

Private Hamer Illingworth[©]
Regimental number: 20/9
Prince of Wales's Own (West Yorkshire) Regiment

born: 1886 - died: 24 July 1917

Private Hamer Illingworth was born in about 1886¹ in Manningham, near Bradford in Yorkshire.² He was the son of Uri and Mary Illingworth. Uri was born in about 1859 in Allerton, near Bradford, and Mary (the former Mary Fuller) was born in about 1858 in Worthington, Suffolk.³ They married in Bradford in 1880⁴ and had ten children: Irvin (born in 1881),⁵ Hampton (born in 1883, but died when he was 1),⁶ Arthur (born in 1885 but died at the age of 9),⁷ Hamer, Charles (born in 1888 but died at the age of 10),⁸ Percy (born in 1890),⁹ Hilda (born in 1892),¹⁰ Gertrude (born in 1894),¹¹ Hiram (born in 1899)¹² and Ben (born in 1903).¹³

In 1891, the family was living at 41 Four Lane Ends in Manningham, where Hamer's father was a milk dealer.¹⁴ Ten years later they were at the same address and Uri was still working as a milk dealer, but his wife Mary was now working as a confectioner.¹⁵

By 1911, the family had moved to 29 Lingwood Road in Girdlington, near Bradford. Uri continued as a milk dealer and Mary was assisting in the business. Like his father, Hamer was now a milk dealer.¹⁶

Hamer enlisted in the West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own) in Bradford,¹⁷ probably in October 1915.¹⁸ In July 1917, he was probably serving with the 1st/5th Battalion.¹⁹ An article in the *Telegraph and Argus* reflected on headmasters from Bradford who served in the Great War, including John William Tindle, who served with the 5th Battalion at the same time as Hamer.

"The History of the Bradford Territorials tells us that on July 22, the West Yorks men had suffered 'one of the great and terrible experiences' of the war: a bombardment with a new kind of gas which smelled 'not unpleasantly' of burnt mustard.

"On that day and in the days following, the 5th Battalion was to lose 250 men (killed or wounded) from this 'mysterious and stealthy German frightfulness'.

"John W Tindle is buried in Coxyde Military Cemetery alongside 22 men from Bradford killed by the gas attack of which the following died as a result of the gas attack: Tom Benn (Princeville), Alfred Booth and Joe Perkins (Queensbury), Hamer Illingworth (Girdlington), . . .).²⁰

Hamer did die of gas poisoning on 24 July at No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station. His mother, who was living at 19 St. Leonard's Road in Girdlington, was his next of kin, was notified of his death²¹ and received the monies owing to him from army upon his death.²² She requested the following inscription for his gravestone in Coxyde Military Cemetery (Grave Reference: Plot I, Row F, Grave 24):²³

TO MEMORY EVER DEAR

Coxyde Military Cemetery (located near the village of Koksijde in Belgium) was about 10 kilometres behind the front line in 1917. Commonwealth troops had relieved the French forces in the area and

the village was used for rest billets. Although the village was occasionally shelled, the cemetery, which had been started by French troops, was reasonably safe. "It became the most important of the Commonwealth cemeteries on the Belgian coast and was used at night for the burial of the dead brought back from the front line."²⁴ There are now just over 1,500 Commonwealth graves from the Great War in the cemetery.

Hamer was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).²⁵

It is possible that Hamer's brother Hiram also served in the Great War.²⁶ His brother Percy married Annie Lowes on 26 June 1920 in Bradford.²⁷ Percy was still living in Bradford when he died on 24 June 1960.²⁸ Hamer's father died in Bradford in 1930.²⁹

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¹ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 3 May 2017) entry for Illingworth, Hamer, Registration district: Bradford Yorkshire, Volume 09B, Page 120

² "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2017), entry for Hamer Illingworth, Registration district: Bradford, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 60, Piece: 3636, Folio: 56, Page: 3

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ "England & Wales Marriages 1837–2008," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 25 May 2017), entry for Uri Illingworth, District: Bradford, County: Yorkshire, Volume: 9B, Page: 258

⁵ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 3 May 2017) entry for Illingworth, Irvin, Registration district: Bradford, Volume 09B, Page 137

