Harry Simpson



Rank: - Private

Number: - 16546

Regiment: - King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, 7th Battalion

Died of Cerebro-Spinal Fever at Tidworth, Hants.: - 12/04/1915 Age: 33 years

Cemetery: - Tidworth Cemetery Grave C.142

Family Details

Harry Simpson was born in spring 1883, the youngest child and only son of Ossett born rag grinder Henry Simpson and his wife, Ann (nee Oldroyd), who married in early 1860. Sadly, Ann died in early 1891, leaving Henry a widower with four children living at Halifax Road, Batley. All of the children were born in Ossett.

Harry attended Staincliffe National School.

In 1901, Harry and his sister, Emily, were living with their 65-year-old father in Batley. Harry was 19 years of age and working as a rag grinder. By 1911, Harry had moved in with his brother-in-law and his wife and son in Gladstone Street, Dewsbury. Harry was working as a card cleaner for a woollen manufacturer. His family lived at Chapel Fold, and was in recent years a member of the Young Men's Bible Class at Christ Church, Staincliffe and a playing member of the cricket club.

Harry Simpson married Alice Cass in late 1914 in the Dewsbury Registration District. Alice Simpson died in the Dewsbury area in 1919 at the early age of 40 years.

Prior to enlisting he worked at Messrs. S. Firth and Sons, Hebble Mills, Thornhill Lees.

Service Details

Harry Simpson's army service record has not survived, but it is known that he enlisted in Dewsbury in September 1914. He died whilst in training after being hospital at Lucknow Military Hospital, Tidworth for over a week with cerebro-spinal fever on the 12th April 1915, and is buried at the Tidworth Military Cemetery in Wiltshire. The Cemetery was directly connected with training grounds on, or near, Salisbury Plain.

The 7th (Service) Battalion of KOYLI was Formed at Pontefract on the 12th September 1914 as part of the Army Orders authorising Kitchener's Second New Army, K2 and attached to 61st Brigade in 20th (Light) Division. Early days were somewhat chaotic, the new volunteers having very few trained officers and NCOs to command them, no organised billets or equipment. The units of the Division first assembled in the Aldershot area with brigades at Blackdown, Deepcut and Cowshott. Artillery was particularly hard to come by, but eventually

twelve old guns arrived from India in February 1915. When, in the same month, the Division moved to Witley, Godalming and Guildford, the artillery had to go by train as there were insufficient harnesses for the horses. Another move was made, to Salisbury Plain, in April 1915.

Tidworth Military Cemetery, which contains burials of both wars, was directly connected with training grounds on, or near, Salisbury Plain. During the First World War, the cemetery was used for burials from Tidworth and Fargo Military Hospitals and the 417 graves, many of them of Australian or New Zealand servicemen, are scattered throughout the cemetery.

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