

THE FALLEN OF SUTTON-IN-CRAVEN



HAROLD WILSON

DUKE OF WELLINGTON REGIMENT

KILLED IN ACTION 3RD MAY 1917

BORN IN 1896 AT SUTTON-IN-CRAVEN, THE SON OF
WALTER AND SELINA WILSON

Wilson Family History

- **1901 census** shows Walter, his wife Selina, their 2 children and a boarder living at 1, North View, Sutton-in-Craven as follows:

Name	Age	Work	Birth place	Birth year
Walter (Head)	32	Card cutter, worsted mill	Sutton-in-Craven	1869 - 1942
Selina (wife)	31		Keighley, Yorkshire	1870 - 1954
Harold	5		Sutton-in-Craven	1896 - 1917
Edna	Baby		Sutton-in-Craven	1901 - 1918
Emily Buckle (boarder)	20	Elementary teacher	Thirsk, Yorkshire	1881



North View, Sutton-in-Craven
(source: Rachel Simpson & Richard Whiteoak from the Glyn Whiteoak collection)

- **1911 census** shows Walter and Selina had been married for 16 years and that of their 3 children born alive, all 3 were still living. It also shows the Wilson family now living at 5, Wilson St, Sutton-in-Craven as follows:

Name	Age	Work	Birth place	Birth year
Walter (Head)	42	Piecelooker	Sutton-in-Craven	1869 - 1942
Selina (wife)	41		Keighley, Yorkshire	1870 - 1954
Harold	15	Office boy	Sutton-in-Craven	1896 - 1917
Edna	10		Sutton-in-Craven	1901 - 1918
William	8		Sutton-in-Craven	1903



Wilson St (arrow), Sutton-in-Craven, 1911
(source: Rachel Simpson & Richard Whiteoak from the Glyn Whiteoak collection)

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 (Aug)



British volunteers, 1914 (Kitchener's new army)

Prior to enlistment, Harold Wilson was employed as a junior clerk with Messrs, John Woodrow & Sons of Junction Mills. Before this he became a student at the Glusburn Institute technical classes.

At the outbreak of the Great War, Harold Wilson responded to the call and enlisted into the 2/6th battalion Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment) at Skipton on the 28th September March 1914.

His regimental number was 264721 and his rank was Corporal.

During his army training he gained his Signal Instructor certificate at Weymouth.

The Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment) raised 24 battalions during WW1 including the 2/6th (Territorial Force) battalion which was formed as a home service (second line) unit.



