



Edmund Watson

1897-1918

Edmund was born in Earlsheaton on 12th January 1897 and baptised at St. Peter's Church, Earlsheaton on 17th March 1897. His father was James Watson, a blanket and rug raiser for a horse clothing manufacturer born in 1857 and died in 1914. His mother was Sarah (nee Senior) born in Earlsheaton in 1855 and died in 1930. They were married on 16th August 1879 at All Saints Church, Dewsbury.

Their other children were; Herbert, born in 1879 and died in 1897, Horace, born in 1882 and died in 1890 and Percy, born in 1889.

On the 1891 Census the family lived at Headland Lane, Earlsheaton and in 1901 and 1911 at 3, Belle Vue Terrace, Earlsheaton.

Edmund was a single man who in 1911 worked as a Clerk for a rag merchant.

He enlisted in the Royal Field Artillery serving as Driver 781609. A newspaper report of 4th January 1919 stated he had been twice wounded in France; on one occasion in the head. He was transferred from Sick Convoy 90th Field Ambulance on 6th March 1917 and was under treatment for 5 days for the ailment '*Stricture*' (a morbid contraction of any passage of the body), he was transferred to Sick Convoy No 28 Ambulance Train on 10th March 1917; at this time he was serving with 168th Brigade, 32nd Division. His Medal Index Card states he had deserted from the Army on 24th October 1918 and a newspaper report of 28th December 1918 stated that he "*was supposed to be an absentee.*" He was taken into custody from St. Luke's Hospital in Bradford, having been remanded at Bradford City Court on 20th December 1918 on a charge of obtaining jewellery to the value of £120 by false pretences; evidence was given that he had recently become "*strange in his manner.*" Detective Chief Inspector Petty who had taken him into custody said he appeared to be "*a very intelligent man and seemed to feel his position keenly.*" He was due to have been brought before the magistrates on 27th December but tragically he was found dead in the Bradford City police cells on the morning of 25th December 1918, hanging with a towel around his neck. At his inquest a verdict of "*Suicide while temporarily insane*" was returned. He was buried in Earlsheaton Cemetery. Edmund was entitled to the award of the British War Medal and the Victory Medal but these were subject to forfeit because he was classed as a deserter; nevertheless, he is justifiably commemorated by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission as a War Casualty.

Edmund 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 Earlsheaton Park War Memorial and on the Oak Reredos in St. Peter's Church, Earlsheaton.

In Memory of

Driver

Edmund Watson

781609, Royal Field Artillery who died on 25 December 1918 Age 21

Son of Mrs. Sarah Watson, of 3, Belle Vue Terrace, Earlsheaton, Dewsbury.

Remembered with Honour

Dewsbury (Earlsheaton) Cemetery



**Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission**

