



Gilbert Cockburn (Coburn)

1893-1918

Gilbert was born in Batley Carr in 1893; his birth name is recorded as *Cockburn*. His father was John Cockburn Robson, a Dyers Labourer born in Jedburgh, Roxburghshire, Scotland in 1869 and died in 1926. His mother was Clara (nee Kershaw, sometimes Lister) born in Dewsbury in 1870 and died in 1937. They were married on 25th December 1890 at St. Mark's Church, Halifax Road, Dewsbury. There are a few spelling variations of their surnames and Robson was also used in some cases.

Their other children were; Ernest, (surname registered as *Cockborn*) born in 1892, Willie Cockburn, born in 1897 and served World War 1 and Elsie Cockburn, born in 1904.

In 1891 the family lived at 15, Quarry Street, Staincliffe, Batley, surnames recorded as *Robson*, in 1901 at 11, Quarry Street, surnames recorded as *Robson*, in 1911 at 44, Wood Hill, Dewsbury, surnames recorded as *Cockburn* and later at 17, Hirst Yard, Batley Carr.

Gilbert was a single man who was educated at Batley Carr Church Day Schools and attended St. Mark's Church where he was a choirboy; he was employed as a Dyer's Labourer at Messrs Marshall, Kaye and Marshall in Ravensthorpe.

He enlisted in Dewsbury in May 1915 into the West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own) as *Gilbert Coburn* with the Service Number 19906 serving in the 9th, 2nd/6th and finally the 1st/6th Battalions rising to the rank of Serjeant. His Medal Index Card states he was sent to the Balkans on 21st September 1915 but he served in the Dardanelles Campaign (Gallipoli) where he contracted enteric fever and was sent to Egypt to recuperate; he was then posted to the Western Front where he was wounded, returning to the front in February 1918. He was killed in action in Northern France on 12th October 1918 and was buried in the field; in June 1920 his remains were reburied in Denain Communal Cemetery, Nord, France. Gilbert was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Denain is a town in the Department of the Nord, next to Valenciennes and on the road towards Cambrai. Denain was a German hospital centre during the greater part of the War; and from the 1st November 1918, to the 12th March 1919, the 33rd Casualty Clearing Station was posted in the town. The Communal Cemetery was used by the Germans to bury their soldiers and (in 1917 and 1918) 153 British prisoners. A British plot was made at the South-East end, after the capture of the town; and after the Armistice the graves of the prisoners and other British graves were regrouped beside it. There are now over 300, 1914-18 war casualties commemorated in this site.

Gilbert is commemorated on the Dewsbury Cenotaph in Crow Nest Park and in the Dewsbury Roll of Honour kept in Dewsbury Central Library as *Gilbert Coburn* and on the War Memorial in Holy Trinity Church, Batley Carr as *G. Cockburn*.

In Memory of
Serjeant
G Coburn

19906, 1st/6th Bn., West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own) who died on 12 October 1918

Remembered with Honour
Denain Communal Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Headstone photograph by courtesy of the "In Memory" Website of Pierre Vandervelden.