

Harry Kitson (1897 – 1974)

Harry Kitson, born in Farnhill, was the youngest son in a family of eight children.

After attending Kildwick school, and working at Woodrow's Mill, he and his brother, Albert, served with the Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regiment.

Harry was seriously wounded and this resulted in his subsequent service being at a home camp. After he was discharged he returned to Farnhill and was very active in village life.

He married in 1925 and had one son. Harry Kitson died in 1974, aged 76.



Photograph courtesy of John Lofthouse

Pre-war life

Harry Kitson was born at 67 Main Street, Farnhill, on 4th March 1897, and was baptised in Farnhill Methodist Chapel just over a month later.

1897 April 10 th Born March 4 th 1897 No. 141	Harry	Richard Green & Hannah	Kitson	Middletown, Farnhill	Charles	John P. Gammell
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Harry Kitson's entry in the Farnhill Methodist Chapel baptismal register
Scanned by Farnhill & Kildwick History Group

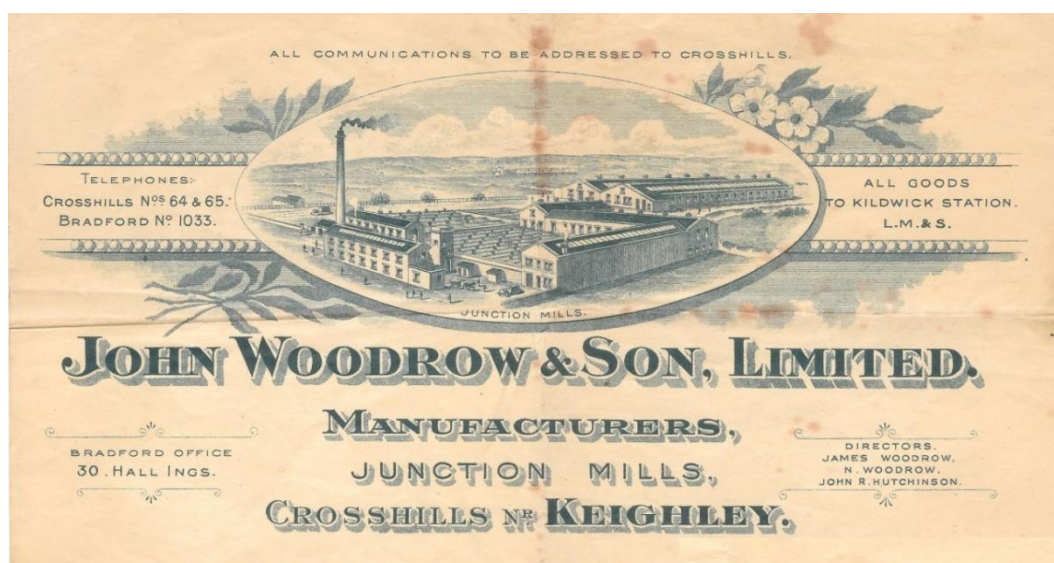
He was the eighth, and youngest, child of Richard Green Kitson and Hannah (nee Greenwood). Richard was from Farnhill and Hannah from Glusburn; they had married in 1882.

Like many of the Farnhill WW1 Volunteers, it is likely that Harry attended Kildwick school. However, by the time the 1911 census was taken, when he was 14 years old, Harry was already working full time as a worsted spinner.

CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.									
Before writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions given on the other side of the paper, as well as the headings of the Columns. The entries should be written in Ink. The contents of the Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used for proof of age, as in connection with Old Age Pensions than the preparation of Statistical Tables.									
NAME AND SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family	AGE last Birthday and SEX	PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE				PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of Persons aged ten years and upwards.		BIRTHPLACE of every person.
1 Richard Green Kitson	Head	58	Married	28	8	6	2	Worsted Weaver 844	York Farnhill
2 Hannah Kitson	Wife	53	Married	28	8	6	2		York Glusburn
3 John Kitson	Son	24	Single					Jaener 761	Farnhill
4 Albert Kitson	Son	22						Worsted Weaver 844	
5 Alice Kitson	Daughter	20							
6 Harry Kitson	Son	14						Worsted Spinner 843	

Extract from the 1911 census return for 67 Main Street, Farnhill
Used under licence from the National Archive

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



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Harry Kitson was a member of Kildwick & Farnhill Institute and, at the annual meeting held in October 1914, was elected as a member of the committee. He was also a member of Kildwick Albion Cricket Club, as was his older brother Albert.

