



## **Norman Keighley**

### **1896-1918**

Norman was born in Bradford in 1896. His father was Israel Keighley, a Jeweller and Watchmaker born in Bradford in 1871 and died in 1946. His mother was Annie (nee Stott) born in Bradford in 1874 and died in 1949. They were married in 1894.

Their other children were; David, born in Bradford in 1895 and died in 1895 and Emily May, born in Earlsheaton in 1903.

On the 1901 Census the family lived at Back Walker Street, Earlsheaton and in 1911 at 147, Craigie Dene, Wakefield Road, Earlsheaton.

Norman was a single man who was educated at Dewsbury Parish Church School and Heckmondwike Grammar School; he was attached to Highfield Church Sunday school and played cricket for Chickenley and also played in the Dewsbury Tuesday Cricket League. He worked for his father at his jewellery business on Church Street, Dewsbury.

He enlisted on 5<sup>th</sup> January 1916 at Newcastle-upon-Tyne serving as Gunner 127365 in the 11<sup>th</sup> Trench Mortar Battery, Royal Field Artillery. He went to Ipswich, Woolwich and the Ewshot Camp in Hampshire where he completed his training. On 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1916 he was sent to the Western Front and was wounded in the thigh by a German sniper in September 1916. Following 6 weeks treatment in a French hospital, he went back to his trench-mortar gun. On 10<sup>th</sup> July 1917 he was taken prisoner by the Germans at Nieuport, Belgium, his parents receiving a postcard from him on 18<sup>th</sup> September to the effect he was a Prisoner of War at Dülmen in Nord Rhein-Westphalia and was later moved to work on a farm in Lechfeld, Bavaria; he said that he was treated well by his captors until the end of the War, sending several cheerful letters home. He died of pneumonia and influenza (Spanish Flu) in the 30<sup>th</sup> General Hospital, Calais on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1918, having being admitted four days earlier after becoming seriously ill on his journey from Bavaria. He was buried in Les Baraques Military Cemetery, Sangatte, Pas-de-Calais, France. Norman was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Les Baraques Military Cemetery will be found on the western side of Calais. In April 1915, No.6 Base Supply Depot was started at Calais to help relieve the pressure on Boulogne and to provide a base nearer to the front than Havre or Rouen. The base remained open until the last Commonwealth forces left France in March 1921. The 30<sup>th</sup>, 35<sup>th</sup> and 38<sup>th</sup> General Hospitals, No.9 British Red Cross Hospital and No.10 Canadian Stationary Hospital were also stationed in the town providing about 2,500 beds. For three years, Commonwealth burials were made in Calais Southern Cemetery, but it later became necessary to start a new site and in September 1917, the first burials took place at Les Baraques. The cemetery continued in use until 1921. The cemetery now contains 1,303 Commonwealth burials of the First World War, together with more than 250 war graves of other nationalities, all but 2 of them German.

Norman 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 Earlsheaton Park War Memorial and on the Oak Reredos in St. Peter's Church, Earlsheaton and on the Memorial Plaque from the now demolished Earlsheaton Highfield Congregational Church relocated to Longcauseway Church, Dewsbury and on the Heckmondwike Grammar School War Memorial and on the Dewsbury Parish Church School Old Boys Memorial Tablet.

In Memory of

Gunner

## Norman Keighley

127365, 11th Trench Mortar Bty., Royal Field Artillery who died on 31 December 1918 Age 22

A Prisoner of War in Germany for eighteen months, he died of influenza, on his way home. Son of Israel and Annie Keighley, of "Craigie Dene," Wakefield Rd., Dewsbury, Yorks.

Remembered with Honour

Les Baraques Military Cemetery, Sangatte



Commemorated in perpetuity by  
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Headstone photograph by courtesy of Richard Houghton.