Donald James Watson





Rank: - Private

Number: - 358110

Regiment: - The King's (Liverpool Regiment) 2/10th Battalion

Killed in Action by shell: - 02/01/1918 Age: 30 years

Memorial: - Tyne Cot Memorial, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium Panel 31 to 34 and 162 and 162A and 163A.

Batley News, 12 Jan 1918. Batley Reporter, 15 Mar 1918. Dewsbury Reporter 12 Jan 1918

Family Details

Donald James was born in 1887 in Morley the son of Thomas Crowther and Rachel Ann Watson nee Jackson, m. 1883, registered Dewsbury).

In 1891 Thomas Crowther Watson, who was a cloth manufacturer, was living with his family at Field House, Morley. Hannah was born in 1885 followed by Thomas 1886, Donald 1887, Jessie 1889. Living at the house was a governess who taught general subjects and music and a domestic cook and general housemaid. Rachel Crowther Watson was born in 1895 and before 1901 the family was living at Milton House, Queen Street, Morley which was a nine roomed home. Living with them was a trained nurse, a cook and a house maid.

In 1901 when the census was taken thirteen-year-old Donald was a boarder at "The College", Ripon Road, Harrogate. From there he went to Cambridge University and on returning home became involved with Messrs. Brooke, Wilford and Co., Carlinghow which his father was also involved.

In 1911 Thomas Crowther and Donald were both cloth manufacturers whilst his elder brother Thomas was an accountant and still living at Milton House, Morley.

On the 2nd September 1913 Donald married Clarice Senior Sheard the daughter of Joseph Senior Sheard, Town councillor, J.P. of Elmdene, Upper Batley. After the Sheard Firm was sold in 1907 he was associated for many years with Messrs Robert Brearley & Sons, Queen St. Mills. In 1917 Joseph Senior Sheard was a member of the Board of Control for the Woollen Industry, established because of concerns for the availability of wool supplies, and the need for army clothing to have priority.

Their daughter Margaret Clarice was born in March 1914.

Donald was a member of Howley Hall Golf Club before he enlisted.

Service Details

Donald enlisted at Dewsbury and according to newspaper reports he enlisted in 1916 and went to France early 1917.

The 2/10th (Scottish) Battalion T.F. was formed at Liverpool about Oct. 1914 in November 1914 they were in Blackpool and in February 1915 to Ashford, Kent

and became 172nd Bde. in 57th Division. In July 1916 they moved to Mytchett, Aldershot and in September 1916 to Blackdown.

The Division received a warning order on 5 January 1917 that it would soon depart for France. The units crossed the Channel 7-22 February and completed concentration at Merris on 23 February 1917. Three days later it took over the right sector of II Anzac Corps, north of Le Tilleloy. The Division then remained in France and Flanders and took part in the following engagements:

The Second Battle of Passchendaele (26 October – 7 November) *which was a phase of the Third Battles of the Ypres*

An officer reported to the family that he had been hit by a piece of shell on the 2nd January 1918 and died about 20 minutes later without gaining consciousness.

According to his Will, Donald lived at The Rookeries, Upper Batley and his Will which went to probate on 25th February 1918 he left £2,280. 8s.3d. to his wife , Clarice.

Donald James was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

He is remembered with Honour at Batley and Morley War Memorials.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group