

# Albert Kitson (1888 – 1956)

Albert Kitson was born in Farnhill and by the time he was 12 years old was already working at Woodrow's Mill in Junction.

Vice-captain of Kildwick Albion Cricket Club in 1915, Albert joined the army in February 1916. Assigned to 2/6 battalion Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regiment, Albert sailed from Southampton to Le Havre in 1917.

His battalion suffered severe losses in action and Albert, who would eventually be promoted to Corporal, was wounded several times.

Returning to civilian life in Farnhill, he took up membership of the Farnhill branch of the Oddfellows. He married twice – he was widowed in 1940 – and his second wife came from Cowling.

Albert Kitson died in 1956 at Raikeswood Hospital, Skipton.



## Pre-war life

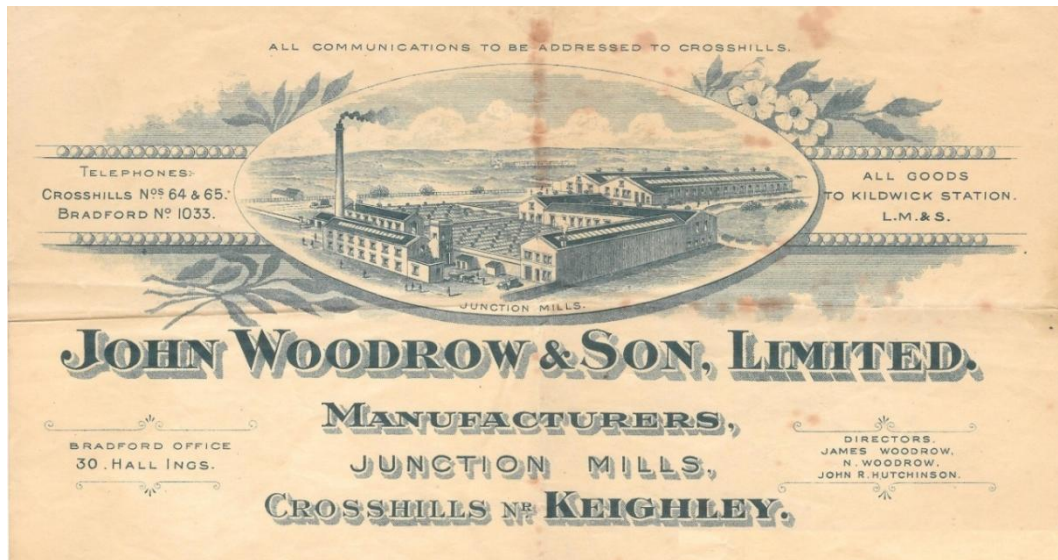
Albert Kitson was born at 67 Main Street, Farnhill, on 26<sup>th</sup> November 1888 and was baptised in Farnhill Methodist Chapel a month later. He was the fourth child and fourth son of Richard Green Kitson and Hannah (nee Greenwood). Richard was from Farnhill and Hannah from Glusburn; they had married in 1882 and would have a total of eight children.

By the time of the 1901 census, taken when Albert was 12 years old, he was already working part-time in one of the local mills.

