

THE FALLEN OF SUTTON-IN-CRAVEN



FREDERICK WILLIAM THOMPSON

BORDER REGIMENT

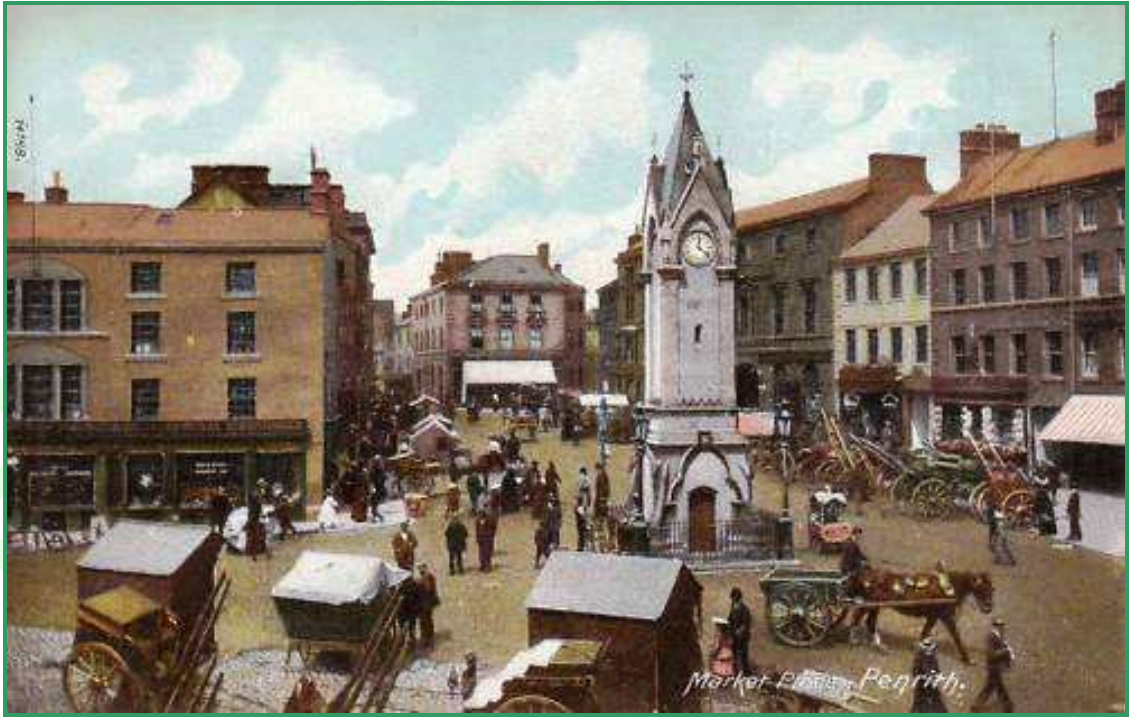
KILLED IN ACTION 21<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 1914

BORN IN 1885 AT PENRITH CUMBERLAND, THE SON OF  
WILLIAM AND ESTHER THOMPSON AND HUSBAND OF  
SARAH THOMPSON

# Thompson Family History

- 1891 census shows William, his wife Esther and their 2 children living at 57, Brougham Street, Penrith, Cumberland as follows:

Name	Age	Work	Birth place	Birth year
William (Head)	32	Timber merchant	Penrith, Cumberland	1859
Esther (wife)	32		Edenhall, Cumberland	1859
Frederick William	6	Scholar	Penrith, Cumberland	1885 – 1914
Thomas	4	Scholar	Penrith, Cumberland	1887



Penrith, Cumberland (circa 1890)

- **1901 census** shows Esther as the Head of the family and her 3 sons now living at 4, Mill Yard, Mill Street, Penrith as follows:

Name	Age	Work	Birth place	Birth year
Esther (Head)	42		Edenhall, Cumberland	1859
Arthur	20	Grocer's apprentice	Penrith, Cumberland	1881
Frederick William	16	Plumber's apprentice	Penrith, Cumberland	1885 – 1914
Thomas	14	Errand boy	Penrith, Cumberland	1887



Penrith, Cumberland

- **1911 census** shows Esther living alone on the night of the census (2nd April 1911) and that she had been married to William for the past 27 years. Of their 3 children born alive, all 3 were still living. It also shows Esther still living at 4, Mill Yard, Penrith as follows:

