



Ernest Beckett

1890 – 1915

Ernest was born in Dewsbury in 1890. His father was William Henry Beckett, a Woollen Spinner born in Dewsbury in 1860 and died in 1923. His mother was Sarah (nee Badley) born in Middlesex in 1868 and died in 1946. They were married on 1st February 1890 at All Saints Church, Dewsbury.

Their other children were; Harry, born in 1892 and died in 1894, Lewis, born in 1894, Harold, born in 1897, Amelia, born in 1899, Eveline, born in 1901 and Mary, born in 1903 and died in 1907.

On the 1901 Census the family lived at Queen Street, Ravensthorpe, in 1911 at Victoria Street, Ravensthorpe and later at 12, Calder Road, Ravensthorpe.

Ernest was a single man who was connected with St. Saviour's Church in Ravensthorpe; he was a member of the Church Institute and sang in the choir. In 1911 he worked as a Piecener and later as a Spinner at Armitage and Rhodes, Calder Vale Mills, Ravensthorpe.

He enlisted in Mirfield on 14th December 1914 serving as Private 3445 in the 1st/5th Battalion Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment) and was sent to the Western Front on 13th April 1915. He was killed in action on 14th September 1915 when he was hit in the head by fragments from a shell, which landed very close to him and he died shortly afterwards without regaining consciousness; he was buried in Bard Cottage Cemetery, West Vlaanderen, Belgium. Ernest was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

The local newspaper reported Ernest's death. A couple of Ernest's comrades, as well as his company officer had written to Ernest's mother about his death: *"He died doing his duty with a working party, and it may be some consolation to you to know his death was instantaneous. We feel his loss very much indeed, as he was one of our best pals, and he was always cheerful. We all undergo the same danger, and we never know whose turn it is next."*

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.

Ernest 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 Ravensthorpe War Memorial in St. Saviour's Church.

In Memory of
Private
Ernest Beckett

3445, 1st/5th Bn., Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment) who died on 14 September 1915 Age 25

Son of William Henry and Sarah Beckett, of 12, Calder Rd., Ravensthorpe, Dewsbury.

Remembered with Honour
Bard Cottage Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

