Arthur Wilson





Rank: - Gunner

Number: - 84421

Regiment: - Royal Garrison Artillery 19th Siege battery

Killed in Action: - 7th August 1918 aged 32 years

Cemetery: - Franvillers Communal Extension, Somme, France 11.B.14

"CHRIST WILL BIND THE BROKEN CHAIN CLOSER WHEN WE MEET AGAIN"

Batley News, 17 Aug 1918, 24 Aug 1918 (photo)

Family Details

Arthur was born in Brookroyd in c1886 the son of Fred and Elizabeth Ann Wilson (nee Wear). The couple had married at St. Saviour's, Brownhill on the 17th May 1885. Before 1891 and after the birth of Annie in 1889 the family lived at 25, Richmond Street, Carlinghow and Fred was employed as a cloth finisher.

Frank was born in 1892 followed by Ida 1898 and Olive 1900 and in 1901 when the census was taken the family was living at Back Crescent Street, Batley. Arthur was employed as a warper in a woollen mill.

In 1911 the family was living in a four roomed home at 35, Crescent Street, Cross bank, Batley and Arthur was now working as a cloth tenterer. The census shows that two children had died in infancy. Ida had sadly died in May 1901 aged 3 years and Ethel in December 1887 aged 7 months.

Arthur attended Batley Parish Day and Wellington Street Primitive Methodist Sunday Schools and for several years worked as a night tenterer at Messrs. J.T. & J. Taylor's Blakeridge Mills. He was a well-known member of Batley Working Men's Club.

Service Details

Arthur enlisted in May 1916 and went to France in June 1917.

Siege Batteries RGA were equipped with heavy howitzers, sending large calibre high explosive shells in high trajectory, plunging fire. The usual armaments were 6 inch, 8 inch and 9.2 inch howitzers, although some had huge railway- or road-mounted 12 inch howitzers. As British artillery tactics developed, the Siege Batteries were most often employed in destroying or neutralising the enemy artillery, as well as putting destructive fire down on strong points, dumps, store, roads and railways behind enemy lines.

On Sunday 4th August 1918 the 19th siege battery left Contay Road (Baizeux) at 12 noon for new positions at Lavielle and spent the rest of the day getting guns into position. They were on guns all day on the 5th and arrived at their billets at 12.30am on the 6th after being on duty for 46 hours. They went back on their guns at 9 pm preparing for the big push. The battery stayed on the guns all day

but at 11pm on Wednesday 7th August Charles Fletcher of Cambridge and Arthur Wilson were killed.

A chaplain wrote to his parents saying: -

"He was killed last night, August 7th, by a shell whilst on duty at the forward position of his battery. I conducted the funeral this afternoon in a British cemetery. He was killed with another gunner and the two are buried side by side."

At the time of his death his brother Frank was serving with the Highland Light Infantry in India.

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

He is remembered with Honour at Wellington Street Primitive Methodist Chapel, Batley Working Men's Club and Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group