

Pte. Joseph CRABTREE (1875 – 1915)

(King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry)



Joseph Edward William Crabtree was born in Hull in 1875 to William Crabtree and Sarah Ann Ineson. His father William was a seaman from Hull but Sarah Ann was from Batley.

Joseph had two sisters Minnie Ineson (1860) and Hannah Crabtree (1868). His two brothers were John (1865) and Frank (1879). All had been born in Hull except for the youngest, Frank, who was born in Skelton, near York. By the time Joseph was two his mother was widowed and his father had probably been lost at sea. Sarah Ann moved back to Dewsbury with the children.

On the 1881 Census Sarah Ann and her family were living in Dewsbury. At twenty -one years old Minnie was already a widow having married James Hirst in 1879. He died in 1880 and their son John William Hirst was born later that year. In 1881 she married John McNamara.

By 1891 Sarah Ann had moved to Heaton's Yard, off Commercial Street. Her occupation was given as a washerwoman. John had married Alice Roberts in 1888 and Hannah had married Tom Lee in 1889. Joseph was now a coal miner.

Frank was deaf and dumb and in 1905 he married Hannah Colbeck Asquith in Batley. She was also deaf and dumb. The 1911 Census shows the couple living at Crossbank, Batley with their two children Clifford Crabtree and Mary Colbeck Crabtree. Frank was a boot and shoe repairer at Batley Co-operative Society.

Joseph Crabtree appears on the 1911 Census living in one room at 5 Back Jacob Street, Woodwell, Batley, with his wife Mary (born in Limerick, Ireland) and his young son Joseph E Crabtree. His occupation was that of a willier in a local mill.

He enlisted at Huddersfield and disembarked on the 17th February 1915. There are no known newspaper reports, but he was killed in action on the 7th May 1915 in all probability at the bayonet charge at Hill 60 in Flanders, south of Ypres.

A note on his file in the Army Register for widow's pensions reads as follows; This soldier left an unmarried 'wife' and 2 children. Application for estate was received in August 1917. Case was put to the Royal Patriotic Fund who made a grant of £5-3-11 to unmarried 'wife'. This fund had been set up at the time of the Crimean War to assist widows, children and other dependants of those in the armed forces.

Private Joseph Crabtree 3/2186, 2nd Battalion Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, is Remembered with Honour at Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial.

Researcher

Susan White, Batley History Group, March 2015