



William Shaw 1886 – 1915

William was born in County Down, Ireland around 1886. His father was John Shaw, a Railway Carter born in County Down in 1862. His mother was Ann (nee Hinchliffe) born in Heckmondwike in 1862 and died in 1903. They were married on 6th June 1881 at St. Peter's Church, Birstall.

They had two more sons; James, born in Liversedge in 1882 and was killed in action 9th April 1917 and Reginald, born in Dewsbury in 1901.

In 1891 the family lived at Chapel Lane, Heckmondwike and in 1901 at 44, Cullingworth Street, Staincliffe, Dewsbury.

John was remarried on 18th February 1904 at All Saints Church, Batley to Eliza Hammerton (born in 1873); they had a daughter Mary Elizabeth, born around 1908. In 1911 John, Eliza and the two youngest children are living at Ballycultra, County Down and later at Olive House, Church View, Holywood, County Down.

William was recorded as a hurrier in a coal mine on the 1901 Census as was his brother James. He served for 8 years as a drill-master in the 2nd Battalion of the Coldstream Guards and on the 1911 Census he was stationed at Ramillies Barracks in Aldershot with the rank of Lance Serjeant. He later worked as a warehouseman at Bickers Department Store on Bradford Road, Dewsbury and was a member of Westborough Working Man's Club, his obituary published in the Dewsbury District News on 28th August described him as highly respected in the district and a much-esteemed employee of Messrs Bickers and Company. When William joined up, James was given his job there.

At the outbreak of war he enlisted in Dewsbury into the 6th Battalion, Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry with the Service Number 11335 rising to the rank of Serjeant and was sent to the Western Front on 21st May 1915. He was killed in action in Flanders on 5th August 1915 and was buried in the second of three cemeteries at Sanctuary Wood, although his actual grave location was later lost. In May 1931 his remains were found and identified in Sanctuary Wood Cemetery, West Vlaanderen Belgium. William was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Sanctuary Wood Cemetery is located 5 Kms east of Ieper (Ypres) town centre. At the Armistice the cemetery contained 137 graves. From 1927 to 1932, graves were brought in from the surrounding battlefields. They came mainly from the communes immediately surrounding Ypres, but a few were taken from Nieuport (on the coast) and smaller cemeteries. There are now 1,989 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in Sanctuary Wood Cemetery. 1,353 of the burials are unidentified. Many graves, in all five plots, are identified in groups but not individually. In Plot I is buried Lieutenant G.W.L. Talbot, in whose memory Talbot House at Poperinghe was established in December 1915. The first list of the graves was made by his brother the Reverend N.S. Talbot, MC, later Bishop of Pretoria, South Africa.

William is commemorated on the Dewsbury Cenotaph in Crow Nest Park and in the Dewsbury Roll of Honour kept in Dewsbury Central Library and in Ireland's Memorial Records 1914-1918.

His Commonwealth War Graves Commission Record states that he was born at Heckmondwike but this is incorrect.

In Memory of

Sergeant

William Shaw

11335, 6th Bn., King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry who died on 05 August 1915 Age 29

Son of John and Eliza Shaw, of Olive House, Church View, Holywood, Co. Down. Born at Heckmondwike.

Remembered with Honour
Sanctuary Wood Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Headstone photograph by courtesy of Ms. Danielle Roubroeks, Antwerp, Belgium.