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| ORRELL, William Henry aged 25  William was the son of John Orrell and Eleanor Shorrock and was born in Darwen on 1892 but his specific date of birth has not been found.   At the time of the 1901 census the family were living in Junction Street, Darwen and the following year William's father passed away.   Ten years later the family were still living at Junction Street and William was now working as a cotton weaver at Springfield Mill.   The family attended Bolton road congregational Church.  At the beginning of 1915 William volunteered for military service and joined the East Lancashire Regiment, 2/4th Battalion (No. 201121).   He went to the Western Front in July 1917 and four months later he was wounded in the chest by shrapnel and was transferred back to England.   He was treated at the Heaton Park Military Hospital.   Following his recovery he was stationed at Scarborough and at the end of June 1918 he had been selected for further active service but was taken ill.   He died on July 9, 1918, a victim of the Spanish Influenza epidemic that was just beginning sweeping the world.  Wilfred Owen, the war poet, was also stationed at Scarborough in late June and one of his letters (June 24, 1918) to his mother gives an account of the Spanish Flu:  *"Quite 1/3 of the battalion and about 30 officers are smitten with the Spanish Flu.   The hospital overflowed on Friday [21st], then the Gymnasium was filled, and now all the place seems carpeted with huddled blanketed forms.   The boys are dropping on parade like files..."*  When *The Darwen News* reported his death the report mentioned that William had two brothers in hospital in France both casualties from the Western Front.  He was buried in Darwen Cemetery on July 15, 1918, the service conducted by the Rev A Bond.  At the end of the war his mother received his medals - Victory Medal and the British War Medal.  Grave Reference:  Darwen Cemetery Section K.445 (OS Ref: SD 69802,20305)                                             Thanks to Tony Foster November 2011                                       updated September 2013 |
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