



## **Harry Firth**

### **1898-1918**

Harry was born in Dewsbury on 15<sup>th</sup> October 1898 and baptised at All Saints Church, Dewsbury on 13<sup>th</sup> Nov 1898. His father was John William Firth, a Cloth Finisher born in Dewsbury in 1866. His mother was Alice (nee Kaye) born in Kirkheaton in 1866 and died in 1904. They were married at St. Matthew's Church, Westtown on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1889.

Their other children were; Clara, born in 1890, Annie, born in 1893, Edwin, born in 1897, Fred, born in 1902 and William Edward Broadley, born in 1904.

John William was remarried on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1909 at All Saints Church to a widow, Louisa Wilby nee Talbot (born in 1875 and died in 1934). They had two children; Jack, born in 1909 and Alice, born in 1912. Louisa was previously married in 1898 to Benjamin Wilby (born in 1874 and died in 1900); they had a daughter, Esther Ellen Wilby born in 1901 who was a step-sister to Harry.

On the 1891 Census the family lived at 20, Halliley Street, Dewsbury, in 1901 and 1911 at 63, Granville Street, Dewsbury and later at 13, Bagshaw Street, Dewsbury.

Harry was a single man who was educated at Boothroyd Lane Day School and attended St. James's Mission Church where he was a member of the choir; he worked as a Shop Assistant at the Carr Top Branch of the Dewsbury Cooperative Society.

He enlisted in Pontefract in April 1917 into the Lincolnshire Regiment with the Service Number 49371 serving in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Battalions, later being transferred to the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Gloucestershire Regiment serving as Private 46348. He sustained gunshot wounds to the chest and died in No 56 General Hospital at Etaples on the French coast on 6<sup>th</sup> October 1918 and was buried in Etaples Military Cemetery, Pas-de-Calais, France. Harry was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Etaples is a town about 27 kilometres south of Boulogne. The Military Cemetery is to the north of the town. During the First World War, the area around Etaples was the scene of immense concentrations of Commonwealth reinforcement camps and hospitals. It was remote from attack, except from aircraft, and accessible by railway from both the northern and the southern battlefields. In 1917, 100,000 troops were camped among the sand dunes and the hospitals, which included eleven general, one stationary, four Red Cross hospitals and a convalescent depot, could deal with 22,000 wounded or sick. The cemetery contains 10,771 Commonwealth burials of the First World War,

Harry is commemorated on the Dewsbury Cenotaph in Crow Nest Park and in the Dewsbury Roll of Honour kept in Dewsbury Central Library.

In Memory of

Private

# Harry Firth

46348, 12th Bn., Gloucestershire Regiment who died on 06 October 1918 Age 19

Son of J. W. and L. Firth, of Bagshaw St., Dewsbury.

Remembered with Honour  
Etaples Military Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by  
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Headstone photograph by courtesy of Tony Emptage.