Joseph Turnbull



Rank: - Private

Number: - 3/826

Regiment: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 2nd Bn Machine Gunner

Killed in Action: - 11/07/1915 Age: 20

Cemetery: - Voormezeele Enclosure No 3, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium V11.B.9

Batley Reporter, 30 Jul 1915. Dewsbury Reporter, 31 Jul 1915

Family Details

Joseph was born in Morley in c. 1895 the son of Henry and Mary Turnbull nee Asquith who had married on the 3rd December 1892 at St. Peter's Church, Morley. Henry was a widower and was employed as a miner.

Sarah Jane was born in 1893 followed by Joseph, Emily 1898, Ada 1900 in Bradford and Emma 1903 in Batley. In 1911 Mary and her four youngest children were living in a two roomed home at 101, New Street, Batley stating that she was head of the household although she was married. Joseph was working as a hurrier in a coal mine.

Joseph married Alice Naylor in October Qtr 1914, registered Dewsbury and Sarah Jane was born in 1915. The couple lived at Back Richmond Street, Cross bank, Batley. Joseph never saw his child.

Service Details

The 2nd Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry landed at Le Havre on the 16th August 1914 but it not certain that Joseph was with them because he got married in the October qtr.

In 1914 they took part in: -

The Battle of Mons and subsequent retreat, including the Action of Elouges (23-24 August)
The Battle of Le Cateau and the Affair of Crepy-en-Valois (26 August)
The Battle of the Marne (7-10 September)
The Battle of the Aisne (12-15 September)
The Battles of La Bassee and Messines 1914 (10 October – 2 November)
The First Battle of Ypres (19 October – 22 November)

In 1915 they took part in: -

The Second Battle of Ypres and the Capture of Hill 60 (22 May – 25 May)

Sgt. W. Stocks of the machine gun section 2nd Battalion wrote to his wife: -

"I am sorry to inform you of the sad death of your dear husband Pte. J. Turnbull 3826. He was killed early on Sunday morning whilst doing his duty. I am sorry I

have to send you this sad news, but it is better for you get the truth as early as possible. I was the sergeant in charge of the gun he was on, and I along with two more men were lucky enough to escape out of ten men. I have known your husband nearly four years and he was a very good man at his work. He was killed instantly so he suffered no pain. He has been buried about two miles behind the firing line and a clergyman conducted a burial service over him. I have enclosed all photographs he had on him, and also as soon as I get out of the trenches, I will send you his wristlet watch and ring, which I always promised I would. He always told me to do that if anything happened to him. He was a brave and fearless soldier. He was in England with me and we came out here together. I could trust him to do anything out here. I and my comrades send you our sympathy in your sad bereavement. If there is anything, I can do for you out here I shall only be too pleased to do so. Please let all his people know as I do not know their address and I feel sorry for you and his child. P.S. Pte W. Hall of Batley was one of the three men to escape and he sends his deepest sympathy. Joe was my chum and we were always mates although I was his sergeant. We have always chummed in with each other."

Private William Hall of Batley wrote: -

"Just a line to let you know how sorry I am about Joe and I hope you and your dear baby are quite well. It happened very early in the morning and it was a bursting shell that did the damage. I may say that dear Joe did not suffer in the least. He was killed instantly and was buried in a fitting manner, there being a short service and a nice cross placed on his grave. Hoping you will accept the sympathy and regard of all his chums."

Joseph was awarded the 1914 Star + Clasp, British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

He is remembered with Honour on Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group