



Downes Ireland

Downes Ireland was born in Gretton in 1895. His father was Thomas Ireland originally from Warwick. His mother was Ellen Ireland originally from Oakham. Downes was named after his grandfather. He was baptised on 2nd June 1895 in Gretton.

The Family

In the 1901 Census, Thomas was recorded as being a fish and coal dealer. With Thomas, Ellen and Downes was a daughter Edith (age 3). An older daughter Florence Elizabeth born in 1893 had died in 1894.

By the 1911 Census the family had relocated to the West Midlands. Living in West Bromwich, Thomas was now a photographer, with Downes his assistant.

Military Service

Downes Ireland served as a Private (204651) in the 1st/4th Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment). His service record has not survived but it is known that he enlisted at Tipton and was resident in Bilston.

He embarked for Europe sometime after the beginning of 1916. His battalion had been in France from April 1916, having spent the earlier part of the war on coastal defence duties around Hull and Grimsby, followed by a period stationed in Doncaster.

Private Downes was killed in action on 25th November 1917. He is buried in the Dochy Farm British Cemetery near Ypres and close to Passchendaele Ridge.

Private Downes is commemorated on the Gretton War Memorial and the Bradley Memorial, Bilston.

Dochy Farm, which had become a German strong point, was taken by the 4th New Zealand Brigade on 4 October 1917, in the Battle of Broodseinde. The cemetery was made after the Armistice when isolated graves were brought in from the battlefields of Boesinghe, St. Julien, Frezenberg and Passchendaele.

The cemetery now contains 1,439 burials and commemorations of the First World War. 958 of the burials are unidentified but special memorials commemorate two casualties believed to be buried among them.



The cemetery was designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield.

Reference

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Gretton History Society

Lest We Forget

Downes Ireland
of Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment).

d.25th November 1917

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