

Edwin John Meedy
1894-1916: age at death 22
Student at the Society of the Sacred Mission

Family History

Edwin John Meedy was the third son of William and Loiusa Meedy and he had a younger sister, Rosalie. William Meedy was a picture framer and wood carver who worked from home. In 1901, the family lived at 43 St Leonards Road, Bromley, which is part of Poplar. Historically it was a poor district in the East End of London, close to the West India Docks and the Isle of Dogs. Today, St Leonard's Road run parallel to the Blackwall Tunnel approach (A12). The original houses have been demolished and replaced by low-rise and high-rise flats

Judging by the birthplaces of the four children, the family moved to a new house regularly, but almost always within the East End.

The children were:

- Robert, born December 1882 in Bromley (by Bow). In 1901 he was employed as an office boy. By 1911 he was married and employed by the Borough Council as a sweeper. On 2 May 1916 he joined the Royal Navy. His military record describes him as being 5 feet, 4¾inches tall, with a 35inch chest, light brown hair, grey eyes and a fresh complexion. He served on a number of ships until was discharged in 1919.
- William, born 1892 in Stepney
- Edwin John, born 1894 in Bow
- Rosalie, born 1897 in Plaistow, Essex.

Edwin was a pupil at the City of London School where he was in the 'Classical Remove' form, then a school-boy scholar at The Society of the Sacred Mission in Kelham between the ages of 16 and 18, before becoming a theological student. The Society of the Sacred Mission Newsletter of Christmas 1916 says that he struggled against the 'disadvantage of a rather weak bodily frame' an numerous attempts to enlist were rejected. When he finally was accepted he did not tell his family he was going into the trenches. He is described as a 'brave and unselfish soul' whose 'sincerity of unselfish affection' was valued by his fellow students.

Military History

Edwin served with 1/16th Bn London Regiment (Queen's Westminster Rifles) as a Rifleman, Service number 5760.

He was killed in action on 22 Sep 1916, age 22.

Based on the date of his death, he was killed on the last day of the battle of Flers-Courcelette (12-22nd September 1916), one of the Battles of the Somme. Flers-Courcelette was notable for the introduction of tanks. The attack was launched across a 12 km front

from Rawlinson's Fourth Army salient on 15 September. Twelve divisions were employed, along with 49 tanks - all the British army possessed.

A combination of poor weather and extensive German reinforcements halted the British and Canadian advance on 17 September; the Allies had again suffered heavy casualties. The attack was called off on 22 September.

The use of tanks had by no means led to any anticipated breakthrough, but they nonetheless impressed Haig, who requested that 1,000 more be constructed.

Commemorated on the Theipal Memorial, Somme, France; Pier and Face 13 C

Individuals are commemorated in this way when their loss has been officially declared dead by their relevant service but there is no known burial for the individual, or in circumstances where graves cannot be individually marked, or where the grave site has become inaccessible and unmaintainable.



Sources

FindMyPast <https://www.findmypast.co.uk/>

Nottinghamshire Great War Roll of Honour:
<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/rollofhonour/>

Commonwealth War Graves Commission: <https://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/805801/>

Forces War Records website: <https://www.forces-war-records.co.uk/>

Society of the Sacred Mission Quarterly Newsletter, Borthwick Institute:
<https://www.york.ac.uk/borthwick/>

GoogleMaps:
<https://www.google.co.uk/maps/place/St.+Leonards+Rd,+Poplar,+London+E14+0QY/@51.5151958,-0.0130878,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x48761d52ab979215:0x5620af3eb7a60197!8m2!3d51.5152536!4d-0.0112735?hl=en>

City of London School Digital Archive:
<http://cityoflondonschoolheritage.daisy.websds.net/FindAll/Main>