 14, Belvedere Road, Mount Pleasant, Batley. It was noted on the census both his parents were deaf and dumb.

The couple had married on 7th September 1870 at St. Mary and St. Michael, Lower Whitley. The couple went to live in Taylor Street, Batley and Alice Hannah was born in 1871 followed by Thomas Robert in 1873 but he sadly died aged 1 year and 8 months in April 1875 and Edith Emma in August 1875.The family moved to live at 5, Oaks Road before the birth of Michael Edward in October 1877 who was followed by Ernest Frederick in November 1879, Ewart Walter 1882 and Oscar Louis in 1884 .Edgar Victor was born in Chidswell in 1886 but they had returned to Batley before the birth of John Benjamin in the first qtr of 1889.

In 1901 John Benjamin, his parents and four of his siblings were living at 17, North Parade, Batley and Edward was employed as a bag and sheet maker. Before 1911 they had moved to live at 6, Oxford Street, Mount Pleasant and in the census of that year Edward was described as working on his own account as a bagging and twine dealer and John Benjamin was a clerk working in the woollen industry.

John Benjamin was well known in Batley having been employed as a cashier at Messrs. Granville Goodall and Co. at Birstall and being connected to the Purlwell Wesleyan Chapel and a member of the Batley (Harbour of Refuge) Lodge of the Sons of Temperance.

At the time of his death his parents were reported to be living at The Poplars, Mount Pleasant, Batley.

Service Details

He was called up in January 1916 as a Derby Recruit and was sent for his medical at Pontefract in February 1916. He was 5 feet 1 inch tall aged 26 years and 10 days and weighed 118 lbs. He had small scars on the back of his neck and suffered from slight general valgus. He was made a Lance Corporal on 4th April 1916 and went to the Front in December 1916.

The first major battle the regiment was engaged in during 1917 was the Battle of Arleux 28-29 April followed by the 3rd Battle of Scarpe, 3-4 May.

It was probably this last battle where he was mortally wounded because it was reported from a sister in charge of a Clearing Station stating that he had been admitted to hospital wounded in the abdomen and bleeding inwardly and that he died the same day. He was afterwards buried in a cemetery nearby.

From April to June 1917, No.21 Casualty Clearing Station was at Nesle, and the dead from it were buried in a plot near the West corner of the Communal Cemetery, between two German plots.

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

John Benjamin is remembered with Honour at Purlwell Wesleyan Chapel and Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group