Name	Age	Work	Birth place	Birth year
Esther (Head)	52		Langwathby, Cumberland	1859

- **1911 census** also shows her second son Frederick William Thompson now married to Sarah, also from Penrith. They had been married for 3 years and had 2 young children. Frederick and his family had relocated from Penrith and were now living at 1, Close Street, Keighley as follows:

Name	Age	Work	Birth place	Birth year
Frederick William (Head)	26	Foundry labourer	Penrith, Cumberland	1885 – 1914
Sarah (wife)	27		Penrith, Cumberland	1884
Muriel	3		Penrith, Cumberland	1908
Richard	1		Penrith, Cumberland	1910

During the Great War, Frederick William Thompson, his wife Sarah and their 3 young children were now recorded as living at Harker Street, Sutton-in-Craven

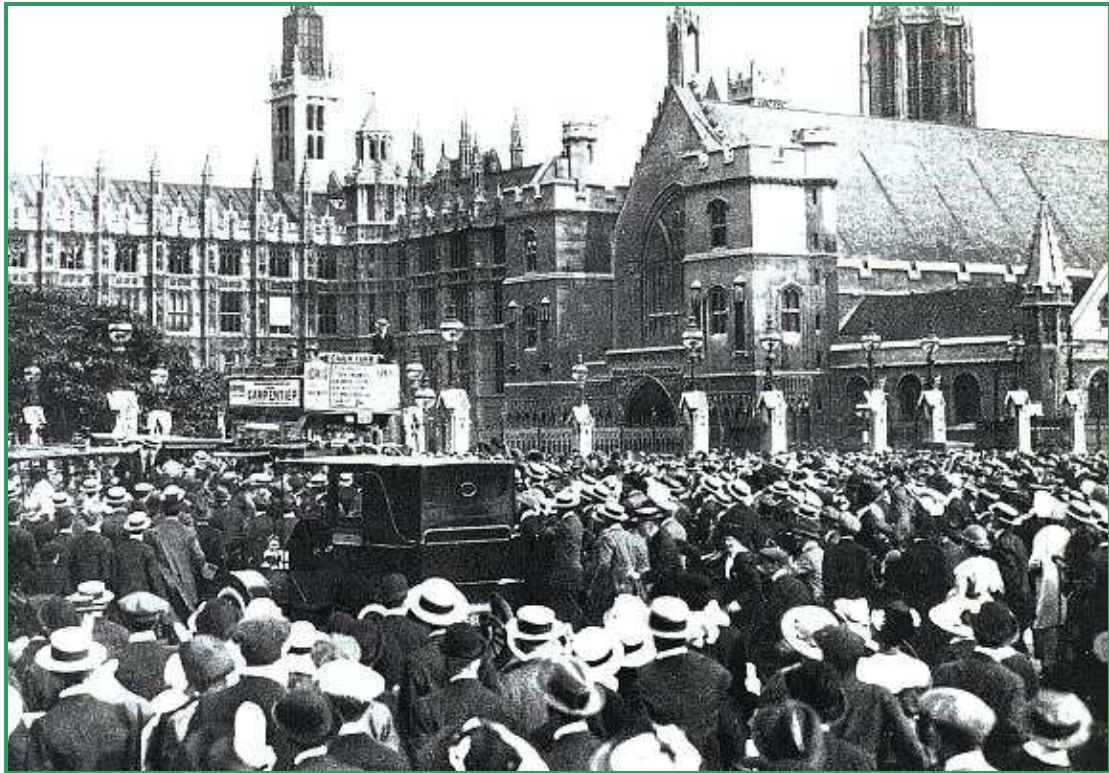
# World War 1



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



The official announcement by Germany of the war (Berlin, August 2nd 1914)



People waiting for news on Parliament Square in London on August 3rd 1914, the day before Britain declared war on Germany



'Jubilant' scenes outside Buckingham Palace on August 4th 1914, the day that war was declared

# August 4<sup>th</sup> 1914

## Britain declares war on Germany

Prior to WW1, Frederick Thompson was already an army reservist. As such he was immediately called up to join his regiment, the 2nd (regular army) battalion of the Border regiment, on the 3rd August 1914.

His regimental number was 7427 and his rank was Private.

The Border Regiment was an infantry regiment of the British Army, formed in 1881 by the amalgamation of the 34th (Cumberland) Foot Regiment and the 55th (Westmorland) Foot Regiment.

