



Charles William Skippins

1895 - 1916

Charles was born in Dewsbury on 29th May 1895 in Dewsbury and baptised on 23rd June 1895 at St. Philip's Church, Leeds Road, Dewsbury. His father was David Skippins, a joiner and undertaker born in Dewsbury in 1868 and died in 1947. His mother was Sarah Elizabeth (nee Woodhouse) born in Huddersfield in 1868 and died in 1940. They were married on 2nd September 1893 at St. Philip's Church.

Their other children were; Helah, born in 1897, Myrah, born in 1899 and died in 1901, Cyril, born in 1901, Alice, born in 1902 and died in 1905, twins Jessie and Olive, born in 1904, both died in 1905, Eric, born in 1905, Donald, born in 1907 and Gerald, born in 1908.

On the 1901 and 1911 Census Records the family lived at 31, Battye Street, Dewsbury.

Charles was a single man who in 1911 was employed as a joiner's apprentice.

He enlisted on 1st September 1914 into the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry serving as Private 15062 and was almost immediately transferred on 7th September into the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve and on 15th September to the Nelson Battalion of the Royal Naval Division serving as Able Seaman KW/247. From August to December 1915 he was hospitalised for an intestinal condition. He was killed in action in the later stages of the Battle of the Somme on 13th November 1916, during the capture of Beaucourt Railway Station near Beaumont-Hamel. He was originally buried in R.N.D. Cemetery (V Corps Cemetery No.21) and in 1919 his remains were moved to Ancre British Cemetery, Beaumont-Hamel, Somme, France. Charles was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Ancre British Cemetery is about 2 Kms south of the village of Beaumont-Hamel, on the road between Albert and Achiet-le-Grand. The village of Beaumont-Hamel was attacked on 1st July 1916, but without success. On 3rd September a further attack was delivered between Hamel and Beaumont-Hamel and on 13th and 14th November, the 51st (Highland), 63rd (Royal Naval), 39th and 19th (Western) Divisions finally succeeded in capturing Beaumont-Hamel, Beaucourt-sur-Ancre and St. Pierre-Divion. Following the German withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line in the spring of 1917, V Corps cleared this battlefield and created a number of cemeteries, of which Ancre British Cemetery (then called Ancre River No.1 British Cemetery, V Corps Cemetery No.26) was one. There were originally 517 burials almost all of the 63rd (Naval) and 36th Divisions, but after the Armistice the cemetery was greatly enlarged when many more graves from the same battlefields and from some smaller burial grounds including; R.N.D. CEMETERY (V Corps Cemetery No.21), in the open country midway between Beaumont-Hamel and Hamel. It contained the graves of 336 officers and men from the United Kingdom, mainly of the Royal Naval Division. There are now 2,540 Commonwealth casualties of the First World War buried or commemorated in the cemetery. 1,335 of the graves are unidentified, but special memorials commemorate 43 casualties known or believed to be buried among them. There are also special memorials to 16 casualties known to have been buried in other cemeteries, whose graves were destroyed by shell fire.

Charles 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 now relocated to Dewsbury Minster.

In Memory of
Able Seaman

C W Skippins

KW/247, Nelson Bn. R.N. Div., Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve who died on 13 November 1916

Remembered with Honour
Ancre British Cemetery, Beaumont-Hamel



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

