



Herbert Wilkinson

1883 -1917

Herbert was born in Halifax on 11th January 1883. His father was Henry Wilkinson, born in Halifax around 1855 and died in 1917. His mother was Jane Ellen (nee Swift) born in Halifax in 1852 and died in 1932. They were married in Halifax in 1878.

Their other children, all born in Halifax were; Edith Hannah, born in 1879, Albin Henry, born in 1881, Tom, born in 1884, Alice, born in 1886, Alfred, born in 1887 and Ernest, born in 1891.

Herbert was married at Our Lady and St. Paulinus Church, Dewsbury on 26th December 1912 to Mary Ellen (nee Barry) born in Dinapore, India around 1884, her father was Serjeant-Instructor John Barry who was a career soldier. They had two children; David Victor, born in Dewsbury in 1914 and died in an accident on 26th April 1916 and Mary Vivianne, born Dewsbury in 1916. Herbert worked in Dewsbury at the Maypole Dairy Store for ten years and then moved to Goole, Yorkshire as Manager of the Meadow Dairy Store, living at 5, Newport Street, Goole.

He enlisted in Goole in August 1916 serving as Private 33989 in the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry and later as Private 40049 in the 8th Battalion York & Lancaster Regiment. He was killed in action on 9th April 1917 near Ypres, during an artillery bombardment. He was buried in Railway Dugouts Burial Ground (Transport Farm) Zillebeke near Ypres, Belgium. Herbert was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

His widow received the following lines from a Lieutenant serving in the same battalion: *"It is my painful duty to have to inform you that your husband, Pte. H. Wilkinson, was killed in action during an intense bombardment on April 9th [1917]. Death, caused by shellfire, was instantaneous and it may prove a source of comfort to you to know that your husband was afforded a decent burial. Sympathy, I know, will not alleviate your grief, but I would venture to offer it as from a friend, having known your husband for some time, as his company officer. He was a fine soldier, and despite the trying conditions, he stuck to his post with the greatest of courage and coolness."* Yours, etc., Lieut. A.J. Riley.

Herbert is commemorated on the Dewsbury Cenotaph in Crow Nest Park and in the Dewsbury Roll of Honour kept in Dewsbury Central Library (see below) and on the War Memorial in Our Lady and St. Paulinus Church.

N.B. In the Dewsbury Roll of Honour compiled in 1923-24, there is a single entry for the name of Herbert Wilkinson as shown below.

Wilkinson Herbert.	28, Marriott Street, Dewsbury.	Pte. 45 Duke of Wellington's Reg. (W.R.)	Killed.	9.4.17.
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On the Dewsbury Cenotaph this name appears only once, and as our research had uncovered some inaccurate entries in the book, it was thought that this entry actually referred to Herbert Wilkinson who served as Private 40049 in the York and Lancaster Regiment and was killed on 9th April 1917. In 2018 we were contacted by a gentleman whose father had survived the war although losing a leg and whose best friend was a Herbert Wilkinson of 28, Marriott Street who served as Private 3747 in the Duke of Wellington's Regiment; this man however, was killed on 3rd December 1915.

Our initial thoughts were that possibly both of the men bearing this name were put forward for commemoration and due to a clerical error were somehow combined into the one entry.

As it is unlikely that the reasons will ever be known for certain, we have decided to include both men in the lists of "The Fallen" on the Dewsbury Sacrifices Website.

