



## Alexander Bruce

### 1896-1918

Alexander was born in Skipton, Yorkshire in 1896. His father was George Henry Bruce, a quarryman and later a railway platelayer born in Goldington, Bedfordshire in 1856 and died in 1936. His mother was Elizabeth (nee Garlick) born in Turvey, Bedfordshire in 1860 and died in 1951. On the 1911 Census they state they had been married for 24 years but no record has been found of a marriage.

Elizabeth had a son, James George Bowler Garlick, born in Bedford in 1882 and served in World War 1.

On the Census records from 1891 to 1911, a daughter, Maud Ethel Victoria Bruce is named. She was born in Skipton on 18<sup>th</sup> December 1887 and her birth was registered on 27<sup>th</sup> January 1888. Her surname is recorded as *Gaunt* and her parents as George Gaunt and Annie Elizabeth Gaunt, nee Garlick.

Their other children were; Walter, born in 1889, Albert Edward, born in 1891 and died in 1892, Tom Llewellyn, born in 1893 and died in 1893, Bertram Algeon, born in 1894 and died in 1894, Lily, born in 1898. All were born in Skipton and their surnames registered as *Bruce*.

Alexander was a single man who was educated at Thornhill Church of England School and sang in the Church Choir. He worked as a fuller in Messrs Wormalds and Walkers blanket mill in Thornhill Lees.

He enlisted in January 1916 into the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry with the Service Number 26138 and was later transferred into the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Royal Irish Rifles serving as Lance Corporal 11/2045. According to his obituary in the local press he was invalided back to the UK on two previous occasions, one being in March 1917 when suffering from trench fever, shell shock and loss of memory. He died of wounds on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1918 in the 61<sup>st</sup> (South Midland) Casualty Clearing Station in the town of Ham in the lower part of the Somme Region, having being wounded the previous day, the First Day of the German Spring Offensive (*Der Kaiserschlacht*). He was believed to be buried in Ham British Cemetery, Muille-Villette, Somme, France but his actual grave location is not known. Alexander was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Ham British Cemetery was begun in January-March 1918 by the Casualty Clearing Station. In 1919 the graves were regrouped and more were added from other cemeteries in the area. The Cemetery contains 485 Commonwealth burials and commemorations of the First World War. 218 of the burials are unidentified but there are special memorials to 14 soldiers believed to be buried among them, of which Alexander Bruce is one. Other special memorials record the names of 39 casualties known to have been buried in other cemeteries whose graves were not found.

Alexander 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. Michael and All Angels Church, Thornhill.

In Memory of  
Lance Corporal  
**A Bruce**

11/2045, 1st Bn., Royal Irish Rifles who died on 22 March 1918 Age 21

Son of George and Elizabeth Ann Bruce, of 45, The Common, Thornhill, Dewsbury. Spec. Memorial.

Remembered with Honour  
**Ham British Cemetery, Muille-Villette**



Commemorated in perpetuity by  
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



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