



Alfred (Fred) Johnson

1893 – 1917

Fred was born in Woodhouse, Leeds in 1893. His mother was Ellen Johnson, born in Leeds in 1876 and died in 1951. His stepfather was William Breheney, born 14th December 1881 in Dewsbury; he was the former landlord of the Crow Nest Inn, Huddersfield Road, Dewsbury and later a teamer for Mr. A. Parkinson, General Carrier. He was killed in action in the Salonica Campaign on 7th December 1915 whilst serving in the Connaught Rangers. They were married on 25th December 1903 at Our Lady and St. Paulinus Church, Dewsbury.

William and Ellen had four children; Margaret, born in 1904, Patrick Joseph, born in 1906, William, born in 1908 and Ellen, born in 1913. The family lived at 3, Nowells Yard, Boothroyd Lane, Dewsbury.

Fred had his own photography business at the bottom of Bond Street, Dewsbury and was noted for his talent as a black and white sketch artist. At the time of his enlistment he was in the employ of Messrs Mark Oldroyd and Sons at Spinkwell Mills on Halifax Road. He was married on 11th January 1913 to Florrie Blackburn (born in 1890 and died in 1966) at Holy Innocents Church, Thornhill Lees. They had one child, Alfred Fearnley, born in 1913. They lived at 3, Mill Street East, Savile Town, Dewsbury. Florrie was remarried on 4th August 1919 to Herbert Thompson (born in 1888 and died in 1968) at Holy Innocents Church. In 1939 they lived at 12, Pretoria Street, Hull where Herbert was a Grocer, but moved back to Dewsbury after his retirement.

He attested in March 1916 serving as Private 202458 in the 2nd/4th Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. In May 1917 he was gravely wounded through the eyes and a shell fragment had lodged in his brain. He died of these wounds in the 5th General Hospital in Rouen, France on 12th May 1917. He was buried in St. Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen, Seine-Maritime, France. Fred was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

During the First World War, Commonwealth camps and hospitals were stationed on the southern outskirts of Rouen. A base supply depot and the 3rd Echelon of General Headquarters were also established in the city. Almost all of the hospitals at Rouen remained there for practically the whole of the war. They included eight general, five stationary, one British Red Cross and one labour hospital, and No. 2 Convalescent Depot. A number of the dead from these hospitals were buried in other cemeteries, but the great majority were taken to the city cemetery of St. Sever. St. Sever Cemetery contains 3,082 Commonwealth burials of the First World War. In September 1916, it was found necessary to begin an extension, where the last burial took place in April 1920. The cemetery extension contains 8,348 Commonwealth burials of the First World War (ten of them unidentified).

Fred 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 from the now demolished St. Mary's Church, Savile Town now displayed in Holy Innocents Church, Thornhill Lees.

In Memory of

Private

Fred Johnson

202458, 2nd/4th Bn., King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry who died on 12 May 1917

Remembered with Honour

St. Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Headstone photograph by courtesy of Mlle. Anais Pancrazy, Rouen, France.