



Charles Speight **1883 - 1916**

Charles was born at Bunker's Hill, Whitley Lower on 28th January 1883. His father was Benjamin Speight, a woollen spinner born in Ravensthorpe in 1860 and died in 1927. His mother was Ellen (née Dean) born in Thornhill Lees in 1866 and died in 1937. They were married on 24th September 1881 at St. Mary and St. Michael's Church, Whitley Lower.

Their other children were; John Thomas, born in 1882, Henry born in 1885, Emma, born in 1887, Lena, born in 1889, Annie, born in 1891, Walter, born in 1898 and was killed in action 20th July 1917, Fred, born in 1900, and Lilly, born in 1903.

On the 1891 Census the family lived at Havelock Street, Ravensthorpe, in 1901 at 15, Thornleigh, Thornhill Lees and in 1911 at 14, Thornville Street off Huddersfield Road, Dewsbury.

Charles was employed as a woollen spinner for Messrs G.H. Hirst and Company; he was married at Holy Innocents Church, Thornhill Lees on 1st June 1907 to Rose Ellen Bland (born in 1881 and died in 1953). They had two children, Horace, born in 1909 and died in 1918 and Jessie, born in 1913. In 1911 they lived at Wallace Cottages, Lees Hall Road, Thornhill Lees and later at 21, Scout Hill Terrace, Dewsbury. He was a member of Ravensthorpe Working Men's Club.

He attested in 1914 serving as Private 19709 in the 10th Battalion York and Lancaster Regiment and was sent to the Western Front on 10th September 1915 and fought in the Battle of Loos later that month. He was killed in action on 15th November 1916 during one of the last actions of the Battle of the Somme. His widow received a letter from a 2nd Lieutenant Sanders telling of how Charles was delivering a message on the front line but was killed by the explosion of a shell. He was buried two days later but his grave must have been lost or destroyed in later battles. His remains were never identified for burial and so he is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial to the missing of the Somme. Charles was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

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.

Charles 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 War Memorial in Holy Innocents Church, Thornhill Lees.

In Memory of

Private

Charles Speight

19709, 10th Bn., York and Lancaster Regiment who died on 15 November 1916 Age 33

Son of Benjamin and Ellen Speight, of 14, Thornville St., Huddersfield Rd., Dewsbury; husband of Rose Ellen Speight, of 21, Scout Hill Terrace, Dewsbury, Yorks.

Remembered with Honour

Thiepval Memorial



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

SPEIGHT C.