



John William Wood

1898-1918

John was born in Batley on 5th December 1898. His father was Clarence Taylor Wood, a Stationary Engineman born in Mirfield in 1871 and died in 1945. His mother was Louisa (nee Newton) born in Batley in 1876 and died in 1930. They were married in 1895.

Their other children were; Harry, born in 1895 and died in 1899, Evelyn May, born in 1902, Arthur, born in 1905 and died in 1906 and Ethel, born in 1907 and died in 1907.

On the 1901 Census the family lived at 23, Newsome Place, Batley, in 1911 at 9, Reservoir Place, North Park Street, Dewsbury and later at 21, Alfred Place, Willans Road, Dewsbury.

John was a single man whose occupation is unknown as he was still at school on the 1911 Census, there are no local newspaper articles reporting his death.

He enlisted in Dewsbury into the West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own) with the Service Number 60189 and was later transferred to the 1st/5th Battalion South Lancashire Regiment serving as Rifleman 32701. He was killed in action near Bethune, France on 10th April 1918 during the 2nd Battle of the Lys; he was buried in Browns Road Military Cemetery, Festubert, Pas-de-Calais, France. John was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Festubert is a village 8 kilometres east-north-east of Bethune; the village was occupied by Commonwealth forces in October 1914 and on 23rd -24th November, the Indian Corps repulsed a German attack. The Battle of Festubert (15th -25th May 1915) resulted in a short advance which left the village somewhat less exposed than it had been. Except for an advance which was attempted just to the south of Festubert (the Second Action of Givenchy, 15th -16th June 1915), this sector remained quiet until 9th April 1918 and the beginning of the Battle of the Lys. Festubert was held by the 55th (West Lancashire) Division against the German assault, and successive attacks lasting through the month were repelled by the 1st and other Divisions. It remained an outpost for Commonwealth forces until the final advance began in September 1918. The cemetery was begun in October 1914, and carried on by fighting units and field ambulances until November 1917, when it contained 299 graves. It was greatly enlarged after the Armistice when graves were brought in from small cemeteries and isolated sites on the surrounding battlefields. Brown's Road Cemetery now contains 1,071 burials and commemorations of the First World War. 407 of the burials are unidentified but special memorials commemorate three casualties believed to be buried among them.

John is commemorated on the Dewsbury Cenotaph in Crow Nest Park and in the Dewsbury Roll of Honour kept in Dewsbury Central Library.

In Memory of

Rifleman

John William Wood

32701, 1st/5th Bn., South Lancashire Regiment who died on 10 April 1918 Age 19

Son of Clarence Taylor Wood and Louisa Wood, of 21, Alfred Place, Willons Rd., Dewsbury.

Remembered with Honour

Brown's Road Military Cemetery, Festubert



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



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