John William Taylor





Rank: - Private

Number: - 12/1420

Regiment: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 12th Battalion

Killed in Action: - 1st July 1916 aged 39 years

Memorial: - Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France Pier and Face 11 C and 12 A.

Batley News, 15 Jul 1916. Batley Reporter, 28 Jul 1916, 4 Aug 1916 (photo)x

Family Details

John William was born in Leeds in c.1876 the son of Newcastle born Christopher, and Ellen Taylor nee Trainer who had married at St. Peter's Church, Leeds on the 12th December 1872.

In 1881 he and his parents were living at 5, Charles Street, Leeds and his father was a hawker of rag and bones. Before 1891 he was living at the home of coal miner Festus Speight of Knowler Hill, Liversedge as his adopted son and John William was a coal hurrier.

On the 21st January 1898 at St. Mary's Church, Leeds he married Batley born Alice Ann Holden and they moved to live in Jacob Street, Batley with their Batley born children James Christopher 1899 and Ruth 1901 who sadly died in November 1902.

Fred was born in April 1904 but sadly died aged 5 months, Charlotte was born in 1905 followed by Mary Jane 1909 and Grace Helen 1911 who died in May 1912 aged 13 months. The family had moved to live at 1, Towngate Road, Healey in a two roomed home before 1911 and John William was working as a banks-man at a pit top. John William was a well-known club entertainer and toured most of the local clubs. He attended Carlinghow Working Men's Club and worked at Carlinghow Colliery before he enlisted and the family had moved to New Street, Batley.

Service Details

John enlisted at Dewsbury on the same day as Patrick Higgins of Birstall.

The 12th Battalion of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry was formed in Leeds on 5 September 1914 by the West Yorkshire Coalowner's Association. The moved to Farnley Park (Otley) and in May 1915, moved to Burton Leonard (Ripon) and attached as Pioneer Battalion to 31st Division, moving to Fovant in October 1915. In December 1915 they moved to Egypt taking over the No.3 Sector of the Suez Canal defences but this was short lived and they went on to France in March 1916.

They first major battle they fought at was the Battle of Albert on the Somme which started on the 1st July 1916.

Private Samuel Blakeley of Cross Street, Birstall who was with the 12th K.O.Y.L.I. wrote home wrote home to his mother of Fearnside's Yard, Batley "*We have been in the thick of the fighting and I thank God for being able to come out alive. It was a sight I shall never forget. George Henry Ryan had his head blown off. We are going for a rest now, we need it. It has been up to the knees in sludge."*

This was also conveyed back to Batley by Patrick Higgins who said*" I am still alive and kicking. I expect you have heard of poor George Ryan and John Taylor being killed. John enlisted on the same day as I did."*

John William was killed on the first day of the fighting on the Somme in 1916.

Alice Ann married Alfred Mothersdale on 19th November 1917 and lived at 20, Peel Street, Batley

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

John William is remembered with Honour at Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group