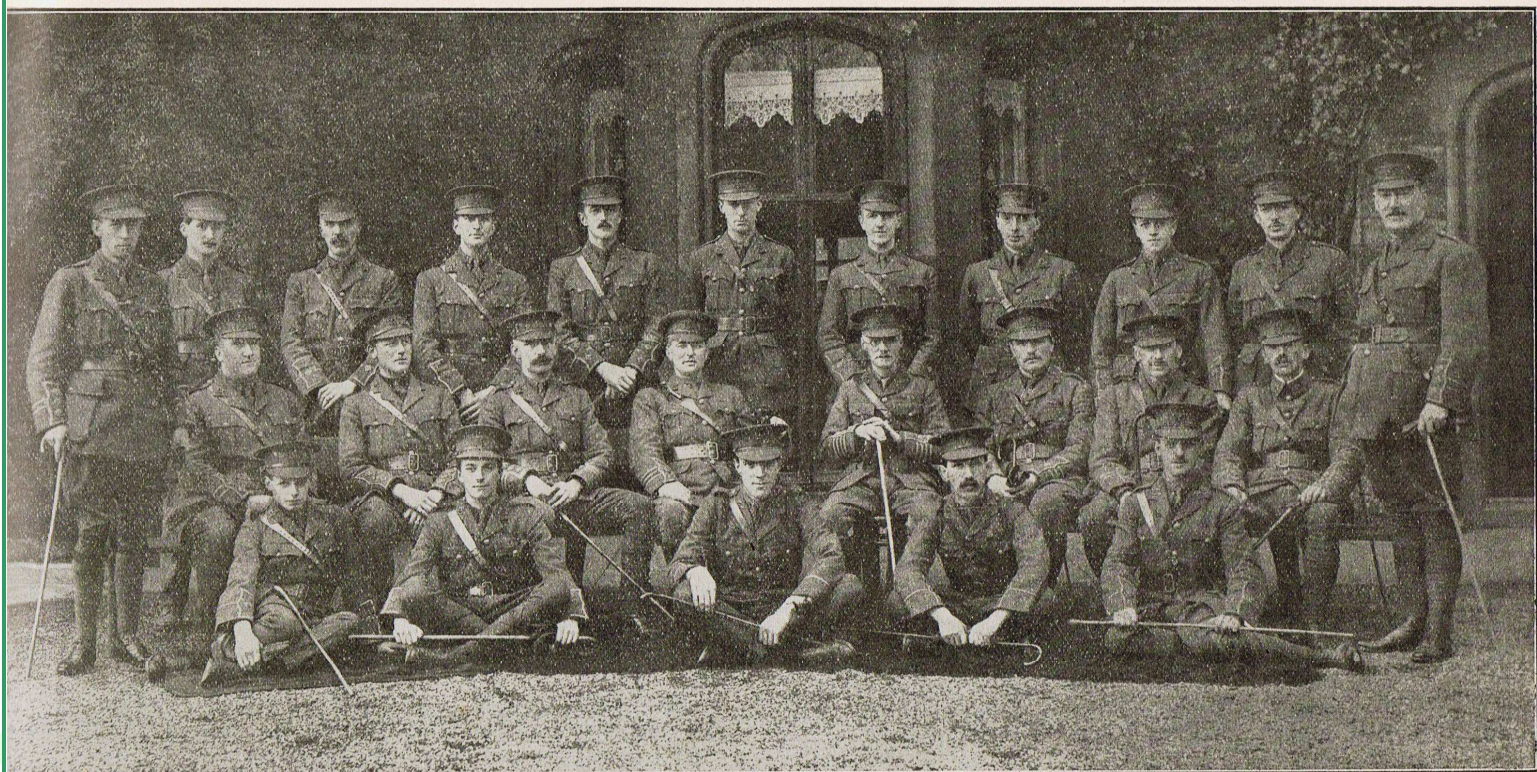
Lord Arthur Wellesley, **Duke of Wellington**, hero of the Battle of Waterloo



WW1 Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment) Cap Badge

Officers of 2/6th West Riding Regiment group photo

2/6th DUKE OF WELLINGTON'S WEST RIDING REGIMENT.



LEFT TO RIGHT. Back Row, standing.—Capt. G. H. Ermen (deceased), 2nd Lieut. (now Capt.) N. Geldard, D.S.O., M.C., 2nd Lieut. (now Capt.) L. Jaques, 2nd Lieut. W. Woodhead, Lieut. N. Clapham, 2nd Lieut. W. K. Law, 2nd Lieut. G. L. Lupton, Lieut. (now Capt.) G. Broughton, 2nd Lieut. G. R. Armstrong, Lieut. (A/Capt.) C. D. Bennett (K.), Capt. C. P. Charlesworth.
Sitting.—Capt. N. C. Prince (K.), Capt. (A/Lt.-Col.) N. A. England, D.S.O., Major W. Claughton (deceased), Major (A/Lt.-Col.) J. Mackillop, Col. R. E. Williamson, V.D. (C.O.), Major E. Dewhurst, Capt. Birbeck (Adj.), Capt. J. Groves.
Front row.—2nd Lieut. J. R. Walker, 2nd Lieut. (now Capt.) R. C. Barrett, 2nd Lieut. C. G. C. Kilner, Lieut. and Quarter-Master M. J. McDermott, 2nd Lieut. (now Capt.) G. C. Foulds.

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

Cpl Harold Wilson entered the Theatre of War in France in February 1917 with the 2/6th (Territorial Force) battalion West Riding Regiment, as part of the 62nd (2nd West Riding) Division.