Civil Parish of <i>Farnhill</i>		Ecclesiastical Parish of <i>Kildwick</i>		County Borough, Municipal Borough or Urban District of <i>Skipton</i>		Ward of Municipal Borough or of Urban District of <i>Skipton</i>		Rural District of <i>Skipton</i>		Parliamentary Borough or Division of <i>Skipton</i>		Town or Village of <i>Skipton</i>	
ROAD, STREET, No. and No. or NAME of HOUSE	In habited	Uninhabited	Buildings	Name and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	Age last Birthda, of	PROFESSION OR OCCUPATION	Employer, Worker, or Own account	If Working at Home	WHERE BORN			
67 Do.	1			<i>Richard G. Kitson</i>	Head	46	<i>Coltman Weaver</i>	Worker		<i>Farnhill</i>			
				<i>Hannah</i>	Wife	43				<i>Do. Glusburn</i>			
				<i>Fred</i>	Son	18	<i>Knasham Tiffers</i>	Worker		<i>Do. Crosshill</i>			
				<i>Joseph</i>	Son	16	<i>Knasham Tiffers</i>	Worker		<i>Do. Do</i>			
				<i>John</i>	Son	14	<i>Knasham Tiffers</i>	Worker		<i>Do. Farnhill</i>			
				<i>Albert</i>	Son	12	<i>Knasham Tiffers</i>	Worker		<i>Do. Do</i>			
				<i>Kellie</i>	Daughter	10	<i>Knasham Tiffers</i>	Worker		<i>Do. Do</i>			
				<i>Mary</i>	Daughter	5				<i>Do. Do</i>			
				<i>Harry</i>	Son	4				<i>Do. Do</i>			

Extract from the 1901 census return for Farnhill – Kitson family at 67 Main Street  
Used under licence from the National Archive

Subsequent news reports (see later) indicate that this was Woodrow's Mill, at Junction.



By kind permission of the Keighley and District Digital Archive

Albert and his older brother John both appear to have been members of Kildwick Albion Cricket Club and were in the team that won the local league Second Division cup in 1913.

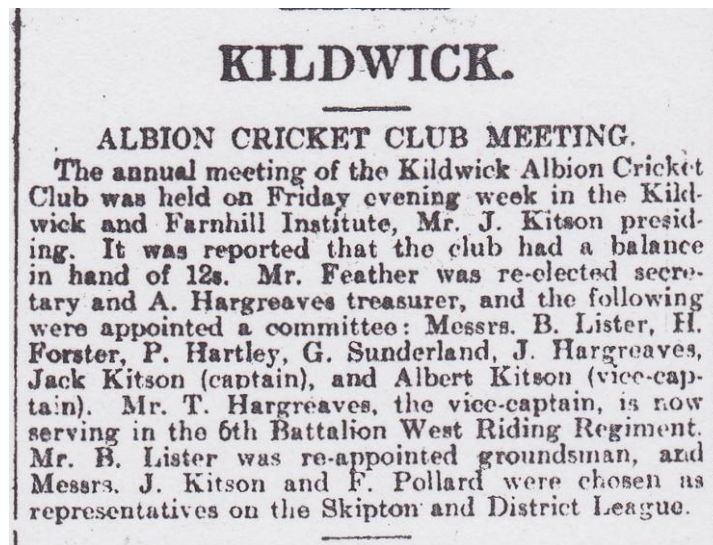


The Kildwick Albion Cricket Club Second Division cup-winning team, 1913.

No key to this photograph is known to exist and so it is not possible to say which of the players is Albert Kitson  
From the Farnhill & Kildwick Local History Group archive



In January 1915, when John was both the club president and team captain, Albert was elected vice-captain.

