



Albert James Chapman

1885 – 1915

Albert James was born in North Walsham, Norfolk in 1885. His father was Thomas William Chapman, a Cordwainer born in New Catton, Norwich in 1849 and died in 1932. His mother was Amelia Sarah (nee Boulton) born in Beccles, Suffolk in 1854 and died in 1931. They were married in 1878.

Sarah had a son, William George Boulton, born in 1874. He served pre-war in the Royal Garrison Artillery for 7 years.

Their other children were; Thomas William, born in 1879 and died of wounds 14th January 1917, Philip Benjamin, born in 1881 and was killed in action 26th September 1915, Beatrice Maud, born in 1884, Alfred Arthur (I), born in 1887 and died in 1889, Amelia Susannah (I), born in 1890 and died in 1892, Alfred Arthur (II), born in 1892 and served in World War 1, Amelia Susannah (II), born in 1894 and Charles Harry, born in 1897.

His first names are recorded differently on all the three Census Records below. In 1891 as *Albert*, in 1901 as *Albert J* and in 1911 as *James*. It would appear that he was known as *Jim* to his family and friends. He worked as a Labourer.

On the 1891 Census the family lived at 24, Angel Road, St. Clement, Norwich, in 1901 at 3, Blakeley's Yard, St. Mary Coslany, Norwich, in 1911 at 3, Muspole Street, Norwich and later at 1, Long Row, New Catton.

Albert James had moved to Ravensthorpe prior to the outbreak of war and worked at the Yorkshire Electric Power Station in Thornhill. His brothers Thomas, Philip and William George Boulton all worked as stokers at the Mirfield Gas Company in Ravensthorpe. Albert James was a member of the Ravensthorpe Working Men's Club.

He enlisted in Dewsbury at the outbreak of war, serving as Gunner 25633 in the 21st Trench Mortar (T.M.) Battery, Royal Field Artillery and was sent to the Western Front on 18th March 1915. He took part in the Battle of Loos in France and was injured in the arm. He was invalided back to England for treatment along with another 365 wounded men, he boarded the hospital ship, SS *Anglia*, which set sail from Boulogne on 17th November 1915. As the ship neared Folkestone, it hit a mine and the shock of the explosion knocked out the wireless set, meaning that an SOS message could not be sent. Lifeboats were launched, but one of them sank, due to overcrowding. HMS *Ure* attempted to help in a rescue, but was impeded by the *Anglia*, as her engines were still running she was going around in circles. A steam collier, *Lusitania*, also joined in the rescue attempt, but she too was struck by a mine laid by the enemy submarine UC-5.

The total loss of life is not truly known, but estimates vary between 120 and 164 including some doctors and nurses and 25 of her crew, who were mainly from Holyhead on the Isle of Anglesey, were either killed by the explosion, or by drowning. Albert James was one of those who died, but it has not been possible to discover the exact circumstances of his death. His body was never recovered and so he is commemorated on the Hollybrook Memorial in Southampton. Albert James was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

The Hollybrook Memorial commemorates by name almost 1,900 servicemen and women of the Commonwealth land and air forces whose graves are not known, many of whom were lost in transports or other vessels torpedoed or mined in home waters. The memorial also bears the names of those who were lost or buried at sea, or who died at home but whose bodies could not be recovered for burial.

Albert James is also commemorated as *Albert J. Chapman* on the Dewsbury Cenotaph in Crow Nest Park and in the Dewsbury Roll of Honour kept in Dewsbury Central Library and as *James A. Chapman* on the Ravensthorpe War Memorial in St. Saviour's Church.

Due to some incorrect naming in the reports of the deaths of his two brothers in the local newspapers, he is referred to as *James H Chapman* and *Jim Chapman*. In addition, his younger brother Alfred is confusingly referred to as *Albert*.

He is one of 7 men whose names appear twice in the Roll of Honour and on the Cenotaph. His name is duplicated on the Dewsbury Cenotaph and in the Dewsbury Roll of Honour as "*J.H. Chapman*".

Chapman Albert J.
Chapman J. H.

Ravensthorpe.

Gnr. 9451 · R.F.A.

Wounded and drowned at sea, on
hospital ship Anglia. 15-11-15.

In Memory of

Gunner

Albert James Chapman

25633, 21st T.M. Bty., Royal Field Artillery who died on 17 November 1915 Age 33

Son of Thomas William and Amelia Sarah Chapman, of 1, Long Row, New Catton, Norwich.

Remembered with Honour

Hollybrook Memorial, Southampton



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

H. S. ANGLIA (CONTD)
GUNNER
CHAPMAN A. J.
R. H. & R. F. A.