



John William Thorpe

1881-1918

John was born in Dewsbury on 28th January 1881. His father was George *Thorp*, born in Thornhill on 24th Aug 1852 and died on 1st March 1945. At the age of eight he was working as a hurrier in a coal mine and later worked in a woollen mill; through studying in his spare time he later rose to be the chairman of the Co-operative Wholesale Society for five years, a director for twenty six years and was awarded the CBE. His mother was Ann (nee Parkinson) born in Dewsbury in 1850 and died in 1901. They were married on 6th October 1872 at All Saints Church, Dewsbury. The family began spelling their surname as *Thorpe* from around 1873.

Their other children were; Mary Elizabeth, born in 1873, Harriet, born in 1875 and David, born in 1878.

On the 1891 Census the family were living at Chatsworth Terrace, Earlsheaton and in 1901 at 18, Thornfield, Thornhill Lees.

George was remarried to a widow, Elizabeth Ann Hepworth (nee Smith, born in 1852 and died in 1909) on 7th September 1901 at St. Mary's Church, Mirfield.

In 1911 George was living at 6, Northfield, Dewsbury with a Mary Alice Smith age 22 who was recorded as his niece; they were both still living at this address on the 1939 Register.

John worked as a woollen spinner in 1901, a card cleaner in 1903 and a corn miller in 1911. He was married to Matilda Stewart (born in 1878 and died in 1904) on 30th May 1903 at All Saints Church, Dewsbury; they had a daughter, Elizabeth Ann Thorpe, born in Halifax in 1904. John was remarried to Nelly Archer (born in 1880 and died in 1958) on 24th June 1905 at Holy Trinity Church, Batley Carr. In 1911 they lived at 1, Rose Mount, Savile Park, Halifax and later at 27, Saltburn Street, Hanson Lane, Halifax.

He enlisted in Halifax serving as Private 37056 in the 9th Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry and died in France on 22nd March 1918, the Second Day of the German Spring Offensive (*Der Kaiserschlacht*). His Soldiers' Effects record states that he died as a Prisoner of War and his name appears in the records held by the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva. He must have died on the day he was captured and was buried by the enemy. His remains were not recovered until August 1919, one of nine men whose remains were found near the village of Longavesnes in the Somme Region; only he and one other were identified from their identity discs. He is now buried in Peronne Communal Cemetery Extension, Somme, France. John was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Peronne Communal Cemetery Extension contained 177 graves at the Armistice. It was then enlarged when graves were brought in from the battlefields north and east of Peronne and from small cemeteries in the area. There are now 1,595 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in the extension. 224 of the burials are unidentified but there are special memorials to seven casualties known or believed to be buried among them, and ten buried in other cemeteries whose graves could not be found.

John is commemorated on the Dewsbury Cenotaph in Crow Nest Park and in the Dewsbury Roll of Honour kept in Dewsbury Central Library and in the County Borough of Halifax Books of Remembrance kept in Halifax Town Hall.

In Memory of

Private

J W Thorpe

37056, 9th Bn., King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry who died on 22 March 1918

Remembered with Honour

Peronne Communal Cemetery Extension



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

