William Williams



Rank: - Private

Number: - 202063

Regiment: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry (Formerly 4772 KOYLI) 1/4th Battalion

Killed in action: - 8th July 1916

Memorial: - Thiepval Memorial, France

Family Details

William was born in Chadsmoor, Cannock Staffordshire in c1884 the son of Elijah and Jane Williams nee Bennett.

In 1891 he was living in Cecil Street, Cannock with his parents and siblings Edward born 1869, Margarette 1878, Elijah 1880, Walter 1882, Amelia 1885 and Emily 1889. His father was a coal miner.

A decade later William was also working in the mines with his father and elder brother Elijah living at? Street, Chadsmoor. Ernest was the youngest addition to the family born in 1902.

On the 4th June 1906 William married Bertha Nicholls at the Parish Church of Brampton Bierlow when they both gave their address as 46, Albert Road. John was born on the 4th December 1907 followed by Frank in April 1909 and Ernest on 22nd October 1910. William was a miner like his father.

At some stage in his life William moved and enlisted in Batley to join the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry.

Service Details

The 1/4th King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry was at camp in Whitby in August 1914 and they went to France at Easter 1915. William was not with these original soldiers because he was not awarded the 1915 Star.

From the 15th May 1915 the 1/4th Battalion was attached to 148th Brigade in 49th (West Riding) Division.

In 1916 they fought at the Battle of Albert which started on the 1st July on the Somme.

The battle started at 7.30 am buglers in the front trench sounded the advance and the assaulting lines rose and moved forward at a steady pace with the precision of a parade movement. The day was the worst in British warfare. Sunday the 2nd July was inactive and they reorganised their divisions sending reinforcements and supplies across No Man's Land.

Shortly after dawn on the 3rd the 1/4th KOYLI position was bombarded for two hours with lachrimantory, HE and shrapnel shells. An attack was expected but it

never came and most of the day was spent repairing the trenches and creating strong points. At about 1.30 pm on the 4th July whilst a thunderstorm raged the Germans made the first of a series of bombing raids against the 1/5th KOYLI and when the runners reached the 1/4th "W" Company was sent to counter attack. On the 5th the 1/5th retaliated but the enemy had been alerted and they had 2 Officers killed and 36 men killed and 3 Officers wounded. They 1/4th which had sent 2 platoons had 2 Officers killed 3 men killed and 20 men wounded. Major Harry Moorhouse was in charge of the sector when the 1/4th relieved the 1/5th during the 6th July.

On the 8th the Germans delivered a text book artillery bombardment as a prelude to an attack in the first hour of the day and at 2 am the guns were turned on the 1/4th in the "A" line and 50 minutes later shells began landing in the communication and support lines as they attempted to stop reinforcements reaching the front line. 2.50 am enemy bombers advanced down the trenches and furious fighting took place until 6.30 am with lots of casualties from bombers and snipers. At 6.30 am they ran out of ammunition and were forced to retire down the communication trench to the original British front line. 20 were killed and 180 wounded. The Germans had used the new light "egg" bomb, which could easily be thrown 50 yards.

At 9 pm they were relieved and moved back to Martinsart Woods where their period of rest was punctuated by the firing of siege howitzers which were in operation nearby.

William was killed in action.

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

He is remembered with Honour on Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group