



Willie Jessop

1884 – 1917

Willie was born in Batley in 1884. His father was William Jessop, a Colliery Deputy Manager born in Lepton, Huddersfield in 1852 and died in 1929. His mother was Margaret Lillas (nee Robb, formerly Swallow) born in Dundee, Scotland in 1844 and died in 1896. There is no record of a marriage.

Their other children were; Fred, born in 1878 and died in 1912, Arthur, born in 1880 and Alexander born in 1887 and whose name was added to the Batley War Memorial in the 1930s despite little being known about the circumstances of his death.

William was married on 3rd May 1875 at St. John the Baptist Church, Kirkheaton to Sarah Jane Lodge (born in 1851 and died in 1931) they had a daughter, Sarah Ann, born in 1875 and died in 1902.

Margaret was previously married in Ayr, Scotland on 28th January 1861 to Thomas Swallow (born in 1839 and died in 1871). Their children were; Elizabeth Swallow, born in 1862 and died in 1869, Adeline Swallow, born in 1864, Charles William Swallow, born in 1866, Hannah Jane Swallow, born in 1868, Lorenza, born in 1872 and died in 1872.

In 1881 they lived at Villiers Street, Batley, in 1891 at Stocks Lane, Batley. In 1901 and 1911 they are at 151, Colbeck Buildings, Commercial Street, Batley; an Elizabeth Jackson is shown as a servant in 1901 and as wife Elizabeth Jessop in 1911.

Willie was a painter and decorator employed by Messrs A. & H. Ruddlesden, Bradford Road Dewsbury and was a member of Batley Carr Working Men's Club and the Batley Football Club. He was married in 1909 to Sophia Colbeck (born in 1889 and died in 1973). In 1911 they lived with Sophia's family at 125, Lidgate Lane, Batley Carr and had a son, Raymond, born 22nd July 1916. Sophia was remarried in 1921 to a widower Tom Wilson (born in 1882 and died in 1934). They lived at 9, Nab Lane, Knowl, Mirfield.

He enlisting on 7th August 1916 serving as Private 35766 in the 2nd Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry and was sent to the Western Front on 9th November 1916. He was killed near Nieuport, Belgium on 28th June 1917. He and three of his comrades were actually in the reserve trench shaving and washing when a shell detonated next to them killing all three instantly. He was buried in Nieuport Military Cemetery, on the South side of the town, a French cemetery in which 107 British soldiers and one sailor were buried. It was closed in July 1917 as excessively dangerous. In November 1923 he was reburied in Ramscappelle Road Military Cemetery, West-Vlaanderen. Willie was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Ramscappelle Road Military Cemetery is located 2 Kms east of Nieuwpoort on the road which leads from Nieuwpoort to Sint Joris. From June to November 1917, Commonwealth Forces held the front line in Belgium from St. Georges (now Sint Joris), near Ramscappelle, to the sea. The Cemetery started with Plot 1 in the middle of the graveyard. Most of the interments were made in July and August 1917. The burial ground was substantially enlarged after the Armistice of November 1918. At that time, the remains of the deceased from the battlefields and a number of smaller cemeteries were brought to Ramscappelle for interment. There are now 841 Commonwealth casualties of World War I who are either buried or commemorated in Ramscappelle Road Military Cemetery. Of those, 312 are unidentified.

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 Batley War Memorial and on the Batley Town Hall Memorial Plaque and on the War Memorial in Holy Trinity Church, Batley Carr on which his regiment is wrongly named as the King's Own Scottish Borderers.

In Memory of

Private

W Jessop

35766, 2nd Bn., King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry who died on 28 June 1917

Remembered with Honour

Ramscappelle Road Military Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