WW1 service

Harry Kitson's WW1 service records have not survived (70% of the records were destroyed during WW2, in the London blitz of 1940) but it is clear from other sources that he entered the forces in March 1916 and served as a member of 2/6th battalion the Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regiment (Private, no. 267297).

267297	Pte	KITSON Harry	267297. Pte.
			2/6. W.Rid.R.

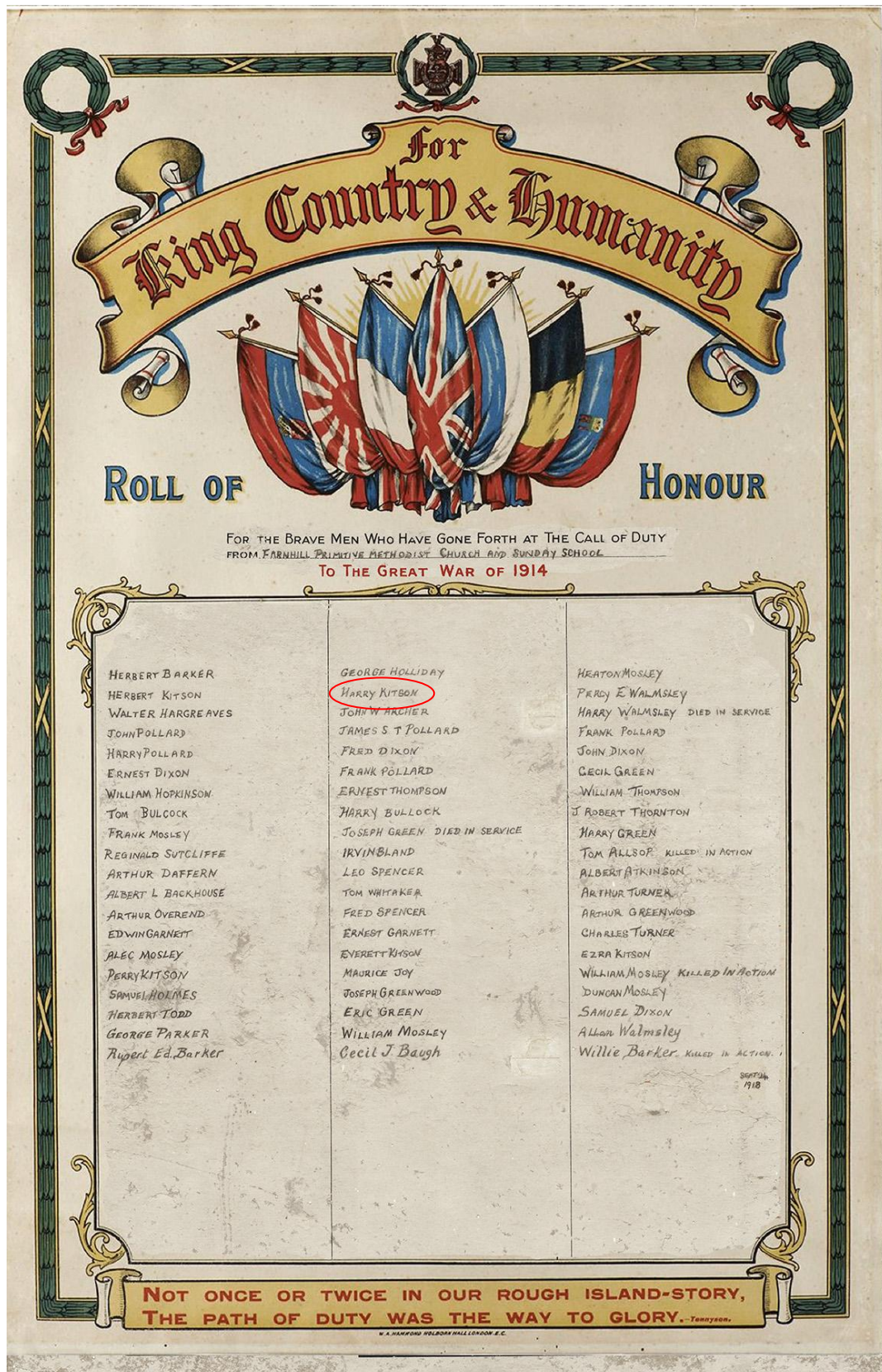
Harry Kitson's entry in the WW1 Medal Roll
Used under licence from the National Archive