In August 1914, the 2nd battalion of the Border regiment was based in Pembroke Dock, Pembrokeshire.

On the 5th September 1914 the battalion moved to Lyndhurst in the New Forest in Hampshire and was attached to the 7th Division.

On the 6th October 1914 the 2nd battalion of the Border Regiment landed at Zeebrugge in Belgium. Pte Frederick Thompson therefore qualified for the Mons Clasp **5th Aug – 22nd Nov 1914** to be attached to the ribbon of his 1914 Star medal.



The Mons clasp was awarded to soldiers who had served in France and Belgium between the 5th Aug and 22nd Nov 1914 **AND** who had been 'under fire' during that period.

54 Campaign:— 1914

(A) Where decoration was earned.  
(B) Present situation.

Name	Corps	Rank	Reg. No.	Roll on which included (if any)		
(A) T. HOMPSON	2nd Bde R	Pte.	4424	MEDAL	ROLL	PF
				VICTORY	4/1/103.B.	97
				BRITISH	—do—	do
(B) Frederick	—	—	—	14 STAR	4/1/13	81
Action taken				K in a		
Class 2/2646						
QUALIFYING DATE.				5/10/14		

(6 34 46) W234—HP5590 500,000 4/19 HWV(P240) K608

WS/2/7724. (OVER)

MEDAL INDEX CARD for Frederick Thompson (source: *The National Archives*)

The battalions of the regular army were naturally the first to go to war and they formed the bedrock for the later expansion of Kitchener's 'volunteer' army

Before WW1 however, the British army was very small in comparison with those of its European neighbours. The army's main role since the South African Boer War (1899-1902) was the policing of the British Empire.

Britain's traditional armed strength lay in the Royal Navy and there was no pre-conceived intention to commit a large army to a Continental war

However, army planning in the crisis years leading up to 1914 had provided for a small **Expeditionary Force** of 6 Infantry Divisions, equipped as a mobile force that could be deployed anywhere.

In the last days of peace, the Government committed 4 Infantry Divisions consisting of pre-war regulars and reservists to the **British Expeditionary Force** going to Belgium and France.



British pre-war regular army soldiers 'The Old Contemptibles'

These soldiers were known as the '**Old Contemptibles**', a phrase used by the German Kaiser to describe this small but efficient fighting force of the British army. These pre-war regulars and reservists were professional soldiers trained to fight, obey orders and not ask questions.

The **British Expeditionary Force** of 1914 is remembered because of its battle honours and the suffering it endured. This culminated in the bloody attritional fighting around Ypres in Oct and Nov 1914



Border Regiment cap badge, WW1

# The First Battle of Ypres

19th October – 22nd November 1914



The First Battle of Ypres, 1914

The 2nd battalion of the Border regiment, as part of the 7th Division, landed at Zeebrugge in the first week of October 1914 and was ordered to assist in the defense of Antwerp.

However, by the time they arrived the city was already falling and the 7th Division was instead ordered to hold certain important bridges and other places that would help the westward evacuation of the Belgian army.

Once the Belgians were through, the 7th Division was moved westwards where the infantry entrenched in front of Ypres, the first British troops to occupy that fateful place.

