



Harry Ellam 1894 – 1917

Harry was born in Lower Hopton on 2nd September 1894. His father was Thomas Ellam, a coal miner born in Lower Hopton in 1859 and died in 1921. His mother was Jane Anne (nee France) born in Cridling Stubbs near Knottingley in 1859 and died in 1918. They were married in St. John's Church, Upper Hopton on 28th September 1879.

Their other children were; John Edward, born in 1879 and died in 1880, Edith, born in 1881, Wilfred, born in 1883 and died in 1884, Annie, born in 1885, Walter France, born in 1887 and Clara, born in 1889.

On the 1891 Census the family lived at Low Lane, Mirfield, in 1901 and 1911 at Hand Bank, Upper Hopton.

Harry was a single man who worked as a mill hand for Messrs Henry Hamer & Sons in their woollen mill. He attended Hopton Congregational Church.

He enlisted in September 1916 serving as Private 34398 in the 7th Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry and was sent to the Western Front around Christmas time. He was killed in action near Morval, France on 12th February 1917. His remains were never identified for burial and so he is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial to the missing of the Somme. Harry was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

On the 17th February 1917 Harry was mentioned in the Dewsbury Reporter as being a recipient of a parcel from the Ravensthorpe and Northorpe Soldiers and Sailors Christmas Fund but by this time he had been killed. In early March his mother received two letters from Harry's officers; Lieutenant E.H. Hanson wrote as his platoon commander to offer his sympathy at Harry's death stating that he was not in the trenches on that particular day but the officer who saw the shell *burst "tells me that death must have been instantaneous, and took place on the 12th of February at 12.15 p.m. in the front line trench"*. The second letter was from 2nd Lieutenant A.W.L. Stewart who wrote that Harry and another soldier were killed by a shell and that Harry's grave had been marked. However, the winter was severe and it would have been difficult to dig a grave in the frozen soil and it is possible that his body was placed in a shell hole which was covered and marked.

The Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme bears the names of more than 72,000 officers and men of the United Kingdom and South African forces who died in the Somme sector before 20th March 1918 and have no known grave. Over 90% of those commemorated died between July and November 1916. The memorial also serves as an Anglo-French Battle Memorial in recognition of the joint nature of the 1916 offensive and a small cemetery containing 300 Commonwealth and 300 French graves lies at the foot of the memorial.

Harry is also commemorated on the Dewsbury Cenotaph in Crow Nest Park and in the Dewsbury Roll of Honour kept in Dewsbury Central Library and on the Ravensthorpe War Memorial in St. Saviour's Church.

In Memory of

Private

Harry Ellam

34398, 7th Bn., King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry who died on 12 February 1917 Age 22

Son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Thomas T. Ellam.

Remembered with Honour

Thiepval Memorial



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

