



## Walter Hatfield

### 1896 - 1916

Walter was born in Dewsbury on 24<sup>th</sup> July 1896 and baptised on October 19<sup>th</sup> at St. Philip's Church, Leeds Road, Dewsbury. His father was John Hatfield, a foreman carboniser born in Earlsheaton in 1874 and died in 1936. His mother was Emma (née Smith) born in Earlsheaton in 1874 and died in 1944. They were married at St. Philip's Church on 16<sup>th</sup> June 1894.

Their other children were: Annie, born in 1895 (surname registered as *Hadfield*), John, born in 1905 and died in 1911, Eleanor, born in 1900 (birth name registered as *Helena Hadfield*) and Wilfred, born in 1913.

On the 1901 Census the family were living at 4, Back Lawson Street, Dewsbury and in 1911 at 41, Caulms Wood Road, Dewsbury.

Walter was a single man who was educated at Eastborough School and worked as a "Giver in" at Fox's Carbonising Works in Caulms Wood Road, Dewsbury. He was associated with the Centenary Wesleyan Boys Brigade.

He served as Private 26144 in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry and was sent to the Western Front in May 1916 after eleven weeks training. He died of wounds on the 14<sup>th</sup> September 1916 after arriving at the Casualty Clearing Station in Bethune, so badly wounded that the surgeon could not operate; he died about five hours later, unable to even give out his address to the orderly. He was buried in Bethune Town Cemetery. Pas-de-Calais, France. Walter was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Bethune is a town 29 kilometres north of Arras. For much of the First World War, Bethune was comparatively free from bombardment and remained an important railway and hospital centre, as well as a corps and divisional headquarters. The 33<sup>rd</sup> Casualty Clearing Station was in the town until December 1917. Early in 1918, Bethune began to suffer from constant shell fire and in April 1918, German forces reached Locon, five kilometres to the north. The bombardment of 21<sup>st</sup> May did great damage to the town and it was not till October that pressure from the Germans was relaxed. Bethune Town Cemetery contains 3,004 Commonwealth burials of the First World War, 11 of which are unidentified.

Walter 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 War Memorial from the now demolished St. Philip's Church, Leeds Road now displayed in Dewsbury Minster and on the Memorial Plaque in Eastborough School to former pupils.

In Memory of  
Private  
**Walter Hatfield**

26144, 2nd Bn., King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry who died on 14 September 1916 Age 20

Son of Mr. and Mrs. Hatfield, of 41, Calms Wood Rd., Dewsbury, Yorks.

Remembered with Honour  
**Bethune Town Cemetery**



Commemorated in perpetuity by  
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Headstone photograph by courtesy of Richard Houghton.