



Ernest Arthur Whitaker

1898 - 1917

Ernest was born in Dewsbury on 18th August 1898. His father was Joseph Whitaker, a Woollen Spinner born in Ossett in 1856 and died in 1922. His mother was Sarah Ann (nee Ingham) born in Ossett in 1861 and died in 1933. They were married on 11th September 1880 at All Saints Church, Dewsbury.

Their other children who could be traced were; Florence Beatrice, born in 1882, and died in 1882, John Harpin, born in 1884, Annie Gertrude, born in 1885, Hilda May, born in 1888, Percy Ingham, born in 1891, Wilfred Henry, born in 1893 and was killed in action on 1st July 1916, Joseph Frederick, born in 1895 and Ivy, born in 1900. On the 1911 Census they declare 10 children born to the marriage, of which 8 were still alive.

On the 1891 Census the family lived at 10, Camroyd Street, Dewsbury, in 1901 at Holmleigh, Thornhill Lees, Dewsbury, in 1911 at 7, Balmoral Terrace, Savile Town and later at Wharf Street, Savile Town. They later moved to Morecambe, Lancashire and lived at 67, Albert Road, then 32, Claremont Road.

Ernest was a single man who was educated at Savile Town School and attended St. Mary's Church where he sang in the choir for nine years; he worked as a grocery assistant at the Dewsbury Pioneers Industrial Society prior to moving to Morecambe.

He enlisted in Lancaster serving as Private 40466 in the 15th Battalion Cheshire Regiment. He was killed in action near Poelcapelle on 23rd October 1917 during the Battle of Passchendaele, when he was hit by a shell whilst taking ammunition to the front line. His remains were discovered in 1922 and he was buried in Poelcapelle British Cemetery, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. Ernest was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Poelcapelle British Cemetery was made after the Armistice when graves were brought in from the surrounding battlefields and smaller cemeteries. The great majority of the graves date from the last five months of 1917, and in particular October, but certain plots contain many graves of 1914 and 1915. There are now 7,479 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in Poelcapelle British Cemetery. 6,230 of the burials are unidentified but special memorials commemorate 8 casualties known or believed to be buried among them. Other special memorials commemorate 24 servicemen buried by the enemy in other burial grounds in the area whose graves could not be located.

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 War Memorial from the now demolished St. Mary's Church, Savile Town now displayed in Holy Innocents Church, Thornhill Lees.

In Memory of
Private
E A Whitaker

40466, 15th Bn., Cheshire Regiment who died on 23 October 1917

Remembered with Honour
Poelcapelle British Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

