



Joseph Colbeck

1899-1918

Joseph was born in Soothill Upper in 1899. His father was also Joseph Colbeck, an Oil Extractor born in Batley in 1864 and died in 1922. His mother was Martha (nee Briggs) born in Batley in 1866 and died in 1943. They were married on 25th December 1885 at All Saints Church, Batley.

Their other children were; William Briggs, born in 1888 and died in 1892, Gilbert, born in 1897 and died in 1898 and one other who died but has not been traced.

On the 1891 Census the family lived at 5, Union Street, Batley, in 1901 at Commonside, Hanging Heaton and in 1911 at 26, Hartley Street, Dewsbury.

Joseph was a single man who was educated at Carlton Road Council School and attended the Spiritualist Churches in Batley Carr and later in Bond Street, Dewsbury where his parents had been prominently associated for many years.

He appealed for his call-up to be deferred as his father was suffering from paralysis but in January 1918 his appeal was refused and he was drafted into the 114th Heavy Battery of the Royal Garrison Artillery serving as Gunner and later Signaller 188638; he was sent to the Western Front on 5th July joining up with his battery on 26th August. On 9th October 1918 in Belgian Flanders, he was asleep in a shelter with five other comrades when a shell landed on the shelter, he died without regaining consciousness on the way to a Dressing Station and three others suffered the same fate. He was buried in Somer Farm Cemetery, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. Joseph was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Somer Farm Cemetery is located 6.5 Kms south of Ypres (Ieper) town centre on the Hollebekestraat, a road leading from the Rijselseweg, connecting Ieper to Wijtschate and on to Armentieres. Wytschaete (now Wijtschate) was taken by the Germans early in November 1914. It was recovered by Commonwealth forces during the Battle of Messines on 7th June 1917, but fell into German hands once more on 16th April 1918. The village was recovered for the last time on 28th September. Somer Farm Cemetery (also known as Somer Farm Cemetery No.1 - the burials in Somer Farm No.2 were removed to Wytschaete Military Cemetery) was begun in June 1917. It was used until March 1918 and again in October 1918. The cemetery contains 91 First World War burials.

Joseph 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 Memorial Plaque in Dewsbury Spiritualist Church.

In Memory of
Gunner (Signaller)

Joseph Colbeck

188638, 114th Heavy Bty., Royal Garrison Artillery who died on 09 October 1918 Age 19

Only son of Martha Colbeck, of 26, Hartley St., Dewsbury, Yorks., and the late Joseph Colbeck.

Remembered with Honour
Somer Farm Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

