



Joseph (Joe) Birkhead

1881 - 1917

Joseph, known to his family as Joe was born in Elland, Yorkshire in 1881. His father was Arthur Birkhead, a Shoddy Merchant, born in Elland in 1855 and died in 1940. His mother was Mary Hannah (nee Kershaw) born in Elland in 1856 and died in 1935. They were married in 1880.

They also had a daughter, Elizabeth, born in 1886.

On the 1891 Census they lived at Catherine Street, Elland, in 1901 at 4, Springfield Place, Dewsbury and in 1911 at 22, Springfield Street, Dewsbury.

Joe was educated at Carlton Road and Dewsbury Technical Schools. In 1901 he was an apprentice to Mr. Robert Armstrong, a Gentleman's Outfitter and in 1911 he was a Boarder living and working in Birmingham as a Manager of a Hosier and Hatter store. He was married in King's Norton, Birmingham in 1911 to Edith May Coole, (born in West Bromwich in 1885 and died in 1973) they had a child, Edna Mary, born 1913. They lived at 317, Stratford Road, Sparkbrook, Birmingham. Edith was remarried in 1921 to Arthur Rochford Tyler (born in 1890 and died in 1977).

He enlisted in Birmingham on January 18th 1917 serving as Gunner 136030 in the 274th Siege Battery Royal Garrison Artillery. He had only been on the Western Front about 16 weeks when he died on 18th September 1917 during the Battle of Passchendaele and was buried in Kandahar Farm Cemetery, Heuvelland, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. Joe was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Kandahar Farm Cemetery is located 14 km south of Ieper (Ypres) town centre on the road leading from Ieper to Wijtschate, Mesen and on to Armentieres. Kandahar Farm was near the village of Wulverghem (now Wulvergem) and for much of the war the front line ran a little east of the village. The cemetery was used by Commonwealth divisions holding this sector from November 1914 to April 1918, when it fell into German hands with the capture of Wulverghem and Neuve-Eglise (now Nieuwkerke). The two villages were recovered in early September and the cemetery was used again. There are now 443 Commonwealth burials of the First World War in this cemetery.

Joe 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 Birmingham Roll of Honour.

In Memory of

Gunner

Joseph Birkhead

136030, 274th Siege Bty., Royal Garrison Artillery who died on 18 September 1917 Age 36

Husband of Edith May Tyler (formerly Birkhead), of 40, Claremont Rd., Sparkbrook, Birmingham.

Remembered with Honour

Kandahar Farm Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Headstone photograph courtesy of Ms. Danielle Roubroeks, Antwerp, Belgium