

# HERBERT WADDING- TON



1st July 1916

1896-1916 Age 19

**Sergeant 6152 13th (Service) Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers.**

Herbert was born on 7th November 1896 in Bradford, the sixth and youngest child of James Henry and Harriet Waddington. He had four older sisters, while an elder brother had died aged 5 before Herbert's birth. James started his working life as a law clerk, then became a cloth salesman, and finally established himself as a Commission Agent, a middle man buying and selling foodstuffs. This may have played a part in his marriage in 1881 to Harriet Jowett, whose widowed mother was a grocer and an importer of eggs. The family lived near Otley Road, close to Undercliffe Cemetery.

Herbert went to Bradford Grammar School in 1909, just before he was 13, and he spent two years there in Forms IV and V on the Modern side. Although it took him time to adjust to the new school, by the end of his second year he came third in his form in German, and fourth in History. He was a well-built young man who would grow to 6ft. 4in. in height, and doubtless he would have been an asset to the rugby football team, however he left school before his fifteenth birthday. What he did next is not known, presumably he assisted in his father's business or was sent to learn the trade.

When war broke out, Herbert was quick to volunteer in September 1914, although he was not yet 18 and under age. Despite enlisting in Bradford, he did not choose a local unit and instead joined the 13th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers which was being formed in Newcastle. This was part of the third Kitchener 'New Army' - the "Pals" battalions were not yet being recruited. The 13th battalion went to France as part of 21st Division at the start of September 1915 and marched straight into action in the Battle of Loos, the first British 'Big Push'. The 21st was a reserve division, to be used in the event of a break-through. Following a wet night march, the 13th battalion reached their bivouac on the late morning of 25th September, only to be sent forward directly without a meal. After another night in the open, on the 26th they were put under the command of the Scottish 146th Brigade and unsuccessfully attacked the German second line near Hill 70, losing men to their own artillery fire in the confusion. In this action



the battalion suffered nearly 400 casualties, including Herbert who was gassed, although it seems not seriously.

The 13th battalion spent the winter in the region of Armentieres before they were moved south in preparation for the next offensive, near the Somme. They contributed many men to working parties, carrying equipment, building roads and also assisting the Royal Engineers working on three mines being dug under the German lines at the 'Tambour' near Fricourt. On 1st July itself, the battalion did not take part in the main assault, but was divided into five parties whose primary task was to move forward at Zero hour to consolidate captured positions. In the confused situation, they were involved in fighting the Germans and came under shellfire. It is not known which part of the battalion Waddington was with, and so the exact circumstances of his death are obscure. The Bradford Daily Telegraph reported on 2nd August that Herbert was '*killed in action at the head of his platoon on July 1st*'. The officer commanding 62nd brigade wrote, not very helpfully: '*He was a splendid young fellow, and the longer I knew him the better I liked him.*'

Although the British took the German positions at Fricourt by 2nd July, Waddington's body was never identified and he has no known grave. His name is on the Memorial to the Missing at Thiepval. He was 19 years old.



## Acknowledgements:

Thanks to the OBA for permission to use Waddington's photo from the Roll of Honour. The family history was researched using the records on Ancestry. Details of Herbert's school careers are from the BGS Yearbooks 1909-1910 and 1910-1911, consulted in the School Archives. The Bradford Daily Telegraph was consulted on microfilm at West Yorkshire Local Studies Library. The War Diary for the 13th Northumberland Fusiliers is available on Ancestry. The 'disjointed' events of 1st July were written up in an appendix which can be found at

[http://interactive.ancestry.co.uk/60779/43849\\_2155\\_2-00156?pid=622438&backurl=http://search.ancestry.co.uk/cgi-bin/sse.dll?\\_phsrc%3Dxcm576%26\\_phstart%3DsuccessSource%26usePUBJs%3Dtrue%26indiv%3D1%26db%3Dukwardiarieswwi%26gss%3Dangs-d%26new%3D1%26rank%3D1%26msT%3D1%26gskw%3DNorthumberland%2520Fusiliers%26MSAV%3D1%26uidh%3D6n6%26pcat%3DUK\\_WAR\\_DIARIES%26fh%3D1115%26h%3D622438%26recoff%3D%26fsk%3DBELFI5wlgADtawACUnk-61-%26bsk%3D%26pgoff%3D%26ml\\_rpos%3D1116&treeid=&personid=&hintid=&usePUB=true&\\_phsrc=xcm576&\\_phstart=successSource&usePUBJs=true#?imageId=43849\\_2155\\_2-00186](http://interactive.ancestry.co.uk/60779/43849_2155_2-00156?pid=622438&backurl=http://search.ancestry.co.uk/cgi-bin/sse.dll?_phsrc%3Dxcm576%26_phstart%3DsuccessSource%26usePUBJs%3Dtrue%26indiv%3D1%26db%3Dukwardiarieswwi%26gss%3Dangs-d%26new%3D1%26rank%3D1%26msT%3D1%26gskw%3DNorthumberland%2520Fusiliers%26MSAV%3D1%26uidh%3D6n6%26pcat%3DUK_WAR_DIARIES%26fh%3D1115%26h%3D622438%26recoff%3D%26fsk%3DBELFI5wlgADtawACUnk-61-%26bsk%3D%26pgoff%3D%26ml_rpos%3D1116&treeid=&personid=&hintid=&usePUB=true&_phsrc=xcm576&_phstart=successSource&usePUBJs=true#?imageId=43849_2155_2-00186).

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