



Samuel E. Smirthwaite MM

1895-1918

Samuel was born in Dewsbury on 12th November 1895; his Birth Record spells his full name as *Samuel Hurworth Smithwaite*. There are many spelling variations of all of his names and also those of his parents including his mother's maiden name. His father was Charles Smirthwaite, born in Dewsbury in 1872 and died in 1923. His mother was Polly (nee Bromfitt) born in Dewsbury in 1869 and died in 1941. They were married on 16th February 1895 at St. Luke's Church, Beeston Hill, Holbeck, Leeds.

Their other children were; Edmund *Smirthwaite*, born in 1899 and served in World War 1, John William *Smithwaite*, born in 1903, Eric *Smirthwaite*, born in 1904 and died in 1904 and Ivy Evelyn *Smithwaite*, born in 1910.

Polly was remarried in 1928 to a John Hudson (born in 1865 and died in 1942).

On the 1901 Census he is recorded as Sam *Smerthwaite* living with his maternal grandparents Jonathan and Elizabeth *Brumfitt* at 1, Folly Lane, Hunslet, Leeds. His father Charles is living with his brother Edmund at Belgrave Street, Dewsbury; there is no record of his mother Polly. On the 1911 census he is recorded as *Samuel Ewart Smithwaite*; the family are all together living at 18, Victoria Road, Dewsbury and later at 15, Battye Street, Dewsbury.

Samuel was a single man and in 1911 was a Printers Apprentice at Messrs Battye and Fletcher's Printworks; he later worked at Messrs Mark Oldroyd and Sons Queen Street Mill in Savile Town.

He served as Gunner 776967 in "A" Battery, 245th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery under the name *Sam Hewart Smirthwaite* and was sent to the Western Front in March 1916. In the London Gazette dated 12th December 1916 it was announced that he had been awarded the Military Medal on 11th September of that year for gallantry in the field; his name is recorded as Gunner *S.E. Smithwaite*. His last home leave was on his 22nd birthday on 12th November 1917. He was killed in action near Ypres, Belgium on 10th April 1918 and was buried in Vlamertinghe New Military Cemetery, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. Samuel was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal in addition to the Military Medal.

Vlamertinghe New Military Cemetery is located 5 Kms west of Ypres (now Ieper) For much of the First World War, Vlamertinghe (now Vlamertinge) was just outside the normal range of German shell fire and the village was used both by artillery units and field ambulances. Burials were made in the original Military Cemetery until June 1917, when the New Military Cemetery was begun in anticipation of the Allied offensive launched on this part of the front in July. The cemetery now contains 1,812 Commonwealth burials of the First World War.

Samuel is commemorated as *Samuel E. Smirthwaite* on the Dewsbury Cenotaph in Crow Nest Park and in the Dewsbury Roll of Honour kept in Dewsbury Central Library.

In Memory of

Gunner

Sam Hewart Smirthwaite

M M

776967, "A" Bty. 245th Bde., Royal Field Artillery who died on 10 April 1918 Age 22

Son of Charles and Polly Smirthwaite, of 15, Battye St., Dewsbury, Yorks.

Remembered with Honour

Vlamertinghe New Military Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



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