

THE FALLEN OF SUTTON-IN-CRAVEN



EDMUND WILKINSON

WEST YORKSHIRE REGIMENT

KILLED IN ACTION 8TH DECEMBER 1915

BORN IN 1884 AT BRADFORD, THE SON OF
AGNES WILKINSON AND HUSBAND OF ALICE WILKINSON
(NEE SAGAR)

Wilkinson Family History

- 1901 census shows Agnes widowed, living with 4 of her children at 26, Main Street, Sutton-in-Craven as follows:

Name	Age	Work	Birth place	Birth year
Agnes A (Head)	52		Bradford, Yorkshire	1849
Elizabeth	20	Woollen weaver	Bradford, Yorkshire	1881
Edmund	17	Worsted warper	Bradford, Yorkshire	1884 - 1915
Clara L	13	Worsted spinner	Bradford, Yorkshire	1888
Annie	9		Bradford, Yorkshire	1892



Main Street, Sutton Mill
(source: Rachel Simpson & Richard Whiteoak from the Glyn Whiteoak collection)

- **1911 census** shows Edmund Wilkinson now married to Alice for the past 4 years and that of their 2 children born alive, 1 had since died. It also shows Edmund and his family living at Bent, Sutton-in-Craven as follows:

Name	Age	Work	Birth place	Birth year
Edmund (Head	27	Oat bread maker	Bradford, Yorkshire	1884 - 1915
Alice Archer (wife)	25	Spinner	Steeton, Yorkshire	1886
Allan	baby		Sutton-in-Craven	1911



Bent, Sutton Mill

(source: Rachel Simpson & Richard Whiteoak from the Glyn Whiteoak collection)

During the Great War, Edmund and his family had moved from Bent and were now living at 1, Wighill Street, Holmefield, Sutton-in-Craven.

World War 1



It had been **99 years** since Britain was last involved in a major European conflict following the defeat of Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815

August 4th 1914 **Britain declares war on Germany**

In the autumn of 1914, the young men of the nation came from town and village to take the King's shilling and to offer him their dedicated services in defence of their homeland. From mills and mines, from shops and farms, from office chairs and civic departments, from loom, lathe, bench, plough and counter they flooded into the recruiting centres in answer to their nation's call for young manhood. These new recruits came to be known as **'Kitchener's Volunteers'**

The New Armies: "Kitchener's Volunteers"



Earl Kitchener recruitment poster 1914



Parliamentary Recruiting Committee,
London 1915



A long queue of British volunteers waiting to enlist for service abroad, 1914
These men would form Kitchener's New Army
(source: "Daily Graphic" photographs)

Prior to enlistment, Edmund Wilkinson worked as a self-employed oat bread maker in Sutton-in-Craven.

At the outbreak of the Great War, Edmund responded to the call and volunteered to enlist into the 1/7th (Leeds Rifles) battalion of the West Yorkshire Regiment in August 1914. His regimental number was 2207 and he commenced with the rank of Private.

The 1/7th battalion was based at Carlton Barracks, Leeds as part of the West Riding Division. On the 10th August 1914, the battalion moved to Selby and then on to Strenshall at the end of August.

In Late October the battalion moved again to York and finally to Gainsborough in March 1915. Having completed his army training, Pte Edmund Wilkinson and the 1/7th battalion were ready to serve overseas the following month.

During the Great War, the West Yorkshire Regiment raised a total of 37 battalions, including regular army, territorials, and battalions of the 'New Armies'. 66 Battle Honours were bestowed and 4 Victoria Crosses were awarded to the West Yorkshire Regiment.



WW1 West Yorkshire Regiment Cap Badge

Pte Edmund Wilkinson entered the Theatre of War on 15th April 1915 when the 1/7th (Leeds Rifles) battalion landed at Boulogne in France as part of the 49th (West Riding) Division.

