



## **George Arthur Cross 1893 – 1915**

George was born in Dewsbury on 26<sup>th</sup> October 1893. His father was Edward Cross, a Carpet Weaver born in Dewsbury in 1872 and died in 1940. His mother was Sophia (nee Nicholson) born in Dewsbury in 1872 and died in 1948 They were married at St. John the Evangelist Church, Dewsbury Moor on 24<sup>th</sup> December 1892.

They also had a daughter; Sarah Ann, born in 1898.

On the 1901 Census the family lived at 6, Charles Street, Dewsbury Moor and in 1911 at 53, Garden Place, Church Lane, Dewsbury Moor.

George was a single man who in 1911 worked as a Coal Hurrier.

He enlisted into the 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry serving as Private 1995 and was sent to the Western Front on 13<sup>th</sup> April 1915. He died from gas poisoning sustained in action at Boesinghe near Ypres on 19<sup>th</sup> December 1915 and was buried in Bard Cottage Cemetery, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. George was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

On 19<sup>th</sup> December 1915, the German 4<sup>th</sup> Army conducted an attack at Ypres using a new gas, a mixture of chlorine and phosgene, a much more lethal concoction. The British took a prisoner who disclosed the intended gas attack and gleaned information from other sources, which led to the divisions of VI Corps being alerted from 15<sup>th</sup> December. The gas discharge was accompanied by German raiding parties, most of which were engaged by small-arms fire, while attempting to cross no-man's land. The British anti-gas precautions were successful and prevented a panic or a collapse of the defence, even though British anti-gas helmets had not been treated to repel phosgene. Only the 49<sup>th</sup> (West Riding) Division had a large number of gas casualties, caused by soldiers in reserve lines not being warned of the gas in sufficient time to put on their anti-gas helmets. A study by British medical authorities counted 1,069 gas casualties, of whom 120 men died. After the operation, German opinion concluded that a breakthrough could not be achieved solely by the use of gas. The Battalion's war diary records one officer and 23 other ranks died of gas poisoning and 6 other ranks were killed in action

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 49<sup>th</sup> (West Riding), the 38<sup>th</sup> (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.

George 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 War Memorial in St. John the Evangelist Church, Dewsbury Moor.

In Memory of

Private

## George Arthur Cross

1995, 1st/4th Bn., King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry who died on 19 December 1915 Age 22

Son of Edward and Sophia Cross, of 53, Garden Place, Church Lane, Dewsbury Moor, Dewsbury.

Remembered with Honour

**Bard Cottage Cemetery**



Commemorated in perpetuity by  
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

