John Thomas Thraves





Rank: - Private

Number: - 52619

Regiment: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 2/4th Battalion

Shot by sniper whilst attempting to capture German held machine gun post: - 4th November 1918 aged 24 years.

Cemetery: - Ruesnes Communal Cemetery, Nord, France 1.B.11.

"GOD WILL LINK THE BROKEN CHAIN CLOSER WHEN WE MEET AGAIN"

Batley News, 23 Nov 1918, 30 Nov 1918 (photo)

Family Details

John Thomas was born in Hanging Heaton on the 14th April 1894 the son of George Edward and Lavina Elizabeth Thraves nee Linney and was baptised at the Wesleyan Chapel on 20th May 1894. The couple had married on 25th September 1881 at Christ Church, Newark, Nottinghamshire.

William Edward was born in 1883 in Doncaster followed by Alfred 1885, Annie 1886 and they moved to live at Drighlington before the birth of George Henry 1888, Fred 1891 and to 12, Mill Lane, Hanging Heaton before the births of John Thomas and James 1897. George Edward, who came from Uttoxeter, was employed as a railway signal man.

John Thomas attended Mill Lane school and was then employed as a miner at Shaw Cross Colliery. He also attended Park Road Baptist Church and was librarian for Hanging Heaton Society.

Service Details

John Thomas enlisted in April 1918 under the colliery "comb-out" and went to France in August 1918.

The 2/4th King's Own Light Infantry was a second line unit and had gone to France in January 1917 and was attached to 187th Brigade in 62nd (2nd West Riding) Division.

From August 1918 the Division fought at: -

The Battle of the Scarpe (26 – 30 August)
The Battle of the Drocourt-Queant Line (2 September)
which were phases of the Second Battles of Arras 1918
The Battle of Havrincourt (12 September)
The Battle of the Canal du Nord (27 – 30 September)
which were phases of the Battles of the Hindenburg Line
The Battle of the Selle (17 – 23 October)
The capture of Solesmes (20 October)
The Battle of the Sambre (4 November)
which were phases of the Final Advance in Picardy

The task of the 187th Brigade was to attack and capture the village of Orsinval to the north of Le Quesnoy, the 2/4th were in support except for one platoon who were with the 5th Battalion. In the early hours of the 4th November the 5th Battalion set out to capture the village which they did by 7 am capturing 200 prisoners and a large number of machine guns.

Twenty-five minutes after the 5th attacked the 2/4th followed with three companies on a front of 1500 yards. It was reported "Considerable opposition was encountered in Orsinval village, the mopping up having been neglected and "B" Coy sustained rather heavy casualties". The 2/4th fought hard to dislodge the enemy's machine gunners. As they moved to their next objective, Frasnoy, they were met with considerable fire power but they pushed on and took several prisoners and mopped up at the first few houses when the 2/4th Lancs. passed through. After a stiff night they captured their final objective on the eastern side of Frasnoy at 9.25 am.

A report of his death by a Chaplain was that he was killed in action while capturing a position held by enemy machine guns.

"He fell gallantly in a great cause and the debt his country owe him and his comrades can never be too highly estimated."

John Thomas was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

He is remembered with Honour at St. Paul's Church Hanging Heaton, Hanging Heaton War Memorial and Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group