



## **John Thomas Blakeley**

### **1898-1918**

John was born in Mirfield on 8<sup>th</sup> June 1898 and baptised on 13<sup>th</sup> July 1898 at the Church of Christ the King, Battysford, Mirfield. His father was Harry Blakeley, a Waggoner and Coal Dealer born in Flushdyke, Ossett in 1874 and died in 1914. His mother was Sarah (nee Buckley) born in Mirfield in 1875 and died in 1950. They were married on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1898 at the Church of Christ the King, Battysford.

Their other children were; Willie, born in 1900, Nellie, born in 1905 and died in 1907, Alice, born in 1907, Hannah, born in 1909, Arthur Edward, born in 1911, Tom, born in 1913 and died in 1913 and Albert, born in 1914.

On the 1901 Census the family lived at Moody's Row, Mirfield and in 1911 at Brick Yard, Knowle, Mirfield.

John was a single man who worked for Mr. Charles Fearnley, a carting agent and farmer of Ravensthorpe. In February and March 1917 during the proceedings of the local tribunal which heard appeals against conscription, his employer made a statement to the tribunal that he was experiencing difficulties in obtaining men due to the nature of his business which included scavenging. The report went on to say John was the eldest of seven children and his widowed mother was reliant upon him. Being turned down he appealed and again this was rejected, although he was given grace until 1<sup>st</sup> of April.

He was called up soon after into the York and Lancaster Regiment with the Service Number but was soon transferred to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Royal Fusiliers serving as Private G/66725 and was sent to The Western Front in June 1917, he appears to have been wounded in November that same year and after a period of convalescence he was posted to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Royal Fusiliers in February 1918. He was killed in action on 11<sup>th</sup> April 1918 during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of the Lys; his remains were never identified for burial and so he is commemorated on the Ploegsteert Memorial, Hainaut, Belgium. John was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

The Ploegsteert Memorial stands in Berks Cemetery Extension, which is located 12.5 Kms south of Ypres (now Ieper). The memorial commemorates the 11,349 servicemen of the United Kingdom and South African forces who have no known grave and died in the area from the line Caestre-Dranoutre-Warneton to the north, to Haverskerque-Estaires-Fournes to the south, including the towns of Hazebrouck, Merville, Bailleul and Armentieres, the Forest of Nieppe, and Ploegsteert Wood. The original intention had been to erect the memorial in Lille. Most of those commemorated by the memorial did not die in major offensives, such as those which took place around Ypres to the north, or Loos to the south. Most were killed in the course of the day-to-day trench warfare which characterised this part of the line, or in small scale set engagements, usually carried out in support of the major attacks taking place elsewhere.

John 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.

In Memory of

Private

**John Thomas Blakeley**

G/66725, 2nd Bn., Royal Fusiliers who died on 11 April 1918

Remembered with Honour

**Ploegsteert Memorial**



Commemorated in perpetuity by  
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

