



Herbert Nicholls

1897 - 1917

Herbert was born in Belfast, Ireland on 24th March 1897 to George and Emma Nicholls; George died aged 50 on 13th August 1900 and Emma died aged 52 on 5th February 1912.

The 1901 Census of Ireland shows Emma as a widow and head of the family, her children are listed as follows; Lizzie, age 17, George, age 15, Alfred/Alphie, (sic) age 14, Emma, age 13, Lucy, age 8, Herbert, age 4 and Grace, age 1. On the 1911 Census of Ireland, only Emma jnr, Lucy and Herbert are living with their mother; the record states 9 children were born to the marriage of which 7 were still alive. Their religion was given as Church of Ireland.

On 21st April 1912, Emma, Lucy and Herbert sailed from Belfast bound for Quebec aboard the S.S. "Lake Manitoba". George jnr and Alfred had already emigrated as they are named in his service records and George had also served in the Canadian Army. In his will Herbert named Alfred as his beneficiary.

Herbert enlisted on Wednesday 15th December 1915 at the recruiting office in Toronto. He gave his address as 62, Muriel Avenue, Toronto and gave his next of kin as his sister, Mrs Emma Barber of 16, Endean Avenue, Toronto.

He gave his religion as Church of England and stated his occupation was that of a farmer. He passed his medical examination after several previous attempts, and was posted to the 123rd Battalion Canadian Expeditionary Force and after a period of training for the next eight months, he embarked for England from Halifax, Nova Scotia on the S.S. "Cameronia", arriving in Liverpool ten days later. After a further period of training terminating on the 5th December 1916, a year after volunteering he was sent to the Western Front, transferring to the 60th (Victoria Rifles of Canada) Battalion who were part of the 3rd Canadian Division.

After serving for many months in France, the 60th Battalion took part in the attack on Vimy Ridge. They were disbanded on 29th April 1917 and he was one of many who were transferred to the 87th Infantry Battalion. Herbert was killed in action in France on 14th August 1917, his remains were never identified for burial and so he is commemorated on the Vimy Memorial to the Missing, which commemorates the names of 11,238 men of the Canadian Expeditionary Force killed during the First World War in France and who have no known grave. Herbert was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Herbert 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 and in the Canadian Book of Remembrance in Parliament Hill, Ottawa.

As Herbert had never lived in the Dewsbury area, it was a mystery as to how his name came to be commemorated on the above memorials; it was discovered that on the 1911 Census his sister Lizzie, now Mrs. James A. Donaldson was living at 22, Myrtle Avenue, Ravensthorpe with a two year old daughter Emma Donaldson and her youngest sister Grace Nicholls. They must have attended St. Saviour's Church and put forward Herbert's name when the War Memorial was inaugurated.

