



Ernest Asquith MM

1887-1919

Ernest was born in Thornhill in 1887. His father was Alfred Asquith, a Blacksmith born in Thornhill in 1861 and died in 1896. His mother was Emma (nee Broadhead) born in Thornhill in 1858 and died in 1928. They were married at St. Michael and All Angels Church, Thornhill on 24th May 1884.

Their other children were; Sarah Ethel, born in Thornhill in 1885 and Edith, born in Thornhill in 1889.

On the 1891 Census the family lived at Brook Houses, Whitley Road, Thornhill, in 1901 at 39, Town Street, Thornhill and in 1911 at 39, Paddock, Thornhill.

Ernest was a single man who was educated at Thornhill Church of England School and was a member of St. Michael and All Angels Church and Institute and attended Thornhill Baptist Chapel Sunday school. In 1911 he was a Shop Assistant selling glass and china, and prior to enlisting he was a Foreman (Chemicals) at Messrs Reckitt and Sons, Crown Blue Starch Manufacturers in Thornhill.

He enlisted on 4th June 1915 into the Royal Field Artillery serving as Gunner 3017 with "B" 245 Battery, 49th Division and was sent to the Western Front in February 1916. He fought in the Somme offensive in 1916 at Thiepval, Beaumont-Hamel and Albert, going on to take part in the offensives at La Basse, Nieuport, Ypres Salient, Passchendaele in 1917, the defence of Kemmel and the final offensive at Cambrai, Maubeuge and Mons in 1918. In March 1918 he was awarded the Military Medal for Gallantry in the Field, which was published in the London Gazette on 25th April 1918. On 16th November 1918 he was promoted to Lance Bombardier 776210. He was admitted to the 42nd Casualty Clearing Station at Douai in Northern France on 8th February 1919 with the suspicion that he had tuberculosis of the lung, after one month he was returned to the UK and hospitalised for 45 days at Fusehill War Hospital in Carlisle and then 52 days in the Military Hospital at Staincliffe, Dewsbury. He was discharged on 27th May 1919, the reason given was debility and *'being generally unfit for further war service'* and was awarded Silver War Badge number 417020. Despite extensive medical tests, tuberculosis was not diagnosed and he returned to his job at Reckitt and Sons. He died at his home at 117, Combs Road, Thornhill on 13th October 1919; the cause of death was given as Pulmonary Tuberculosis! He was buried in Thornhill (Edge Top) Baptist Chapelyard. In addition to the Military Medal, Ernest was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Ernest 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 St. Michael and All Angels Church, Thornhill.

He was one of twenty men who were named on the Cenotaph and Roll of Honour but were not recorded as official war casualties, due to their cause of death not being officially attributed to war service.

In November 2021 Dewsbury Sacrifices collated all available Service Records, Pension Records and newspaper articles to provide a chronological narrative between Ernest's date of discharge and date of death with the assertion that the original sputum test for tuberculosis was flawed, in light of the fact that he died from that disease less than five months after discharge and requested that his case might be reconsidered. On 3rd August 2022 he was accepted as an official war casualty and his name was added to the records of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

In Memory Of

Gunner

ERNEST ASQUITH

Military Medal

Service Number: 776210

1st West Riding Bde., Royal Field Artillery who died on 13 October 1919 Age 32

Son of Alfred and Emma Asquith.

Remembered with Honour

THORNHILL (EDGE TOP) BAPTIST CHAPELYARD



COMMONWEALTH
WAR GRAVES



COMMEMORATED IN PERPETUITY BY THE COMMONWEALTH
WAR GRAVES COMMISSION

