



James Degan

1898-1918

James was born in Widnes, Lancashire on 24th July 1898. His father was also James Degan, a Chemical Manufacturer's Labourer born in County Leitrim, Ireland around 1868 and died in 1922. His mother was Mary (nee Johnson) born in Dublin, Ireland around 1874 and died in 1932. On the 1911 Census they state they had been married for 20 years but no marriage record has been found.

Their other children who can be traced were; Annie, born in Widnes in 1892, Thomas, born in Widnes in 1895 and died in 1895, John, born in Widnes in 1897, Robert, born in Widnes in 1900 and served in World War 1, Susan, born in Dewsbury in 1902 and died in 1919, Mary, born in Dewsbury in 1907, Thomas Edward, born in Dewsbury in 1908 and died in 1917, Louis, born in Dewsbury in 1910 and Emily, born in Dewsbury in 1912. On the 1911 Census they state that 11 children were born to the marriage of which nine were still alive.

On the 1911 Census the family lived at 13, Ingham Road, Westtown and later at 82, Middle Road, Westtown.

James was a single man who was educated at St. Paulinus School and attended Our Lady and St. Paulinus Church and was a member of the Boys Brigade. He worked at Ingham's Colliery in Thornhill.

He enlisted on 22nd July 1916 and was sent to the Western Front a year later serving as Private 34010 in the 12th and later the 2nd Battalions of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry; in September 1917 he was wounded in the left hand having a finger amputated and was also gassed on two occasions. He was killed in action near Landrecies, France on 4th November 1918 whilst delivering a message up the line, his remains were never identified for burial and so he is commemorated on the Vis-en-Artois Memorial, Haucourt, Pas-de-Calais, France. James was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

His family did not receive official confirmation of his death until September 1919.

Vis-en-Artois and Haucourt are villages on the straight main road from Arras to Cambrai. The Memorial is the back drop to the Vis-en-Artois British Cemetery, which is west of Haucourt on the north side of the main road. It bears the names of over 9,000 men of the forces of Great Britain and Ireland and South Africa; who fell in the period from 8th August 1918 to the date of the Armistice in the Advance to Victory in Picardy and Artois, between the Somme and Loos, and who have no known grave. Canadian, Australian and New Zealand forces being commemorated on other memorials to the missing.

James is also 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 Our Lady and St. Paulinus Church.

In Memory of

Private

James Degnan

34010, 2nd Bn., King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry who died on 04 November 1918 Age 20

Son of Mrs. Mary Degnan, of 82, Middle Rd., West Town, Dewsbury.

Remembered with Honour

Vis-En-Artois Memorial



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

