



Douglas Dekenzo (Served as Smith) 1894 – 1915

Douglas was born in Liverpool around 1894. Nothing is known about his parents, suggesting that he was either an orphan or abandoned. The 1901 census shows him as an inmate of Richmond Lodge, a children's home in Church Road, Wavertree, Liverpool.

On the 1911 census, Douglas is recorded as a boarder with the Smith family in Whitley Lower, near Dewsbury working as a Trammer below ground in a coal mine.

He attested at Mirfield on 13th November 1914 serving as Private 3434 Douglas Smith 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 in Flanders on 23rd October 1915 and was buried in Talana Farm Cemetery, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. Douglas was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. Sadly, his medals were returned in 1920 as he had no dependants.

On his army record, Douglas named as his next of kin Mr J. Whittell of Howroyd Farm, Whitley Lower. However, through an 'intent of wishes', Douglas left his soldiers effects to a Miss Beatrice Evelyn Rawcliffe, who was born in Huddersfield in 1900; she was described as a 'friend'. She married a Herbert Murphy in Eton, Buckinghamshire in 1920. In 1921, the birth of a son was registered in Huddersfield and the name given was Douglas.

Talana Farm was one of a group of farm houses named by the army from episodes of the South African war. From Ieper (Ypres) the Cemetery is located on the road in the direction of Boezinge. The cemetery was begun by French troops in April 1915, then taken over by the 1st Rifle Brigade and 1st Somerset Light Infantry in June 1915, and was used by fighting units until March 1918. There are now 529 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in the cemetery. 14 of the burials are unidentified and there are special memorials to six casualties whose graves in the cemetery could not be located and ten who are identified as a group, but not individually. It is probable that the cemetery contained other graves later destroyed by shell fire.

Douglas 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 Memorial Pillar in St. Mary and St. Michael's Church, Whitley Lower.

In Memory of
Private
D Smith

3434, 1st/5th Bn., Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment) who died on 23 October 1915

Remembered with Honour
Talana Farm Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