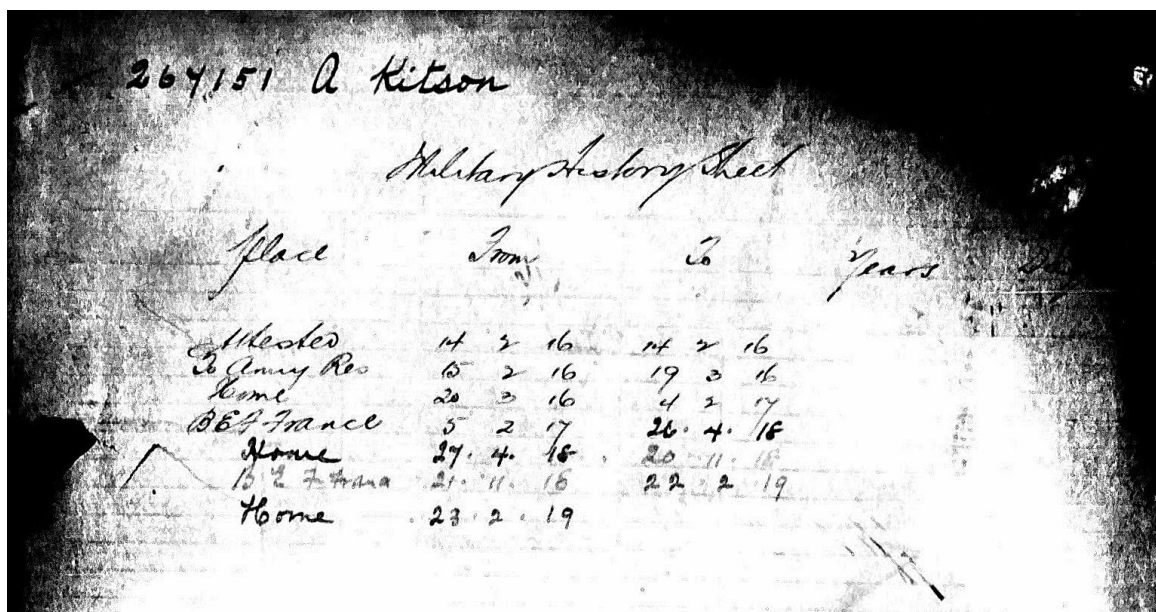


From Keighley News, 23/1/1915  
By kind permission of Keighley News

## WW1 service

Albert didn't attest his willingness to serve until 14<sup>th</sup> February 1916, by which time it was clear that mandatory conscription was almost inevitable. (Farnhill Parish Council had already made its decision to draw up a list of Volunteers at its meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> January 1916.)

As was usual, he was assigned to the Army Reserve and then, on 20<sup>th</sup> March 1916, began almost a year's training with the Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment), as a Private (no. 5064).



A hand-written Military History Sheet attached to Albert Kitson's WW1 service record  
Used under licence from the National Archive

During his training, between 22<sup>nd</sup> November and 27<sup>th</sup> December 1916, Albert was in hospital in Bedford, suffering from boils (Furunculosis).

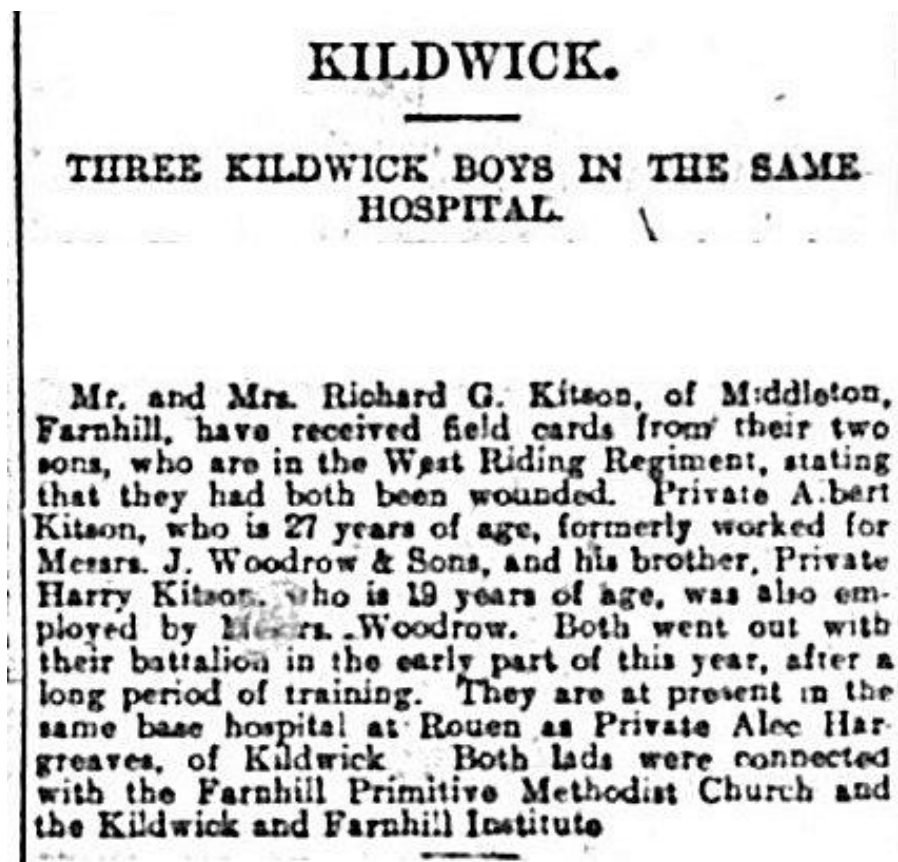
The war diary of 2/6 battalion Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regiment records that an inspection was carried out by the GOC of the Northern Army at its Bedford headquarters at 12:45pm on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1917, and later that day it received the order to embark on the 5<sup>th</sup>.

