



Herbert Smith

1895 - 1916

Herbert was born in Dewsbury in 1895 and baptised at the Wesleyan Methodist Church, Battye Street, Eastborough, Dewsbury on 25th August 1896. His father was Mark Smith, a Glass Blower in a glass bottle factory born in Thornhill Lees in 1861 and died in 1924. His mother was Leila Ada (nee Pickard) born in Goole in 1866 and died in 1941. They were married at All Saints Parish Church, Dewsbury on 4th April 1885.

Their other children were; Percy, born in 1885 and died in 1885, Amy, born in 1886 and died in 1887, Harry, born in 1887 and died in 1887, Harold born in 1889, Fred, born in 1892 and died in 1892, Annie Elizabeth, born in 1899 and died in 1899 and Leonard, born in 1903.

On the 1891 Census the family lived at Hollinroyd Road, Dewsbury, in 1901 at 21, Thornton Road, Thornhill Lees and in 1911 at Lees Hall Farm, 402, Lees Hall Road, Thornhill Lees.

Herbert was a single man who worked as a Teamer of horses at Ingham's Farm, Thornhill Lees and was connected to Thornhill Lees Wesleyan Chapel and Bible Class.

He enlisted in November 1915 into the 8th Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry serving as Private 26501 and was sent to the Western Front in April 1916. He was killed in action on 1st July 1916 during the First Day of the Battle of the Somme, his body was recovered and he is buried in Blighty Valley Cemetery, Authuille Wood, Somme, France. Herbert was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

His death was not officially announced until late November 1916.

Authuille (now Authuille) is a village 4 kilometres north-east of Albert. Blighty Valley was the name given by the Army to the lower part of the deep valley running down South-Westward through Authuille Wood to join the river between Authuille and Aveluy; a railway was carried along it soon after July, 1916, and it was for some time an important (though inevitably a dangerous) route. The upper part of the valley was called Nab Valley. Blighty Valley Cemetery is almost at the mouth of the valley, a little way up its northern bank. It is partly in either commune. Blighty Valley Cemetery was begun early in July 1916, at the beginning of the Battle of the Somme, and used until the following November. At the Armistice it contained 212 graves, but was then greatly enlarged when 784 graves were brought in from the battlefields and small cemeteries to the east. Most of these concentrated graves were of men who died on 1 July 1916. The cemetery now contains 1,027 burials and commemorations of the First World War. 536 of the burials are unidentified but there are special memorials to 24 casualties known or believed to be buried among them,

Herbert is also commemorated on the Dewsbury Cenotaph in Crow Nest Park and in the Dewsbury Roll of Honour kept in Dewsbury Central Library and on the War Memorial in Holy Innocents Church, Thornhill Lees.

In Memory of
Private
H Smith

26501, 8th Bn., King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry who died on 01 July 1916 Age 20

Son of Leila Ada Smith, of 402, Lees Hall Rd., Thornhill Lees, Dewsbury.

Remembered with Honour
Blighty Valley Cemetery, Authuille Wood



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Headstone photograph by courtesy of Robert Pike.