

Walton Colliery, Wakefield, West Yorkshire. First World War, Military Casualties.

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THE GREAT WAR (World War I)

Military casualties who had a connection with Walton Colliery (Sharlston West).

A. AMOS

18746 Private Alfred Amos, 6th Bn, King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, killed in action on 20 July 1915. Commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial at Ypres.

Amos was a single man who lived with his parents at Haw Park and worked at Walton Colliery before joining the colours. He was killed by a shell bursting in his trench and he was buried nearby (Wakefield Express 31 July 1915).

Haw Park Cottages were situated in the south of Walton C.P. on Haw Park Lane near the pit shaft in Haw Park Wood.

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R. E. ATKINSON

2007 Private Robert Edward Atkinson, 1/4th Bn, King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, killed in action aged 22years (or 24\*) on 19 December 1915.

Atkinson, who was gassed, lived at 40 Ings Cottage, Crofton, and left a widow and two children. He worked as a miner at Walton Colliery.

\* The Commonwealth War Graves Commission and Wakefield Express both give his age as 22 years , but a further newspaper announcement by the widow gives it as 24 years.

Ings Cottages (Spike Island) were demolished some while ago and now the area is part of Walton Colliery Nature Park.

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E. CLARKE

201263 Private Ernest Frederick Clarke, 10th Bn, King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, died aged 26* years on 19 December 1917. Remembered at Epehy Wood Farm Cemetery, Somme.

Clarke, who lived at Walton House Cottage, Walton, enlisted in November 1914, previous to which he had worked in the brickyard at Sharlston Colliery. He died of severe wounds caused by a shell burst.

* A Wakefield Express report of 5 January 1918 gives his age as 25 years. Walton House is in Shay Lane, and has since been renamed as Walton Manor and is a care home for senior citizens.

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W. B. CRESWICK

Captain Wilfred B. Keswick, M.C., manger Sharlston Collieries.

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J. LUMB

220118 Private Jasper Lumb, 2/4th Bn, King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, died aged 35 years on 27 November 1917. He is commemorated with 7.000 others on the Cambrai Memorial at Louveral, France. Another man from Walton Colliery.

Wakefield Express 15 December 1917:

"REFUSED TO GO BACK THOUGH HE WAS WOUNDED
DIED LIKE A TRUE GALLANT SOLDIER

The death took place in action on November 27th of Private Jasper Lumb, King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, second son of Mr Lumb, Crossley Street, Sharlston.

His widow, who is left with one child, has received the following letter from Lieutenant McClausland:-

'It is my painful duty to have to inform you of your husband's death, he died like a true gallant soldier. He had been wounded but refused to go back, and was killed by a shell on November 27th in the big advance. He was one of our very best Lewis gunners, always keen and cheerful and to the fore. He was loved and respected by everyone in the company, and we all feel we have lost a personal friend, whose place can never be filled. Please accept my sympathy in your great loss.'

Deceased, who was 35 years of age, enlisted on November 12th 1914, previous to which he was a fitter at Walton Colliery. He had been in France since January 1915."

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C.R. SMITH

201162 Private Charles Richard Smith, 2/4th Bn, King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, died aged 22 or 23 on 27 November 1917. Son of Henry and Sarah Smith, of 4 Victoria Terrace, Walton. Commemorated on the Cambrai Memorial, Louveral. He was formerly a worker at Walton Pit, a footballer and a chorister. Victoria Terrace is in School Lane, Low Town, opposite the post office.

Wakefield Express, 8 December 1917:

"CASUALTY LIST

News has been received of the death in action of Private Charles Richard Smith, of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, whose parents live at 4 Victoria Terrace, Walton. He enlisted in the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry in December 1914, and had been in France over twelve months. He previously worked at Walton pit, and was a member of the Walton Athletic A.F.C. and also in the choir at Walton Church.

In a letter to deceased's parents Second Lieutenant Rodgers says:- 'He was killed instantly by shell fire during the recent operations . I can honestly say he was the smartest man in the platoon, and I was terribly grieved at his death. His death is felt throughout the whole Company as he was respected by everyone.'