The battalion, a total of 33 officers and 953 men, including Private Albert Kitson (now having been given the service number 267151), sailed from Southampton to Le Havre on three vessels: Mona's Queen, Caesarea and Huntscraft, arriving at 8am on 6<sup>th</sup> February 1917 – on which day Albert was promoted to Lance-Corporal. By the 17<sup>th</sup> they were in the front line.

In May 1917, 2/6 battalion were in action near Mory, south-east of the town of Arras; their principal objective being to secure a railway embankment.

The Regimental diary reports that on 3<sup>rd</sup> May the battalion suffered severe losses during an attack on the embankment (16 killed, 160 wounded, 91 missing). It seems likely that Albert was amongst those wounded in this action, as two days later he was admitted to hospital in Rouen suffering from gunshot wounds to his back.

**Note:** Albert's younger brother Harry, who was also serving with 2/6 battalion, was also wounded in the same action and also admitted to hospital in Rouen.



Section of a news report, 12<sup>th</sup> May 1917  
By kind permission of Keighley News

Albert was out of action for almost two months, returning to active service on 28<sup>th</sup> June.

A few months later, on the 27<sup>th</sup> November 1917, Albert was promoted to full Corporal.

At the end of January 1918, 2/6 battalion was disbanded and the men transferred to 5<sup>th</sup> 2/4<sup>th</sup> and 2/7<sup>th</sup> battalions. As part of this reorganisation, Cpl. Albert Kitson (along with 12 officers and 239 other men of 2/6) became a member of 2/7<sup>th</sup> battalion on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 1918.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> April 1918, about 10km south of Arras, whilst the battalion was preparing new defensive positions under heavy artillery fire, Albert was wounded in the back and left leg. He was again transferred to hospital in Rouen, but on the 23<sup>rd</sup> was brought back across the Channel to a war hospital in Sunderland. This was reported in all the local newspapers, including the West Yorkshire Pioneer (3/5/1918).

### **Farnhill Soldier Wounded.**

Mr. R. G. Kitson, of Main Street, Farnhill, has received word that his son, Pte. Albert Kitson (Duke of Wellington's Regiment) was wounded in the left knee and the back on April 20th, and is now in hospital at Sunderland. Pte. Kitson joined the army in March, 1916, and went out to France in February, 1917. His brother Harry, who went out about the same time, was wounded last May, and is now at a home camp. A third son, Pte. Everitt Kitson, is also serving, and is in France. Before enlisting, Ptes. Albert and H. Kitson were employed by Messrs. J. Woodrow and Son, at Junction Mill, and were prominent members of the Kildwick Albion Cricket Club.

Report of Albert Kitson in hospital, in Sunderland  
By kind permission of Craven Herald

After leaving hospital at the very end of July 1918, Albert was assigned to the reserves.

Man returned from an Expeditionary Force or from Garrison Abroad. Army Form W. 3016. (in Books of 200.)

