

JOHN HAMMOND FISHER



7th September 1918

1898-1918 Aged 20

**Second Lieutenant, M.C., Croix de Guerre,
6th Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment (TF),
attached 2-4th Battalion King's Own
Yorkshire Light Infantry.**

John Fisher was born in Bradford in late April 1898. He was the second child of Benjamin Hammond Fisher and Mary Ellen nee Moorhouse. They both came from Bradford and married in 1893. They had three sons followed by a daughter. Benjamin worked as clerk to a cloth merchant and was able to go into business on his own dealing in worsted cloth. The family moved to a large house at 6 Fairfield Road, off Toller Lane.

John went to Bradford Grammar School in 1909, entering the School in 2nd Classical Upper, coming sixth at the end of his first year. He moved up through the Classical forms, coming first in Latin, Greek, French and Divinity in 1913. He gained Higher Certificates in Latin, Greek, English and History and joined the recently-formed Officer Training Corps. At the end of 1916 he won an Open Classical Scholarship at Worcester College, Oxford, but he was never able to take up this place. Early in 1917 he received his call-up papers and reported to the Bradford Recruiting Office on 5th April. He was posted to the West Riding Regiment, but as he was clearly officer material with his educational achievements and his O.T.C. training, he was sent direct to 8th Officer Cadet Battalion. On 1st August 1917 he was commissioned into the 6th Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment, as he desired, and he arrived in France on 18th September.

When Billing went to the front is not yet known. He was posted to another Yorkshire battalion, the 2-4th King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry and this may have been in April 1918 when eleven (unnamed) officers arrived to replace the severe casualties suffered in late March during the German Spring Offensive. If this is so, then in July he served under French command in the Second Battle of the Marne, which was the beginning of the Allied counter-attack that led to victory before the end of the year. This may explain why he was awarded the Croix de Guerre, a French decoration.



Fisher's battalion returned to British command in August and from 25th August it was almost continuously in action, advancing from Courcelles on the old Somme battlefield to Havrincourt, a bastion of the Hindenburg Line outside Cambrai. On 27th August, when two companies of 2-4th Yorkshire Light Infantry attacked the German-held 'Banks Trench', Fisher's company commander Captain Skirrow was killed by machine-gun fire and 'D' Company's advance lost direction. Fisher, a platoon commander, took control of the situation and made contact with troops of the neighbouring battalion. This may have been the occasion for his (posthumous) award of the M.C. After a brief rest during which 2-4th K.O.Y.L.I. absorbed 180 replacements for its casualties, the battalion returned to the line to attack near Vaulx-Vraucourt on 1st September. It was a characteristic of these operations, and of the high-degree of training of British units by this time, that attacks could be organized at very short notice and with little time for reconnaissance. The battalion War Diary gives a very detailed account of three day's fighting, but there is no indication of what happened to Fisher until the summary for 3rd September where it was reported that he had died of wounds. There must have been an error in the information received for he was in fact evacuated to Le Havre and died of his wounds in 2nd General Hospital on 7th September. He is buried in Ste. Marie Cemetery, Le Havre.

Old Bradfordians—'We will remember them'



Acknowledgements:

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 years at B.G.S. are recorded in the Annual Reports for

This biography was researched and composed by Nick Hooper in .

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