



Albert Walker 1892 – 1916

Albert was born in Heckmondwike on 23rd April 1892. His father was Ernest Walker, a blanket raiser born in Heckmondwike in 1870 and died in 1948. His mother was Margaret (née Howard) born in Preston Brook, Dutton, Cheshire in 1869 and died in 1953. They were married on 8th June 1889 at St. Peter's Church, Birstall.

Their other children were; Arthur Graham, born in 1890 and died in 1891, Alice, born in 1894, Willie, born in 1896 and died in 1901, May, born in 1898, Ralph, born in 1900 and died in 1901, Annie, born in 1904, Frank, born in 1906 and Jack, born in 1908 and died in 1910.

On the 1891 Census the family lived at 13, Smithies Moor Lane, Birstall, in 1901 at 63, Occupation Lane, Staincliffe and in 1911 at 4, White Lea, Heckmondwike.

Albert worked as a timekeeper on the Lancashire and North West Railways, but at the time of enlisting he was employed as a blanket raiser at Messrs J. Fenton and Sons, Low Mills, Dewsbury Moor. He was a member of the Dewsbury Moor Nelson cricket club, captaining the second team, including during their successful 1915 season when they won the cup and medals. He was married on 7th December 1915 at St. John the Evangelist Church, Dewsbury Moor to Eva Penistone Moss (born in 1892 and died in Doncaster in 1922). They had a son, Albert, born 26th May 1916. In 1921 Eva and her son were living at 16, Reform Street, Westborough, Dewsbury.

He enlisted on 23rd August 1915 into the 9th Battalion Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) serving as Private S/11391 and was sent to the Western Front on 22nd December 1915. He died of gunshot wounds to the abdomen in the 33rd Casualty Clearing Station at Bethune, France on 21st February 1916 and was buried in Bethune Town Cemetery, Pas-de-Calais, France. Albert was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Albert's wife and parents, now living at 105, Moor End Lane, Dewsbury Moor, received news of his death from the Rev. Gillenders who wrote; *"I am sure the news I have for you is not very good. Your husband has been wounded in the abdomen and has had an operation. He received very great care and attention from the medical point of view. There was no hope entertained of his life since he was wounded. He passed away at 5pm on 21st February, and was buried on the 22nd in Bethune Cemetery by me. Please accept my very sincere sympathy"*. Another letter from Pte A. Howe of the Royal Army Medical Corps to his parents gave additional information. *"It is with sad regret that I inform on the death of your son, which happened yesterday. He came in our place on Saturday night wounded in the abdomen. He was operated on at once by Major Cuffe, of Sheffield, but the case proved to be hopeless. He was conscious nearly to the last, and did not suffer much pain. He did not know that death was so near, or he might have given me messages for you. I send my deepest sympathy to you and yours. You will have some consolation to know that, although he was wounded very seriously, he lived to come here and be buried by our men in military fashion"*

For much of the First World War, Bethune was comparatively free from bombardment and remained an important railway and hospital centre, as well as a corps and divisional headquarters. The 33rd Casualty Clearing Station was in the town until December 1917. Bethune Town Cemetery contains 3,004 Commonwealth burials of the First World War, 11 of which are unidentified.

Albert 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 and on the Memorial Plaque from Moorlands Wesleyan Methodist Church, now stored in the Resource Centre at Batley Central Methodist Church.

In Memory of
Private
Albert Walker

S/11391, 9th Bn., Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) who died on 21 February 1916 Age 23

Son of Ernest and Maggie Walker, of Dewsbury Moor; husband of Eva Penistone Walker, of 16, Reform St., Westborough, Dewsbury Moor, Yorks.

Remembered with Honour
Bethune Town Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Headstone photograph by courtesy of Richard Houghton.