

Pte. Tom EASTWOOD (1884 - 1915)

(Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry)



Tom Eastwood was born in Holmfirth in 1884 to Abraham Eastwood and Emily Marsh. His parents had married at Christ Church, New Mill, Holmfirth, on the 20th October, 1883.

The 1891 Census shows the family living at Lane Bottom, Wooldale, near Holmfirth. Abraham was a Stone Mason. Tom had a brother John (1885) and 2 sisters, Emma (1887) and Alice (1889). By the 1901 Census the family had moved to Blackburn Square, off Hilberoyd Road, Batley. Both Abraham and Tom were now Stone Masons.

Tom married Emma Hirst on the 12th of August 1905 at Batley Parish. On the 1911 Census they were living in two rooms at 10, Oxford Street, Mount Pleasant, Batley. They had three children, Ellen (1905), Annie (1908) and Emily (1911). A further child Abraham was born in 1913. Tom was now a Mill Hand.

Tom Eastwood went to war in 1915 but never returned. The following is a report from the Batley Reporter on the 25th June, 1915 a few days after his death which occurred on the 14th June.

‘The name of Private T. Eastwood of No. 2 Yard, off Oxford Street, Mount Pleasant, Batley has to be added to the roll of honour, he having died from wounds

accidentally sustained. Private Eastwood enlisted in the 1st Battalion of the K.O.Y.L.I. in January on his 31st birthday and proceeded to 'somewhere in France' five or six weeks ago. He is survived by a widow and four children.

The first intimation of misfortune which Mrs Eastwood received was contained in the following letter dated June 12th, from a chaplain attached to the 84th Field Ambulance of the 28th Division of the British Expeditionary Force, 'Dear Mrs Eastwood, your husband asks me to write and let you know that he was wounded the other day. It was an accident which happened during a practice with hand grenades and he is wounded in three places but the only serious one is in the stomach, I think. You must not be too anxious because the doctors are very hopeful about him and he hopes to be able to write a letter to you himself in a few days.'

A day or two later, Mrs Eastwood received the following letter from the Sister-in - Charge of No.10 Casualty Clearing Station,

'Dear Madam, I am writing to tell you that your husband is wounded and in hospital. He was admitted this morning. His wound is in the chest and I am afraid his condition is serious. I asked him this morning if he had any message for you, as I was writing to tell you that he was in hospital. He didn't want me to say that he was badly wounded but sent his love to you and the children and hoped to get better soon and be home to see you all again. He is receiving every care and I hope to have better news for you soon. I will write in a few days and let you know how he is. He is not in great pain but very weak.'

This letter was quickly succeeded by the following note...

'I am very sorry to tell you that your husband died a few hours after I had written to you yesterday. He sank rapidly and passed peacefully away. He was unconscious for some time before the end. He spoke very little after he had given me the message for you - just asked for a drink. I am very sorry indeed for you and your children. It is very hard to lose a husband and father - With Sympathy - Yours etc.'

Emma Eastwood lost her only son Abraham in 1916 aged 2 years.

Private Tom Eastwood 3509, 1st Battalion, King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry is Remembered with Honour at Hazebrouck Communal Cemetery, Nord, France. His name also appears on the Roll of Honour of Trinity Church, Batley Carr.

Researcher:

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