Ben Wainwright



Rank: - Private

Number: - P5277

Regiment: - Manchester Regiment 2nd Battalion

Died of Wounds: - 3rd July 1916 aged 30 years

Cemetery: - Bouzincourt Communal Cemetery Extension, Somme, France 11.D.20

"AT REST "

Batley News, 9 Sep 1916

Family Details

Ben was born in Batley on 1st June 1886 the only child of John William and Mary Ann Wainwright (nee Kaye). He was baptised at St. Thomas's Church on 29th August 1886 when the family lived at Batley Carr and John William gave his occupation as a mason. The couple had married at Batley Parish Church on 14th November 1885.

In 1891 he was living with his parents at 1, Wainwright Yard, Batley Carr and his father was a stone mason whilst his mother worked as a weaver.

In 1901 the family was living at 14, High Street, Batley Carr and Ben was working as a grocer's assistant.

In June Qtr 1907 Ben married Annetta Lomax daughter of Mr. & Mrs. T. Lomax Old Westgate, Dewsbury and Joseph Arthur was born on 23rd August 1907 followed by Annie on 7thJune 1909.

Ben's father John William died in 1908 and in 1911 his mother was living with Ben and his young family at South View, Leeds Road, Dewsbury. Ben was a former newsagent and stationer of Bradford Road, Batley Carr but moved to Roman Road, Higher Broughton, Manchester before the outbreak of war.

Service Details

In August 1914 the 2nd Battalion of the Manchester Regiment was part of 14th Brigade in 5th Division landing at Le Havre on 17th August 1914.

In 1914 they fought at the Battles of Mons including the action of Elouges, Le Cateau and the affair of Crepy-en-Valois, Marne, Aisne, La Bassee and Messines and the First Battle of Ypres.

In 1915 they took part in the Second Battle of the Capture of Hill 60. On the 30th December 1915 they moved with the Brigade to 32nd Division.

In 1916 they fought at the Battle of Albert.

On the 24th June the battalion moved into billets at Bouzincourt and on the 27th moved to Aveluy Wood in preparation of going into battle on the 28th, however this was postponed and they had to move back to the billets in Senlis.

The battalion left Senlis on the evening of the 30th June proceeding to Authuille Wood in preparation for going into battle on the 1st July. At 7.30 am the battalion left Crucifix Corner (Aveluy) and proceeded to Dunbarton Track (Authuille Wood) .

The 17th Highland Light Infantry, 2nd King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, 1st Dorsets,11th Borderers and 19th L.F. were ahead of them at Naze trench with only 4 officers. Several prisoners were taken and all through the night wounded were brought back to Wood Post.

At 3 am on the 2nd July the enemy launched bombing attacks on their positions at three points. On the latter two the enemy were driven off by bombers and Lewis Guns but at the first they broke into their positions for about 100 yards but were driven back by bombers. Throughout the day the work of consolidation and building of barricades continued. The work was hampered by their own artillery which despite many urgent messages continued their barrage on their own front lines causing many casualties.

At 8pm the Colonel returned from Brigade H.Q. to say an attack was planned for 3.15 am the following morning against the Leipzig Line. The battalion at this time had been fighting for 40 hours without sleep and could hardly stand and it was decided they would be relieved by the 15th Highland Light Infantry and they would be relieved at 11pm being in reserve if required.

The relief was completed by 3 am but at 6.15 am the H.L.I. was attacked and an hour later "A" company was sent to support them. At 7.30 am "C" Company was also sent, followed 15 minutes by "B" Company who were loaded with bombs.

It was reported that Ben was hit by a fragment of a shell and died of his wounds.

It was several weeks before his family received news of his death.

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

He is remembered with Honour at Batley Carr Wesleyan Chapel, Bouzincourt Communal Cemetery and Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group