



## **William Henry Barker**

### **1895 - 1916**

William was born in Dewsbury in 1895. His father was Seth Ainley Barker, a Dyer's Labourer born in Dewsbury in 1870 and died in 1943. His mother was Emma Jane (nee Jackaman) born in Mendlesham, Suffolk in 1873 and died in 1928. They were married on 24<sup>th</sup> February 1894 at Holy Innocents Church, Thornhill Lees.

They had another son, Harry, born in 1897.

On the 1901 Census the family lived at 11, Thornton Street, Boothroyd Lane, Dewsbury, and in 1911 at 21, Thornton Street.

William was unmarried and was connected to the Providence Independent Methodist Chapel and was employed by Messrs Mark Oldroyd and Sons Limited, Woollen Manufacturers.

He enlisted on 6<sup>th</sup> August 1915 serving as Private 25219 in the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry and was sent to the Western Front on 18<sup>th</sup> December 1915. He was killed in action during the First Day of the Battle of the Somme on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916. His body was not recovered until 1927 and was buried in Serre Road Cemetery No 2, Somme, France. William was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

The village of Serre is 11 kilometres north-north-east of Albert. In June 1916, the road out of Mailly-Maillet to Serre and Puisieux entered No Man's Land about 1,300 metres south-west of Serre. On 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916, the 31<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Divisions attacked north and south of this road and although parties of the 31<sup>st</sup> Division reached Serre the attack failed. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> Divisions attacked once more on the 13<sup>th</sup> November, but again without success. Early in 1917, the Germans fell back to the Hindenburg Line and on 25<sup>th</sup> February, Serre was occupied by the 22<sup>nd</sup> Manchesters. The village changed hands once more in March 1918 and remained under German occupation, until they withdrew in August. In the spring of 1917, the battlefields of the Somme and Ancre were cleared by V Corps and a number of new cemeteries were made, three of which are now named from the Serre Road. Serre Road Cemetery No.2 was begun in May 1917 and by the end of the war it contained approximately 475 graves, but it was greatly enlarged after the Armistice by the addition of further graves from the surrounding area, including graves from smaller cemeteries. There are now 7,127 Commonwealth burials of the First World War in the cemetery, mostly dating from 1916. Of these, 4,944 are unidentified. The cemetery, which was not completed until 1934, was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens.

William is commemorated on the Dewsbury Cenotaph in Crow Nest Park and in the Dewsbury Roll of Honour kept in Dewsbury Central Library and on the War Memorial in the Providence Independent Methodist Church, Thornton Street, Dewsbury.

In Memory of

Private

## William Henry Barker

25219, 8th Bn., King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry who died on 01 July 1916 Age 21

Son of Seth and Emma Barker, of 21, Thornton St., Boothroyd Lane, Dewsbury.

Remembered with Honour

Serre Road Cemetery No.2



Commemorated in perpetuity by  
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

