



## Mark Donovan 1880 – 1915

Mark was born in Dewsbury in 1880. His father was James Donovan, a Bricklayer born in Cork, Ireland in 1847 and died in 1894. His mother was Ann/Annie (nee Foy) born in Ireland around 1848 and died in 1907. They were married in 1871.

Their other children were; John, born in Salford in 1872 (name registered as *Donovin*), James, born in Dewsbury in 1873 and served in World War 1, Mary, born in Dewsbury in 1875, William, born in Dewsbury in 1876 (name registered as *Donavan*) and Annie Jane, born in Dewsbury in 1882.

On the 1881 census, the family lived at Back Victoria Road, Dewsbury, in 1891, 1901 and 1911 at 51, Bradford Road, Dewsbury. At the time of Mark's death in 1915, it appears that he was living at Crawshaw's Yard, Bradford Road, Dewsbury.

Mark attended St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church in Batley Carr. His occupation is given as a Bricklayer's Labourer and his three older brothers are all recorded as being Bricklayers. With the eldest, John, having his own business as a building contractor, it is possible that all the brothers worked together.

He attested in the army on 6<sup>th</sup> August 1901 into the York and Lancaster Regiment, 65<sup>th</sup> and 84<sup>th</sup> Foot with the Service Number 9442. He fought in the South African Campaign (Boer War) and rose to the rank of Lance Serjeant and was awarded the Queens South Africa Medal with clasp for Cape Colony. He left the army at his own request on 13<sup>th</sup> June 1907.

At the outbreak of the war he joined the local Territorials as part of the 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry with the Service Number 2252 rising to the rank of Lance Corporal. He was sent to the Western Front on 13<sup>th</sup> April 1915 and died of wounds in Belgium on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1915; he was buried in Ferme-Olivier Cemetery, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. Mark was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

According to a report in the *Dewsbury Reporter* dated 7<sup>th</sup> August, he was severely wounded in the leg by a shrapnel shell, which severed an artery. He requested a priest for the Last Sacraments and it was a Chaplain, the Rev. Michael J. Mullins who wrote to his brother John to tell the family of his death; his section commander, Serjeant G.A. Lunn also wrote to his family.

Ferme-Olivier Cemetery is located 7 kilometres north west of Ieper (Ypres) town centre. The cemetery was used continuously between 9<sup>th</sup> June 1915 and 5<sup>th</sup> August 1917, with the 62<sup>nd</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 129<sup>th</sup> and 130<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulances successively having dressing stations close by. Throughout this period, the village was just within range of the German artillery. The cemetery contains 408 Commonwealth burials of the First World War, 6 of which are unidentified.

Mark 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 Memorial Plaque in St. Joseph's RC Church, Batley Carr.

In Memory of  
Lance Corporal  
**M Donovan**

2252, 1st/4th Bn., King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry who died on 03 August 1915

Remembered with Honour  
**Ferne-Olivier Cemetery**



Commemorated in perpetuity by  
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



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