Joseph Wilson





Rank: Private

Number: - 40729

Regiment: - Leicestershire Regiment (formerly 3081 KOYLI) 1st Battalion (attached to Trench Mortar Battery)

Killed in Action: - 22nd March 1918 aged 30 years

Memorial: - Arras Memorial, Pas-de- Calais, France Bay 5

Batley News, 13 Apr 1918 (photo)

Family Details

Joseph was born in Hanging Heaton, Batley on 14th May 1886 the son of John and Mary Ann Wilson (nee Townsley). He was baptised at St. Paul's, Hanging Heaton on 1st March 1893 on the same day as his siblings Emma (1884), Eliza (1888) and Rebecca (1893). A daughter, Sarah Jane, had been born to Mary Ann Townsley in 1881but died in 1906.

In 1891 the family was living at High Street, Hanging Heaton with the addition of Sam (1891-1892) and John who came from Birstall was a miner.

Sarah Hannah was born in July 1897 followed by George in July 1899.

In 1901 Joseph was also working as a miner and the family was living at High Street, Hanging Heaton but had moved to live at 31, Taylor Street, Batley before the birth of Beatrice in December 1901.

On the 18th April 1908 he married Annie Holmes at St. Peter's, Birstall. Evelyn was born in 1909 when the family were living at 11, Back Taylor Street, Batley and was followed by Mary A in 1911 and Harold in 1914.

He was, before the war, a miner at West End Colliery; a member of Carlinghow Working Men's Club and played in the second team of Batley Football Cub.

The family later lived at 8, Taylor Street, Batley.

His father, John died in 1917.

Service Details

He enlisted in Batley in December 1914 and disembarked for France on the 14th April 1915 with the local Territorial's.

In December 1915 he received a gunshot wound in his shoulder and was ten months recuperating. He returned to the Front from Ireland and was then attached to the Trench Mortar Battery.

A letter from an officer of the Battery read: -

"I regret to inform you your husband has been killed in action on 21st March. I knew your brave husband personally and always found him a very fine soldier and true Britisher. He was killed by a direct hit from a shell which killed two of

his comrades who were fighting very gallantry with him. The corporal in charge of the mortar your husband was on speaks highly of his gallantry and bravery during the early part of the battle. He at all times of great danger performed his duty with great cheerfulness. I cannot express my great opinion of him enough and I feel his absence keenly. I send the great sympathy of the officers and men of this battery in your great loss. Your brave husband died fighting for his country. What more can a man do? "

An Army Chaplain wrote: -

"His officers cannot speak too highly of his bravery and comradeship. I am sure it will be a great help to you to know that men like him are among those who made England."

Joseph is remembered with Honour at Broomhill United Methodist Church, Arras Memorial, Batley Rugby League Club and Batley War Memorial.

He was awarded the 1915 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group