⁶ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 3 May 2017) entry for Illingworth, Hampton, Registration district: Bradford Yorkshire, Volume 09B, Page 152; "England & Wales Deaths 1837–2007," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2017), entry for Hampton Illingworth, District: Bradford, County: Yorkshire, Volume: 9B, Page: 99

⁷ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 3 May 2017) entry for Illingworth, Arthur, Registration district: Bradford Yorkshire, Volume 09B, Page 129; "England & Wales Deaths 1837–2007," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2017), entry for Arthur Illingworth, District: Bradford, County: Yorkshire, Volume: 9B, Page: 50

⁸ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 3 May 2017) entry for Illingworth, Charles, Registration district: Bradford Yorkshire, Volume 09B, Page 110; "England & Wales Deaths 1837–2007," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2017), entry for Charles Illingworth, District: Bradford, County: Yorkshire, Volume: 9B, Page: 71

⁹ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 3 May 2017) entry for Illingworth, Percy, Registration district: Bradford, Volume 09B, Page 114

¹⁰ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 3 May 2017) entry for Illingworth, Hilda, Registration district: Bradford, Volume 09B, Page 75

¹¹ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 3 May 2017) entry for Illingworth, Gertrude, Registration district: Bradford, Volume 09B, Page 78

¹² "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 3 May 2017) entry for Illingworth, Hiram, Registration district: Bradford, Volume 09B, Page 95

¹³ "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 3 May 2017) entry for Illingworth, Ben, Registration district: Bradford, Volume 09B, Page 94

¹⁴ "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2017), entry for Hamer Illingworth

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- ¹⁵ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2017), entry for Hamer Illingworth, Registration district: Bradford, Sub-registration district: Bradford West, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 38, Piece: 4159, Folio: 149, Page: 2, Household schedule number: 12
- ¹⁶ "1911 England, Wales & Scotland Census," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2017), entry for Hamer Illingworth, Registration district: Bradford, Registration district number: 498, Enumeration district: 23, Sub-district: Manningham, Sub-district number: 3, Census reference: RG14PN26786 RG78PN1541 RD498 SD3 ED23 SN123, Piece number: 26786
- ¹⁷ "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2017), entry for Hamer Illingworth
- ¹⁸ Based on "War Gratuity Calculator" (<https://wargratitude.wordpress.com/2015/08/16/gratuity-calculator/>: accessed 18 May 2017); "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2017), entry for Hamer Illingworth
- ¹⁹ There are conflicting records about the battalion with which Hamer served, including the 4th (*Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org: accessed 27 April 2017), entry for Illingworth, Hamer), 5th ("UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2017), entry for Hamer Illingworth and "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2017), entry for Hamer Illingworth) and 8th ("No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 27 April 2017), entry for Illingworth, H.). The most likely appears to be the 5th Battalion entry.
- ²⁰ "Bradford school masters who joined up to teach the Germans a lesson," *Telegraph and Argus* (http://www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/tahistory/featuresnostalgia/pasttimes/12905449.School_masters_who_joined_up_to_teach_the_Germans_a_lesson/?ref=arc: accessed 25 May 2017) NAME OF BOOK "National Union Of Teachers War Record 1914-1919"
- ²¹ "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 27 April 2017), entry for Illingworth, H.
- ²² "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2017), entry for Hamer Illingworth
- ²³ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org: accessed 27 April 2017), entry for Illingworth. Hamer, Service No: 20/9
- ²⁴ "Coxyde Military Cemetery," *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org: accessed 2 May 2017)
- ²⁵ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2017), entry for Hamer Illingworth
- ²⁶ "UK, WWI Service Medal and Award Rolls, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 28 May 2017), entry for Hiram Illingworth
- ²⁷ "West Yorkshire, England, Marriages and Banns, 1813–1935," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 28 May 2017), entry for Percy Illingworth
- ²⁸ "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1966," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 28 May 2017), entry for Percy Illingworth
- ²⁹ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 3 May 2017), entry for Uri Illingworth, Registration district: Bradford, Inferred county: Yorkshire, Volume: 9B, Page: 206