He was the son of Mr and Mrs Harry Smith and was 22 years of age."

A later Roll of Honour announcement in the Wakefield Express says Pte Smith was killed in action near Bournon Wood.

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G. SMITH

556 Private George Smith, 1/4th Bn, King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. died aged 28/29 on 20 November 1915. He was the son of Walter and Jane Smith, of Wakefield, and husband of Evelyn Smith, later of 15 Haigh Moor Street, Wakefield. He is buried at Bard Cottage Cemetery, Ypres.

Wakefield Express, 27 November 1915:

"WALTON TERRITORIAL KILLED BY
A BULLET FROM A GERMAN MACHINE GUN

The death as taken place in action of Private George Smith of the 1/4th Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, who lived with his wife and son at Priory Square, Walton. Major Harry Moorhouse, writing to the widow on Sunday last, expresses regret that Smith died on Saturday night from a bullet wound in the knee from a German machine gun whilst on a working party. The wound was so serious that every effort to save his life was to no avail. He is buried in a Military Cemetery just behind the firing line, alongside some of his other comrades who have fallen.

Lieutenant H. G. Fraser, in writing to deceased's mother, who also lives at Walton, states that 'Smith was a very popular man in the Company, and his death is deeply deplored by both Officers and men.'

Private Smith, who was 28 years of age, worked at Walton Pit, and formerly lived at Thornes Lane Wharf, Wakefield. He had been a member of the Territorials for eight years, and he was home on furlough about three weeks ago. Deceased had two brothers in the army. One of them Driver H. Smith, Royal Field Artillery, is now in Greece, and on a ship which was torpedoed. He was in the water eight hours before being picked up by a French boat. The other brother is in the 1/4th Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. He has been wounded and is now in hospital at Mansfield."

Wakefield Express, 18 December 1915:

"THE DEATH OF A WALTON SOLDIER
'THE LIFE AND SOUL OF No 6 SECTION'

In reference to the death of Private George Smith, 1/4th Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, of Walton, his widow has received the following letter from Private Richard W. Paterson of the 2nd Platoon A Company:- 'The boys in your husband's old section wish me to express their profound sorrow at his unfortunate death. His ready wit, unfailing good humour and spirit made very dear to us all.

'He was the life and soul of No 6 Section, so you can readily understand how much we miss him, and we realise what a great loss it is to you. Be brave and show a cheerful heart ever as George did in face of the greatest hardship'."

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H. WARD

3452 Private Herbert Ward, 1/4th Bn, King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, died (gassed) aged 18 on 19 December 1915. Son of John and S.A. Ward, later of 12 Apple Tree Lane, Stanfree, Chesterfield. Native of Walton, Wakefield. Buried at Bard Cottage Cemetery, Ypres.

Wakefield Express, 1 January 1916:

"YOUNG WALTON SOLDIER

Private H. Ward, of Wood's Yard, Walton, who was 18 years of age, joined the 2nd/4th King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry in November 1914. Although so young he was an enthusiastic soldier, and he had his desire when he went to join the 1st/4th at the front. Regularly he wrote cheery letters to his parents. Any hardship did not appear to trouble him, and he always spoke highly of the good food and warm clothing with which they were provided. He was a fine young fellow weighing about 11 stone, and his height 5ft 6ins. Previous to enlisting he worked at Walton Colliery."

The Wakefield Express published numerous Roll of Honour announcements, many with verse, from various members of the family until at least 1919.

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P. WILKINSON

12007 Gunner Percy Wilkinson, 168th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery, died aged 27 on 31 January 1917. He was the son of Mr G. Wilkinson, of Woodyard Cottages, Walton. Before the war, he was a miner at Walton Colliery. Buried at Sucrierie Military Cemetery, Colincamps, Somme.

A headstone at St. Helen's, Sandal Magna, bears the name of Gnr. Wilkinson and his parents, George Martin Wilkinson and Maria Wilkinson.

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See The War Memorial, Walton, Page 2 (<https://overtown.org.uk/middle-walton/war-memorial-2.html>)

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