



William Spencer

1886 - 1916

William was born in Sheffield in 1886. His father was Joseph John Spencer, a bricklayer born in Battersea, London in 1848. His mother was Sarah Ann Clark (née Langton) born in Selston, Nottinghamshire in 1847 and died in 1933. They were married in 1873 in Radford, Nottinghamshire.

Their other children were; Sarah Ann, born in 1874 and died in 1875, Annie Eliza, born in 1876 and died in 1910, Christopher Charles, born in 1878 and died in 1909 and John Joseph, born in 1881 and died in 1906.

On the 1891 Census the family lived at 35, Southern Street, Attercliffe, Sheffield, in 1901 William is living at the home of his brother Christopher in Town Green, Earlsheaton, his occupation was a taker-in at a glass bottle works (Kilner Brothers)

William was married at St. Joseph's Catholic Chapel, Batley Carr on 6th June 1908 to Catherine Rourke (born in Newcastle upon Tyne in 1886 and died in 1912) They had two children; John Joseph, born in 1908 and died in 1912 and William, born in 1910 and died in 1911. They lived at 24, Albert Street, Batley Carr. William worked as a Willyer for Joshua Ellis of Batley Carr.

He enlisted in April 1915 into the 3rd Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry with the Service Number 22387 rising to the rank of Serjeant and was sent to the Western Front on 27th October 1915. He died on 23rd September 1916 in the No.2 General Hospital at Le Havre following several operations after being severely wounded on 30th August during the Battle of the Somme. He was buried in Ste. Marie Cemetery, Le Havre, Seine-Maritime, France. William was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

His obituary in the local press on 7th October 1916 gave his home address as 6, Lower Cross Street, Bradford Road, Dewsbury.

During the First World War, Le Havre was one of the ports at which the British Expeditionary Force disembarked in August 1914. Except for a short interval during the German advance in 1914, it remained No.1 Base throughout the war and by the end of May 1917 it contained three general and two stationary hospitals, and four convalescent depots. The first Commonwealth burials took place in Ste. Marie Cemetery in mid August 1914. There are now 1,690 Commonwealth burials of the First World War in this cemetery, 8 of which are unidentified.

William 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 addenda panel on the Batley War Memorial and on the War Memorial in St. Joseph's Church, Batley Carr.

In Memory of
Serjeant
William Spencer

22387, 3rd Bn., King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry who died on 23 September 1916 Age 29

Son of Joseph and Sarah Ann Spencer, of Batley Carr, Batley, Yorks.

Remembered with Honour
Ste. Marie Cemetery, Le Havre



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Headstone photograph by courtesy of Franck Benoist.