

THE FALLEN OF SUTTON-IN-CRAVEN



WILLIAM GORDON HAGGAS

ROYAL ENGINEERS

DIED OF INJURIES 11<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 1918

BORN IN 1890 AT SUTTON-IN-CRAVEN, THE SON OF  
CHARLES AND ANNIE HAGGAS AND BROTHER OF  
WALTER HAGGAS WHO WAS ALSO KILLED IN ACTION  
DURING THE GREAT WAR

# Haggas Family History

- **1891 census** shows Charles, his wife Annie and their 7 children living at New Market, Sutton-in-Craven as follows:

Name	Age	Work	Birth place	Birth year
Charles (Head)	38	Labourer at bobbin mill	Sutton-in-Craven	1853
Annie (wife)	33	Housewife	Llanymynech, Wales	1858
Lizzie	13	Worsted spinner	Sutton-in-Craven	1878
Susannah	12	Worsted spinner	Sutton-in-Craven	1879
Luther	7		Sutton-in-Craven	1884
Charles Herbert	5		Sutton-in-Craven	1886
John Leonard	2		Sutton-in-Craven	1889
William Gordon	1		Sutton-in-Craven	1890 - 1918
Martha	Baby		Sutton-in-Craven	1891



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



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

- **1901 census** shows Charles, his wife Annie and 7 of their children now living at 23, High Street, Sutton-in-Craven as follows:

Name	Age	Work	Birth place	Birth year
Charles (Head)	48	Wood sawyer at bobbin mill	Sutton-in-Craven	1853
Annie (wife)	43	Housewife	Penyvoil, Wales	1858
Luther	17	Twister in a silk factory	Sutton-in-Craven	1884
Charles Herbert	15	Plasterer	Sutton-in-Craven	1886
John Leonard	12	Spinner in a worsted mill	Sutton-in-Craven	1889
Martha	10		Sutton-in-Craven	1891
Walter	8		Sutton-in-Craven	1893 - 1914
Raymond	5		Sutton-in-Craven	1896
Edith May	4		Sutton-in-Craven	1897

**Note:** William Gordon Haggas is absent from his family home address on the night of the 1901 census. He would have been 11 years old at that time.

- **1911 census** shows that Charles and Annie had been married for 34 years and that of their 12 children born alive, 2 had since died. It also shows the Haggas family now living at 23, Daisy Croft, Sutton-in-Craven as follows:



Name	Age	Work	Birth place	Birth year
Charles (Head)	58	Wood sawyer	Sutton-in-Craven	1853
Annie (wife)	54	Housewife	Montgomeryshire, Wales	1858
William Gordon	21	Plasterer	Sutton-in-Craven	1890 - 1918
Martha Annie	20	Weaver	Sutton-in-Craven	1891
Walter	18	Labourer, sawyer's	Sutton-in-Craven	1893 - 1914
Raymond	15	Worsted doffer	Sutton-in-Craven	1896
Edith May	14	Worsted spinner	Sutton-in-Craven	1897



Daisy Croft, Sutton-in-Craven  
(photo taken by Barbara & Allen Chapman )

During the Great War the Haggas family were now recorded as having migrated to the USA two years earlier. Their home address was now Clark Mills, Oneida County, New York, USA.



Clark Mills, N.Y. USA  
(source: postcard dated 12 July 1912)

## 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 (Feb)



British volunteers are taken in double-deckers to their training places, 1914. These men would form Kitchener's New Army (source: *The Bradford Pals* Ralph N. Hudson 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed, 1993)

Prior to WW1 the Haggas family had migrated to the USA and were living in Oneida County, New York.

However, William Gordon Haggas returned to England in 1916 and answered the nation's call. At this stage the United States was not involved in WW1.

He volunteered to enlist into the 7th Depot Company of the Royal Engineers in October 1916. His regimental number was 213580 and he commenced with the rank of Sapper.



## Additional Information

The Great War of 1914 - 1918 very much relied on engineering. Without engineers there would have been no supply to the armies, because the Royal Engineers maintained the railways, roads, water supply, bridges and transport.

There would have been no communications, because they also maintained the telephones, wireless and other signalling equipment.

There would have been little cover for the infantry and no positions for the artillery, because they designed and built the front-line fortifications.

In addition the infantry and artillery would have soon been powerless had it not been for the Royal Engineers, as they also maintained the guns and other weapons.

By August 1917, the Royal Engineers had grown to a total manpower of 295,668, from just over 25,000 three years earlier at the outbreak of the Great War.



WW1 Royal Engineers Cap Badge

Sapper Haggas entered the Theatre of War arriving in France in October 1917

Name.		Corps.	Rank.	Regt. No.
HAGGAS.		RE	Spr	213580
William G				
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.	
VICTORY				
BRITISH	RE/101A3	679.		
STAR				
Theatre of War first served in				
Date of entry therein				

E. 1380

MEDAL INDEX CARD for William Gordon Haggas  
(source: *The National Archives*)

## The Western Front



British Royal Engineers

The Western Front 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.

However, it was the Russian Revolution in 1917 that finally changed the nature of the deadlock and war of attrition in the west. Once the fighting had halted in the east, it allowed the Germans to transfer many Divisions to the Western Front. They knew that time was running out, for the United States of America had entered the war on the Allied side and it was only a matter of time before vast untapped reserves of manpower swung the balance in the favour of the Allies.

