



Francis Victor Sykes

1893-1918

Francis was born in Earlsheaton in 1893. His father was Frank Sykes, a Woollen Rag and Waste Dealer born in Earlsheaton in 1862 and died in 1923. His mother was Annie (nee Woodcock) born in Earlsheaton in 1862 and died in 1924. They were married on 28th December 1881 at St. Peter's Church, Earlsheaton.

Their other children who have been traced were; William Henry, born in 1882, Charles Edward, born in 1884, an unnamed male child was born and died in the 4th Quarter of 1886, Harry, born in 1890 and died in 1891, Elizabeth Ellen, born in 1895 and died in 1901.

On the 1891, 1901 and 1911 Census Records the family lived at Town Green, Earlsheaton.

Francis was a single man who was educated at Earlsheaton Church of England School and in 1911 worked at Messrs Wormalds and Walker Limited as a Dyer in blanket manufacturing, and later assisted in his father's rag and waste business.

He was attached pre-war to the Heckmondwike Artillery and was mobilized with them the day after the declaration of war on 4th August 1914. Owing to an attack of pneumonia, he was prevented from going to France with the local Battery and afterwards lost touch with them. He was sent to the Western Front in April 1916 with "C" Battery, 82nd Brigade, Royal Field Artillery with the Service Number 780051 rising to the rank of Serjeant; in early 1917 he was invalided home with trench fever and in autumn 1918 he was slightly gassed, but was soon able to return to his Battery. He was killed in action in France on 18th September 1918 and was buried in the field; in October 1920 his remains were reburied in Peronne Communal Cemetery Extension, Somme, France. Francis was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

He had been recommended for a commission, and but for the delay of the authorities in sending him the necessary papers, would have been home a month earlier. His death was notified to his parents by His Major, who wrote: *"Our guns on September 18th were very close up behind our infantry, and when we opened our barrage, at about 5.30, we immediately began to have a bad time from the German defensive barrage. We were shelled continuously, and it was at about 6.30 that two shells came over, killing and wounding nine men. It was a most trying time, and Sjt. Sykes behaved, as usual, with the greatest gallantry. All my officers join with me in sending you heartfelt sympathy. Sjt. Sykes was an excellent N.C.O., and a great favourite with us all. He was always so keen and cheerful."*

There are 1,595 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in Peronne Communal Cemetery Extension, 224 of the burials are unidentified.

Francis 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 Earlsheaton Park War Memorial and on the Oak Reredos in St. Peter's Church Earlsheaton.

In Memory of

Serjeant

F V Sykes

780051, "C" Bty. 82nd Bde., Royal Field Artillery who died on 18 September 1918

Remembered with Honour

Peronne Communal Cemetery Extension



**Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission**

