

Sergeant Harry Goodson[©]
Regimental Number: 34784
16th Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers

born: about November 1887 - died: 5 September 1917

Harry Goodson died on 5 September 1917 and was buried in Plot D. 8 of the Adinkerke Military Cemetery, near De Panne in western Belgium, close to the border with France.¹ He was the son of Thomas Goodson and Mary Goodchild of Kelmarsch, Nottingham.^{2,3,4} Harry enlisted in the Northumberland Fusiliers at Corbridge-on-Tyne and rose to the rank of sergeant⁵ before he “died of wounds.”⁶ Harry served in the 4th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers and after his promotion to sergeant continued to serve with the 6th and 16th Battalions of that same regiment.⁷ He arrived in France on 20 April 1915 and remained there until his death in 1917.⁸ Sergeant Harry Goodson was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 8 August 1917.⁹



Northumberland Fusilier's Regimental Badge
Source: Wikimedia Commons

Harry was suffering from shrapnel wounds to his face, received in action the previous day. He was posthumously awarded the British War Medal, the Victory Medal and the 1914–1915 Star.¹⁰ This 1914–1915 Star was a campaign medal given to officers and men of British and Imperial forces who served in any theatre of the First World War in Central Europe between 5 August 1914 and 31 December 1915. This medal was always awarded in conjunction with the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).

It is interesting to note that Harry had one regimental number as a private and was assigned another number when he was promoted to the rank of Sergeant.¹¹ This was sometimes the case.

Harry was from a family of nine children. His parents Thomas and Mary both came from Suffolk, England, and married early in 1878.¹² Thomas's father was born in Palgrave, and his mother was born in Cranford. After their marriage, Thomas and Mary remained for a time in Palgrave¹³ but later moved to Newport, Gloucestershire. They then established a home in Aldford, Cheshire, in the 1880s. Thomas worked as a gardener and domestic servant, possibly on an estate. Harry and two of his siblings were born there¹⁴ and Harry was baptized there on 6 November 1887.¹⁵

By 1901, the family resided in Aldburgh, Yorkshire,¹⁶ and they were settled in Kelmarsch, Leicestershire, by 1911, where Harry's father was employed as a gamekeeper.¹⁷ This is where Harry's parents were living when he was killed in action.¹⁸



Goodson Family (est. 1897) Source: *ancestry.com* family tree owner *StuartCrook134*, used with permission

Back Row: Harry, George, Tom, Edie, James (Jim)

Front Row: Emily, Mary, Baby Matilda (Tilly), Annie, Thomas (Tom) and William Goodson

Harry was the second of the nine children that Thomas and Mary raised. He had three brothers and five sisters: George (b. 1880), Thomas (b. 1881), Alice Emily (b. 1883), James (b. 1884), William (b. 1886), Edith (b. 1891), Annie (b. 1892) and Matilda (b. 1894).^{19,20,21} Harry's father Thomas died on 18 January 1919,²² and his mother Mary in 1940.²³ The family belonged to the Church of England.²⁴

When Harry joined the Northumberland Fusiliers that day in 1915 at Corbridge-on-Tyne he became part of a proud regiment and no doubt knew this.

The history of the Fusiliers dates back to 1674, when it was originally raised as the 5th Regiment of Foot. It gained the regional designation of "Northumberland" in 1782 and later adopted the title of Northumberland Fusiliers.²⁵ It was known as "the fighting fifth." Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's character, Dr. Watson, was portrayed as having served in Afghanistan with the 5th Regiment of Foot.²⁶

The 16th Battalion of the Northumberland Fusiliers was the unit Harry was assigned to; it was raised in September 1914 and assigned to the 96th Brigade, 32nd Division. It landed at Boulogne, France, in November 1915 and proceeded to Belgium, where it remained until it disbanded on 7 February 1918. The battalion fought at the battles of the Somme, Albert, Bezentin Ridge, Ancre Heights and Ancre.²⁷

At the end of July 1917, the 16th Battalion moved from the coastal defences at Bray Dunes near Dunkirk, France, to Coxyde/Koksijde, in Belgium. On 1 August they went on to the nearby Ribaillet

camp, where they remained for the next two days, before travelling on to the St. Georges sector on 3 August. The St. Georges sector was subject to frequent and intense bombardments and casualties often resulted.

On 6 August 1917 one officer and sixteen men of the Battalion conducted a raid on a rat post, killing every German soldier they found there. The Lieutenant and four men were wounded. (A rat post was probably the name given to a German observation post.) On 9 August the battalion was again relieved and returned to the Ribaillet camp.²⁸

By that time, Sergeant Harry Goodson had been wounded and was being treated at No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station. Whether he was part of that raid or was wounded in a bombardment cannot now be ascertained. We do know, however, that Harry did not succumb to his injuries until a month later, on 5 September 1917. Harry was 29 years old when he died.

