

THE FALLEN OF SUTTON-IN-CRAVEN



THOMAS HENRY SUMMERSKILL

NORTHUMBERLAND FUSILIERS

DIED OF WOUNDS 20TH JULY 1916

BORN IN 1898 AT SUTTON-IN-CRAVEN, THE SON OF
JOHN AND MARY SUMMERSKILL

Summerskill Family History

- **1901 census** shows John, his wife Mary and their 2 children living at 8, Ethel Street, Sutton-in-Craven as follows:

Name	Age	Work	Birth place	Birth year
John William (Head)	31	Slater's labourer	Carleton near Skipton	1870
Mary (wife)	27	Winder in woollen mill	Allerston, North Yorkshire	1874
Thomas Henry	2		Sutton-in-Craven	1899 - 1918
John William	1		Sutton-in-Craven	1900



Ethel Street, Sutton-in-Craven

- **1911 census** shows that John and Mary had been married for 16 years and that of their 5 children born alive, 2 had since died. It also shows the Summerskill family now residing at 5, Lister Hill, Sutton-in-Craven as follows:

Name	Age	Work	Birth place	Birth year
John William (Head)	41	Worsted weaver	Carleton near Skipton	1870
Mary (wife)	38		Allerston, North Yorkshire	1874
Thomas Henry	12	School/worsted spinner	Sutton-in-Craven	1899 - 1918
John William	11	School	Sutton-in-Craven	1900
Harry	2		Sutton-in-Craven	1909
Lizzie Cutler (boarder)	15	Worsted spinner	Wath-on-Deerne, Yorkshire	1896



Lister Hill, 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

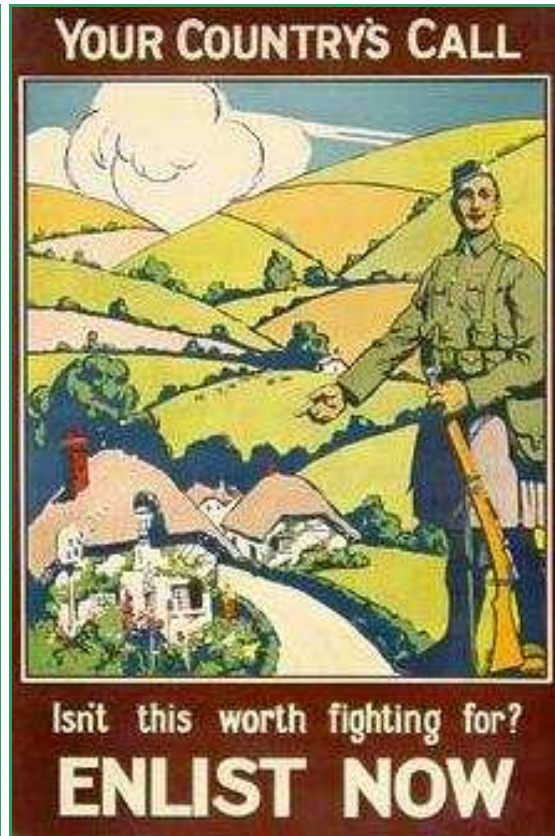
August 4th 1914 **Britain declares war on Germany**

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



British volunteers queuing to enlist, 1914 (Kitchener's New Army)

At the outbreak of the Great War, Thomas Summerskill responded to the call and volunteered to enlist into the forces. He was unsuccessful at the first two attempts, however he persisted in trying to enlist for active service and was finally accepted the third time around. He joined the 13th (service) battalion Northumberland Fusiliers in February 1916.

During the Great War, the Northumberland Fusiliers raised a total of 51 battalions based on the original 2 regular, 1 reserve and 10 territorial force battalions. This made it the second largest regiment after the London Regiment.