Harry Kitson's name was included in the list of men who were members of the battalion's "B" Company recorded in the book "Craven's Part in the Great War", which was published after the war.

NOMINAL ROLL 2/6th Duke of Wellington's West Riding Regiment.				
Pte. H. Thompson.	Pte. M. Benson.	L/Cpl. W. N. Groom.	Pte. T. G. Jackson.	Pte. W. Powell.
Pte. A. Thompson.	Pte. S. H. Bentley.	Pte. T. W. Garner.	Pte. H. Kempton.	Pte. F. Pratt.
Cpl. C. Vollentine.	Pte. D. Binns.	Pte. H. R. Gilman.	Pte. H. Kitson.	Pte. A. Priestley.
Pte. H. Vaughan.	Pte. F. Bracewell.	Pte. W. Goodall.	Sgt. C. Lee.	Pte. A. Pybus.
Pte. T. H. White.	Pte. J. Brooks.	Pte. R. Greenwood.	Cpl. S. R. Lane.	Pte. W. Petty.
Pte. L. W. Wood.	Pte. B. Brotherton.	Coy. Qt.-Master Sergt.	Dr. F. Lyons.	L/Cpl. J. Rothwell.
Pte. H. Waddington.	Pte. W. Broughton.	W. Horsfield.	Pte. J. Lawson.	Pte. C. Rawlings.
Pte. T. Whitehead.	Pte. C. E. Brown.	Cpl. W. Hudson.	Pte. A. H. Lovell.	Pte. T. Read.
Sgt. M. B. Windle.	Pte. C. W. Bryan.	Pte. F. Hadfield.	Pte. E. Lund.	Pte. A. Richardson.
L/Cpl. H. Wilkinson.	Pte. M. Buckley.	Pte. G. Hadfield.	Pte. J. Lund.	Pte. C. Ridehalgh.
Pte. R. West.	Pte. J. Butterfield.	Pte. J. Haigh.	Pte. J. H. Lund.	Pte. J. Riley.