On the 11th November 1917, the German High Command decided to make a decisive attack in the west in the following spring. Their target was the British Army. They believed that the British were exhausted by the four major efforts in 1917 (Arras, Messines, Passchendaele and Cambrai).



Transporting heavy artillery, WW1



In the new year of 1918 the British began to prepare for the anticipated major offensive the Germans were preparing to launch. The Royal Engineers attended to the defenses of their respective zones of responsibility.

These defensive measures included the preparation of all bridges for demolition together with their numbering both on the ground and on maps, storing of the charges in chambers close at hand and the felling of trees across roads.

Having been in France for only a few weeks, Sapper William Gordon Haggas received an injury sustained in the line of duty. This was caused as a consequence of a 'wrench' whilst lifting a heavy weight. He sustained internal haemorrhaging and became seriously ill as a result.

Sapper Haggas was transferred from the battlefields in France to the War Hospital at Newark, Nottinghamshire.

He subsequently **Died of Injuries** on the 11th January 1918.

**He was 28 years of age**

Tragically Gordon's younger brother Walter Haggas had earlier been **Killed in Action** in November 1914 whilst serving with the Scots Guards in France & Flanders at the outbreak of the war.

Two other brothers, Raymond and John Leonard Haggas both served with the United States Army during the latter stages of WW1.



Article Date: 18 January 1918

## SUTTON

### DEATH OF SAPPER W. HAGGAS

It was with deep regret that the residents learned on Sunday morning last that Sapper Willie Gordon Haggas, of the Royal Engineers, had died in hospital at Newark, following a serious attack of internal haemorrhage, the result of a wrench when lifting a heavy weight in France. Sapper Haggas is the fourth son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Clark, Mills Oneda County, U.S.A. (formerly of Sutton), who went out to the United States five or six years ago. He came over to this country about a year ago on a visit and joined the Royal Engineers. His brother, Private Walter Haggas, at the outbreak of war was a reservist, and was in the police force at Bootle. He was called up and went out with the British Expeditionary Force, and has been missing since November, 1914. He was a young man of fine physique and a fearless soldier. Two other brothers, John Leonard Haggas and Raymond Haggas (the youngest son), have recently joined the United States Army. They were all connected with the Sutton Baptist Sunday-school.

The funeral took place on Wednesday afternoon last at the Button Baptist burial ground, Rev. F. Ward Pollard conducting the last rites. The body of the deceased arrived at Crosshills in the morning and was conveyed to the residence of Mr. Fred Davy (uncle), with whom deceased served his apprenticeship as a plasterer. The relatives are very grateful for the manner in which the authorities at Newark Hospital have carried out the arrangements, and for the kindly treatment shown to the deceased. He was in his 29th year. The coffin was taken to the station from Newark Hospital on a gun carriage with full military honours. The chief mourners were Mr. and Mrs. Frank Haggas (uncle and aunt), Miss A. Cooper (Steeton), Mr. and Mrs. Fred Davy (uncle and aunt), Mr. J. Williams (uncle), Mr. and Mrs. Cooper, Mr. C. Hanson. Others in attendance were be local Volunteers, with their officer, 2nd Lieut. A. Clough, Gunner J. W. Horsfall, R.F.A. (Doncaster), Gunner L. Davy, R.F.A. (home on leave

from Glasgow Hospital), and who were his fellow schoolmates. Pte. Harry Happs (Ambulance Corps). The bearers were Messrs. S. Haggas, L. Preston, R. Williams, Fred Feather, J. Binns, Corpl. W. Eals, Lance-Corpl. J. Clough, Privates J. H. Hardacre, B. Pullen, J. Craven, W. Barsby, E Walworth, and W. Smith. Floral tributes were sent by 'Alice,' 'Aunt Polly and Uncle Fred and family.' 'Gladys and Doris,' N.C.O.'s and man No. 7 Depot Company R.E., Newark, and officer commanding and officers No 7 Depot Company R.E., Newark.

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

The mid-week funeral of William Gordon Haggas at Sutton-in-Craven Baptist Chapel was tinged with manifestations of regret in that his parents resided in the USA and were not able to attend. A family aunt & uncle represented the family.



(source: original postcard owned by Andrew Monkhouse)





## Casualty Details

**Name:** HAGGAS

**Initials:** W G

**Nationality:** United Kingdom

**Rank:** Sapper

**Regiment/Service:** Royal Engineers

**Unit Text:** Training Centre (Newark)

**Age:** 28

**Date of Death:** 11/01/1918

**Service No:** 213580

**Additional information:** Son of Charles and Annie Haggas, of Clark Mills, Oneida Co., New York, U.S.A.

**Casualty Type:** Commonwealth War Dead

**Grave/Memorial Reference:** B. 101.

**Cemetery:** SUTTON-IN-CRAVEN BAPTIST BURIAL GROUND

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

William Gordon Haggas is remembered on the Sutton-in-Craven war memorial and on the tomb-stone also bearing the name of his brother Guardsman Walter Haggas in the burial ground of Sutton-in-Craven Baptist Chapel.



Tomb-stone in the Baptist Chapel burial ground  
(photo taken by Josie Walsh)



WAR MEMORIAL, SUTTON-IN-CRAVEN PARK



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



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



Sapper William Gordon Haggas 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



SAPPER W. G. HAGGAS, Royal Engineers, son of Mr. & Mrs. Haggas, formerly of Sutton, died in Newark War Hospital, January, 1918.

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)