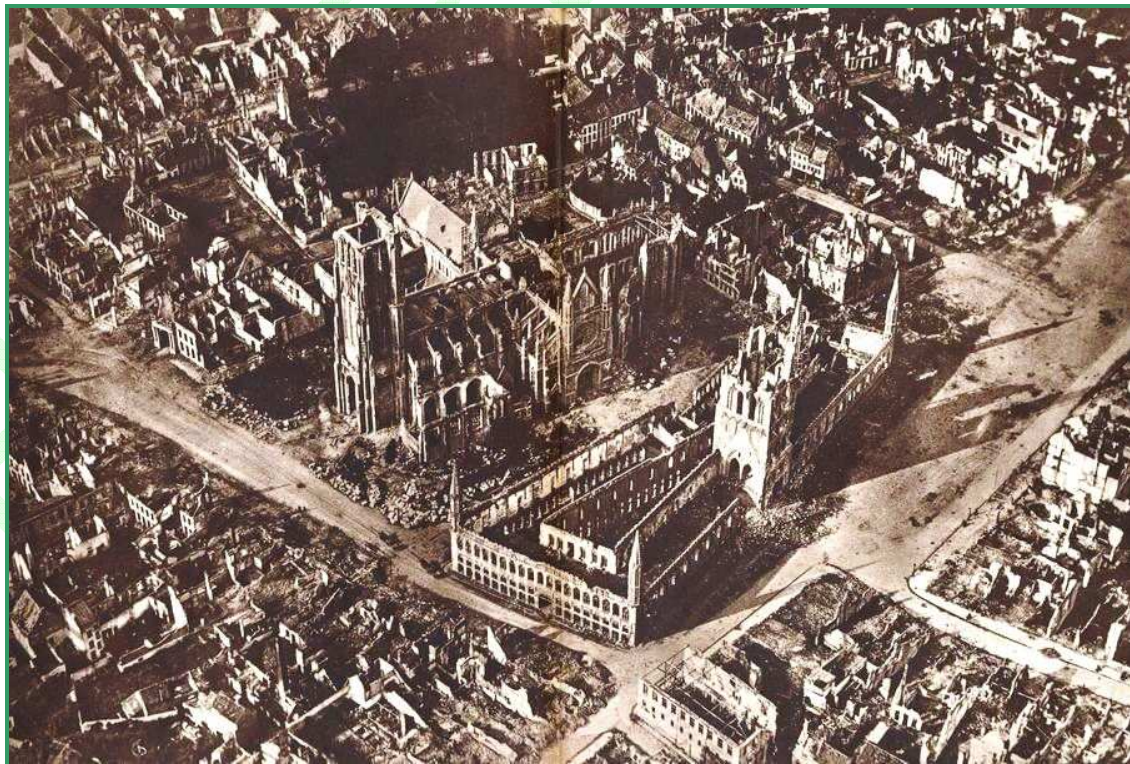
The First Battle of Ypres was a series of battles fought from the 19th October to the 22nd November 1914 when the British Expeditionary Force retreated to Ypres after Antwerp fell and prepared to fight.

Any attempt by the German's to take the channel ports had to be met with resistance by the British. The key to the area was the town of Ypres in the west of Belgium and just north of the Franco-Belgian border. The name Ypres haunts British military history only slightly less than that of the Somme.

The Commander in Chief of the British Expeditionary Force was certain that the numbers opposing him were considerably less than being reported. He was badly mistaken.

From mid October and throughout November 1914, the small British Expeditionary Force, including the 7th Division, fought the advancing German army to a standstill at Ypres. All units suffered grievous losses, and it was not until the following January/February that the 7th Division was once more in a complete enough condition to be considered at full fighting strength.

The British Expeditionary Force eventually succeeded in securing the town before the onset of winter, pushing the German forces back to the Passchendaele Ridge, but at a huge cost. British casualties were reported at 58,155, mostly pre-war professional soldiers. It is often said that the pre-war professional army died at the First Battle of Ypres.



Ruins of Ypres, 1914 (source: [www.gwpda.org/photos](http://www.gwpda.org/photos))

Having served in France & Flanders for 11 weeks and having survived the First Battle of Ypres, Pte Frederick Thompson was **Killed in Action** on the 21st December 1914.

Pte Thompson did not die during a major offensive, but in the course of the day-to-day trench warfare which came to depict the Great War.

**He was 30 years of age**



## **Casualty Details**

**Name:** THOMPSON, FREDERICK WILLIAM

**Initials:** F W

**Nationality:** United Kingdom

**Rank:** Private

**Regiment/Service:** Border Regiment

**Unit Text:** 2nd Bn.

**Age:** 30

**Date of Death:** 18/12/1914

**Service No:** 7427

**Additional information:** Son of Fredrick W. and Esther Thompson; husband of Sarah Thompson, of 9, Don St., Conisborough, Rotherham.

**Casualty Type:** Commonwealth War Dead

**Grave/Memorial Reference:** Panel 6.

**Memorial:** PLOEGSTEERT MEMORIAL

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



Article Date: 15 January 1915

### Sutton Mill Man Killed in Action

Deep regret was felt on Wednesday morning when official information was received by Mrs. Thompson, of Harker Street, Sutton Mill, that her husband, Private Fred W. Thompson, of the 2nd Borderer's Regiment, had been killed in action in France. The deceased was a reservist, and was called upon to join the regiment on August 3rd. From that date until a month ago news was received regularly that he was all right. Since then fears have been entertained owing to the absence of the regular letters of his safety. A friend wrote to the authorities, and a reply quite recently came by postcard stating that Private Thompson was serving with his regiment in France. The official news that her husband had been killed in action in France was a very severe blow to the wife. The deceased, who was highly respected by his fellows, was in his 31st year. He leaves a widow and three little children, the eldest being under 6 years of age, also a mother partly dependent upon him.

