



Eric Oxley

1896 -1916

Eric was born in Dewsbury on 4th November 1896 and baptised on 18th December 1896 at All Saints Church, Dewsbury. His father was Benjamin Lee Oxley, a Railway Goods Foreman born in Dewsbury in 1862 and died in 1924. His mother was Matilda (née Rawlinson) born in Hambleton near Selby in 1865 and died in 1940. They were married at All Saints Church on 4th January 1888.

Their other children were; Charles Edward, born in 1890 and died in 1890, Laurence Lee, born in 1892 and Stanley, born in 1894 and served alongside Eric in the Royal Field Artillery.

On the 1901 and 1911 Census the family lived at 7, Amy Street, Halifax Road, Dewsbury.

Eric was a single man who was educated at Dewsbury Parish Church School and attended the St. James Mission Church, Flatts, Dewsbury; he worked as a joiner's apprentice for Messrs J. Richardson and Sons, Staincliffe.

He enlisted in January 1916 into "D" Battery, 38th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery serving as Gunner 128119 along with his brother Stanley (Gunner 128118); they were both sent to the Western Front in April 1916. He was killed in the Battle of the Somme on 3rd October 1916 by a direct hit from heavy German shelling. He was buried in Carnoy Military Cemetery, Somme, France. Eric was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

His commanding officer Captain Laurence E. Booth wrote to his parents, saying; "*We are all sorry to lose him as he was always cheerful, keen and ready to do anything*".

Carnoy is a village just north of the road from Albert to Peronne, about 10 kilometres east-south-east of Albert. The Military Cemetery was begun in August, 1915, by the 2nd King's Own Scottish Borderers and the 2nd King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, when the village was immediately South of the British front line. It continued in use by troops holding this sector until July 1916 when Field Ambulances came up and a camp was established on the high ground north of the village. It was closed in March 1917 but from March to August 1918 it was in German hands. There are now over 850 1914-18 war casualties commemorated in this site. Of these, nearly 30 are unidentified and special memorials are erected to 17 soldiers and one airman from the United Kingdom, known or believed to be buried among them.

Eric 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 Memorial Plaque from the St. James Mission Church now relocated to Dewsbury Minster.

In Memory of

Gunner

Eric Oxley

128119, "D" Bty. 38th Bde., Royal Field Artillery who died on 03 October 1916 Age 19

Son of Benjamin Lee Oxley, and Matilda Oxley, of 7, Amy St., Dewsbury.

Remembered with Honour

Carnoy Military Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Headstone photograph by courtesy of Tony Emptage