



Sam Steele

1881-1918

Sam was born in Dewsbury on 2nd March 1881. His father was Fred Steele, a bricklayer, born in Thornhill Lees in 1857 and died in 1918. His mother was Mary Jane (nee Ellis) born in Whitley in 1857 and died in 1937. They were married on 26th January 1879 at Holy Innocents Church, Thornhill Lees.

Their other children were; Charles Edward, born in 1880, John William, born in 1883 and Fanny, born in 1888 and died in 1889.

On the 1891 Census the family lived at Mill Street East, Savile Town, Dewsbury, in 1901 at 25, Dale Street, Thornhill Lees and in 1911 at Bretton Street, Savile Town.

Sam was educated at Thornhill Lees Day School and also attended the Sunday school and later was a member of Trades and Friendly Club at the end of Vulcan Road, known locally as the "Sawdust Club". He worked as a Wireman for the National Telephone Company in Huddersfield and was married to Lily Popplewell (born in Dewsbury in 1880 and died in 1962) on 19th December 1903 at St. Philip's Church, Leeds Road, Dewsbury. They lived at 56, Cliffe Street, Crackenedge, Dewsbury and had one child, Fred, born in 1904.

He enlisted in Huddersfield in April 1915 serving as Sapper 73057 in "R" Corps, Signal Company, Royal Engineers and was sent to the Western Front in January 1916 being delegated to work on the telephonic system of communications between the military headquarters and the trenches ensuring that the wires were in order at all times, a skill in which he was highly experienced. He was involved in a Motor Cycle accident near a level crossing at Dieval, Pas-de-Calais, France on 21st July 1918 and whilst initially appearing not to be seriously injured he later became unconscious and died in hospital on 22nd July 1918 from a fractured skull and cerebral haemorrhage; he was buried in Pernes British Cemetery, Pas-de-Calais, France. Sam was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Pernes-en-Artois is a small town on the main road from Lillers to St. Pol. The British cemetery is nearly one kilometre west of the town and was not begun until April 1918 when the 1st and 4th Canadian Casualty Clearing Stations came to Pernes, driven back by the German advance. In May, the 6th and 22nd Clearing Stations arrived and in August, they were joined by the 13th. Almost all the burials were made by these units, but a few of the graves were brought into the cemetery after the Armistice There are now 1,078 First World War burials in this cemetery.

Sam 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 Holy Innocents Church, Thornhill Lees.

In Memory of

Sapper

Sam Steele

73057, "R" Corps, Signal Coy., Royal Engineers who died on 22 July 1918

Husband of Lily Steele, of 56, Cliffe St., Crackenedge, Dewsbury, Yorks.

Remembered with Honour

Pernes British Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Headstone photograph by courtesy of Nigel Marshall.