Name.		Corps.	Rank.	Regtl. No.
WILKINSON		W York R	Pte	2207
Edmund.				
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.	
VICTORY	0/2/104 B5.	615.	R in A	
BRITISH	do	do		
15 STAR	0/2/1B	793		
Theatre of War first served in		(1) France		
Date of entry therein		15-4-15		

MEDAL INDEX CARD for Edmund Wilkinson (source: *The National Archives*)

The Western Front

The Western Front was the name applied to the fighting zone in France & Flanders, where the British, French, Belgian and later American armies faced that of Germany.

It was marked by a system of trenches and fortifications separated by an area known as 'No Man's land'. These fortifications stretched 475 miles and precipitated a style of fighting known as trench warfare.

From the moment the German army moved into Luxemburg on the 2nd August 1914 to the Armistice on the 11th November 1918, the fighting on the Western Front in France & Flanders never stopped.

Just as there were quiet periods, there were also the most intense, savage, huge-scale battles the world has ever known.



British soldiers on the Western Front, WW1



The Western Front, WW1



Bombardment in the 'mincing machine' of the Western Front, WW1

Less than 8 months after arriving in France, Pte Edmund Wilkinson was **Killed in Action** on the Western Front on the 8th December 1915.

He did not die during a major offensive; rather he was hit by a shell and killed instantly during the course of the day-to-day trench warfare which came to depict the Great War.

He was 31 years of age



Article Date: 24 December 1915

SUTTON SOLDIER KILLED IN ACTION

News was received last week by Mrs. Edmund Wilkinson, of Sutton, of the death of her husband in France. Prior to enlistment in the 1/7th West Yorkshire Regiment, Pte. Wilkinson carried on business as oat-bread baker, and was well known in the Sutton district. He was of a very genial disposition, and much sympathy is felt for his widow and two young children. Mrs. Wilkinson has received the following letter from the officer commanding: -

1/7 West Yorkshire Regt., B.E.F., December 10th, 1915

"Madam, I expect by the time you receive this letter you will have heard officially from the War Office of the death of your husband. I am writing to express my sympathy with you in your great loss. We were in the front line trench at the time, and were being heavily bombarded. Your husband was hit by a shell and killed instantly. Any personal belongings will be forwarded to you by the authorities, but I took the enclosed 10 francs from his pocket. I knew your husband at Saltfleet and much regret we have lost such a good soldier and willing worker. I trust the fact that he has given his life in this great cause will be some little consolation to you. Yours very sincerely, W. J. TODD, O.C., 'A' Co."

(source: *Craven's Part in the Great War* www.cpgw.org.uk)



Casualty Details

Name: WILKINSON, EDMUND

Initials: E

Nationality: United Kingdom

Rank: Rifleman

Regiment/Service: West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own)

Unit Text: 1st/7th Bn.

Age: 31

Date of Death: 08/12/1915

Service No: 2207

Additional information: Husband of Alice Archer Wilkinson, of 1, Wighill St., Holmfield, Halifax.

Casualty Type: Commonwealth War Dead

Grave/Memorial Reference: I. E. 9.

Cemetery: ESSEX FARM CEMETERY

(source: *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* www.cwgc.org/)

ESSEX FARM CEMETERY

The land south of Essex Farm in Belgium was used as a dressing station cemetery from April 1915 to August 1917. The burials were made without definite plan and some of the Divisions which occupied this sector may be traced in almost every part of the cemetery.

The 49th (West Riding) Division buried their dead of 1915 in Plot I.

There are 1,200 servicemen of the Great War buried or commemorated in this cemetery, including Pte Edmund Wilkinson.

Pte Wilkinson is also commemorated on the Sutton-in-Craven memorial.