Pte Summerskill entered the Theatre of War in June 1916 arriving in France. He was about to witness one of the most horrifying campaigns of the Great War - **The Battle of the Somme**

MEDAL INDEX CARD for Thomas Summerskill (source: *The National Archives*)

Battle of the Somme

1st July – 18th November 1916

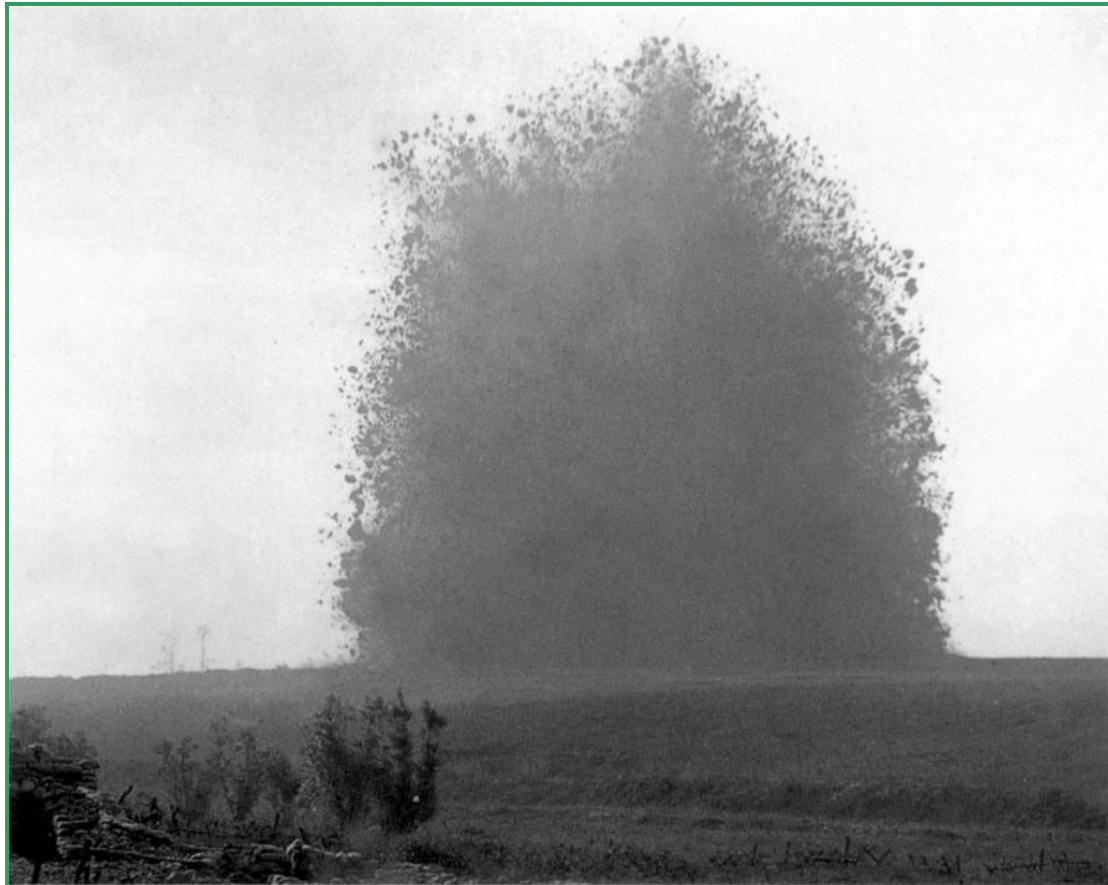
The Battle of the Somme was fought from 1st July – 18th November 1916 and claimed more than 1.5 million casualties.

The battle was preceded by 7 days of preliminary artillery bombardment, in which the British fired over **1.7 million shells**. The logic behind this was so to destroy the German trenches and barbed wire placed in front of the trenches before sending in the infantry.



However, the enemy's position was situated on high, undulating tract of ground, in which they had deep trenches and bomb proof shelters for their men. When the bombardment started the Germans moved these men into the relative safety of the deep dugouts. When the bombardment stopped, the Germans knew that this was the signal for an infantry advance. They moved from the safety of their dugouts and manned their machine guns to face the British and French.

