



John Riley

1892 – 1916

John was born in Dewsbury in 1892. His father was also John Riley, a coal miner born in Liverpool in 1860 and died in 1937. His mother was Elizabeth (née Crowther) born in Dewsbury in 1860 and died in 1926. They were married at All Saints Church, Dewsbury on 29th April 1878.

Their other children were; Charlie, born in 1878 and died in 1878, Ada, born in 1879, Alfred, born in 1881 and died in 1885, Laura, born in 1883, William Henry, born in 1887, Hetty, born in 1889 and died in 1890, Norman, born in 1890, Ben Crowther, born in 1895 and served in World War 1, Harry, born in 1897, Sarah Elizabeth, born in 1900 and Edgar, born in 1906 and died in 1907.

On the 1881 and 1891 Census Records the family lived at 1, Back Leatham Street, Dewsbury, in 1901 at 5, Gladstone Street, Dewsbury, in 1911 at 44, Heckmondwike Road, Dewsbury Moor and later at 1, Brick Row, Dewsbury Moor.

John was a single man who in 1911 was working as a teamer in the coal mining industry, prior to enlisting he worked for the Mirfield Colliery Company at Dark Lane Pit. He was connected with St. John the Evangelist Church, Dewsbury Moor and was a member of Dewsbury Moor Nelson Cricket Club.

He enlisted in the 9th Battalion Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) in August 1915 serving as Private S/11384 and was sent to the Western Front on 22nd December. He was killed in action during the Battle of the Somme on 17th August 1916. His remains were never identified for burial and so he is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial to the missing of the Somme. John was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

His parents received the following letter from Private H. Morris, one of his pals: *"I am taking the opportunity of answering the letter which you sent to Jack, as I was his chum. I am sorry to break the news of Jack's death to you, but he was killed whilst in the trenches, and he suffered no pain, for he passed away very quickly. We buried him as best we could, and we are very sorry to lose one of our best chums. I hope you will soon get over the shock, and I will be glad to hear from you."*

The Thiepval Memorial, the Memorial to the Missing of the Somme, bears the names of the 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.

John 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 War Memorial in St. John the Evangelist Church, Dewsbury Moor.

In Memory of

Private

John Riley

S/11384, 9th Bn., Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) who died on 17 August 1916 Age 24

Son of John and Elizabeth Riley, of 1, Brick Row, Dewsbury Moor, Dewsbury, Yorks.

Remembered with Honour

Thiepval Memorial



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