Essex Farm Cemetery, Belgium

(source: Commonwealth War Graves Commission www.cwgc.org/)



Sutton-in-Craven War Memorial (photo taken by Paul Wilkinson)



Sutton-in-Craven War Memorial
(source: photo taken by Paul Wilkinson)

Pte Edmund Wilkinson was posthumously awarded the
1914/15 Star, British War Medal & Victory Medal



Original trio of WW1 medals, obverse (1914/15 star unnamed original)



Original trio of WW1 medals, reverse (1914/15 star unnamed original)
(source: owned by Andrew Monkhouse)

A Memorial Plaque inscribed with the soldiers name was also given to the family of those who were killed during WW1



Original WW1 Memorial Plaque (name digitally altered)
Also referred to as a Death Plaque or Dead Man's Penny
(source: owned by Andrew Monkhouse)

Lest we Forget

CRAVEN'S ROLL OF HONOUR



**PRIVATE EDWARD WILKINSON, West Yorks. Regt.,
of Sutton, killed in action December, 1915.**

source: *Craven's Part in the Great War*
(original 1919 copy owned by Andrew Monkhouse)

FOR THE FALLEN

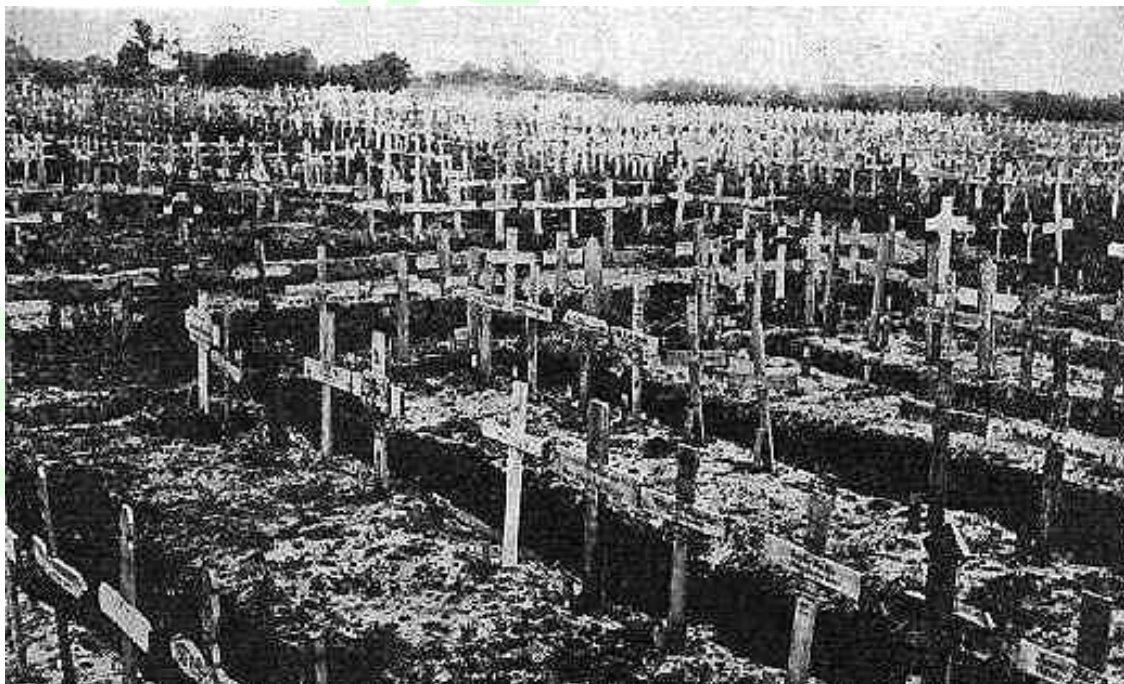
*THEY SHALL NOT GROW OLD, AS WE THAT ARE
LEFT GROW OLD*

*AGE SHALL NOT WEARY THEM, NOR THE YEARS
CONDEMN*

*AT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN AND IN THE
MORNING*

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

LAURENCE BINYON, 1869-1943



(Information compiled by Andrew Monkhouse 2011)