

# JOHN RHODES CRABTREE



9th August 1915

1893-1915 Aged 22

**Lance Sergeant 10910 9th (Service) Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment.** John was born on 26th June 1893 to John Rhodes senior and Mary Elizabeth Crabtree, in Manningham, Bradford. He was christened in the local Wesleyan-Methodist chapel. The fourth of five children, he was born into comfortable circumstances. His paternal grandfather William worked his way up from a joiner-carpenter living in Grammar School Street, to a master joiner employing twenty-four men. When he died in 1899 he was described as a "gentleman". His son John Rhodes senior rose from being a worsted merchant's salesman at fifteen to owning his own business manufacturing hosiery and supplying yarn a decade later. He lived next door to his father on Springcliffe, Manningham, then inherited his house, before later retiring to "Hathaway", Ben Rhydding. When he died in 1924 he left an estate valued at £24,000.

John Rhodes junior attended Bradford Grammar from 1905-9, from the ages of twelve to sixteen. In his final year, in Form III Classical, he came first or second in English, French, History, Geography, Greek, Science and Maths. He was not however destined for university. His father sent him to learn his trade with a large drapers company in Market Place, Leicester, where he was in 1911. His two older sisters were also sent to work, as a nurse and teacher. John had returned to Bradford by the time war broke out.

When Kitchener published "Your King and Country need you: a call to arms", on 11th August, he was one the "first hundred thousand" who responded in a fortnight. The 9/West Yorks were formed at York on 25th August and allocated to 32nd Brigade, recruited entirely in Yorkshire, part of 11th (Northern) Division. They were the first Tykes of Kitchener's Army to see



action. On 3rd July 1915, the Division sailed for Lemnos near Gallipoli, disembarking on the 11th. It was only at 07.25 on 6th August that they were told they would land at Suvla Bay that night in an attempt to rescue the disastrous failure of the April landings. In pitch darkness they advanced across rough, sandy and marshy ground in support of 6/Yorkshire's attack on Lala Baba Hill, bayonetting ten snipers en route. On the 7th they assaulted Hill 10, where the Turks were strongly entrenched and surrounded with land mines. Crabtree survived these encounters, but at dawn on the 9th the Turks counter-attacked in strength and compelled the 9/West Yorks to fall back with severe loss to Sulajik Farm. In confused fighting from their landing until they were withdrawn into reserve on 11th August the battalion suffered 153 missing in addition to their killed and wounded. Crabtree was among those killed. His body was not found and at the end of the year the British evacuated their bridgehead. His name is among those on Helles Memorial. He was unmarried.



## Acknowledgements:

Information for Crabtree's School years is from The Bradfordian. His photo is used by permission of the OBA. His family history is constructed from census and probate records accessed through [Ancestry.com](http://Ancestry.com). His death is recorded by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC.org). For Kitchener's "first hundred thousand" see <http://www.1914-1918.net/kitcheners.htm> and for 11th (Northern) Division <http://www.1914-1918.net/11div.htm>. Information about the service of 9/West Yorks is at <http://www.wartimememoriesproject.com/greatwar/allied/westyorkshireregiment9.php#sthash.t4t22e6l.dpuf> and the battalion War Diary account of the landing and subsequent assaults can be read on Ancestry, starting at [http://interactive.ancestry.co.uk/60380/42871\\_625537\\_11837-00016/?pid=24898#?imageld=42871\\_625537\\_11837-00016](http://interactive.ancestry.co.uk/60380/42871_625537_11837-00016/?pid=24898#?imageld=42871_625537_11837-00016).



*Thanks to Keith Roberts OB for these photos of Helles Memorial and for placing the commemorative cross.*

*This biography was researched and compiled by Nick Hooper (Nhooper1956@googlemail.com) June 2015.*

