



Walter Bray 1885 – 1916

Walter was born in Dewsbury on 26th May 1885 and baptised 18th October at St. Mark's Church, Dewsbury. His father was Benjamin Bray, a Power Loom Tuner born in Honley, Huddersfield in 1857 and died in 1905. His mother was Elizabeth Ann (née Gibson) born in Dewsbury in 1863 and died in 1936. They were married at All Saints Church, Dewsbury on 6th December 1884.

Their other children were; Emma, born in 1887, Selina, born in 1895, Percy, born in 1897 and served in World War 1, Fred Gibson, born in 1899 and Albert, born in 1901.

On the 1901 Census the family lived in Cemetery Road, Westtown, in 1911 at 9, Robinson Street, Dewsbury and later at 26, Soothill Terrace, Crackenedge, Dewsbury.

Walter was a single man who in 1911 worked as a cloth scourer and prior to enlistment was employed by Messrs Mark Oldroyd and Sons Limited. He was connected to Dewsbury Moorlands Wesleyan Church, and played for the Cricket Club.

He enlisted on 23rd April 1916, and was initially posted to the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. He was soon transferred to the 76th Company Machine Gun Corps (Infantry) serving as Private 37246 and was sent to the Western Front on 6th August 1916. Shortly after arriving he wrote his only letter home to his mother reassuring her as to his wellbeing, as follows: *"Just a few lines to let you know I am in the pink, and I hope you are the same. We are having some lovely weather. It is red-hot. We had a splendid voyage on Sunday; I enjoyed sailing very much. We have had plenty to eat so far."* He was killed in action during the Battle of the Somme on 18th August 1916, less than two weeks after his arrival in France. His remains were never identified for burial and so he is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial to the missing of the Somme. Walter was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

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.

Walter 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 Memorial Plaque from Moorlands Wesleyan Methodist Church, now stored in the Resource Centre at Batley Central Methodist Church.

In Memory of

Private

Walter Bray

37246, 76th Coy., Machine Gun Corps (Infantry) who died on 18 August 1916 Age 31

Son of Ben and Elizabeth Bray, of 26, Soothill Terrace, Crackenedge, Dewsbury, Yorks.

Remembered with Honour

Thiepval Memorial



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