Date 30-7-18 1918

(1) To the Officer i/c Records, 2/7 D of W West Riding R. Hqs  
Leeds (Station).

(2) The Officer Commanding, 2nd Bde  
Halifax (Station).

(3) The Paymaster, 2nd Bde (Station).

Regimental No. 267151

Rank and Name Cpl. Kitson A. 2nd 21-4-18

Regiment or Corps 2/7 D of W West Riding R. Hqs

has been granted a furlough from 31-7-18 to 9-8-18

His address while on leave will be: 67 Main St. Hildwick,  
Mr. Houghley (Hildwick Str.)

I consider he is fit for\*  
☒ i. Duty.  
☐ ii. Command Depot.  
☐ iii. Employment.

\* Strike out that which is inapplicable.

Officer in charge for WAR HOSPITAL, Hospital,  
SUNDERLAND, (Station).

Four copies to be made, and one copy sent to each Officer mentioned above and one copy filed in the office. In the case of men of the Royal Flying Corps, Royal Engineers and Army Ordnance Corps two copies of A.F.W. 3016 will be sent to the Officer in charge Records concerned and one to the Paymaster, instead of one copy to the Officer i/c Records, the Paymaster, and O.C. shown in the Schedule.

[MT2635] W13591/M1452 12m bks. 1/17sr G & S E. 842

Cpl. Albert Kitson given leave after discharge from hospital 30/7/1918  
Used under licence from the National Archive

However this was not the end of his military career as, on 21<sup>st</sup> November 1918 – ten days after the Armistice – he was returned to the colours and sent back to France, where he remained until 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1919. During this time he served with a number of different battalions of the West Riding Regiment as they were disbanded or demobilised.

Albert's final period of service in France may have been brought to an end by another attack of boils. Certainly he was treated in hospital in Woolwich for some days after his return to England.



Although he may actually have been at home in Farnhill from August 1919, Albert Kitson's war service officially ended on 17<sup>th</sup> September 1919 when, as a member of 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regiment, he was demobilised and transferred to the Army Class Z Reserves.

Name.		Corps.	Rank.	Regtl. No.
KITSON		W. Rid. R.	Cpl.	267151
Albert				
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.	
VICTORY	0/2/101B23.	4097.		
BRITISH	do	do		
STAR				
Theatre of War first served in				
Date of entry therein				
K. 1380				

Cpl. Albert Kitson's WW1 Medal Card  
Used under licence from the National Archive

## Post-war life

After his period of service, Albert returned to his life in Farnhill.

He must have almost immediately taken up membership of the Farnhill branch of the Oddfellows. A news report of November 1919 (Keighley News, 8/11/1919) suggests that Albert may have also been a member before the war, as in it he is referred to by the title PPGM (Past Provincial Grand Master). Subsequent reports (Craven Herald, 3/4/1927 and 2/3/1928) indicate a long-standing membership of the organisation.

The 1921 census records him living at home with his mother, father and brother, at 67 Main Street. He was employed as a weaver at Woodrow's Mill, Junction.

Albert's mother, Hannah, died in November 1921, aged 64, and was buried at Crosshills Ebenezer Chapel on the 14<sup>th</sup>.

On 15<sup>th</sup> April 1922 Albert married Annette (Annie) Haslam at Farnhill Methodist Chapel, a ceremony witnessed by his younger brother Harry.

1922. Marriage solemnized at <u>Primitive Methodist Chapel, Farnhill</u> in the District of <u>Skipton</u> in the County of <u>York, West Riding</u>								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
1	April 15 <sup>th</sup> 1922	Albert Kitson	33 years	Bachelor	Mixed Goods Weaver	67, Main Street, Farnhill	Richard Green Kitson	Stauer
		Annette Haslam Annette	29 years	Spinster	Woolen Winder	Bank Cottage, Main Street, Cononley.	John William Haslam (deceased)	Clerk

Married in the Primitive Methodist Chapel according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Primitive Methodists by Certificate

This Marriage was solemnized between us, Albert Kitson in the Presence of us, Harry Kitson And in the Presence of Thomas Thorntou Authorised Person for the said Chapel.