The Regimental Creed²⁹

I am a Fusilier, trained and ready to deploy.
I will defend my country's freedoms with respect and integrity.
I will always maintain my arms, my equipment and myself.
I will place the mission and the team first.
I will never accept defeat nor let down my mates or my Regiment
I will always be one of England's finest, a Fusilier.

Their motto is "Honi soit qui mal y pense" which can be translated directly as "Evil be to him who evil thinks," but the Fusiliers usually said: "Shame to he who thinks evil of it" or "Shame on him who thinks this evil".³⁰

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¹ "Commonwealth War Graves Registers (Circumstances of Casualty), 1914–1948," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 14 November 2014), entry for H Goodson, Service No: 34784

² "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 10 July 2016), entry for Harry Goodson, Registration district: Market Harborough, Registration district number: 399, Sub-registration district: Market Harborough, Sub-district number: 1, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 24, Piece: 18947

³ "England & Wales Marriages 1837–2008," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 10 July 2016), entry for Thomas Goodson and Mary Goodchild, District: Plomesgate, County: Suffolk, Volume: 4A, Page: 863

⁴ "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 7 July 2016), entry for Harry Goodson

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ "UK, WW1 Service Medal and Award Rolls, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 12 July 2016), entry for Harry Goodson, Rank: Sergeant, Regimental Numbers: 4/1813 and 3478

⁷ "British Army WW1 Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 8 July 2016), entry for Harry Goodson, Regimental Number: 4/1813, Northumberland Fusiliers

⁸ "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 8 July 2016), entry for H Goodson

⁹ "British Army WW1 Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 8 July 2016), entry for Harry Goodson, Regimental Number: 4/1813, Northumberland Fusiliers

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- ¹⁰“UK, WW1 Service Medal and Award Rolls, 1914–1920,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 12 July 2016), entry for Harry Goodson, Rank: Sergeant, Regimental Numbers: 4/1813 and 34784
- ¹¹“England & Wales Marriages 1837–2008,” *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 10 July 2016), entry for Thomas Goodson and Mary Goodchild, District: Plomesgate, County: Suffolk, Volume: 4A, Page: 863
- ¹²“1881 England Census,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 10 July 2016), entry for Thomas Goodson, Registration district: Hartismere, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 5, Piece: 1853, Folio: 62, Page: 9
- ¹³“1891 England Census,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 10 July 2016), entry for Thomas Goodson, Registration district: Chester, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 1, Piece: 2859, Folio: 7, Page: 8
- ¹⁴“1901 England Census,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 10 July 2016), entry for Thomas Goodson, Registration district: Richmond (Yorkshire), Sub-registration district: Aldbrough, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 1b, Household schedule number: 76, Piece: 4613, Folio: 13, Page: 17
- ¹⁵“Diocese of Chester Bishop’s Transcripts of Baptisms, c1600-1910,” *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 10 July 2016) entry for Harry Goodson, baptized 6 Nov 1887
- ¹⁶“1911 England Census,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 10 July 2016), entry for Thomas Goodson, Registration district: Market Harborough, Registration district number: 399, Sub-registration district: Market Harborough, Sub-district number: 1, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 24, Piece: 18947
- ¹⁷“Commonwealth War Graves Registers (Circumstances of Casualty), 1914–1948,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 14 November 2014), entry for H Goodson, Service No: 34784
- ¹⁸“1891 England Census,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 10 July 2016), entry for Thomas Goodson, Registration district: Chester, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 1, Piece: 2859, Folio: 7, Page: 8
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- ²¹“England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 10 July 2016), entry for Thomas Goodson, Registration district: Market Harborough, Inferred county: Leicestershire Riding, Volume: 7a, Page: 14
- ²²“England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 10 July 2016), entry for Mary Goodson, Registration district: Daventry, Inferred county: Northamptonshire, Volume: 3b, Page: 99
- ²³“No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station,” *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 8 July 2016), entry for H Goodson
- ²⁴“Royal Northumberland Fusiliers” *Wikipedia* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Northumberland_Fusiliers: accessed 11 July 2016)
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*
- ²⁶“List of Northumberland Fusiliers battalions in WW1” *Wikipedia* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Northumberland_Fusiliers: accessed 11 July 2016)
- ²⁷“List of Northumberland Fusiliers battalions in WW1” *Wikipedia* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Northumberland_Fusiliers: accessed 11 July 2016)
- ²⁸“The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers - Fighting John Watson’s War,” *Fighting John Watson’s War* (<https://archiveofourown.org/works/3269450>: accessed 10 July 2016)
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*