

# EDWARD JOHN CECIL KIDD



10th April 1918

1896-1918 Aged 21

## Second Lieutenant Royal Air Force.

Edward John Cecil, known as Cecil, was the son of William Kidd, the headmaster of the National School at Addingham, and his wife Clara England. Both were from Addingham and had married in 1891. They had four children. The second Lilian died a few days before her first birthday in 1894; Cecil and his twin sister Marjorie were born on 23rd December 1896. The family lived at 'Lynholme' on the edge of Addingham village, within easy reach of the station which Cecil must have used when he started at the Bradford Grammar School in September 1910. He was fourteen. At the end of his first year in Fourth Modern lower he was awarded the Division prize for his results in Maths, Physics and Chemistry, and he also won an honourable mention for the form prize. He was then promoted two forms into Fifth Modern upper, but he did not prosper there. He then spent two years in the Matriculation form and once more showing his ability at Maths and Chemistry, and also did well in Geography and History. Had the war not intervened he might have gone to university, or perhaps he intended to join his parents and elder sister Winifred as a teacher at Addingham School.

Soon after the outbreak of war Cecil enlisted in the Yorkshire Dragoons (his occupation was stated as 'student'), but he later transferred to the West Yorkshire Regiment. He would not have been old enough to serve abroad until he was nineteen in December 1915, but he was recommended for a commission and after a course with the Officer Training Battalion at Trinity College, Cambridge he was gazetted Second Lieutenant on 1st January 1917. He crossed to France in February and then on 22nd March he joined 1/5th West Yorkshire Regiment which was resting to the west of Arras. He was posted to 'D' Company, but after only four days he was sent to hospital suffering from sickness. When he returned from hospital is not known and there is no further mention of him in the battalion's war diary until December. He was not one of the officers involved in the 9th October attack near Passchendaele when 1st-5/West Yorkshire suffered severe losses including fourteen officers. On 7th December he led a night patrol south of Passchen-



daele into the flooded lunar landscape of no man's land: 'the ground was very heavy. Nothing was seen or heard of the enemy.' At the end of the month he transferred to the Royal Flying Corps (which on 1st April became the Royal Air Force).

Following a brief home leave Kidd reported to Reading on 4th January 1918, then completed his aerial gunnery course at Hythe in which he demonstrated 'proficiency'. He was posted to 99th Squadron at Yatesbury in Wiltshire. It was preparing to proceed to France as part of the Independent Air Force to conduct daylight raids against targets in Germany. In early April after a weekend leave at home Kidd returned to his squadron, arriving at 9 am on Tuesday 9th. He found that he was rostered for a flight as an observer with another pilot. They went up in a de Havilland 9, a two-seater biplane notorious for its poor performance. About six minutes into the flight the plane crashed. The pilot was killed outright while Kidd was pulled from the wreckage with multiple injuries. On receipt of a telegram reporting the accident, William Kidd set off to see his son, but Cecil died the next day. His body was brought back to Addingham where it was interred in the churchyard on Monday 15th April. The service was conducted by the man who had baptized him twenty years earlier. The Adjutant of his former battalion wrote to his parents: 'He was a gentleman and had made good'.





## Acknowledgements:

Cecil Kidd's photo is from the School memorial book courtesy of the O.B.A. and B.G.S. The family was researched using Ancestry.com. His time at B.G.S. is recorded in the Annual Reports for 1911-1914. No Service Record survives for Kidd, and his Officer Personal Record has not come to light at T.N.A. His Medal Index Card records his entry into the French theatre of war. A brief report of his service in the R.A.F. (AIR 76-275) is available. The best source for his war service and the circumstances of Edward Kidd's death is <http://www.cpgw.org.uk/> (accessed 21-3-2018), which prints newspaper articles not available through the British Newspaper Archive, particularly the detailed account in the *Craven Herald* for 19th April 1918. For his time with the 1-5th/West Yorks. I supplemented the War Diary (accessed through Ancestry.com) with John Sheehan, *Harrogate Terriers. The 1/5th (Territorial) Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment in the Great War* (Pen & Sword, Barnsley, 2017), chapters 9-11. For 99th Squadron R.A.F., see <https://www.revolvy.com/main/index.php?s=No.%2099%20Squadron%20RAF>, and for the de Havilland 9, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Airco\\_DH.9](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Airco_DH.9). I have not been able to identify the pilot killed in the same accident. The photo of Kidd's grave was taken by the author.

This biography was researched and composed by Nick Hooper in March 2018. For further information, contact [Nhooper1956@googlemail.com](mailto:Nhooper1956@googlemail.com), or see