



John William Oakley

1891-1918

John was born in Thornhill Lees on 10th September, 1891 and baptised on 16th October 1891 at Holy Innocents Church, Thornhill Lees. His father was John Oakley, an Iron Puddler born in Staffordshire in 1855 and died in 1891. His mother was Martha (nee Benson) born in Batley Carr in 1858. They were married at Holy Innocents Church on 22nd November 1885.

Their other children were; Ethel, born in 1886 and died in 1891 and Herbert, born in 1888.

On the 1891 and 1901 Census Records the family lived at 49, Back Dale Street, Thornhill Lees and in 1911 at 11, Thornton Road, Thornhill Lees.

John worked as a Foreman Spinner for Messrs Joshua Pyrah and Sons, Liversedge. He was married to Florence Amelia Bentley (born in 1885 and died in 1964) in the Church of St. John the Baptist, Dawgreen, Dewsbury on 2nd November 1912. They did not have any children.

He enlisted in August 1916 into the 8th Battalion, King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry with the Service Number 34390 rising to the rank of Lance Corporal. He was involved in heavy fighting in the Ypres Salient in 1917 and was later posted to the Italian Front; he came home on leave at Easter 1918 returning on 12th April. He was severely wounded in the face and head and died in a Casualty Clearing Station on 22nd June 1918 and was buried in Montecchio Precalcino Communal Cemetery Extension, Vicenza, Italy. John was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Montecchio Precalcino is a town in the Province of Vicenza, 4 kilometres north of Dueville and 16.8 kilometres north of the town of Vicenza. The Italians entered the war on the Allied side, declaring war on Austria, in May 1915. Commonwealth forces were at the Italian front between November 1917 and November 1918, and rest camps and medical units were established at various locations in northern Italy behind the front, some of them remaining until 1919. Between April 1918 and February 1919 those who died from wounds or disease in the 9th, 24th and 39th Casualty Clearing Stations were buried either here or at Dueville. Certain graves were brought in after the Armistice from other burial grounds in the area. Montecchio Precalcino Communal Cemetery Extension contains 439 Commonwealth burials of the First World War.

John 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
Lance Corporal

John William Oakley

34390, "A" Coy. 8th Bn., King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry who died on 22 June 1918 Age 26

Son of John and Martha Oakley, of Thornhill Lees, nr. Dewsbury, Yorkshire.

Remembered with Honour
Montecchio Precalcino Communal Cemetery Extension



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Headstone photograph by courtesy of the British War Graves Website of Michael McCann.