Joseph Arthur Watson





Rank: - Private

Number: - 204710

Regiment: - York and Lancaster 2nd/5th Battalion (T.F.)

Killed in Action: - 15th April 1918 aged 31

Cemetery: - Le Grand Beaumart British Cemetery, Steenwerck, Nord, France Spec.Mem11.B.15

"GOD BLESS YOU DEAR"

Batley News, 4 May 1918 (photo). Dewsbury Reporter 4 May 1918 (photo).

Family Details:

In 1871 James Watson, who was born in Thornhill, was the innkeeper at The Fleece Inn, Church Lane, Batley (Stocks Lane, Church steps). He was married to Mary Ann (nee Hall) who was born in Batley, and the children were Harriett Rebecca (1861), Thomas William (1863), Alfred (1865), William Hall (born Scotland 1867), Ellen Eliza (1869), James Walter (1870 born Batley). Mary Ann died in 1878.

James married Lavinia Smith on 18th August 1879 at Batley Parish Church and Mary Ann was born in 1880 followed by Grace Smith (1881), Edith Martha (1884), Joseph Arthur (1886), Lucy (1889). James died in 1889.

Joseph Arthur Watson was born in Batley on 23rd May 1886 the son of James and Lavinia (Nee Smith) Watson who was born Carlinghow. He was baptised on the 15th September 1886 when his father s occupation was given as a commission agent.

When his father died in 1889 the family moved nearby to 11, Churchfield Terrace, Fleming Street, Batley. The family remained there and in the 1901 census Joseph is working as a telegraph messenger. A decade later Lavinia was still in these 6 roomed houses with the five children of James and their half-sister, Harriett. Joseph is working as a shop assistant for A. Scarr & Sons Ltd. ironmonger's shop at Dewsbury. He became the manager there before joining the Colours.

As a boy Joseph attended Batley Parish Church School and was a member of the choir at the church from being a boy until he was grown up.

Joseph married Emily Barker at Thornhill Lees, Holy Innocents on 14th February 1912. At this time, he was living at Churchfield Terrace, Batley and his occupation was given as an ironmonger. They went to live at 17, St. Mary's Place, Saville Town, Dewsbury.

Service Details:

His attestation papers say that he enrolled at Dewsbury in October 1915 and went into the Army Reserve on 20th December 1915. He was 5 feet and $2^{3/4}$ inches tall living at 17, St. Mary's Place, Savile Town, Dewsbury and being

employed as an ironmonger's manager. He was in the reserve from 10th December 1915 until 13th March 1917 and then at home until being sent to France on 29th June 1917.

The 2nd /5th Battalion of the York and Lancaster Regiment were formed in Rotherham in October 1914 as a second line unit.

The 2nd /5th Battalion moved to Larkhill in January 1916 and then to several other English destinations before landing at Le Havre in January 1917, but Joseph did not join them until mid-July 1917. He travelled from Folkestone to Boulogne on the 29th June, joining the 34th Infantry Base Depot the following day at Etaples. He was posted to the York and Lancaster 2nd /5th on the 15th July at Etaples before joining the "D" Company to go to the Field two days later.

He was part of the 62nd (West Riding) Division and would have been part of the capture of Bourlon Wood in November 1917 and the Battles of Bapaume and the First Battle of Arras in 1918. He was killed in action on the 15th April 1918.

His Commanding Officer wrote to Emily and after expressing his sorrow said: -

"He will be greatly missed by his comrades with whom he was a prime favourite, and I may say he was a loyal soldier. His courage and devotion to duty was shown in the matter in which he met his death. At such a time as these words fail to adequately express our feelings but it may be of interest to you to know that in this latest venture the Battalion earned for itself a good name and each man acquitted himself gloriously and showed great bravery and courage. It is such actions as these that will ultimately bring a victorious termination to this terrible war. All the N.C.O.'s and men of this Company, along with myself, wish to sympathise with you in the great loss you have been called upon to bear. "

Emily received a pension of 13/9d a week.

Steenwerck was untouched for most of the First World War but on 10th April 1918 it was captured during the German advance and remained in their hands until the beginning of October 1918. The original cemetery was made by fighting units and field ambulances in April and October 1918.

Joseph was awarded British War Medal 1914-1920 and the Victory Medal.

He is commemorated on Batley War Memorial Addenda, Batley Parish Church and Le Grand Beaumart Military Cemetery, France along with another 47 who were killed on the same day.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group