



## **Arthur Brearley Johnson**

### **1893 - 1916**

Arthur was born in Dewsbury in 1893. His father was John Henry Johnson, a coal miner born in Horbury in 1869 and died in 1921. His mother was Emma (née Hayward) born in Wrockwardine, Shropshire in 1872 and died in 1898. They were married in St. Andrew's Church, Peterson Road, Wakefield on 30<sup>th</sup> July 1892.

They also had a daughter; Gertrude, born in Dewsbury in 1897.

On the 1901 Census Arthur lived at 10, South View, Savile Town with his father and sister at the home of his paternal grandfather George Johnson and his aunt Charlotte Johnson. In 1911 Charlotte was head of the family, George having died in 1910; they all lived at 1, Clement Terrace, Savile Town.

Arthur was a single man who worked as a clerk at Horsforth Laundry.

He served as Rifleman R/16483 in the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion King's Royal Rifle Corps, into which he attested in November 1915 in Winchester. In March 1916 he was sent to France and in September 1916 he was transferred to the machine gun corps section. He was accidentally killed near Ypres on 17<sup>th</sup> December 1916 when a fellow soldier was cleaning his pistol which was loaded at the time, the gun discharged and Arthur was hit in the chest, he died five minutes later despite the attentions of a doctor. He was buried in Essex Farm Cemetery, Boesinghe, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. Arthur was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Boezinge (formerly Boesinghe) is a village, north of Ieper (Ypres) on the Diksmuidseweg road. The land south of Essex Farm was used as a dressing station cemetery from April 1915 to August 1917. The burials were made without definite plan and some of the divisions which occupied this sector may be traced in almost every part of the cemetery, but the 49<sup>th</sup> (West Riding) Division buried their dead of 1915 in Plot I, and the 38<sup>th</sup> (Welsh) Division used Plot III in the autumn of 1917. There are 1,200 servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in this cemetery. 103 of the burials are unidentified but special memorials commemorate 19 casualties known or believed to be buried among them. It was in Essex Farm Cemetery that Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae of the Canadian Army Medical Corps wrote the poem 'In Flanders Fields' in May 1915. The 49<sup>th</sup> Division Memorial is immediately behind the cemetery, on the canal bank.

Arthur is commemorated on the Dewsbury Cenotaph and in the Dewsbury Roll of Honour kept in Dewsbury Central Library and as *Arthur Johnson* on the War Memorial from the now demolished St. Mary's Church, Savile Town now displayed in Holy Innocents Church, Thornhill Lees.

In Memory of

Rifleman

**A B Johnson**

R/16483, 10th Bn., King's Royal Rifle Corps who died on 17 December 1916

Remembered with Honour

**Essex Farm Cemetery**



Commemorated in perpetuity by  
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Headstone photograph courtesy of Antony Thibaut.