



## **Fletcher Smithson**

### **1898-1918**

Fletcher was born in Dewsbury Moor on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1898 and baptised at St. John the Evangelist Church, Dewsbury Moor on 29<sup>th</sup> June 1898. His father was Benjamin Smithson, a coal miner/hewer born in Dewsbury in 1857 and died in 1917. His mother was Ann (nee Bedford) born in Heckmondwike in 1858 and died in 1929. They were married on 29<sup>th</sup> January 1876 at All Saints Church, Dewsbury.

Their other children were; John, born in 1876 and died in 1876, Thomas, born in 1878, Fred, born in 1880, John, born in 1883, Will, born in 1886, Martha, born in 1888 and died in 1888, Matthew, born in 1889 and Walter, born in 1891.

On the 1891 Census the family lived at 5, Low Fold, Dewsbury Moor, in 1901 at 46, Reform Street, Dewsbury and in 1911 at 29, Low Road, Dewsbury Moor and later at 43, Smith's Buildings, Dewsbury Moor.

Fletcher was a single man who was educated at Dewsbury Moor Council School and attended Dewsbury Moor Primitive Methodist Sunday school; he worked as a Fettleer at Messrs William Crabtree and Sons, Dewsbury Moor.

He enlisted on 19<sup>th</sup> February 1917 into the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own) with the Service Number 42399 rising to the rank of Lance Corporal. He came back home in the April of that same year for his father's funeral, returning the following month. He was hospitalised after being gassed and wounded in March 1918 and was wounded again the right shoulder on 9<sup>th</sup> June. He was killed in action near Reims on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1918 during the Second Battle of the Marne. His remains were discovered in 1919 and he was buried in Courmas British Cemetery, Marne, France. Fletcher was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Courmas is a village about 7 miles south-west of Reims. The cemetery was made after the Armistice, by the concentration of graves from the neighbouring battlefields and from two small cemeteries made by the 62<sup>nd</sup> (West Riding) Division after the fighting of the 20<sup>th</sup> July 1918. There are now 207 1914-18 war casualties commemorated in Courmas British Cemetery. Of these, 77 are unidentified and special memorials are erected to seven British soldiers believed to be buried among them.

Fletcher 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 War Memorial in St. John the Evangelist Church, Dewsbury Moor.

In Memory of  
Lance Corporal

## F Smithson

42399, 8th Bn., West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own) who died on 20 July 1918 Age 20

Son of Ben and Ann Smithson, of 43, Smith's Buildings, Dewsbury Moor, Dewsbury, Yorks.

Remembered with Honour  
Courmas British Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by  
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

