



Hadfield Ripley

1889-1918

Hadfield was born in Heckmondwike in 1889. His father was John William Ripley, a Willeyer born in Dewsbury in 1864 and died in 1936. His mother was Ann (nee North) born in Liversedge in 1862 and died in 1932. They were married in Heckmondwike on 22nd January 1887.

On the 1911 Census they stated that three children were born to the marriage, two of whom had died, but no birth records have been traced.

On the 1891 Census the family lived at George Street, Heckmondwike, in 1901 at Norristhorpe Lane, Liversedge, in 1911 at Park Farm, Heckmondwike, in 1918 at 110, Knowles Hill Road, Dewsbury Moor and later at 20, Lower Smithies, Heckmondwike.

Hadfield was a single man who was educated at Heckmondwike Higher Grade School; he attended Heckmondwike Wesleyan Church and Sunday school and worked as a packer at Messrs Walter Hamer and Sons, Ravensthorpe.

He enlisted in 1916 serving as Private 306483 in the 1st/7th Battalion Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment) being slightly wounded on two occasions. He died in a Field Ambulance near Meteren, France on 12th April 1918 from wounds sustained in action. He was buried in Berthen Churchyard a few miles north of the village. In 1920 his remains were reburied in Meteren Military Cemetery, Nord, France along with 12 other Commonwealth servicemen. Hadfield was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Meteren is a village 17.5 kilometres south-west of Ypres (now Ieper) in Belgium and 3 kilometres west of Bailleul in France, on the main road to Cassel. It was occupied by German forces early in October 1914 and on 13th October their entrenched positions covering the village were captured by the 10th Brigade of the 4th Division. The village then remained in Allied hands until the German offensive of April 1918. The 33rd Division held it against heavy German attacks on 13th April, but it was lost on the 16th. The cemetery was made in 1919 by the French authorities, who brought in Commonwealth graves from the neighbouring battlefields and from other cemeteries, including Berthen Churchyard in which 13 soldiers and airmen from the United Kingdom, two soldiers from Canada, and one soldier from Newfoundland were buried by Field Ambulances or fighting units in 1916 and 1918. Meteren Military Cemetery now contains 768 Commonwealth burials and commemorations of the First World War. 180 of the burials are unidentified.

Hadfield 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 and on the Memorial Plaque from Heckmondwike Higher Grade School (Now Heckmondwike Grammar School).

In Memory of

Private

Hadfield Ripley

306483, 1st/7th Bn., Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment) who died on 12 April 1918 Age 26

Son of John Ripley, of 20, Lower Smithies, Heckmondwike, Yorks.

Remembered with Honour

Meteren Military Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



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