



John William Holmes

1893-1918

John was born in Thornhill Lees on 26th November 1893. His mother was Alice Holmes born in Thornhill Lees in 1873 and died in 1948.

Alice was married in 1898 to Joseph Roberts (born in 1876 and died in 1904). In 1901 they lived in Sheffield and had four children; Alice Ellen, born in 1899, Eva, born in 1901, Joseph, born in 1902 and Lilian, born in 1904.

In 1909 Alice was remarried to Charles Skidmore (born in 1876 and died in 1962). In 1911 they lived in Dewsbury and had a daughter, Marion Ethel, born in 1910 and died in 1918.

In 1901 John was living with the family of his grandmother, Mrs. Mary Holmes at 46, Back Dale Street, Thornhill Lees, he was educated at Thornhill Lees Church Day School and the Sunday school; by 1911 he was a Boy Sailor aboard H.M.S. "Hogue". He had previously worked at Messrs Wormalds and Walkers with a Miss Amy Bedford with whom he exchanged letters during his service.

At the outbreak of World War 1 his Service Number was J/10315 and he rose to the rank of Petty Officer; he served on a number of H.M. Ships, notably H.M.S. "Ophelia" during the Battle of Jutland in 1916. He was posted to serve aboard Submarine E34, a British E class submarine built by John Thornycroft, Woolston, Hampshire. She was laid down on 21st January 1917 and was commissioned in March 1917. H.M.S. E34 sank the U-Boat UB-16 off Harwich in the North Sea on 10th May 1918. E34 was mined off the Dutch Coast near the Eijerlandse Gronden, the sands between the Frisian Islands Texel and Vlieland on 20th July 1918. There were no survivors but John's body was washed ashore on the Frisian Island of Rottumeroog and he was buried there in the sand dunes. In 1925 the Imperial War Graves Commission (later the CWGC) erected a Kipling Memorial Headstone in The Hague General Cemetery, Zuid-Holland, Netherlands to the memory of John, as his original burial place had by then become lost. John was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

John is also 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
Petty Officer

John William Holmes

J/10315, H.M. Submarine E.34., Royal Navy who died on 20 July 1918 Age 24

Son of Mrs. Alice Skidmore, of 113, Dale St., Thornhill, Lees, Dewsbury, Yorks.

Remembered with Honour
The Hague General Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



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