



James Sykes

1887 - 1917

James was born in Horbury in 1887 and baptised on 4th December 1887 at St. Peter and St. Leonard's Church, Horbury. His father was Brook Sykes, born in 1858 and died in 1895. His mother was Sarah Ann (nee Bradshaw) born in St. Helens, Lancashire in 1865 and died in 1958. They were married at St. Peter and St. Leonard's Church on 18th January 1887.

Their other children were; Numa, born in 1889 and served in World War 1, Sybil Ann, born in 1891, Ida Lilian, born in 1892 and Clarence, born in 1898.

On the 1901 Census, Sarah is a servant for Mr. George Stables, living in Horbury with her five children. In 1902 she was remarried to Albert Ernest Schofield (born in 1875 and died in 1954); on the 1911 Census they lived at Carr Lodge Farm, Dewsbury Moor.

James was a single man who was educated at St. Peter's Church School, Horbury and was later connected with St. Thomas the Apostle Church, Grosvenor Road, Batley. On the 1911 Census he was recorded as a Poultry Dealer. In 1917 he was a Senior Partner in the firm of Sykes Brothers, poultry farmers at Low Side, Dewsbury Moor.

He enlisted in March 1917 and went out to the Western Front in September the same year, serving as Private 151321 in the 146th Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery. He died from shrapnel wounds and the effect of gas shells on 7th November 1917 in the 20th General Hospital, Camiers, France. His family had been urged to go see him in London when he was transferred, but upon arrival there, they were told that he had died. He was buried in Etaples Military Cemetery, Pas-de-Calais, France. James was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Etaples is a town about 27 kilometres south of Boulogne. The Military Cemetery is to the north of the town. During the First World War, the area around Etaples was the scene of immense concentrations of Commonwealth reinforcement camps and hospitals. Ten months after the Armistice, three hospitals and the Q.M.A.A.C. convalescent depot remained. It was remote from attack, except from aircraft, and accessible by railway from both the northern and the southern battlefields. The cemetery contains 10,771 Commonwealth burials of the First World War, the earliest dating from May 1915. 35 of these burials are unidentified.

James is commemorated on the Dewsbury Cenotaph in Crow Nest Park and in the Dewsbury Roll of Honour kept in Dewsbury Central Library.

In Memory of

Gunner

James Sykes

151321, 146th Heavy Bty., Royal Garrison Artillery who died on 07 November 1917

Remembered with Honour

Etaples Military Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Headstone photograph by courtesy of Tony Emptage.