**Herbert Tomlinson**





**Rank: -** Gunner

**Number: -** 77401

**Regiment: -** Tank Corps "B" Battali**on** (formerly 25099 King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry)

**Killed in Action when his tank was hit by shellfire: -** 31st July 1917

**Cemetery: -** Ypres Town Cemetery Extension, Belgium III. H. 30.

# "THY WILL BE DONE"

Batley News, 11 Aug 1917 (photo)

## Family Details

Herbert was born in Cleckheaton in c.1893 the son of William and Sarah Ann T(h)omlinson nee Robinson. The couple had married at St. Peter's Church, Birstall on 18th September 1886. William was a boiler maker and sadly died in April 1894. He was buried at St. John's Church, Cleckheaton.

In 1901 Herbert was living at 6, Porritt Yard Cleckheaton with William Henry Elsworth and Sarah Ann who had married at St. Peter's Church, Birstall on 13th May 1899. They moved to live at 17, Union Street, Cleckheaton before the death of William Henry in March 1908 aged 37 years.

Herbert and Sarah moved to live at Partington Square, Birstall and on the 11th December 1909 she married widower James Walter Stone of Blackburn Road, Birstall.
In 1911 Herbert was living in a 3 roomed home at 40, Blackburn Road Birstall with his mother, step father James Stone and his 5 children who ranged in age from 22 years to 6 years.
Herbert was well known in Staincliffe and Birstall areas and was a a popular member of the Birstall Harriers.

On 20th February 1915 he married Sarah Ann Minnie Welch at Christ Church, Staincliffe and moved to live at 65, Occupation Lane, Staincliffe (later 59).
Before enlisting he worked as a Boiler firer at Messrs. J.T. & J. Taylor's Blakeridge Mills, Batley.

He was an enthusiastic athlete and had written home shortly before he was killed to say he had won a prize in the battalion sports.

## Service Details

Herbert enlisted in the Territorial 1/4th Battalion of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry on 22nd March 1911 giving his step father and his mother as next of kin and at the time was working as a miner for the Howden Clough Colliery Company. He was discharged medically unfit to serve on 5th August 1914. They did take him at a later date.

Originally formed as Companies of the Heavy Section M.G.C. designated A, B, C and D, each Company consisted of 4 Sections of 3 tanks of each type (male and female Mk 1's). Companies also had another machine in reserve.

The *Tank Corps* was formed from the Heavy Branch MGC on 27 July 1917 and the Battalions adopted numbering rather than letter designations (although tank names followed the same lettering: for example, 7th Battalion tanks were all named with a letter G, like Grouse, Grumble, etc.) Each Tank Battalion had a complement of 32 officers and 374 men.

Herbert would have gone to the Front in January 1916 (17 months)

An officer wrote to his wife: -

*"I have some very sad news to tell you, your husband Gunner Tomlinson was killed yesterday July 31st. He was in my tank when a shell hit it and killed him instantaneously at 9.15 a.m. He was my best gunner, a man could absolutely rely on to do anything, and more than that, he was the wit of my crew and always kept us laughing. All the men loved him and he is very badly missed indeed. I am going up this evening to bury him and will write to you later."*

The writer enclosed his pocket book and promised that other personal effects would be sent on.

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

Herbert is remembered with Honour at Christ Church, Staincliffe, Birstall War Memorial and Batley War Memorial.




Researched by members of
Batley History Group