Harry Barclay
1900-1918

Harry was born in Sagan, Germany (now Żagań, Poland) in 1900. His father was Arthur Hirst, a Scribbling Overlooker in the textile industry born in Batley in 1869 and died in 1942. His mother was Annie (nee Priestley) born in Almondbury, Huddersfield in 1872 died in 1941. They were married at All Saints Church, Batley on 29th July 1891.

Their other children were; Willie, born in Berlin, Germany in 1892, Fred, born in Berlin in 1894 and Cyril (birth registered as *Cyril Barclay Hirst*) born in Dewsbury in 1906. The family must have moved to Germany, where Arthur was employed sometime between 1891 and 1901, by which year they had returned to England. They began to use the surname Barclay from about this time.
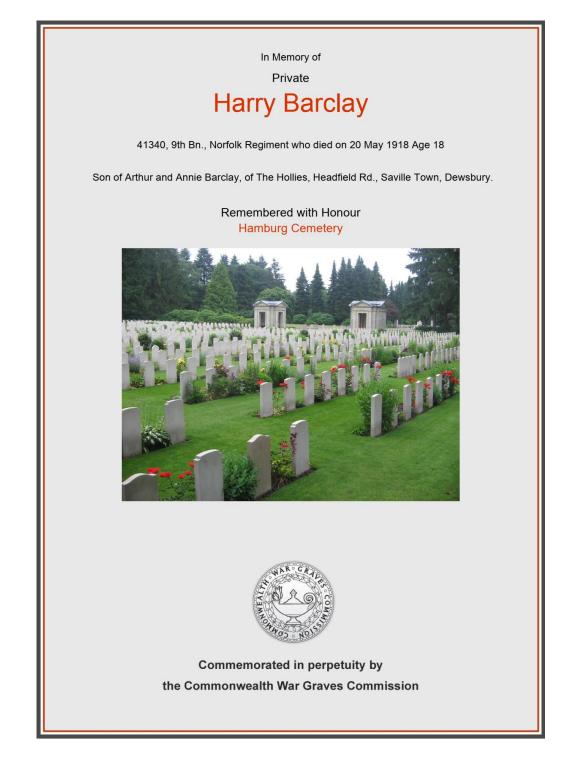
On the 1901 Census the family lived at 132, Purlwell Lane, Batley and in 1911 at West Grove, Ravensthorpe; on this Census Document only their initials are stated. Harry is recorded as *"H A Barclay"*. They later lived at "The Hollies" Headfield Road, Savile Town, Dewsbury.

Harry was a single man who was educated at Mirfield Grammar School and was an apprentice in the dyeing department of Messrs Jas. Smith and Sons, Ravensthorpe.

He enlisted on 5th October 1917 into the South Staffordshire Regiment with the Service Number 46782 and was later transferred into the 9th battalion of the Norfolk Regiment serving as Private 41340. He was sent to the Western Front on 3rd April 1918 and was badly wounded in both legs, one of which was also broken and was captured by the enemy on 15th April during the German Spring Offensive *(Der Kaiserschlacht).* He was taken to a Prisoner of War Camp at Saltau near Hannover, Germany where despite a number of operations in hospital he died on 20th May 1918. He was buried in Saltau Prisoner of War Cemetery along with 24 other Commonwealth Servicemen who died between 1916 to 1918. In 1921 their remains were reburied in Hamburg War Cemetery, Germany. Harry was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Hamburg is a large city in the north of Germany, approx 150kms to the north of Hannover. Hamburg Ohlsdorf Cemetery (Friedhof Ohlsdorf) is the biggest non-military cemetery in the world. During the First World War, Hamburg Cemetery was used for the burial of over 300 Allied servicemen who died as prisoners of war. In 1923, it was decided that the graves of Commonwealth servicemen who had died all over Germany should be brought together into four permanent cemeteries. Hamburg was one of those chosen, and burials were brought into the cemetery from 120 burial grounds. The majority died as prisoners, but a few were sailors whose bodies were washed ashore on the Frisian Islands. There are now 708 First World War servicemen buried or commemorated in the Commonwealth plot at Hamburg.

Harry is commemorated on the Dewsbury Cenotaph in Crow Nest Park and in the Dewsbury Roll of Honour kept in Dewsbury Central Library and as *Harry Alexander Barclay* on the Memorial Plaque from the Salem United Methodist Church, Dewsbury, now stored in the Resource Centre at Batley Central Methodist Church.

In Memory of

Private

Harry Barclay

41340, 9th Bn., Norfolk Regiment who died on 20 May 1918 Age 18

Son of Arthur and Annie Barclay, of The Hollies, Headfield Rd., Saville Town, Dewsbury.

Remembered with Honour
Hamburg Cemetery

Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Headstone photograph by courtesy of Tony Emptage.