Arthur Wilkinson





Rank: - Private

Number: - 41288

Regiment: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 9th Battalion

Died of Wounds in captivity: - 25th March 1918 aged 23

Memorial: - Pozieres Memorial, Somme, France Panel 59 and 60

Family Details

Arthur was born in Batley in c 1894 the son of Joseph and Annie Wilkinson (nee Sykes). The couple had married at Batley Parish Church on 3rd December 1888. Annie had a daughter, Lydia, born in January 1884 and Gertrude was born in January 1889 followed by Harry in 1890 but he sadly died aged 9 years in January 1901.

In 1901 the family was living with widow, Mary Ann Sykes at 60, Queen Street, Batley.

In 1911 Joseph was working for Batley Borough Council as a sanitary carter and Arthur was a piecer and the family was still living at 60, Queen Street, Batley.

He attended Park Road School and Broomhill Methodist Chapel and Sunday school and before enlisting was employed at John Blackburn and Co. New Ing Mills, Batley as a fettler.

On 20th November 1915 he married Sarah Emma Thornton at Broomhill Chapel, Batley. At the time he was a piecener living at 62, Albion Street, Batley and she was a woollen weaver living at 65, Albion Street, Batley.

Their daughter, Annie was born about January 1917.

Service Details.

He tried to enlist in November 1915 but was rejected but was accepted in 1916. He went to France in March 1917 but was wounded in June and returned to England.

He would have fought at the First Battle of Scarpe which took place between 9-14th April and the Third Battle of Scarpe 3-4 May and he would probably been wounded when the battalion was in the flanking operations around Bullecourt.

Whilst he was recuperating in England the battalion fought at the Battles of Polygon Wood, Broodseinde and the Second Battle of Passchendaele which took place between 26th October and 10th November. He left for France in November 1917 and the battalion took part in Cambrai Operations.



In 1918 they fought at the Battle of St. Quentin (21st March – 23rd March)

On the 22nd March the battalion was at Guyencourt and in Brown Line, where there had been a small bombardment the previous day. The bombardment continued on the 22nd and in the afternoon it increased in intensity and a heavy barrage of 8-inch shells was put down on "C" Company. From 2 pm onwards the Germans flew low flying aeroplanes reconnaissance over the positions of the Brown Line and at the same time putting down much machine gun ammunition.

At 3.30pm the Germans could be seen advancing from Priziers along the Priziere- Saulcourt Road. The British counterattacked and it was thought 250 Germans were killed on the attack at Guyencourt. At 5.40 pm other battalions started to withdraw after heavy fighting. At 7.50 pm the battalion assembled in the Green Line in accordance with previous arrangements. From information there it appeared that 5 Officers and 70 men had been killed or wounded in the withdrawal, about 250 had not assembled at the appointed rendezvous and only 16 Officers and 160 other ranks were present.

They took up their new positions and patrols were sent out and reported that the Germans were only 1,000 yards away.

Arthur was reported missing on the 22nd March.

Nothing more was heard until July 1918 when his wife received a letter from the Red Cross authorities in Geneva giving the following extracts from lists dispatched from Berlin on June 12th: -

"*Private Arthur Wilkinson K.O.Y.L.I. died 25th March of shot in the breast in a field lazaret."*

The report in the Batley News asked if anyone could supply more information his relatives would be grateful.

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

He is remembered with Honour at Broomhill Chapel, Pozieres Memorial and Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group