



John Lewis Scanlan

1893 – 1915

John was born in Swansea, Glamorgan, Wales in 1893. His father was Patrick Scanlan, a Railway Signaller born in Limerick, Ireland around 1863 and died in 1934. His mother was Catherine (nee Davies) born in Swansea in 1871 and died in 1925. They were married in Swansea in 1892.

Their other children were; Mary, born in 1892, Matthew, born in 1896, William Richard, born in 1897, Albert, born in 1899, Michael, born in 1903, Hanorah, born in 1905, Catherine (Katie), born in 1906, Elizabeth, born in 1908 and Edward, born in 1909 and died in 1911.

On the 1901 Census the family lived at 32, Back Cliffe Street, Leeds Road, Dewsbury, in 1911 at 2, Hirst Yard, Upper Road, Batley Carr, Dewsbury.

Patrick was remarried in Pontefract in 1927 to a widow, Emily Glassell, nee Crossland (born in 1868 and died in 1941).

John was a single man who in 1911 worked as a Woollen Yarn Piecener.

He enlisted in "C" Company. 1st/4th Battalion Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry with the Service Number 1629 and was sent to the Western Front on 13th April 1915; He was wounded in October, receiving an injury to his face and was in hospital for some time before returning to the front and being promoted to Lance Corporal. He was gassed in an enemy attack at Boesinghe near Ypres on 19th December 1915 and died of gas poisoning in No. 8 Stationary Hospital at Wimereux in France on 21st December 1915. He was buried in Wimereux Communal Cemetery, Pas-de-Calais, France. John was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

The local newspapers featured reports from colleagues who were serving with him at the time; it seems that when the Phosgene gas attacks began, it took some time for him to locate his gas mask and by the time he had managed to put it on, he had ingested what ultimately proved to be a fatal dose. In addition to his mother, in his Soldiers Effects record, a Miss Mary Waterhouse was named as joint legatee.

Wimereux is a small town situated approximately 5 kilometres north of Boulogne. Wimereux was the headquarters of the Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps during the First World War and in 1919 it became the General Headquarters of the British Army. From October 1914 onwards, Boulogne and Wimereux formed an important hospital centre and until June 1918, the medical units at Wimereux used the communal cemetery for burials, the south-eastern half having been set aside for Commonwealth graves, although a few burials were also made among the civilian graves. Because of the sandy nature of the soil, the headstones lie flat upon the graves. Wimereux Communal Cemetery contains 2,847, Commonwealth burials of the First World War, two of them unidentified. Buried among them is Lt.-Col. John McCrae, author of the poem "In Flanders Fields."

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

In Memory of
Lance Corporal
John Lewis Scanlan

1629, "C" Coy. 4th Bn., King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry who died on 21 December 1915 Age 22

Son of Patrick and Catherine Scanlan, of Dewsbury, Yorks.

Remembered with Honour
Wimereux Communal Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Headstone photograph by courtesy of Tony Emptage.