Name.		Corps.	Rank.	Regt. No.
WILSON		W. RID. R.	Cpl	264721
Harold				
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.	
VICTORY	9/2/101 B22	3089		
BACCHUS	do	do.		
STAN				
Theatre of War first served in				
Date of entry therein				

MEDAL INDEX CARD for Harold Wilson (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.



Trench warfare, WW1



Trench warfare, German attack, WW1

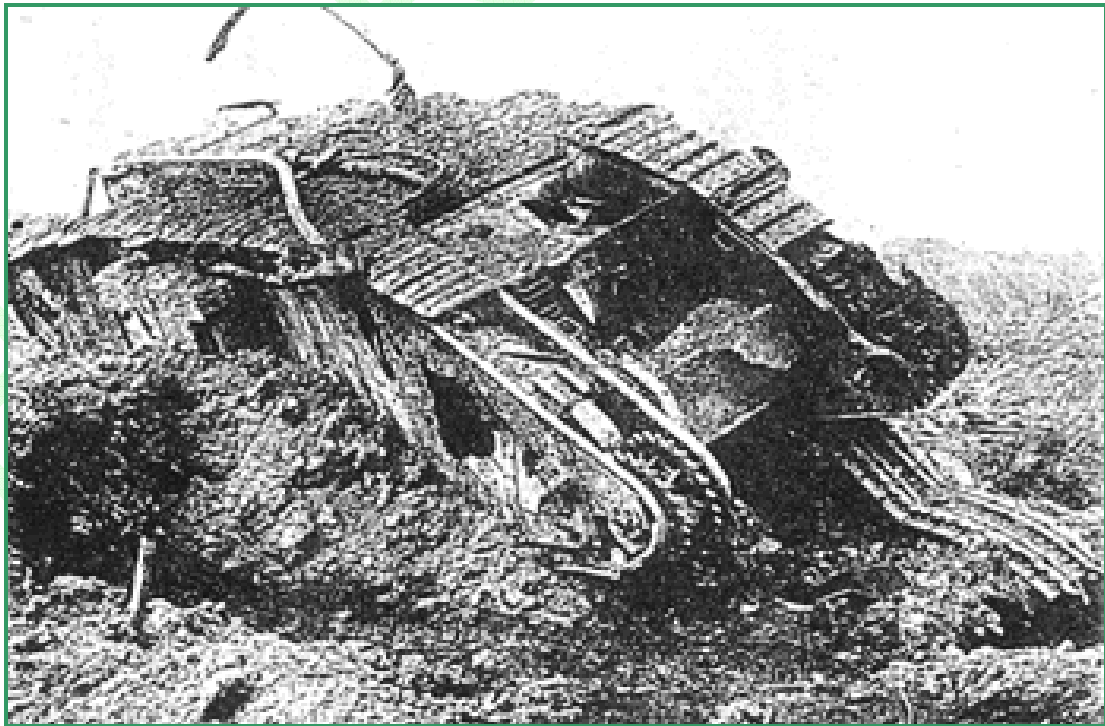
The First Battle of Bullecourt

11th April 1917

The village of Bullecourt is situated on the flat landscapes of Picardy, north-eastern France. There a combined force of British and Australian soldiers, for the most part conscripts, were faced with a force of professional Prussian troops entrenched within the Hindenburg line.

The first Battle of Bullecourt took place on the 11th April 1917 and involved the 62nd (2nd West Riding) Division and the 4th Division of the 1st Anzac Corps. The plan was to attack either side of the village of Bullecourt and push the German's out of their fortified positions and into the reserve trenches.

Tanks intended for the assault were delayed by bad weather and the attack was postponed for 24 hours. However the order to delay did not reach all units in time and two battalions of the West Yorkshire regiment attacked and were driven back with significant losses. This aborted attack alerted the German's in the area to the impending assault and they were better prepared for the attack to follow.



WW1 British Mark 1 tank destroyed by shell fire at the Battle of Bullecourt, 1917

Badly planned and hastily mounted, the Germans quickly overcame the attack. This was largely due to the failure of tanks to support them, due to their breaking down and vulnerability to attack. Also a limited artillery barrage left much of the barbed wire in front of the German trenches uncut.