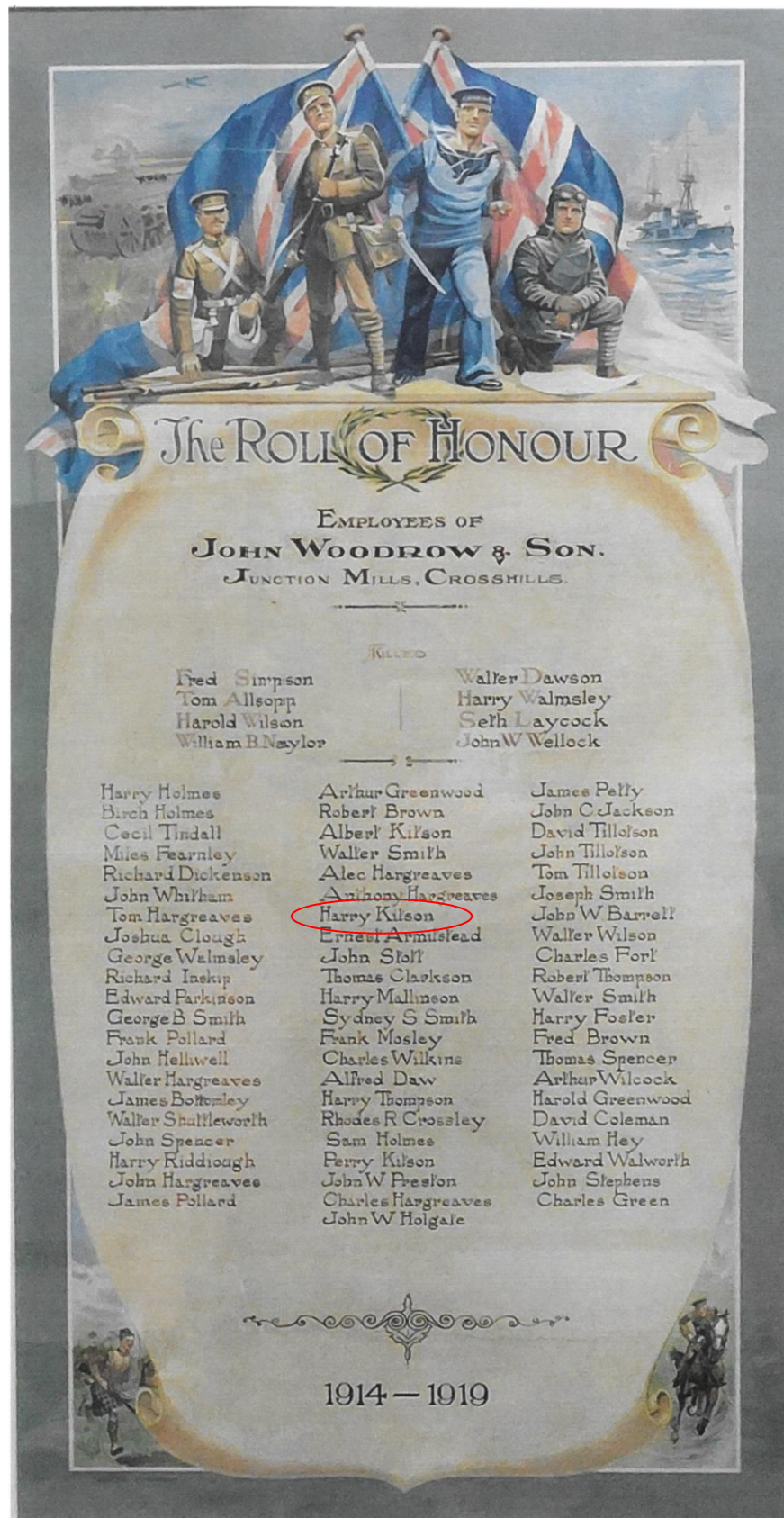
Part of a page from "Craven's Part in the Great War" listing men of 2/6th battalion Duke of Wellington's Regiment

Harry's name was included on Farnhill Methodist Chapel's Roll of Honour, which was unveiled on 9th July 1916.



The digitally-restored Farnhill Methodist Roll of Honour (1916)

And also on the recently found WW1 Roll of Honour of men employed by Woodrow's Mill at Junction.



