

JAMES RISHWORTH



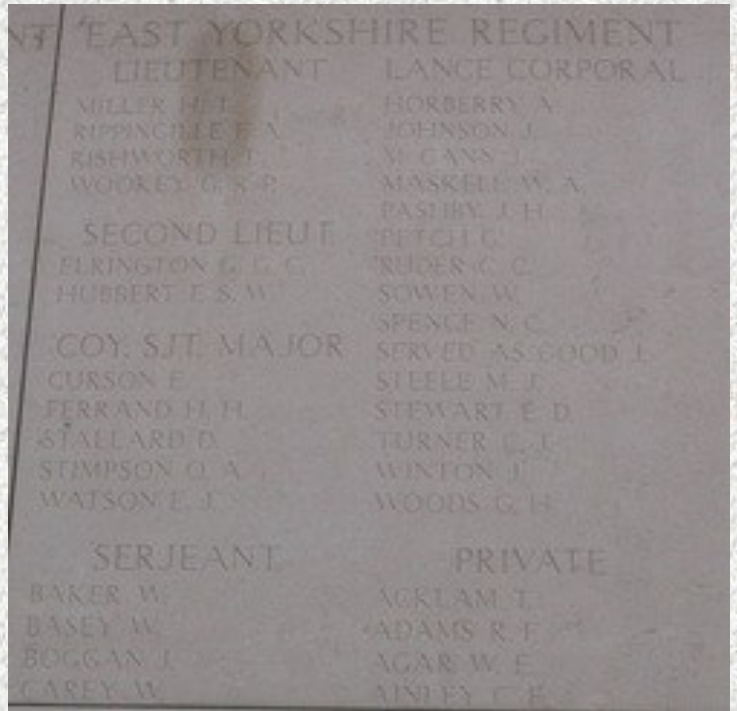
3rd May 1915

1879-1915 Aged 36

Lieutenant, 4th Battalion East Yorkshire Regiment.

James Rishworth was born in Horsforth, Leeds, on 2nd March 1879. He was the fourth of six children born to John Midgley and Ida Maria Rishworth. John worked as a corn miller in Horsforth until 1900 when he set up on his own account and moved to Kirk Ella, near Hull. His sons worked for him. James Rishworth first attended the Commercial School, Horsforth, then Bradford Grammar for an unknown period. He joined the 3rd Volunteer Battalion of the West Yorkshire Regiment, the 'Leeds Rifles' based at Carlton Barracks, and although only twenty-one he had reached the rank of sergeant when he retired from the Volunteers late in 1900 to move to Hull with his father. Unlike several other OBs who were in the Volunteers, he did not see active service in the South African War, 1899-1902.

Following a ten-year break from the volunteers, in 1912 James applied for a commission with the local Territorial Army unit, the 4th Battalion East Yorkshire Regiment, and he was appointed Second Lieutenant. Promotion to Lieutenant followed a few days after the outbreak of war in August 1914. He was one of the sixty-five per cent of the unit to volunteer for overseas service, but in the opening months of hostilities the battalion was sent to construct entrenchments to protect Newcastle against a feared German landing. It was while stationed there that he met a girl considerably his junior in years. Gladys Taylor was a draper's daughter who lived in Jarrow. He was thirty-six, she twenty-four. On 5th April 1915, the 4th East Yorks. received notice that they would soon embark for France – five days later James and Gladys were married in Jarrow, and a week later he departed. That was the end of their married life.



On the night of 17th April 1915, the 4th East Yorks. disembarked at Boulogne as part of the York and Durham (150th) Brigade of the 50th Northumbrian Division. Although they were extremely raw and inexperienced, within a few days of landing they were thrown into action near Ypres where the Germans had attacked using chlorine gas for the first time on 22nd April. First they took part in a counter-attack near Potizje, then they took over an exposed position near St. Julien. Owing to German advances, their position was exposed to "a constant hail of shell and rifle bullets" from the side and the rear. It was under this fire that Rishworth was one of twenty-two men killed and forty-two wounded on 3rd May. That same night the battalion was withdrawn. This meant his body was left behind and today he has no known grave. His name is one of the 54,896 inscribed on the walls of the Menin Gate, Ypres.

James Rishworth was a well-off man who left an estate of £1800 in trust for his wife, who also received an annual officer's widow pension of £80 a year. By the early 1920s she had moved from Jarrow to the seaside resort of Margate in Kent. She never re-married and she survived in Leamington Spa until 1943, when she died while in Hampstead, north-west London. She divided her property between her husband's sister Ida Maria Rishworth and her brother Leonard Johnson Taylor.



Acknowledgements: I am extremely grateful to Tricia Restorick for copying Rishworth's officer's file for me at the National Archives. The War Diary of the 1/4th East Yorks. was downloaded from the National Archives (WO 95-2834-1). Ancestry was used to consult census, probate and military records for James Rishworth and Gladys Taylor. The image of Rishworth's inscription on the Menin Gate is from <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=12021846>. The photo of the East Yorkshire Regiment badge was taken by the author. Rishworth's death was recorded in The Bradfordian July 1915.

Researched and compiled by Nicholas Hooper (Nhooper1956@googlemail.com) April 2015.

