

Hoylandswaine Stories

John Willie Charlesworth was a private in the 4th Battalion South Staffordshire Regiment. John was born January 1899 in Hoylandswaine, Yorkshire. He was the son of Colin and Florence Matilda Charlesworth (Brooke). Both his parents were born in Yorkshire.

In 1911 John was living with his parents and sister Florence at Ginder Bottom, Hoylandswaine. His father was a deputy overman at a colliery.

John was reported missing on 27th May 1918 and is remembered on the Soissons Memorial. On 27th May, the 4th (Extra Reserve) Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment, was heavily involved in the opening day of the Third Battle of the Aisne, facing a massive German offensive with intense artillery and gas bombardment that resulted in heavy casualties. As part of the 7th Brigade, 25th Division, they were positioned near the Chemin des Dames ridge when the attack began at 1 a.m.

Thomas Lockwood was a private in the 2nd Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. Thomas was born in Hoylandswaine in 1879. He was the son of William and Ellen Lockwood (Stenton).

In 1911 Thomas was living with his mother and brothers George and Albert at Hoylandswaine, Penistone, Yorkshire. Thomas and George were both coal miners and Albert was a labourer in a steelworks.

In 1912 Thomas was sentenced to a month in HMP Wakefield for Game Trespass at night. His mother died in 1914.

On the 9th February 1916 the battalion were hit by a heavy artillery bombardment. When the bombardment ended much of the front line was virtually obliterated. However, for all that expenditure of ammunition, casualties recorded in the War Diary were 8 killed, 18 wounded and 11 missing. Most of the fatalities were stated to be from when one of the dugouts was blown in. Thomas was one of the men killed. He is buried in Aveluy Communal Cemetery Extension and remembered at St John the Evangelist churchyard, Hoylandswaine. Thomas was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal and the Russian Order of St George.

Thomas William Senior was a private in the 21st Battalion Manchester Regiment. Thomas was born in 1885 in Hoylandswaine, Yorkshire. He was the son of Jonathan and Martha Senior.

He married Elsie Oates in 1910 in Wortley, Yorkshire. She would remarry and become Elsie Collingwood following Thomas' death.

In 1911 Thomas was living with his wife Elsie at The Bank, Thurlestone, Penistone. Thomas was working as a carter and cab driver. Elsie was born in Thornhill, Yorkshire.

On 24th October 1917, the 21st (6th City) Battalion, Manchester Regiment was in the Ypres Salient, Belgium, preparing for the Second Battle of Passchendaele, having been heavily engaged in the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele campaign). During this time, they operated under the 91st Infantry Brigade, 7th Division.

There are conflicting accounts of what happened to the battalion that day with some suggesting that they lost about 100 men killed and many more wounded on 24th October. Thomas was one of those who lost on this day. He is remembered on the Tyne Cot Memorial. The battalion war diary does not mention an attack on that day but does show action on the days that followed.

William Lilley Mellor was a private in the 1st/5th Battalion York & Lancaster Regiment. William was born on 11th November 1897 in Hoyland Common, Barnsley and was baptised on 20th November 1898 at Tankersley, Yorkshire. He was the son of Tom and Margaret Mellor. His father was born in Yorkshire, and his mother was born in St Helens, Lancashire.

In 1901 William was living with his parents, brothers George and Tom and sisters Elizabeth, Annie and Alice at 50 Central Street, Nether Hoyland, Barnsley. His father was a hewer in a coal mine.

In 1911 William was living with his father who had remarried Maria, brother Tom and daughter Elsie. His father was still a hewer in a coal mine and at thirteen William was a pony driver.

During the First World War William joined the 1st/5th Battalion York & Lancaster Regiment (part of the 1st West Riding Division). After mobilisation, the 1st West Riding Division concentrated in the South Yorkshire area and began training for war. William enlisted on 2nd March 1915. On 31st March the battalion was informed that it had been selected to proceed to France to join the British Expeditionary Force (BEF), and the battalion landed at Boulogne on 14th April. On 18–19 April platoons from the III West Riding Brigade were attached to 8th Division for training in the routine of trench duties. On 28th April the West Riding Division took over its own section of the line at Fleurbaix. It now formed part of IV Corps, which attacked at the Battle of Aubers Ridge on 9th May. While the other two divisions of IV Corps made the actual attack, the West Riding Division took over the greater part of the corps' trench line. It was supposed to follow up and occupy the captured enemy line, but the breakthrough did not occur. On 12th May the division was designated 49th (West Riding) Division and the brigade became 148th (3rd West Riding).

For the next nine months the 49th Division took part in no major operations but was almost continuously engaged in day-to-day trench warfare, much of it in the Ypres Salient, with the considerable casualties that this entailed.

William did not sail to France till 27th October 1915, setting off from Southampton. On 19th December the division received a sudden attack with the new German phosgene gas, followed by heavy shelling, but no serious infantry attack followed. William, however died as a result of the gas attack and is buried in Bard Cottage Cemetery.



Private Thomas Lockwood



Private William Mellor

