Arthur William Bayldon Woodhead





Rank: - Private

Number: - S/43194 (formerly 4771)

Regiment: - Seaforth Highlanders 2nd Battalion.

Died of Wounds and Trenchfoot : - 30th December 1916 aged 19

Cemetery: - Boulogne Eastern Cemetery, Pas-de-Calais, France.

"SEEKING NOTHING, GIVING ALL ANSWERING TO HONOUR'S CALL R.I.P."

Batley News, 6 Jan 1917 (photo)

Family Details:

Arthur William Bayldon Woodhead was born in Batley on 5th May 1897 to Walter and Kate Evelyn Woodhead (Nee Bayldon) who had married at Batley Parish Church on 17th August 1896. Her father William Bayldon named on the marriage certificate was described as a surgeon and was a Batley doctor for over 40 years.

Arthur was baptised at Batley Parish Church on 9th October 1901 on the same day as his sister Kate Ella Bayldon Woodhead that was born 19th October 1900, when their father was described as an Insurance Agent. His brother, Frederick Charles Bayldon, was born 24th August 1902.

The family lived at 26, Hanover Street, Batley in the 1901 census and Walter was described as a Collector (Insurance Agent) and in 1911 he was described as an Agent (Fire and Life Insurance) and at the time of Arthur's death he was a Commission Agent .After leaving school Arthur assisted him with this.

As a boy Arthur attended Batley Parish Church Day School. He was interested in various kinds of athletic sports, particularly cricket and cycling.

He was a comrade of the late Private Arthur Sheard also of Hanover Street who was killed in action the previous month.

Service Details:

Arthur enlisted at Dewsbury in December 1915 and went to France in June 1916.

The Seaforth Highlanders 2nd Battalion were part of 10th Brigade in 4th Division When Arthur went to join the Regiment in June 1916, they were about to take part in the Battles of the Somme.

In this opening phase, the British assault broke into and gradually moved beyond the first of the German defensive complexes on the Somme. Success on the first day in the area between Montauban and Mametz led to a redirection of effort to that area, for the initial attack was defeated with huge losses north of Mametz. There was a stiff fight for Trones Wood and costly, hastily planned and piecemeal attacks that eventually took La Boisselle, Contalmaison and Mametz Wood.

By 13th July the British advance had taken it to a point where it was now facing the second German defensive complex. A well planned and novel night attack on 14th July took British troops through that line but they now ran into stiffening enemy defence at Guillemont, Delville Wood and Longueval, High Wood and Pozieres. Attack and counter attack ground relentlessly on as the British edged forward. The Seaforth Highlanders fought in the Battles of Albert (1st -13th July 1916) and Le Transloy(1st -18th October 1916).

The Batley News reported that the first intimation that he had been wounded was a letter dated 17th December to his parents and signed by "An Anzac." The letter said he was wounded and hoped to be in England in a few weeks' time. Subsequently letters were received from a Roman Catholic priest who said he had visited Arthur and he was progressing favourably and an English priest who said he was in a hospital in Boulogne and said: -

"Although his body is filled with shrapnel, he is bright and cheerful and progressing satisfactorily"

He also indicated that he had trenchfoot.

Trenchfoot was a fungal infection of the feet brought on by prolonged exposure to damp, cold conditions and poor environmental hygiene. Sometimes gangrene set in and toes were amputated.

Later a telegram arrived saying he was dangerously ill and could not be visited followed by another on Monday 1 January saying he had died on the 28th December.

In the Memorial Column of the Batley News in December 1917 there was the following: -

WOODHEAD- On December 30th 1916 at the 13th General Hospital, Boulogne, Private Arthur William Bayldon Woodhead, beloved son of Mr.& Mrs. Walter Woodhead of 26, Hanover Street, Batley.

Seeking nothing, giving all,
Answering to Honour's call.
R.I.P

In the 4th January 1919 issue of the Batley: -

WOODHEAD - On December 30th 1916 at 13th General Hospital, Boulogne, Private Arthur William Bayldon Woodhead, Seaforth Highlanders, the dearly beloved son Mr. and Mrs. Walter Woodhead, 26 Hanover Street, Batley. Was interred at Boulogne Eastern Cemetery.

Greater love hath no man than this, he gave his life for another

R. I.P.

The Memorials continued on 3rd January 1920 in the Batley News.

Woodhead - In loving memory of Private Arthur William Bayldon Woodhead 2nd Seaforth Highlanders, son of Mr. And Mrs. Walter Woodhead 26. Hanover Street, Batley who died 30th December 1916 aged 19 years, at 13 General Hospital, Boulogne and was interred at Eastern Cemetery, Boulogne.

R.I.P.

Seeking nothing, giving all,
Answering to Honour's call.

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

He is commemorated on Batley War Memorial, Batley Parish Church, St. Andrew's Church at Purlwell, St. Mary of the Angel, and the Boulogne Eastern Cemetery France where there was only one other soldier buried on the same day.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group