



Tom Houseman was aged 25 years & 135 days when he was attested for entry to the Military service on the 8 December 1915.

A medical examination took place that recorded him as standing 5 feet 7.5 inches tall and having a chest measurement of 37 inches. He was found fit for service.

Tom was employed as a tram driver at the time of his enlistment. His address is given as 17 Queen's Road, Shipley.

He was married, and gave as his next of kin his wife Edith Pinder of 17 Queen's Road, Shipley / 4 Britannia Road, Bingley.

It is recorded that he was married at the Wesleyan Chapel, Bingley on the 23 October 1912 and he had a daughter Emily Mary born on the 9 January 1914 at Shipley.

He signed the declaration on the attestation form, swore an oath and received the "King's shilling". Tom was then accepted into the army as a Private. He was instructed to return home and to continue civilian life while he was formally on the Army Reserve, awaiting call up. He duly received notice and was mobilised on 29 January 1917.

Tom was posted to the 85 Training ATS for training. On the 25 April 1917 he was transferred to the base depot in France and was posted to the 8th bn York & Lancaster Regiment as Private no 32490 on the 12 May. On the 14 June he was posted back to the base depot.

On the 30 November 1917 he was transferred back in to reserve and was discharged on the 14 December 1918 & because of his overseas service in a theatre of war he was qualified to wear the British War Medal and Victory Medal. The medals were posted to him in 1921.

In France

The 8th bn York & Lancaster regiment were part of the 70th Brigade of the 23rd Division. Formed at Frensham near Aldershot in September 1914 as part of the Third New Army. Arrived in France in August 1915. Served in France and Flanders until November 1917 when the Division moved to Italy. Served in Italy until the Armistice (04 November 1918).

The following battles and engagements were undertaken by the 23rd Division. Tom may have participated in some or all of them.

Battle of Messines. 7-14 Jun 1917, including the capture of Wytschaete.

Battle of the Menin Road. 20-25 Sep 1917.

Battle of Polygon Wood. 26 Sep-3 Oct 1917.

First Battle of Passchendaele. 12 Oct 1917.

Second Battle of Passchendaele. 26 Oct-10 Nov 1917.

Tom was posted back to base depot on the 14 June 1917 which makes it possible that he had just taken part in the Battle of Messines which ended on the 14 June.

Below is a description received from the York and Lancaster Regimental museum about Tom's battalion following my request for information

Tom Houseman served with the 8th Battalion of the York and Lancaster Regiment in one of the most successful actions of the war, The Battle of Messines. When he joined the Battalion they were occupying the Observatory Ridge / Hooge sector preparing for the offensive. The objective of the attack was to clear the high ground that dominated the Ypres Salient and prevent the enemy from putting them under constant observation. The first phase of the assault began at 3.30am on the 7th June. The 8th Battalion set off later in the morning in the second phase. Although they took heavy casualties from artillery as they moved up to the assembly position they still managed to carry all objectives as they moved along the Kleine Zillebeke spur.

They held all the captured ground under artillery fire until relieved and withdrawn on the 13th June 1917. The Battle of Messines was one of the most complete and overwhelming successes achieved in trench warfare. On the day of the 7th June 1917 the Messines and Wytschaete ridges were captured along with the German battery positions, including 67 artillery pieces, and 7,200 prisoners. The whole was masterminded by Field Marshall Herbert Plumer, Colonel of the York and Lancaster Regiment.

With Thanks to:
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