



Ernest Smith MM

1896-1918

Ernest was born in Dewsbury on 23rd April 1896. His father was Henry Smith, a Glass Blower and later a Railway Porter then a Gardener born in Thornhill Lees around 1861. His mother was Amy (nee Oldroyd) born in Dewsbury in 1864. They were married at St. Michael and All Angels Church, Thornhill on 8th November 1890.

They had another son, Charles John Broadley, born in Thornhill Lees in 1893.

On the 1901 Census the family lived at 33, Manor Road, Westtown, Dewsbury and in 1911 at 8, Leatham Street, Westborough, Dewsbury.

Ernest was a single man who was educated at St. John's Day School, Dewsbury Moor; in 1911 he was employed as an Errand Boy and later at the boot works of the Co-operative Wholesale Society in Heckmondwike.

He enlisted in the 9th Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry with the Service Number 25581 and was later transferred into the 23rd Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers, Service Number 59044; he was finally transferred back into the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry serving as Private 63218 in the 5th Battalion. He was killed in action near Vaulx-Vraucourt, France on 2nd September 1918 and was originally buried in Vaulx Churchyard British Extension; in 1924 his remains were reburied in Vaulx Hill Cemetery, Pas-de-Calais, France. The Regimental Diary for September 1918 notes that he was one of a number of men awarded the Military Medal for gallantry in the field. This was officially published in the London Gazette on 11th February 1919. In addition to the Military Medal, Ernest was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Vaulx-Vraucourt is a village 6 kilometres north-east of Bapaume. It was taken in the spring of 1917, lost (after severe fighting) in March 1918, and retaken in the following September. Vaulx Hill Cemetery started with just 17 graves of September 1918. The rest of the cemetery was formed after the Armistice when graves were brought in from the battlefields in the immediate neighbourhood and other smaller cemeteries. The cemetery now contains 856 Commonwealth burials and commemorations of the First World War. 258 of the burials are unidentified but special memorials commemorate 29 casualties known or believed to be buried among them, and four others buried in other cemeteries whose graves were destroyed by shell fire.

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. John the Evangelist Church, Dewsbury Moor.

In Memory of

Private

E Smith

M M

63218, 5th Bn., King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry who died on 02 September 1918

Remembered with Honour

Vaulx Hill Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