The Second Battle of Bullecourt

3rd – 17th May 1917

After the initial assault to take the village of Bullecourt failed to penetrate the German lines, British commanders made preparations for a second attempt. British artillery began an intense bombardment of the village of Bullecourt which by the 20th April had been virtually destroyed.

The second offensive began in the early hours of the 3rd May 1917 with the British attacking the village itself and the Australians attacking the German lines to its east. The fighting was fierce and slow moving. On the east of the village the Australian advance was halted by accurate machine gun fire.

In the village the British troops advanced to the far side but strenuous resistance combined with confusion between the movements of the different units led to the British being thrown back and out of the village. Both the British and Australians then established defensive positions.



Sentries during the fighting for Bullecourt, spring 1917

When additional Allied troops were sent in several days later to reinforce the attack, the British & Australian troops were able to link up. This enabled British troops to eventually push the Germans out of Bullecourt on the 15th May.

German resistance had been fierce and when the offensive was finally called off on the 17th May, the Allies had incurred massive casualties.



British casualties, WW1

Cpl Harold Wilson fought in both battles of Bullecourt in the spring of 1917 with the 2/6th Territorial Force battalion West Riding Regiment, as part of the 62nd (2nd West Riding) Division.

In the third week of May 1917, the parents of Cpl Wilson received information from unofficial reports that their son was **Missing in Action** in France.



Article Date: 18 May 1917

SUTTON MILL SOLDIER MISSING

Anxiety has been felt throughout the village during the week as to the whereabouts of Pte. Harold Wilson, Duke of Wellington's Regiment, eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Wilson, of Wilson Street, Sutton Mill, owing to the reports which have reached the village (unofficial) that he was missing. Mr. and Mrs. Wilson have received a letter from the officer stating that their son was missing, but he was expecting him rejoining his regiment, as many did. Pte. Wilson joined the colours early in the war, going out in February of this year. He was well known in the district, of a cheery disposition, and it is hoped that he has rejoined his regiment. He was connected with St. Thomas's Church and Sunday School.

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

10 months later however, Mr and Mrs Wilson received official information that their son Harold was presumed to have been **Killed in Action** during the great push on the 3rd May 1917. This was the **First Day of the 2nd Battle of Bullecourt**.

He was 21 years of age



Article Date: 15 March 1918

SUTTON-IN-CRAVEN - Corporal Harold Wilson Presumed Killed

We regret to record the presumed death of Corporal Harold Wilson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Wilson. He was attached to the Duke of Wellington's West Riding Regiment, and death is supposed to have occurred on May 3rd 1917, or since. Hopes were entertained that Corporal Wilson was a prisoner of war, but for some time recently the worst was feared. The deceased, aged 22 years, was amongst the first in the district to join up, going along with a few others at Skipton on September 28th 1914. He was connected with St. Thomas's Church Sunday School, and was a member of the 1st Troop of Boy Scouts. On leaving the day school at the age of 13 years, he became a student at Glusburn Institute technical classes, and at the time of joining up was employed by Mr. James Woodrow, Junction Mills, as junior clerk. He was of a studious disposition and very highly respected. He gained his certificate as an Instructor at Weymouth. A special memorial service was conducted by the Vicar on Sunday the 3rd inst. At the ordinary morning service special reference was made to the deceased. The Boy Scouts were present; their flags being draped.

Several letters of appreciation and regret have been received, including one from his Lieutenant-Colonel, who states:- "I have made many and careful inquiries about your son, Corpl. H. Wilson, and I regret to inform you that he was seen wounded in an attack made on the German trenches by this battalion on the 3rd of May. Although the battalion reached the German trenches they were unable to hold them and were driven back. Thus the fate of a great number of the wounded is unknown, and they had to be regarded as missing. Search parties were sent out and a few of the wounded were received, but I regret to say that your son was not amongst them. Your son always behaved with great gallantry, and by always setting a fine example and devotion to duty he was looked up to as an excellent soldier and liked by everybody."

