



John William Sykes

1888 - 1916

John was born in Dewsbury in 1888. His father was Emmanuel Sykes, a woollen weaver born in Dewsbury in 1859 and died in 1908. His mother was Hannah (née Dyson) born in Westtown in 1863 and died in 1903. They were married at St. John the Evangelist Church, Dewsbury Moor on 10th July 1881.

Their other children were; Eunice, born in 1881 and died in 1881, Theodora Delila, born in 1882, Mary Emma, born in 1890, Amy, born in 1892 and died in 1896, Benjamin Dyson, born in 1896 and Caroline Cooper, born in 1899.

On the 1891 Census the family were living at 55, Bradford Road, Dewsbury, in 1901 at Royle Fold, Heckmondwike and in 1911 at 33, Staincliffe Hall Road, Batley.

John was a colliery labourer and by-worker for Messrs Crawshaw and Warburton; he was married to Edith Fell (born in 1886 and died in 1951) on 28th December 1907 at Christ Church, Staincliffe. They had five children; Amy, born in 1908 and died in 1908, William, born in 1910, May, born in 1912, Caroline, born in 1914 and Fred, born in 1915. Edith was remarried to Ernest Whitaker in 1917.

He served as Private 202779 in the 1st/4th Battalion Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment) and was killed in action during the Battle of the Somme on 3rd September 1916 at Thiepval on a Salient known as the "Pope's Nose". His body was recovered in May 1919 and he was buried in Mill Road Cemetery, Thiepval, Somme, France. John was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Thiepval is a village about 8 kilometres north of the town of Albert. On the 1st July 1916 the 36th (Ulster) Division were detailed to attack the German positions north of Thiepval, known as the Hansa Line and the Schwaben Redoubt. It would take until 26th September 1916 before the village finally fell. It then remained under Allied occupation until 25th March 1918, when it was lost during the great German offensive, but was retaken on the following 24th August. Mill Road Cemetery (called at one time Mill Road Cemetery No.2) was made during the spring of 1917. At the Armistice, it contained 260 burials, but was then greatly enlarged when graves were brought in from the battlefields of Beaumont-Hamel and Thiepval and from smaller cemeteries. There are now 1,304 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in the cemetery. 815 of the burials are unidentified. The headstones in Plot 1 were laid flat in the early 1950s because the site was subject to subsidence between the wars as a result of it being sited above the infamous Schwaben Redoubt.

John is commemorated on the Dewsbury Cenotaph in Crow Nest Park and in the Dewsbury Roll of Honour kept in Dewsbury Central Library and on the Earlsheaton Park War Memorial and on the Oak Reredos of St Peter's Church, Earlsheaton and on the Memorial Plaque to former employees of Messrs Crawshaw and Warburton in the porch of St. Paul's Church, Hanging Heaton.

In Memory of
Private
J W Sykes

202779, 1st/4th Bn., Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment) who died on 03 September 1916

Remembered with Honour
Mill Road Cemetery, Thiepval



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

