



Rowland Knight Littlewood

1899-1918

Rowland was born in Dewsbury on 6th July 1899 and baptised at St. Philip's Church, Leeds Road, Dewsbury on 31st July 1899. His father was Henry Littlewood, a Warp Dresser and Weaver in a woollen mill born in Honley, Huddersfield in 1864 and died in 1911. His mother was Isabella (nee Lund) born in Pontefract in 1866 and died in 1918. They were married at Holy Innocents Church, Thornhill Lees on 24th December 1887.

Their other children were; Mary, born in 1888, Laura, born in 1890, Ethel born in 1893, Thomas, born in 1896 and died in 1907, Elsie, born in 1897 and Alice, born in 1901.

On the 1891 Census the family were living at 5, Vulcan Road, Dewsbury, in 1901 at 5, Upper Bank Street, Dewsbury and in 1911 at 7, Savile Grove, Savile Town, Dewsbury.

Rowland was a single man who was educated at Dewsbury Parish and St. Mary's Savile Town Schools; he worked for Messrs Firth, Blakeley and Company, Thornhill Lees as a Fitter and Erector.

He enlisted in Dewsbury on 18th July 1917 serving as Private 60517 in the 10th Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own) and was sent to the Western Front at the beginning of April 1918. He was killed in action in France on 30th April 1918 when a shell fragment pierced his heart; he was buried in Varennes Military Cemetery, Somme, France. Rowland was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

An officer wrote to his family; *"He was always a willing boy, and never gave any trouble."*

Varennes is a village 11 kilometres from Albert and 18 kilometres from Amiens. The cemetery was laid out by the 39th Casualty Clearing Station in August 1916, during the Battle of the Somme, but the first burials were made during August and September by more mobile divisional Field Ambulances. The 4th and 11th Casualty Clearing Stations then used the cemetery from October 1916, joined by the 47th from December 1916, but by May 1917 Varennes was deserted and remained so until the Germans launched their offensive in this quarter in April 1918. The cemetery was then extended by the 17th and 38th (Welsh) Divisions and at the beginning of September 1918, the 3rd Canadian and 59th Casualty Clearing Stations arrived at Varennes. The cemetery contains 1,219 burials of the First World War

Rowland is commemorated on the Dewsbury Cenotaph in Crow Nest Park and in the Dewsbury Roll of Honour kept in Dewsbury Central Library and as *Rowland Littlewood* on the War Memorial from St. Mary's Church, Savile Town, now displayed in Holy Innocents Church, Thornhill Lees.

In Memory of
Private
R K Littlewood

60517, 10th Bn., West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own) who died on 30 April 1918

Remembered with Honour
Varenes Military Cemetery



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



Headstone photograph by courtesy of Nigel Marshall.