



William Henry Heeley

1890 – 1916

William was born in Norristhorpe, Liversedge in 1890. His father was Joe Heeley, a Coal Miner born in Holmfirth in 1860 and died in 1921. His mother was Ellen Anne (née Ruston) born in Dewsbury Moor in 1865 and died in 1941. They were married on 16th October 1886 at St. Mary's Church, Mirfield.

Their other children were; Harriet, born in 1887 and died in 1887, Martha, born in 1888, Irving, born in 1891, Charles Herbert, born in 1894, Alice, born in 1899 and died in 1899, Jean Ellen, born in 1900, Clara, born in 1902 and died in 1902 and Ivy, born in 1905 and died in 1909.

On the 1901 Census the family lived at 7, Providence Place, Bruntcliffe, Morley and in 1911 at 8, Brick Road, Dewsbury Moor.

William worked as a coal miner and in 1913 he was married to Martha Elizabeth Drake (born in 1891 and died in 1971) at St. John the Evangelist Church, Dewsbury Moor. They lived at 10, Charles Street, Dewsbury Moor and had a son; William, born in 1914. They later moved to Northorpe Lane, Mirfield. Martha was remarried in 1920 to Hirst Crawshaw (born in 1889 and died in 1959) they had eight children between 1920 and 1936.

He enlisted in August 1915 in the 8th Battalion Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) serving as Private S/11392 and was sent to the Western Front in January 1916. He died in No.2 Stationary Hospital at Abbeville, France on 22nd July 1916 from a gunshot wound to the chest sustained during the Battle of the Somme. He is buried in Abbeville Communal Cemetery, Somme, France. William was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

The Chaplain, the Rev E. Milner-White wrote to William's wife at the family home, informing her that William died without pain and that his funeral service was held on 24th July. It also appears he sent a card with the prayers said at the service and a photograph, stating; *"How tenderly our graves are kept you will see from the photo. The cross already stands on it, and the French covered it with flowers"*.

The town of Abbeville is about 80 kilometres south of Boulogne. For much of the First World War, Abbeville was headquarters of the Commonwealth lines of communication and No.3 BRCS, No.5 and No.2 Stationary Hospitals were stationed there variously from October 1914 to January 1920. The communal cemetery was used for burials from November 1914 to September 1916, the earliest being made among the French military graves. The extension was begun in September 1916. Abbeville Communal Cemetery contains 774 Commonwealth burials of First World War. The Extension contains 1,754 First World War burials.

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 War Memorial in St. John the Evangelist Church, Dewsbury Moor.

In Memory of

Private

William Henry Heeley

S/11392, 8th Bn., Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) who died on 22 July 1916 Age 26

Husband of Martha Elizabeth Heeley, of Northorpe Lane, Northorpe, Mirfield, Yorks.

Remembered with Honour

Abbeville Communal Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