Ten minutes before the infantry advance, at 7:20 a.m. on 1st July 1916, a British officer detonated a massive mine beneath the **Hawthorn Ridge** (photo below).



Explosion of the Hawthorn Ridge, 1st July 1916

At 7.30am, on a clear midsummer's morning, the British infantry emerged from their trenches and advanced in extended lines at a slow steady pace across the grassy expanse of No Man's Land. There they met a hail of machine-gun and rifle fire from the German defenders. Accurate German barrages immediately added to the pandemonium, as shells engulfed the attackers and wrecked the crowded British assembly trenches. The advancing infantry and many more waiting to attack suffered enormous casualties.

The Battle of the Somme is best remembered for its first day, 1st July 1916 on which the British suffered 57,470 casualties, including **19,240 dead** - the bloodiest day in the history of the British Army.

Ironically, going over the top at the Somme was the first taste of battle many of these men had, as many were part of "Kitchener's Volunteer Army" persuaded to volunteer by posters showing Lord Kitchener himself summoning these men to arms to show their patriotism.



Going 'over the top'

The battle became a metaphor for futile and indiscriminate slaughter. By the time the Battle of the Somme was abandoned the Allies had advanced only 5 miles.

The Somme campaign finally came to an end on the 18th November 1916 when the British 51st Highland Division took Beaumont Hamel that had in fact been an objective for the first day.

The British Army suffered, over the course of the entire 142-day Somme campaign, some 415,000 casualties, which works out to be around 3,000 per day. The French lost 200,000 men and the German's nearly 500,000

Having only just arrived on the Western Front the previous month, Pte Summerskill was **Wounded in Action** during the first phase of the Battle of the Somme in July 1916.



Article Date: 28 July 1916

SUTTON - Private Tom Summerskill Wounded

The parents of Pte. Tom Summerskill, of the Fighting Fifth (Northumberland Fusiliers), received a letter on Thursday evening week from their son, informing them that he had been wounded in the 'big push.' The letter, written from a base hospital in France, says:- "Just a line to let you know I am wounded and going on well, At present I am in a base hospital, but expect to be sent to England very shortly. My wounds though rather uncomfortable are not serious; one in each leg. I am in good hands and receiving every care and attention possible." Pte. Summerskill joined the Northumberland Fusiliers several months ago and has been 'Somewhere in France' for some time. Before joining this regiment he tried several times to enlist for active service. At the time of enlistment he worked in one of the machine shops in Keighley, and lived with his parents at the Lister Hill, Sutton.

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

However, as a result of the injuries he received in action to both legs, Pte Summerskill **Died of Wounds** on the 20th July 1916 at the Military Hospital at Rouen, France.

He was 18 years of age

News was received on Sunday last by the parents of Private Tom Summerskill, of the Northumberland Fusiliers, that he had died in hospital at Rouen on July 20 from wounds in the right thigh and left leg. The chaplain who was with Private Summerskill when he died wrote expressing his sympathy, and the matron of the hospital in a sympathetic letter spoke very highly of Private Summerskill. She said he was very popular in the hospital, and was always bright and cheery.

Keighley News extract (source: photocopied by Josie Walsh)



Article Date: 28 July 1916

SUTTON - Soldier Dies from Wounds

Mrs. Wm. Summerskill received letters on Sunday stating that her son, Private Tom Summerskill, of the Northumberland Fusiliers (Fighting Fifth), had died in the Military Hospital at Rouen from wounds received in action. The Matron of the Hospital wrote and said that Private Summerskill was a great favourite in the Hospital, and was loved because he was always a bright and cheery. She expressed her sympathy with Mrs. Summerskill in her great loss. A letter was also received from the Hospital Chaplain, who was with Pte. Summerskill when he died. He spoke very highly of him and expressed his sorrow at the loss of Private Summerskill. Private Summerskill died on the 20th July, from wounds in the left leg and right thigh.

