



John Willie Ormsby

1898 - 1917

John Willie was born in Dewsbury on 31st March 1898. His father was Patrick James Ormsby, a Paver born in Dewsbury in 1876 and died in 1943. His mother was Martha Jane (nee Hall) born in Dewsbury in 1878 and died in 1944. They were married on 11th October 1897 at Our Lady & St Paulinus Church, Westtown.

Patrick served for five years in India from 30th May 1915 to 31st December 1919 as Private 6179 in the 1st Battalion Connaught Rangers and as Guardsman 25318 in the Royal Irish Fusiliers. He developed severe bronchitis and asthma which prevented him from ever working again.

Their other children were; Mary, born in 1900, Harriet Ann, born in 1902, James, born in 1903, Edward, born in 1905, Joseph, born in 1907, William, born in 1910, Martha Jane, born in 1912, Patrick James, born in 1914, Michael, born in 1916, Teresa, born in 1921 and Agnes, born in 1923.

On the 1911 Census the family lived at Swallow Road, Westtown, Dewsbury and later at 46, High Street, Westtown.

John Willie was a single man who was educated at St. Paulinus School and attended the Church. He worked as a mill hand for Messrs Mark Oldroyd and Sons. His uncle, after whom he was named, was Serjeant John William Ormsby VC. MM.

He joined the Royal Navy on 1st June 1915 as Ordinary Seaman J/4061, surviving the great sea battle of Jutland whilst serving on H.M.S "Barham" and was transferred to a minesweeper where he was involved in even more dangerous work. He was killed in action on 6th October 1917 whilst serving on board H.M.S. "Begonia" which was sunk in a collision with a German submarine off Casablanca. His remains were never identified for burial and so he is commemorated on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial, Hampshire. John Willie was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Standing on Southsea Common overlooking the promenade in Portsmouth, Hampshire, is the Portsmouth Naval Memorial. It commemorates 9,706 naval personnel of the First World War who were lost or buried at sea.

John Willie 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
Ordinary Seaman

John Willie Ormsby

J/40616, H.M.S. "Begonia.", Royal Navy who died on 06 October 1917

Remembered with Honour
Portsmouth Naval Memorial



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

ORMSBY J. W.