



John William Craxford

John William Craxford was born in Gretton in 1875. His father was Robert Craxford of Gretton, his mother Sarah Craxford (nee Jacques) of Corby.

Family History

In 1881, the family were living in Gretton. Robert Craxford was an agricultural labourer. Robert & Sarah had two sons, Albert Jacques Craxford and John William Craxford.

The family relocated to Warwickshire.

By 1891, the young John Craxford was employed as a serving lad to Arthur Donkin & family in Rugby. Arthur Donkin was an Assistant Master (Mathematics) at Rugby School.

The 1901 Census provides a mystery as to John's whereabouts. There is an entry that showed a J. W. Craxford (b. Gretton) boarding with the Claridge family in Rugby. His occupation was given as "electric lighting steelworks", however the first names are scored-through and "Thomas E." written in their place.

In 1908, John William Craxford married Elizabeth Maud Delaney (of Parsontown, Ireland). They had a son, Sydney Robert Craxford.

In the 1911 Census, the family are living at Hunningham, near Leamington. John Craxford is employed as a domestic gardener.

Military History

John William Craxford served as a Private (74783) with the Royal Army Medical Corps (39th Field Ambulance Unit). He served in Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq). The war raging there between the Ottoman (Turkish) forces and the British & Commonwealth forces was fierce and unforgiving.

The 39th Field Ambulance Unit provided medical assistance to the 13th Western Infantry Division. The Division was involved in heavy fighting in March 1917 as the British & Commonwealth forces pushed towards Baghdad.

It is recorded that Private Craxford died of wounds on 11th March 1917. He was 44 years of age.



The Coventry Standard of 6th April 1917 reported Private Craxford's death:-

Died of Wounds

Mrs. Sarah Craxford has received the sad news that her son, John William Craxford, has died of wounds in Mesopotamia. He was connected with the Red Cross Society, and went out to Mesopotamia. Only a short time ago his father died, which makes it all the more sad for the bereaved mother. He leaves a widow and one child, who at the present time are residing at Lillington, Leamington.

Private Craxford is commemorated on the Basra Memorial and the Gretton War Memorial.

The Basra Memorial commemorates more than 40,500 members of the Commonwealth forces who died in the operations in Mesopotamia from the Autumn of 1914 to the end of August 1921 and whose graves are not known. The memorial was designed by Edward Warren and unveiled by Sir Gilbert Clayton on the 27th March 1929.

Reference

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Gretton Local History Society

The Coventry Standard

Lest We Forget

John William Craxford
of the Royal Army Medical Corps

d. 11th March 1917