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



Casualty Details

Name: WILSON, HAROLD

Initials: H

Nationality: United Kingdom

Rank: Corporal

Regiment/Service: Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment)

Unit Text: 2nd/6th Bn.

Age: 21

Date of Death: 03/05/1917

Service No: 265721

Additional information: Son of Walter and Selinca Wilson, of 5, Wilson St., Sutton-in-Craven, Yorks.

Casualty Type: Commonwealth War Dead

Grave/Memorial Reference: Bay 6.

Memorial: ARRAS MEMORIAL

ARRAS MEMORIAL

The Arras memorial commemorates almost 35,000 servicemen from the United Kingdom, South Africa and New Zealand who died in the Arras sector between the spring of 1916 and the 7th of August 1918 on the eve of the Advance to Victory and have no known grave.

The most conspicuous events of this period were the Arras offensive of April - May 1917, and the German attack in the spring of 1918.

Canadian and Australian servicemen killed in these operations are commemorated by memorials at Vimy and Villers-Bretonneux.

Corporal Harold Wilson is also remembered on the Sutton-in-Craven war memorial and on the tomb-stone bearing the name of his parents and sister in the burial ground of St Thomas' Church.

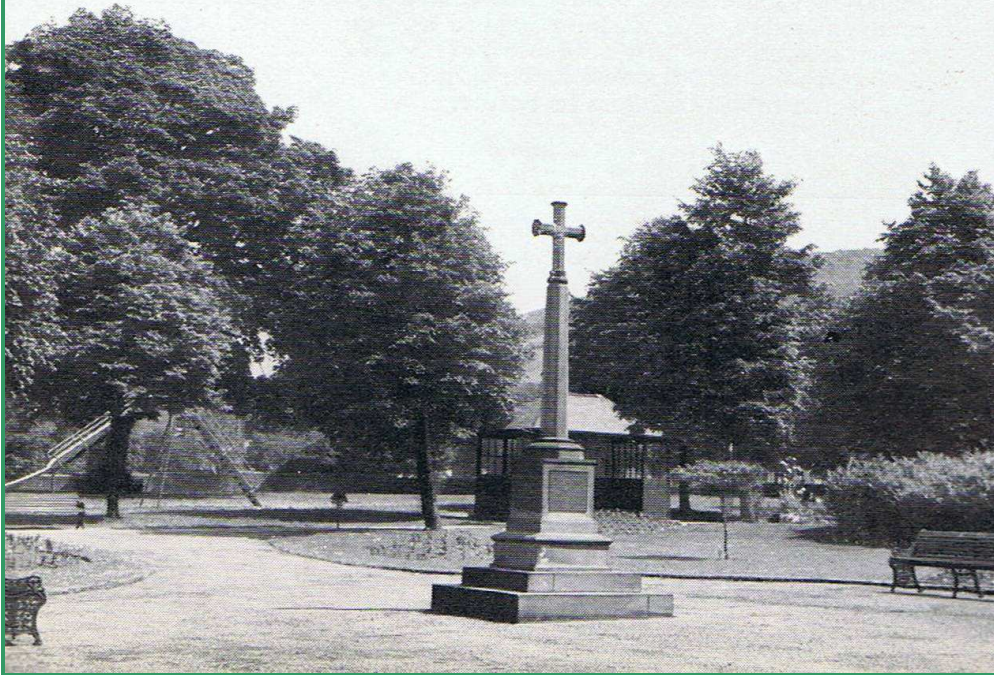


Arras memorial, France
(source: Commonwealth War Graves Commission www.cwgc.org/)



Arras memorial, France

WAR MEMORIAL, SUTTON-IN-CRAVEN PARK



(source: *South Craven, the official guide*, 1950)



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

Corporal Harold Wilson was posthumously awarded the
British War Medal & Victory Medal



Original pair 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)

Lest we Forget

CRAVEN'S ROLL OF HONOUR



CORPORAL HAROLD WILSON, Duke of Well's
Regt., son of Mr. & Mrs. Walter Wilson, Sutton,
presumed killed 3rd May, 1917. Aged 22 years.

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)