# Arthur Thompson





**Rank: -** Private

**Number: -** 3536

**Regiment: -**Kings' Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 1/4th Battalion

**Killed by accidental collapse of dugout: -** 28th October 1915 aged 35

**Cemetery: -** Bard Cottage, West Vlaanderen, Belgium 1.B.21

**Batley News, 6 Nov 1915. Batley News, 27 Oct 1917 (Roll of Honour)**

## Family Details

Arthur was born in Batley in 1880 the youngest child son of William and Emma Thompson (nee Elstub formerly Ratcliffe). The couple had married in 1873 after the death of her first husband John Sunderland Ratcliffe in 1868. Eleanor (Hellena) was born in 1875 and in 1881 the family was living at Commercial Street, Batley with Herbert Ratcliffe (1858) and Annie (1865) who were the children from her first marriage. Mary who was born in January 1861 was living at Gomersal with her paternal grandmother.

Before 1891 the family had moved to live at 1, Cross Mill Street, off Commercial Street Batley. William was employed as a mechanic and loom fitter. William died in 1896 but the twice widowed Emma was still living at Cross Mill Street with three of her children in 1901 when Arthur was working as a cloth finisher. Emma died in 1914.

On the 13th September 1902 Arthur married Sarah Ann Warner at St. Thomas's Church, Batley and the couple went to live in Back Albert Street, Batley Carr where William was born in 1903 when his father gave his occupation as a dyer. Before 1911 the family had moved to live at 9, Hilberoyd Road, Batley. Beatrice was born in the summer of 1912.

Before enlisting Arthur worked as a dyer at Frank Townend and Sons Ltd., Carlinghow previously for many years he had worked in the warehouse at Messrs.G. & J. Stubley's, Bottoms Mill. He had a lifelong connection with the Zion Chapel.

## Service Details

Arthur enlisted at the start of the war and had been at the Front for five months. The 1/4th K.O.Y.L.I.'s in August 1914 arrived in Wakefield, from their annual camp at Whitby, and was part of 3rd West Riding Brigade, West Riding Division along with the 1/5th KOYLI and 1/4thand 1/5th York and Lancs. Commanded by Brig-Gen. R.Dawson. On mobilization they moved to Doncaster Race Course, moving to Gainsborough in November 1914 and to York in February 1915.

The 1/4th left York at around midday on the 13th April 1915 and arrived at Liverpool Street Station, London at 6.20p.m. and embarked at Folkestone for a night crossing to Boulogne.

On the 15th May their formation became part of the 148th Brigade, 49th West Riding Division.

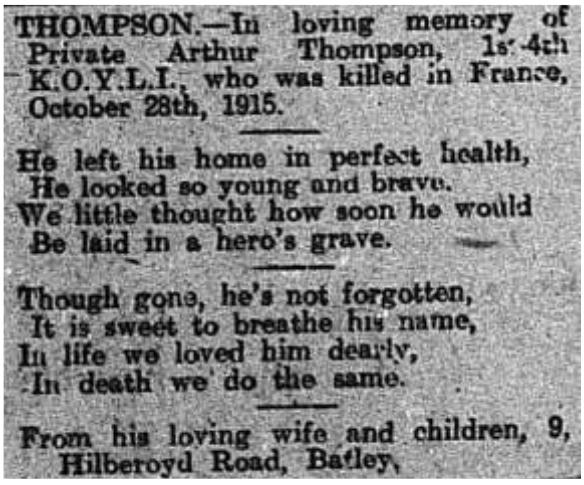
At Whitsuntide they were under shell fire for 3 days and nights. In October they were near the Yser Canal at Ypres where the 49th Division had dug and named many of the trenches.

Arthur was killed by the falling of his dugout and Lieut. Colonel Haselgrave, the Officer Commanding the Battalion wrote to his wife: -

*"Dear Madam, --- It is with extreme regret I have to write to inform you of the death of your husband Private Arthur Thompson No.3536 of the battalion under my command. He was instantly killed by the falling of the dug-out in which he was sleeping and the probability is that he was killed instantly owing to the heavy nature of the construction of the dug-out. Please accept my heartfelt sympathy, in this, your sad bereavement which must come as a great shock to you and it is especially more regrettable that his death should come the same night as he had come out of the trenches for a little rest. There is, however, some little consolation to be found in the knowledge that your husband did his duty in a soldier like manner and gave his life to uphold the honour and glory of his King and country. He is buried in a military cemetery just behind the trenches, and the place is marked with a cross and I hope at some future date I will be able to tell you the exact spot where his body lies. "*

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

Arthur is remembered with Honour at Zion Methodist Church, Batley War Memorial and Bard Cottage Cemetery, Belgium.



THOMPSON.—In loving memory of Private Arthur Thompson, 1st 4th K.O.Y.L.I., who was killed in France, October 28th, 1915.

He left his home in perfect health,
He looked so young and brave.
We little thought how soon he would
Be laid in a hero's grave.

Though gone, he's not forgotten,
It is sweet to breathe his name,
In life we loved him dearly,
In death we do the same.

From his loving wife and children, 9, Hilberoyd Road, Batley.

Batley News 1917.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group