



Herbert Wragg 1887-1916

Herbert was born in Glasshoughton, Castleford on 18th July 1887. His father was William Wragg, a Coal Miner born in Nottinghamshire around 1857 and died in 1924. His mother was Jane (nee Haywood) born in Bilston, Staffordshire around 1865 and died in 1919. They were married on 26th April 1884 in St. Mary's Church, Horton, Northumberland. On the 1911 Census they declared 10 children born to the marriage of which 7 were still alive.

Their other children who could be found were; William, born in Pontefract in 1890, Sydney, born in Pontefract in 1892, Walter, born in Pontefract in 1893, Simpson, born in Cowpen, Blyth, Northumberland in 1895 and was killed in action 22nd February 1916, Emma, born in Cowpen in 1898 and died in 1898, Ellen, born in Cowpen in 1899, Jane, born in Cowpen in 1902 and Mona, born in Cowpen in 1906 and died in 1906. Sydney and William served in the Royal Navy and Walter in the Military Police in World War 1.

William was previously married in 1881 to Isabella Belch (born in 1861 and died in 1882); they did not have any children.

On the 1891 Census the family lived at Farrar's Yard, Corn Market, Pontefract, in 1901 at Cowpen Row, Blyth, in 1911 at 12, Wesley Street, Castleford and later at 100, Huddersfield Road, Westtown, Dewsbury where they ran a butcher's shop which Simpson was to have managed, had he survived his war service. They later lived at 12, Dale Street, Thornhill Lees and finally 20, Thornhill Street, Savile Town.

Herbert worked as a Coal Miner and was married on 27th December 1909 to Dora Colley (born in Sheffield in 1892) they had a son, William, born 24th December 1910 and died 15th May 1912. The marriage must have broken down either before or after this date, as Dora enters into what appears to be a bigamous marriage using her mother's maiden name of Cockayne in December 1913 to a Frank Pashley in Leicester; she later emigrated to Canada in May 1914 and died in 1977.

According to an article in the Dewsbury Reporter in February 1916 which stated that his brother Simpson was reported as missing; Herbert (his name is misspelt as *Hubert*) had joined the "*Tynemouth Heavy Battery of Territorials*" prior to the war and described him as "*a Married Man*". The Tynemouth Royal Garrison Artillery had its HQ at Tynemouth, but Companies No. 6 & 7 were based at Blyth. On 28th October 1916 an article in the Dewsbury Reporter stated that Herbert's parents had received an intimation that he had been killed in action on 1st July 1916, the First Day of the Battle of the Somme whilst serving with the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry which was also reported on 3rd November in the Pontefract and Castleford Express. An article which appeared in the Dewsbury District News on 17th March 1917 under the heading "*A Dewsbury Family's Patriotism*" told how the family had received a report confirming Simpson's death and the service of his three surviving brothers. It also stated that Herbert had worked; "*in the collieries near Sheffield.*"

In 1917, 1918 and 1919 "In Memoriam" notices placed in the Dewsbury Reporter stated that he had served in the 9th Battalion of the KOYLI. His mother Jane's headstone in Holy Innocents Churchyard, Thornhill Lees also states the above.

Despite years of research and scrutiny of military records, Dewsbury Sacrifices have been unable to find any evidence that Herbert Wragg had served and died in World War 1 under his true name. There are others with exact and similar names but the Parents and Wife details do not match. We are convinced that he served under an alias, probably the same one which he may have used when attesting as a Territorial.

Herbert 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 from the now demolished St. Mary's Church, Savile Town now displayed in Holy Innocents Church, Thornhill Lees and on the Castleford War Memorial along with his brother Simpson. Both brothers are named on their mother's headstone in Holy Innocents Churchyard.

The family's address in the Roll of Honour which was compiled in 1923/24 is given as 11, Cloth Hall Street, Dewsbury.

