Walter Booth
1877 - 1916

Walter was born in Mirfield on 11th July 1877. His father was William Henry Booth, a coal miner and later a sweetshop keeper born in Almondbury, Huddersfield in 1844 and died in 1918. His mother was Sarah (née Parkinson) born in Dewsbury in 1849 and died in 1918. They were married on 28th November 1868 at St. Michael and All Angels Church, Thornhill.

Their other children were; Samuel, born in 1869 and died in 1869, Elizabeth, born in 1871 and died in 1872, Mary Hannah, born in 1873 and died in 1874, Albert, born in 1875, Frank, born in 1879 and died in 1880, Clara, born in 1881, Letty, born in 1884 and Alice, born in 1887.

On the 1881 Census the family were living at Northorpe Road, Mirfield, in 1891 at Briestfield Road, Thornhill, in 1901 and 1911 at Edge Top, Thornhill.

Walter was educated at Thornhill Church School and was married at Holy Innocents Church Thornhill Lees on 31st August 1901 to Nancy Douglas (born in 1877 and died in 1930). Prior to enlistment he was a coal miner at Ingham's Colliery, Thornhill. Their children were; Ida, born in 1904 and Harriet, born in 1905. In 1911 they were living at 69, Providence Buildings, Thornhill Lees and later at 344, Lees Hall Road, Thornhill Lees.

He attested at Huddersfield serving as Private 4424 in the 1st/5th Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment), his obituary stating that he had volunteered in May 1915. He was later given the Service Number 241291. He was killed in action during the Battle of the Somme on 3rd September 1916 at Thiepval when the 149th Division attacked a Salient known as the "Pope's Nose". His remains were not found until 1927 and he was reburied in Serre Road Cemetery No. 2. Somme, France. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission burial record notes that he was identified by his identity disc and that there were *"very small remains"* Walter was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

The village of Serre is 11 kilometres north-north-east of Albert. In June 1916, the road out of Mailly-Maillet to Serre and Puisieux entered No Man's Land about 1,300 metres south-west of Serre. On 1st July 1916, the 31st and 4th Divisions attacked north and south of this road and although parties of the 31st Division reached Serre the attack failed. The 3rd and 31st Divisions attacked once more on the 13th November, but again without success. Early in 1917, the Germans fell back to the Hindenburg Line and on 25th February, Serre was occupied by the 22nd Manchesters. The village changed hands once more in March 1918 and remained under German occupation, until they withdrew in August. In the spring of 1917, the battlefields of the Somme and Ancre were cleared by V Corps and a number of new cemeteries were made, three of which are now named from the Serre Road. Serre Road Cemetery No.2 was begun in May 1917 and by the end of the war it contained approximately 475 graves, but it was greatly enlarged after the Armistice by the addition of further graves from the surrounding area, including graves from smaller cemeteries. There are now 7,127 Commonwealth burials of the First World War in the cemetery, mostly dating from 1916. Of these, 4,944 are unidentified. The cemetery, which was not completed until 1934, was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens.

Walter 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 Holy Innocents Church, Thornhill Lees.

In Memory of

Private

Walter Booth

241291, (4424). 1st/5th Bn., Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment) who died on 03 September 1916

Age 39

Husband of Nancy Booth, of 344, Lees Hall Rd., Thornhill Lees, Yorks.

Remembered with Honour

Serre Road Cemetery No.2

Commemorated in perpetuity by

the Commonwealth War Graves Commission