Photograph of the marriage register of Farnhill Methodist Chapel  
Taken by Farnhill & Kildwick Local History Group

The couple initially set up home in Main Street Cononley, but very soon after they moved back to Farnhill – to 71 Main Street, just two doors up from his father. The couple had one daughter, Katherine May (Kathy), born in Farnhill on 24<sup>th</sup> March 1923.

On the register taken in September 1939 when WW2 ration cards were being issued, Albert was recorded as being a “weaver of Fancy Goods”. This probably means that he was employed creating items using silk or artificial silk (Rayon).

**Note:** In a memoir about his 49 years working at Woodrow's Mill, Alec Hargreaves recorded that the Junction mill was the first in the area to work with artificial silk, prior to the start of WW1. Many mills would work with artificial silk during WW2 when it was in high demand for use in parachutes and barrage balloons.

Annette Kitson died on the 4<sup>th</sup> May 1940. She was 49 years old.

Albert remarried on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1942, in Ickornshaw Methodist Church. His second wife was Alice Jobling, of Cowling – originally from Richmond.

1942. Marriage solemnized at <u>The Methodist Church, Ickornshaw, Cowling</u> in the District of <u>Skipton</u> in the County of <u>York (W. R.)</u>								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
10	Fifteenth August 1942	Albert Kitson	52 years	Widower	Rayon Weaver	71, Main Street, Farnhill	Richard Green Kitson (deceased)	Weaving Overseer
		Alice Jobling	47 years	Spinster	Rayon Weaver	11, Fold Lane, Cowling	Joseph Jobling (deceased)	Road Surveyor

Married in the Ickornshaw Methodist Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Methodists by Certificate

This Marriage was solemnized between us, Albert Kitson in the Presence of us, Joseph Jobling And in the Presence of Herbert Jones Authorised Person for the Methodist Church, Cowling.

Kitson – Jobling marriage certificate  
(c) Crown Copyright

**Note:** The marriage certificate recorded that the ceremony was, like Albert's first marriage, witnessed by his younger brother Harry. It also noted that both Alice and Albert were Rayon Weavers.



The couple continued to live at 71 Main Street, Farnhill, until they both died.

In July 1943, Albert's daughter Kathy married George Colling Bell at Farnhill Methodist Chapel. Until 1948 they too lived at 71 Main Street Farnhill, before moving to Cononley.

Albert Kitson died on the 21<sup>st</sup> December 1956 at Raikeswood Hospital, Skipton, of Emphysema and Bronchitis. He was 68 years old.

REGISTRATION DISTRICT					STAINCLIFFE				
1956 DEATH in the Sub-district of Skipton					in the County of York (W.R.)				
No.	When and where died	Name and surname	Sex	Age	Occupation	Cause of death	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of registrar
232	Twenty First December 1956 Raikeswood Hospital Skipton	Albert KITSON	Male	68 years	of 71 Main Street Farnhill Rayon Weaver	1a Emphysema b Chronic Bronchitis (2) Myocardial Failure Certified by M.W.Sweet-Pascott B.M.	A. Kitson Widow of deceased in attendance 71 Main Street Farnhill	Twenty Fourth December 1956	Allan I Hartley  Registrar

