



Albert Watson

1888 – 1917

Albert was born in Dewsbury on 17th March 1888 and baptised at St. Mark's Church, Halifax Road, Dewsbury on 28th September 1888. His father was John Watson, a Mule Spinner in a Woollen Mill born in Horsforth near Leeds in 1843 and died in 1920. His mother was Sarah (nee Anderson) born in Dewsbury in 1845 and died in 1898. They were married on 4th February 1865 at All Saints Church, Dewsbury. She is recorded as Sarah Ann on the children's baptism and Census records.

Their other children were; Dan, born in 1865 and died in 1866, Hannah, born in 1868 and died in 1869, Albert, born in 1870 and died in 1873, Harry, born in 1871, William, born in 1875 and died in 1876, Edith, born in 1877, Regina, born in 1879, Ethel, born in 1883, Inman, born in 1885 and died in 1886, Eileen Gladys, born in 1894 and died in 1894 and Ethel Maud, born in 1897 and died in 1900. Also recorded on the 1881 Census is Willie Senior, recorded as "*Adopted Child*". Willie was born on 1st April 1880 to Abraham and Harriet Senior who already had 6 children; sadly, Harriet died in the September Quarter of 1880. The Watson family who lived in the same street showed great kindness by taking in the baby. Abraham took his son Willie back home after remarrying in August 1882.

On the 1881 Census the family lived at Albion Street, Dewsbury, in 1891 at Commonsides, Soothill, Batley, in 1901 at Greenwood Buildings, Commonsides and in 1911 at 65, High Street, Hanging Heaton, Batley.

In 1911 Albert was recorded as an Assistant Tuner in a Woollen Mill; however, by 1917 he was employed in the coal department of the Dewsbury Co-operative Society. He was married in Dewsbury in 1914 to Edith Annie Hirst (born in 1893 and died in 1946). They had a son, Norman Watson, born in 1914 and lived at 4, Warwick Cottages, West Street, Batley Carr.

He attested in Batley serving as Private 30823 in the 6th Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. Controversy surrounded his place of death, as the newspaper articles created difficulty in establishing the facts. A postcard received by his wife stated he was "*a Prisoner of War in Germany*". If he meant that he was "a prisoner of the Germans" this makes a difference. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission records state that he died on 5th April 1917 and was buried in Douai Communal Cemetery, Nord, France. Albert was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Douai was captured by the Germans on 1st October 1914 and remained in enemy hands until 17th October 1918. The Cemetery was used during the occupation for burials of prisoners of war. It is possible he was wounded and held at Douai German Field Hospital and then buried in Douai Communal Cemetery when he died. There are now 222 Commonwealth burials of the 1914-1918 war commemorated in this site, 19 being unidentified.

Albert is commemorated on the Dewsbury Cenotaph in Crow Nest Park and in the Dewsbury Roll of Honour kept in Dewsbury Central Library, the Earlsheaton Park War Memorial, the Oak Reredos in St. Peter's Church, Earlsheaton, the Hanging Heaton War Memorial in St. Paul's Church, the Memorial Window in the Ebenezer Methodist Chapel, Hanging Heaton, the War Memorial in Holy Trinity Church, Batley Carr and the now lost Dewsbury Co-operative Society Memorial. He is also named in the book *'Urban District of Soothill Upper War Register and Records of War Service 1914-1920'* compiled by The Rev. W.R. Cleworth, M.A., Cantab. Vicar of Hanging Heaton from January 1894.

