James Walker Nelson





Photo curtesy of Spen Valley History Society

Rank: - Private

Number: - 3995

Regiment: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 1/4th Battalion

Killed in Action: - 7th July 1916 aged 29 years

Memorial: - Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France Pier and Face 11 C and 12 A.

Batley Reporter, 21 Jul 1916

Thanks to Spen Valley Historical Society.

Family Details

James was born in Heckmondwike in 1886, the youngest son of Edwin and Rhoda Mary Sarah Nelson of Hollinbank Lane, Heckmondwike. His mother had been born in Batley and had married Edwin Nelson in 1877 and they had eight children.However, by 1911 only four were still living. James's sisters Hannah and Elizabeth and his married brother, Washington Nelson, who also went on to become a Private in the KOYLI during the Great War, but survived. James was the only child still living at home with his parents at 47, Hollinbank Lane, working as a Warper in a cloth mill.

James married Martha A. Purcell in the Dewsbury area late in 1912 and they eventually made their home at 4, Crofts, Heckmondwike. Their only child, James Edward Nelson was born in 1916, possibly just after James was killed.

Service Details

It is not known when James enlisted but he did not receive the 1915 Star so it would appear he did not go to France with the original local Territorial's.

Notification of James Walker Nelson's death came first in a letter from a fellow Heckmondwike soldier Private J. W. Clough which was published in the Heckmondwike Herald newspaper in July 1916 "*of the death in action of Private James W. Nelson, whose wife resides at 4, Crofts, Heckmondwike. Only 28 years of age, Private Nelson was in the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. He enlisted in the December following the outbreak of war and first landed in France on 7th February 1916*."

James was killed during the Battle of Albert which had started on Saturday 1st July 1916 and was part of the Battles of the Somme.

James Nelson was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal and is remembered with Honour at Batley and Heckmondwike War Memorials.