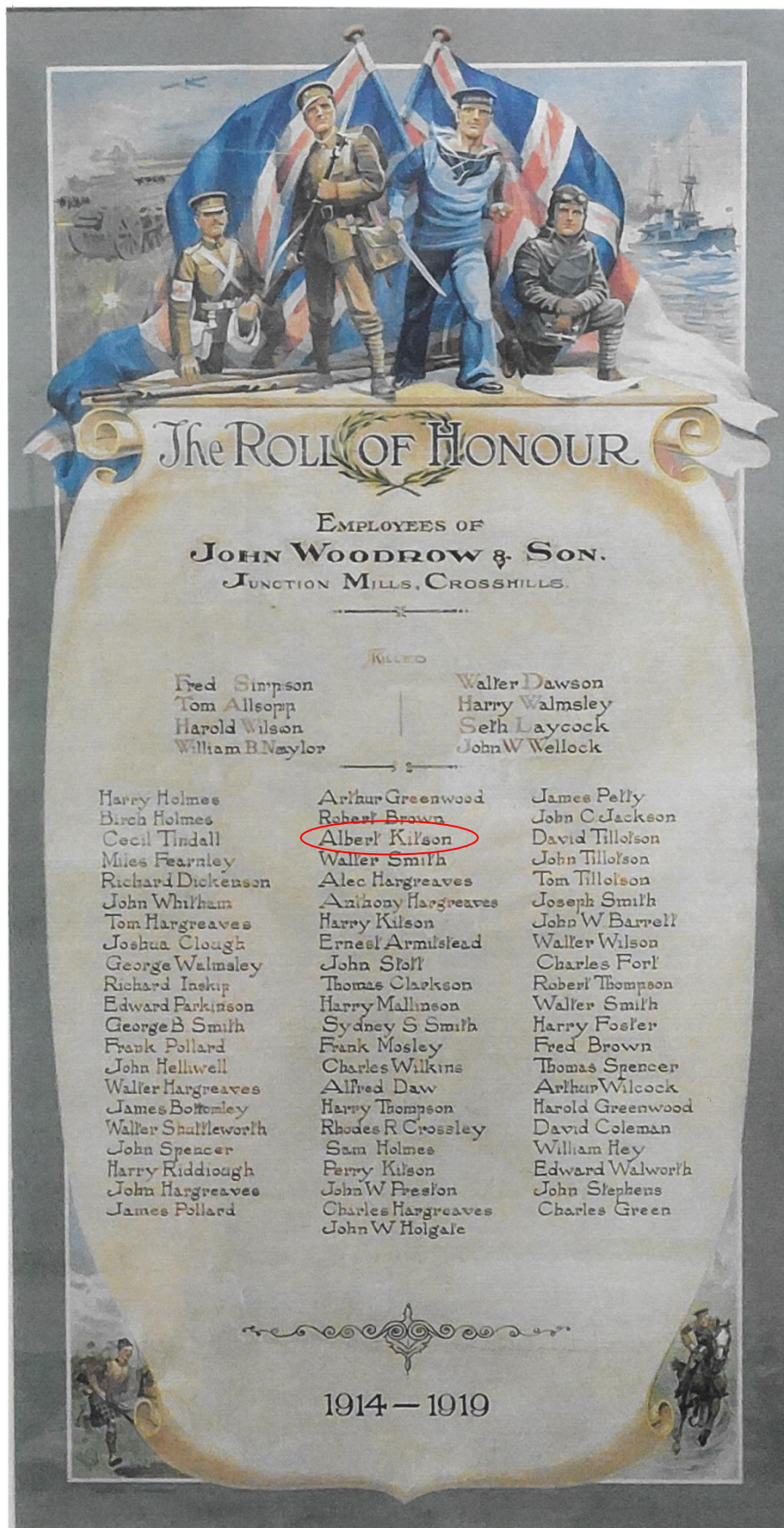
Albert Kitson's death certificate  
(c) Crown Copyright

A few days after his death, on 28<sup>th</sup> December 1956, the following news report appeared in the Craven Herald.

