



## **Nelson Secker**

### **1896 - 1916**

Nelson was born in Whitley Lower on 16<sup>th</sup> August 1896. His father was Henry Secker, a coal miner born in Thornhill in 1849 and died in 1923. His mother was Lydia (née Brearley) born in Hopton in 1857 and died in 1918. They were married at St. Mary's Church, Mirfield in 1878.

Their other children, all born in Whitley Lower were; John William, born in 1880, Bertram, born in 1881, Jane Elizabeth, born in 1883, Josephus, born in 1885, Samuel, born in 1887, Eli, born in 1889, Selina, born in 1891 and Benjamin, born in 1893. Samuel and Benjamin both served in World War 1

On the 1901 Census the family lived in Lees Hall Road, Thornhill Lees and in 1911 at Charlesworth Street, Brewery Lane, Thornhill Lees.

Nelson was a single man who was educated at Thornhill School and was a member of the choir at Holy Innocents Church, Thornhill Lees; he worked as a piecer at Wormalds and Walker's blanket mill in Thornhill Lees.

He served as Private 4526 in the 1<sup>st</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Battalion Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment) and was sent to the Western Front in March 1916. He was killed in action during the Battle of the Somme on 17<sup>th</sup> September 1916 in the Battle of Flers-Courcelette. His remains were not found until 1927 and he was reburied in Serre Road Cemetery No. 2, Somme, France. Nelson was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

The village of Serre is 11 kilometres north-north-east of Albert. In June 1916, the road out of Mailly-Maillet to Serre and Puisieux entered No Man's Land about 1,300 metres south-west of Serre. On 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916, the 31<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Divisions attacked north and south of this road and although parties of the 31<sup>st</sup> Division reached Serre the attack failed. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> Divisions attacked once more on the 13<sup>th</sup> November, but again without success. Early in 1917, the Germans fell back to the Hindenburg Line and on 25<sup>th</sup> February, Serre was occupied by the 22<sup>nd</sup> Manchesters. The village changed hands once more in March 1918 and remained under German occupation, until they withdrew in August. In the spring of 1917, the battlefields of the Somme and Ancre were cleared by V Corps and a number of new cemeteries were made, three of which are now named from the Serre Road. Serre Road Cemetery No.2 was begun in May 1917 and by the end of the war it contained approximately 475 graves, but it was greatly enlarged after the Armistice by the addition of further graves from the surrounding area, including graves from smaller cemeteries. There are now 7,127 Commonwealth burials of the First World War in the cemetery, mostly dating from 1916. Of these, 4,944 are unidentified.

Nelson 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 in Holy Innocents Church, Thornhill Lees.

In Memory of

Private

# Nelson Secker

4526, 1st/5th Bn., Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment) who died on 17 September 1916

Remembered with Honour

Serre Road Cemetery No.2



Commemorated in perpetuity by  
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

