



Willie Berry

1895 – 1917

Willie was born in Dewsbury on 10th October 1895 and baptised at Earlsheaton Wesleyan Methodist Chapel on 8th September 1898. His father was John Berry, a boot and shoe maker and repairer born in Dewsbury in 1866 and died in 1921. His mother was Martha Ann (nee Day) born in Dewsbury in 1865 and died in 1948. They were married in Dewsbury in 1887.

Their other children were; Gilbert, born in 1888, and served in World War 1, Percy, born in 1889, Mary, born in 1894 and Stanley, born in 1902.

On the 1891, 1901 and 1911 Census Records the family lived at 101, High Road, Earlsheaton.

Willie was a single man and worked as a textile worker employed by Messrs. Wormalds and Walker Limited, Dewsbury. He attended Earlsheaton Wesleyan Sunday schools and played cricket for Chickenley second eleven before the war.

He served as Lance Bombardier 127349 'D' Battery 46th Brigade Royal Field Artillery, attesting under the Lord Derby Scheme in December 1915, he joined up before his group was due to be posted to the Western Front around Easter 1916. According to newspaper reports he had fought in the battles of the Somme, Vimy Ridge and Messines Ridge. He wore three gold stripes on his jacket sleeve, signifying he had been wounded three times. He was killed in action in the Ypres Salient on 3rd December 1917 during attack on the Polderhoek Spur in the aftermath of the Battle of Passchendaele and was buried in Oxford Road Cemetery, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. Willie was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Oxford Road Cemetery lies North-East of Ypres. Oxford Road was the name given to a road running behind the support trenches, from a point west of the village of Wieltje south-eastwards to the Potijze-Zonnebeke road. Plot I is the original Oxford Road Cemetery and was used by the units fighting on this front from August 1917 to April 1918. In October 1917, another cemetery, known as Oxford Road Cemetery No.2, was started close by and now forms Plot V of the cemetery as it appears today. After the Armistice, scattered graves from the battlefields east and south-east of Ypres (now Ieper) were brought into the cemetery. There are now 851 Commonwealth casualties of the First World War buried or commemorated in this cemetery. 297 of the burials are unidentified and special memorials commemorate three casualties known to have been buried in the cemetery, but whose graves could not be located.

Willie 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 Earlsheaton Park and on the Oak Reredos in St. Peter's Church, Earlsheaton.

In Memory of
Lance Bombardier
Willie Berry

127349, "D" Bty. 46th Bde., Royal Field Artillery who died on 03 December 1917 Age 22

Son of John and Martha Berry, of 101, High Rd., Earlsheaton, Dewsbury, Yorks.

Remembered with Honour
Oxford Road Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Headstone photograph courtesy of Ms. Danielle Roubroeks, Antwerp, Belgium.