**DEATH OF BROTHERS.**—The death occurred on Friday of Mr. Albert Kitson, Middleton, Farnhill. Well known and respected in the village, Mr. Kitson was 68. He was at one time a member of the Institute and was also a past Grand Master of the 'Oddfellows' Lodge at Farnhill. He served in the first world war, and his health suffered as a consequence. He leaves a widow and a daughter. The funeral was on Monday, a service at Farnhill Methodist church, conducted by the Rev. Taylor Clarke, preceding cremation at Skipton. News was received during the week-end by Mr. Kitson's family, that an older brother, John, who lived in Manchester died at Foulridge whilst on his way to Mr. Kitson's funeral.

By kind permission of Craven Herald

His name is included on the WW1 Roll of Honour of men employed by Woodrow's Mill at Junction.



With thanks to BurberryGroup, PLC

## Postscript

Alice Kitson continued to live in 71 Main Street, Farnhill, until her death in 1972.

Albert's daughter and a number of his siblings are known to have married and had children. It is likely that descendants continue to live in the area.



## Albert Kitson – a life in summary

**Born:** 26/11/1888, Farnhill

**Baptised:** 27/12/1888, Farnhill Methodist Chapel

**Died:** 21/12/1956, Raikeswood Hospital, Skipton      **Aged:** 68

**Home address:** 71 Main Street, Farnhill

### Parents

**Father:** Richard Green Kitson; b. 1854, Farnhill; d. 18/2/1927, Farnhill;  
buried 21/2/1927, Crosshills Ebenezer Chapel

**Mother:** Hannah (nee Greenwood); b. 1/5/1857, Glusburn; bapt. 21/4/1861, Kildwick;  
d. November 1921; buried 14/11/1921, Crosshills Ebenezer Chapel

**Married:** 1/5/1882, Kildwick

### Siblings

Fred; b. 7/2/1883, Crosshills; bapt. 18/3/1883, Farnhill Chapel;  
m. Mary Ann Hopkinson, 21/5/1907, Cowling; d. 1954, Staincliffe (Registration district)

Everett; b. 1884, Crosshills; bapt. 28/12/1884, Farnhill Chapel;  
m. Ethel Hird, 1908, Skipton (Registration district); d. 13/4/1960, Cowling

John; b. 18/01/1887, Farnhill; bapt. 27/2/1887, Farnhill Chapel; d. 23/12/1956, Foulridge

Nellie; b. 1890, Farnhill; m. Thomas Thornton, 1912, Skipton (Registration district); d. 1975

Maggie; b. 26/10/1893, Skipton (Registration district); bapt. 10/12/1893, Farnhill Chapel,  
d. September 1894, Farnhill

Mary Jane; b. 15/11/1895, Farnhill; bapt. 18/2/1896, Farnhill Methodist Chapel;  
d. August 1908, Farnhill

Harry; b. 4/3/1897, Farnhill; bapt. 10/4/1897, Farnhill Methodist Chapel;  
m. Alice Mary (May ?) Hancock, 28/11/1925, Skipton Register Office; d. 5/2/1974, Farnhill

### WW1 service

**Service period:** 14/2/1916 to 17/9/1919

**Regt.:** 2/6 battalion Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regt.  
(Pte. no. 5064, Cpl. no. 267151); 2/7 battalion; 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion

**Medals:** Victory Medal, British War Medal

**Home address:** 67 Main Street, Farnhill

### Relationship to other volunteers

Harry Kitson – brother

Herbert Kitson – paternal cousin

## Marriage

- Wife:** (1) Annetta/Annette/Annie Haslam; b. 13/7/1890;  
d. 4/5/1940, Farnhill (died at John's Cross, Cononley)  
(2) Alice Jobling; b. 18/8/1894, Richmond (Registration district);  
d. 1972, Staincliffe (Registration district)
- Date:** (1) 15/4/1922, at Farnhill Methodist Chapel  
(2) 15/8/1942, Ickornshaw Methodist Church

## Children

Katharine (Kathy) May; b. 24/3/1923, Farnhill; bapt. 17/6/1923, Farnhill Methodist Chapel;  
m. George Colling Bell, 10/7/1943. Farnhill Methodist Chapel

