



Samuel Middleton Hawkswell

1890 - 1917

Samuel was born in Fitchburg, Worcester County, Massachusetts, USA in 1890. His father was John Smith Hawkswell, a bricklayer and plasterer born in Asenby, Yorkshire in 1856 and died in 1933. His mother was Jane Hawkswell (nee Fleetham) born in Shildon, County Durham in 1859. They were married in Ottringham, Yorkshire on 30th October 1881.

They had a daughter born in Dewsbury in 1883; Dorothy Ellen, (birth name registered as Dora) also known as Nellie and they later emigrated to the USA. They had another son Ralph, born in Fitchburg in 1893. On 24th December, 1894 John and the children returned to England on the Cephalaria which sailed from Boston, Massachusetts to Liverpool. Jane had previously died in the USA.

John was remarried in Dewsbury in 1896 to a widow, Susannah Farrar, nee Sellers (born in 1864 and died in 1943). She already had two children, Robert Vernal Farrar, born in 1887 and John Henry Vincent Farrar, born in 1889. John and Susannah had three children, Alva Lawrence, born in 1897, Gladys, born in 1899 and Charles Cyril, born in 1903. They lived at 152, Mill Street East, Savile Town, Dewsbury.

Samuel, known to his family and friends as Sam was a single man who was educated at St. Mary's Church School in Savile Town and attended the Church and Sunday school. For years he worked for Messrs Hemmingway and Bindschadler's Dyeworks on Church Street, Dewsbury. On the 1911 Census he was a Wool Dyer; sometime after the Census he emigrated to the USA and only returned home in October 1915 to enlist.

He enlisted in February 1916 into the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry but was transferred into the Royal Scots and finally into the 1st Battalion Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) serving as Private 40258. He was sent to the Western Front but contracted septic poisoning and came back to England to recuperate. He returned to the Front where he was killed in action by a shell during the Battle of Passchendaele on 18th August 1917 and is buried in Coxyde Military Cemetery, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. Samuel was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

In June 1917, Commonwealth forces relieved French forces on 6 kilometres of front line from the sea to a point south of Nieuport (now Nieuwpoort), and held this sector for six months. Coxyde (now Koksijde) was about 10 kilometres behind the front line. The village was used for rest billets and was occasionally shelled, but the cemetery, which had been started by French troops, was found to be reasonably safe. It became the most important of the Commonwealth cemeteries on the Belgian coast and was used at night for the burial of the dead brought back from the front line. The cemetery now contains 1,507 Commonwealth burials of the First World War.

Samuel is commemorated on the Dewsbury Cenotaph in Crow Nest Park and in the Dewsbury Roll of Honour kept in Dewsbury Central Library and as *Sam Hawkswell* on both the War Memorial from the now demolished St. Mary's Church now displayed in Holy Innocents Parish Church, Thornhill Lees and the Holy Innocents Church War Memorial.

In Memory of

Private

Samuel Middleton Hawkswell

40258, 1st Bn., Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) who died on 18 August 1917 Age 27

Son of John Smith Hawkswell and Jane Hawkswell, of 152, Mill St. East, Savile Town, Dewsbury.

Remembered with Honour

Coxyde Military Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

