



William Henry Smith

1891 – 1916

William was born in Thornhill Lees in 1891 and baptised on 2nd December 1891 at Holy Innocents Church, Thornhill Lees. His father was Joseph Smith, a Glass Bottle Maker born in Thornhill Lees in 1861 and died in 1903. His mother was Martha (née Nussey) born in Warmfield near Wakefield in 1863 and died in 1940. They were married at Holy Innocents Church on 5th September 1884.

Their other children were; Eveline, born in 1884, George, born in 1888 and was killed in action on 23rd April 1917, Arthur, born in 1895, Mary Louisa, born in 1899 and died in 1902 and Clifford, born in 1902

On the 1891 Census the family lived at 7, Cromwell Terrace, Thornhill Lees, in 1901 at 30, Berry Square, Thornhill Lees and in 1911 at 1, Queen Street, Thornhill Lees.

William was a single man who worked at Messrs Kilner Brothers glass-works as a glass bottle breaker off. He was a member of the Thornhill Labour Club.

He enlisted as Private 13486 in the 11th Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own) and was sent to the Western Front in August 1915, where he was part of the 11th Battalion's machine gun section and achieved the rank of Lance Corporal. According to official records he was killed in action on 5th July 1916 during the Battle of the Somme. His remains were never identified for burial and so he is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial to the missing of the Somme. William was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Sources at the time had informed his family that his death had occurred on 6th July. This was the date in a letter his mother received which read: *"It grieves me very much to have to write these few lines to let you know that your poor son Bill got killed in action on Wednesday the 6th. I know it will be a terrible blow to you, just as it was to us, because he was such a fine chap. He died without any pain, having been shot through the head. All his pals in the gun section wish to share their deepest sympathy with you."*

The Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme bears the names of more than 72,000 officers and men of the United Kingdom and South African forces who died in the Somme sector before 20th March 1918 and have no known grave. Over 90% of those commemorated died between July and November 1916. The memorial also serves as an Anglo-French Battle Memorial in recognition of the joint nature of the 1916 offensive and a small cemetery containing equal numbers of Commonwealth and French graves lies at the foot of the memorial.

William is also commemorated on the Dewsbury Cenotaph in Crow Nest Park and in the Dewsbury Roll of Honour kept in the Dewsbury Central Library and as William Hy. Smith on the War Memorial in Holy Innocents Church, Thornhill Lees.

In Memory of
Lance Corporal

William Henry Smith

13486, 11th Bn., West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own) who died on 05 July 1916 Age 24

Son of Mrs. Martha Smith, of 1, Queen St., Thornhill Lees, Dewsbury.

Remembered with Honour
Thiepval Memorial



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

