

Joseph Drysdale Died 25th July 1916

Died: 25th July 1916 ~ France

Joseph Drysdale Reg. No: 1758

Joseph Drysdale of the 1st/7th Bn., Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders died on 25 July 1916 Age 21

He was the son of Mrs. Jane Ann Drysdale, of 51, Long Row, Menstrie, Stirling.

When Joseph enlisted on 23rd January 1913 he was 17 years 3 months of age, his occupation was that of moulder at William Angus and Co. At this time he was residing at 4 Park Road, Menstrie. Joseph enlisted into 7th Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, which was a Territorial Battalion.

At the time of Joseph's enlistment his medical record dated 5th January 1913 indicates that he was 17 years and 3 months old and that he was 5 foot 4 ½ inches tall. His chest size was 32 inch and he had a chest expansion of 2 inches. His vision and Physical development was good and he was fit for duty with the territorials.



Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders
Cap Badge

Joseph had a second medical inspection, the second was on 12 Dec 1915 where his weight was listed as 101 pounds and his height 5 foot 4 ½ inches. His chest size had grown to 34 inches and his chest could now expand to 3 inches. He was now 20 years and 65 days and interestingly the medical record shows that he had a tattoo mark on his right forearm. At this time he was transferred to the 3rd Provost Battalion.

Joseph's parents were Mrs Jane Ann Drysdale and John Drysdale of 51 Long Row, Menstrie. His brothers were recorded as: Francis Drysdale (aged 28) of 51 Long Row, Menstrie; Robert Drysdale (aged 25) of 12 Ochil Road, Menstrie as at 25th June 1919

Less than 6 months after Joseph's last medical inspection he embarked from Southampton on 1st May 1916 and he disembarked at Rouen on the 2nd May 1916. By the 5th May he had joined the depot and on the 18th May he joined his Battalion and by the 25 July 1916 he had been killed in action. His military service was recorded as 3 years 184 days. Joseph's last resting place is in Caterpillar Valley Cemetery, Longueval.

Historical Information

Caterpillar Valley was the name given by the army to the long valley which rises eastwards, past "Caterpillar Wood", to the high ground at Guillemont.

The ground was captured, after very fierce fighting, in the latter part of July 1916. It was lost in the German advance of March 1918 and recovered by the 38th (Welsh) Division on 28 August 1918, when a little cemetery was made (now Plot 1 of this cemetery) containing 25 graves of the 38th Division and the 6th Dragoon Guards. After the Armistice, this cemetery was hugely increased when the graves of more than 5,500 officers and men were brought in from other small cemeteries, and the battlefields of the Somme. The great majority of these soldiers died

in the autumn of 1916 and almost all the rest in August or September 1918.

Of the burial grounds from which Commonwealth graves were taken to Caterpillar Valley Cemetery:-

CLARK'S DUMP CEMETERY, BAZENTIN, was a little West of High Wood, on the road from Bazentin-le-Petit to Flers. It contained the graves of 26 soldiers from the United Kingdom, and two from South Africa, who fell in August-December, 1916.

GINCHY GERMAN CEMETERY (500 metres North of the village, between the Flers and Lesboeufs roads), in which two unknown British soldiers were buried.

McCORMICK'S POST CEMETERY, FLERS, nearly two kilometres West of Flers village. Here were buried 19 soldiers from the United Kingdom, nine from Australia and nine from New Zealand, who fell in September-November, 1916.

MARTINPUICH ROAD CEMETERY, BAZENTIN, contained the graves of 41 soldiers from the United Kingdom who fell in July and August, 1916.

SNOWDON CEMETERY, BAZENTIN, in Bazentin-le-Grand village, contained the graves of 24 soldiers of the 38th (Welsh) Division who fell in August and September, 1918.

WELSH CEMETERY, LONGUEVAL, between Flers village and High Wood, in which were buried 17 soldiers of the 38th (Welsh) Division who fell in August and September, 1918.

CATERPILLAR VALLEY CEMETERY now contains 5,569 Commonwealth burials and commemorations of the First World War. 3,796 of the burials are unidentified but there are special memorials to 32 casualties known or believed to be buried among them, and to three buried in McCormick's Post Cemetery whose graves were destroyed by shell fire.

On the 6th November 2004, the remains of an unidentified New Zealand soldier were removed from this cemetery and entrusted to New Zealand at a ceremony held at the Longueval Memorial, France. The remains had been exhumed by staff of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission from Plot 14, Row A, Grave 27 and were later laid to rest within the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior, at the National War Memorial, Wellington, New Zealand.



On the east side of the cemetery is the CATERPILLAR VALLEY (NEW ZEALAND) MEMORIAL, commemorating more than 1,200 officers and men of the New Zealand Division who died in the Battles of the Somme in 1916, and whose graves are not known.

This is one of seven memorials in France and Belgium to those New Zealand soldiers who died on the Western Front and whose graves are not known. The memorials are all in cemeteries chosen as appropriate to the fighting in which the men died.

Both cemetery and memorial were designed by Sir Herbert Baker.