Thomas William Edward Yates





Rank: - Private

Number: - 13761

Regiment: - Coldstream Guards 2nd Bn. Stretcher Bearer

Killed in Action: - 28/08/1918 Age: 29 years

Cemetery: - Mory Street Military Cemetery, St Leger, Pas de Calais, France B1

Batley News, 1 Jan 1916 (photo), 14 Sep 1918 (photo)

Family Details

Thomas William Edward was born in Birstall on the 18th June 1888 the eldest son of John George and Annie Maria Yates (nee Latham) and was baptised at St. Saviour's Church, Brownhill on 7th March 1900 on the same day as his siblings Herbert 1890, Stephen Frank 1894 and Alice Ann Lily 1900.

In 1891 the family was living at Leeds Road, Birstall but moved to live at Moat Hill, Birstall before 1901. His father was a Birstall born stone mason but his mother came from Stroud, Gloucestershire. In 1911 the family was living at 4, Plantation Villas, Geldard Road, Birstall, although Thomas William had married Annie M. Elliott in late 1910. Thomas and Annie went to live as boarders at the home of Joe Hoyland, 11, Tichill Street, Denaby Main, Rotherham probably because there would have been better pay for miners. They later moved to Wakefield where he worked at Kirkhamgate Colliery before he enlisted. The couple had one child between 1911 and 1918.

His parents later moved to 69, Intake Lane, Batley. Thomas was very well known in Birstall where he carried a considerable reputation as a very good boxer and was a great friend of Percy Teale of Soothill who was also an athlete and served in the same regiment. Thomas was reported to have been 6 ft. 1 inch tall. 1911 TATES

Service Details

Thomas enlisted in November 1914 and went to France on the 8th June 1915. He was wounded in the right thigh and had to crawl 300 yards after he was hit, at the Battle of Loos which took place between the 25th September to 15th October 1915 and brought back to England. A mortally wounded officer gave him a stick and said, "*Take that, lad and get away as quickly as you can."*

The bullet was extracted at a Gosforth Hospital and he was sent to a hospital at Middleton St. George, Durham to recover. The bullet was sent to his parents in Birstall. He sent interesting letters home saying how he enjoyed whist parties and motor parties. He had even been to see a fox hunt at Richmond thanks to a nice lady who drove him in her motor car "*I saw the fox but I did not see it killed. I think it is fine sport."*

It is not known when Thomas was able to return to his regiment but in 1916 they took part on the Somme in the battles of Flers-Courcelette and Morval.

In 1917 they took part in the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line (14 Mar – 5 Apr).

The Third Battles of Ypres

Battle of Pilkem (31 Jul – 2 Aug)
The Battle of the Menin Road (20 – 25 Sep)
The Battle of Poelcapelle (9 Oct)
The First Battle of Passchendaele (12 Oct)
The Battle of Cambrai (20 Nov – 3 Dec)

The division was forced to restructure in February 1918 (in which the infantry brigades were reduced from four battalions down to three).

The First Battles of the Somme, 1918

The Battle of St Quentin (21-23 Mar)
The Battle of Bapaume (24-25 Mar)
The First Battle of Arras 1918 (28 Mar)

The Second Battles of the Somme 1918

The Battle of Albert (21-23 Aug)
The Second Battle of Bapaume (31 Aug – 3 Sept)

His officer wrote to his wife: -

"We did an attack on the 27th when your husband worked like an hero, in getting wounded back under heavy fire, but the next day when he was near Company Headquarters, he was killed instantaneously with a shell. My grief is great when I think he should have survived the awful time we had on the 27th , when he was under fire all day and then to have been killed by a chance shell the next day. His work whilst he was with the Company had been magnificent and he was much loved by the men. He will be a great loss to the battalion."

His brother Stephen Frank Yates died from influenza on 2nd November 1918.

Thomas was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal, 1914-18 and Victory Medal and is remembered with Honour at St Saviour's Church, Brownhill and Batley War Memorial.



Researched by members of
Batley History Group