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

## PLOEGSTEERT MEMORIAL

The Ploegsteert Memorial commemorates more than 11,000 servicemen of the United Kingdom and South African forces who died in this sector during the First World War and have no known grave.

Those commemorated by the memorial did not die in major offensives, such as those which took place around Ypres to the north, or Loos to the south. Most were killed in the course of the day-to-day trench warfare which characterised this part of the line, or in small scale set engagements, usually carried out in support of the major attacks taking place elsewhere.



Ploegsteert memorial, Belgium  
(source: *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* [www.cwgc.org/](http://www.cwgc.org/))



Ploegsteert memorial, Belgium



Article Date: 31 December 1915

### CRAVEN'S ROLL OF HONOUR - SUTTON

Pte. Fred Thompson, of Sutton Mill, 2nd Border Regiment, who was called up with the Reserves. Killed on Dec. 21st, 1914.

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

Pte Frederick Thompson is also remembered on the Sutton-in-Craven war memorial



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



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

Pte Frederick Thompson was posthumously awarded the  
1914 Star + MONS CLASP, British War Medal & Victory Medal



Original trio of WW1 medals (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)

# FOR THE FALLEN

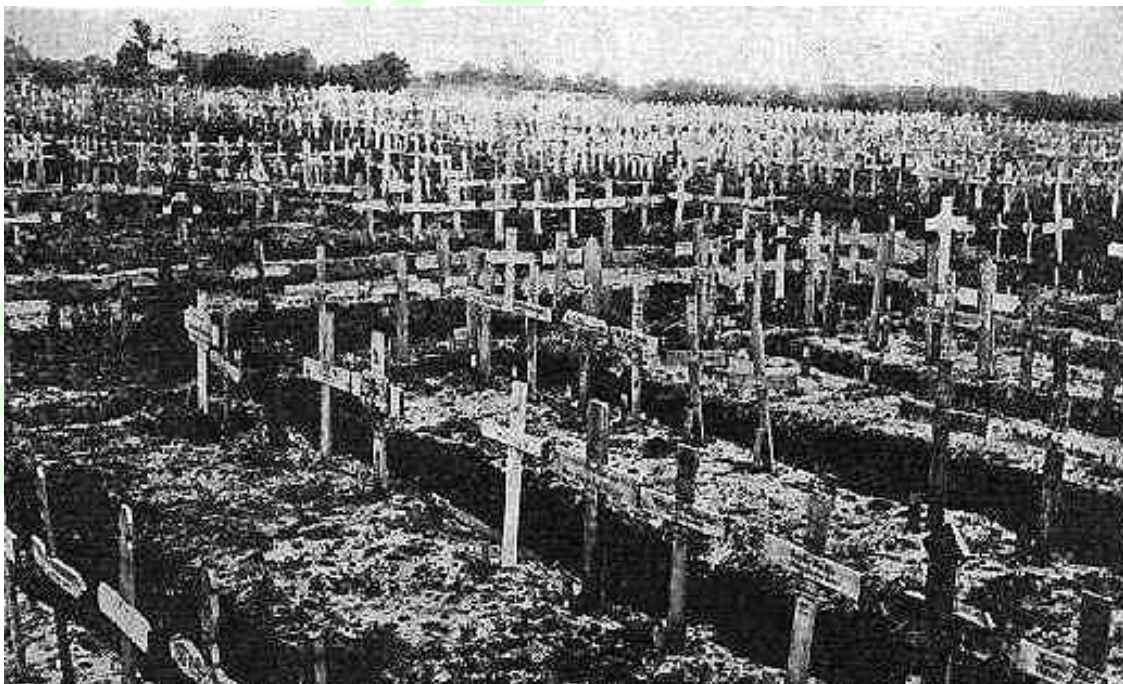
*THEY SHALL NOT GROW OLD, AS WE THAT ARE  
LEFT GROW OLD*

*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)