



William Ewart Popplewell

1896 – 1915

Ewart, as he was always known, was born in Mirfield on 7th August 1896. His father was Edwin Popplewell, a Bookkeeper in a textile mill born in Heckmondwike in 1856 and died in 1945. His mother was Louisa (nee Pollitt) born in Mirfield in 1858 and died in 1929. They were married in 1879.

Their other children were; Hudson, born in 1879, Stanley, born in 1884, Ivy, born in 1886, Ruth, born in 1888 and died in 1890 and Doris Louisa, born in 1901 and died in 1903.

On the 1881, 1891, 1901 and 1911 Census Records the family lived at Primrose Lane, Mirfield, and later at 73, Garden Street, Ravensthorpe.

Ewart was a single man who in 1911 worked as a Butcher's Apprentice and later for Fred Ellis Ltd. Shoddy Manufacturers, Dewsbury. He regularly attended St. Mary's Church, Mirfield and later at St. Saviour's, Ravensthorpe.

He served as Private 3436 in the 1st/5th Battalion, Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment) and was sent to the Western Front on 29th June 1915. On 7th November 1915 the Battalion were camped nearby to the Yser canal on the outskirts of Ypres and had been resting in a reserve area known as 'The Farms'. He was killed in action by a machine gun bullet around 11.30 pm; and was buried in Talana Farm Cemetery, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. Ewart was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

A letter of condolence from a Lieutenant Sharp to his parents, published in the *Dewsbury Reporter* on 13th November, stated that Ewart had been killed whilst carrying rations. A further letter from a Lance Corporal Smith added that; ... *"about 11.30pm, they had nearly reached the firing line when the machine guns were turned on us. We all dropped down and on rising again we found Ewart had been hit by a bullet and killed instantaneously"*.

Talana Farm was one of a group of farm houses named by the army from episodes of the South African war. From Ieper (Ypres) the Cemetery is located on the road in the direction of Boezinge. The cemetery was begun by French troops in April 1915, then taken over by the 1st Rifle Brigade and 1st Somerset Light Infantry in June 1915, and was used by fighting units until March 1918. There are now 529 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in the cemetery. 14 of the burials are unidentified and there are special memorials to six casualties whose graves in the cemetery could not be located and ten who are identified as a group, but not individually. It is probable that the cemetery contained other graves later destroyed by shell fire.

Ewart 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 Ravensthorpe War Memorial in St. Saviour's Church and on the Mirfield War Memorial.

In Memory of

Private

William Ewart Popplewell

3436, 1st/5th Bn., Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment) who died on 07 November 1915 Age 19

Son of Edwin and Louisa Popplewell, of 73, Garden St., Ravensthorpe, Dewsbury, Yorks. Native of Primrose, Mirfield, Yorks.

Remembered with Honour

Talana Farm Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