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



Casualty Details

Name: SUMMERSKILL, THOMAS HENRY

Initials: T H

Nationality: United Kingdom

Rank: Private

Regiment/Service: Northumberland Fusiliers

Unit Text: "C" Coy. 13th Bn.

Age: 18

Date of Death: 20/07/1916

Service No: 27833

Additional information: Son of John William and Mary Summerskill, of 10, Elm Rd., Sutton-in-Craven, Yorks.

Casualty Type: Commonwealth War Dead

Grave/Memorial Reference: A. 15. 52.

Cemetery: ST. SEVER CEMETERY, ROUEN

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

St. SEVER CEMETERY, ROUEN

During the Great War, Commonwealth camps and hospitals were stationed on the southern outskirts of Rouen.

Almost all of the hospitals at Rouen remained there for practically the whole of the war. They included eight general, five stationary, one British Red Cross, one labour hospital, and No. 2 Convalescent Depot.

A number of the dead from these hospitals were buried in other cemeteries, but the great majority were taken to the city cemetery of St. Sever. In September 1916, it was found necessary to begin an extension.

St. Sever Cemetery contains 3,082 Commonwealth burials of the Great War.

Pte Summerskill is also remembered on the Sutton-in-Craven war memorial.



St. Sever Cemetery, Rouen in France

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



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



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

Pte Thomas Summerskill 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)

FOR THE FALLEN

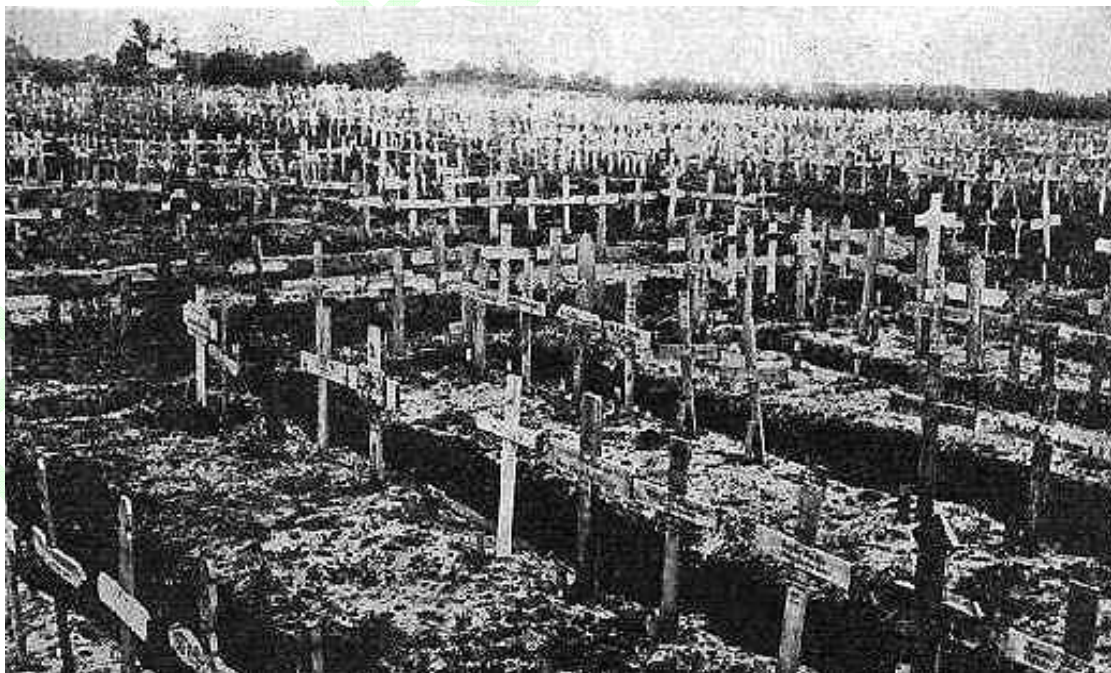
*THEY SHALL NOT GROW OLD, AS WE THAT ARE
LEFT GROW OLD*

*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)