



Norman Tomlinson

1896 – 1915

Norman was born in Thornhill in 1896. His father was Benjamin Kirby Tomlinson, a Glass Bottle Maker born in York in 1855 and died in 1932. His mother was Elizabeth (nee Yates) born in Oldham, Lancashire in 1863 and died in 1944. They were married at St. Thomas's Church, Huddersfield on 26th December 1887.

Their other children were; Elsie, born in Castleford in 1888, Ellen, born in Castleford in 1890, Frank, born in Knottingley in 1891 and was killed in action 28th August 1917, Harold, born in Thornhill in 1893 and served in World War 1 and Jack, born in Thornhill 1906 and died in 1906.

In 1891 the family lived in Knottingley, in 1901 at 12, Lister's Buildings, Thornhill, in 1911 at 5, Mount Terrace, Lees Hall Road, Thornhill Lees and later at Ernest Cottages, 17, Lees Hall Road.

Norman was a single man who in 1911 worked as a Messenger Boy. He had attended the Lees Moor Independent Methodist Chapel and had sung in the choir since he was seven and was also a Sunday School Teacher there.

He served as Private 2032 in the 1st/4th Battalion, King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, having joined the reserves in February 1914. He was killed in action on 8th November 1915, shot with an explosive bullet, whilst on a ration party detail; the bullet entered his right lung near his heart and he died within a few minutes. He was buried in Bard Cottage Cemetery, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. Norman was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Soon after his death, his mother received a letter from him, which may have been written on the day he died and was reported in both the *Batley News* and *Dewsbury Reporter* on 20th November 1915. He wrote that he was 'downhearted', as his friend Private Jack Scarborough from Wakefield had been badly injured when a 'whizz-bang' landed on his dug-out. He also mentions another friend, Private Bertie Barber, from Mount Terrace, Lees Hall Road, Thornhill Lees, who was alive but had been taken prisoner. He finishes his letter off with a brief comment about the conditions in the trenches; "*We are up to the waist in some places, but we have been supplied with thigh boots, so it doesn't bother us so much*".

For much of the First World War, the village of Boesinghe (now Boezinge) directly faced the German line across the Yser canal. Bard Cottage was a house a little set back from the line, close to a bridge called Bard's Causeway, and the cemetery was made nearby in a sheltered position under a high bank. Burials were made between June 1915 and October 1918 and they reflect the presence of the 49th (West Riding), the 38th (Welsh) and other infantry divisions in the northern sectors of the Ypres Salient, as well as the advance of artillery to the area in the autumn of 1917. There are now 1,639 Commonwealth casualties of the First World War buried or commemorated in this cemetery. 39 of the burials are unidentified but special memorials commemorate three casualties known to be buried among them.

Norman 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

Norman Tomlinson

2032, 1st/4th Bn., King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry who died on 08 November 1915 Age 19

Son of Benjamin Kirby Tomlinson and Elizabeth Tomlinson, of Ernest Cottages, 17 Lees Hall Road, Thornhill, Dewsbury, Yorks. His brother, Frank, also fell.

Remembered with Honour

Bard Cottage Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

