

JACKSON, WILLIAM STORM - Died 25th July 1917 aged 33

6665 Private, West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own)

307694 Rifleman, 1st/8th Battalion, West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own)



Photograph courtesy of Roy Streets, grandson of his sister, Elizabeth

William, a bachelor, was the son of George and Hannah (nee Storm) Jackson and lived with his family on West Street, Scotter. His parents married at St. Peter's Church on 17th February 1879. William had older brothers named John and Henry, a twin brother George and a younger sister called Elizabeth. He was baptised at the church on 22nd July 1884.

After leaving school William found work as a farm hand and became a shepherd.

On 4th June 1906 his brother John died aged 26 and was buried in the village churchyard. Henry married Anne Robinson on 7th February 1910 and George married Beatrice Maud Jones on 29th June 1912.

After William's death, Elizabeth became the wife of Cyril James Hunt (Shown on the West face of the memorial) on 7th May 1919.

William enlisted in April 1915 and later transferred to the 1/8th Battalion which was also known as the 2nd Leeds Rifles. In May 1915 they became part of 146th Brigade of the all-territorial 49th (1st West Riding) Infantry Division.

He went to the front on 13th July 1915.

Sadly William suffered before he died. By July 1917 the Allies were trying to forge a bridgehead at Nieuport, Belgium and the 1/8th West Yorkshire Regiment were in support.

The following is an edited extract from the Regimental War Diary:-

'On the night of the 21st/22nd Nieuport was subjected to severe bombardment of gas shells mixed with helium. This took place at 9pm and 11pm on the 21st, and again at 2am on the 22nd; each bombardment lasting for half an hour. The wind was about 3 miles per hour, warm and ideal for gas shells. On each occasion they were mixed with helium.

The effect of the gas seemed very slight. About midnight many men became sick and started vomiting, and in consequence could not keep their box respirators on. Undoubtedly many casualties were caused by the mixture which made them to be mistaken for 'duds', and by the smell being unfamiliar.

The main symptoms were intense pain in the eyes and conjunctivitis, vomiting of the sea-sick type, sometimes diarrhoea and abdominal pain, skin erythema. Later on it was found that bronchitis developed in a number of cases turning in some instances to bronchopneumonia.

The smell of the gas was that of mustard and slightly of garlic. About 7am on the 22nd the men's eyes became so affected that blindness came on. Every officer and man with the battalion in Nieuport was affected and, with the exception of 4 officers and 40 men, had to be sent to hospital on the 22nd. The total casualties of the battalion up to that night were 18 officers and 662 other ranks.'

The Gainsborough News reported:-

'He was acting as a stretcher bearer in fetching in some wounded comrades on Monday, July 23rd, when he was gassed by the explosion of gas shells and died in hospital on the Wednesday.'

A fuller account was included in the Lincolnshire Chronicle of 22nd September 1917:-

'The sad news of the death of William Storm Jackson of the West Yorkshire Regiment has reached his parents, Mr. and Mrs. George Jackson of West Street, Scotter. His death took place at the General Hospital, St. Omer, France on July 25th from gas poisoning. Enlisting in April 1915 he was in the trenches by the spring of 1917. He was afterwards given the work of a stretcher bearer and was gassed while carrying in the wounded, dying in less than 48 hours. Pte. Jackson was 33 years old, single and employed as a shepherd and general hand previously to joining.

Numerous letters of sympathy have been received by the bereaved parents, including one from Rev. Wm. Jollans (Capt) [West face], France who knew him before enlisting, Sis. C. Baggaley, of the Ambulance Flotilla to which he was taken, Cpl. W. Hicks, late of Messingham; also Rev Arthur B. Fisher, C. of E. Chaplain who buried him at the Souvenir Cemetery.

The sympathy of the whole village is marked, the deceased being much esteemed and a great favourite with many companions.'

Private William Jackson is buried at Longuenesse (St. Omer) Souvenir Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France. PLOT - IV. C. 66.
The base of his gravestone reads:-

*'Not dead to us
We love him still
Not lost but gone before'*