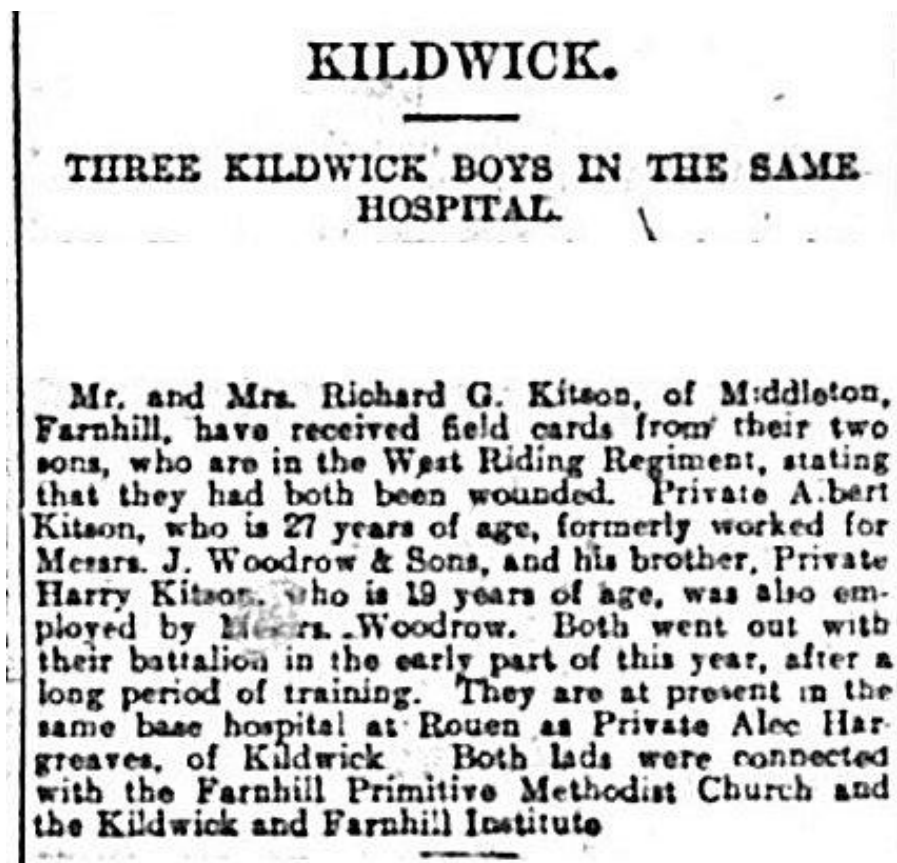
With thanks to Burberry Group, PLC

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

The battalion, a total of 33 officers and 953 men, including Private Harry Kitson, sailed from Southampton to Le Havre on three vessels: Mona's Queen, Caesarea and Huntscraft, arriving at 8am on 6th February 1917. By the 17th they were in the front line.

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

The Regimental diary reports that on 3rd May the battalion suffered severe losses during an attack on the embankment (16 killed, 160 wounded, 91 missing). It seems likely that Harry and his older brother Albert, who was also serving with the same battalion, were amongst those wounded in this action. They were both admitted to hospital in Rouen suffering from gunshot wounds, as was reported in the Keighley News on the 12th.



Section of a news report, 12th May 1917
By kind permission of Keighley News

Harry's wound turned out to be serious, as the local Craven Herald newspaper reported.

FARNHILL.

News of the Wounded.—Mr. and Mrs. R. G. Kitson, of Main Street, Farnhill, received notice from the War Office on Sunday morning last, May 20th, that their two sons, Lce.-Cpl. Albert Kitson and Pte. Harry Kitson, both of the Duke of Wellington's West Riding Regt., were admitted into the 6th General Hospital, Rouen, suffering from gunshot wounds—Harry, the younger, severely wounded in the right arm, and Albert in the back (slight). Mr and Mrs Kitson have also another son in France, who is in the Labour Battalion.

News report – 25/5/1917

By kind permission of Craven Herald

Although this wound was not sufficient to get Harry discharged from the army, it was enough to ensure that his subsequent service was at a "home camp" – as was made clear in a news report about his brother Albert, dated 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.

West Yorkshire Pioneer report – 3/5/1918

By kind permission of Craven Herald

As a result of his wounds Harry was initially awarded a pension of 12s (60p) per week for what was judged to be a 30% disability. Over time the extent of the disability was reduced and in June 1922 he was given a final gratuity of £10.

26th Bn 1771

Form No. S.B 36 **KITSON** Christian **Harry** Regional No. **4/M K/ N° 437**

Surname (in block letters) **KITSON** Christian Names **Harry**

Unit and Regiment or Corps **West Riding** Regtl. No. **267297** Rank **Pvt.**

Date of Discharge **18.10.19** Year of Birth **1896** Marital Status { S. = Single
W. = Widower
M. = Married } **S**

Address **67 Main St. Kildwick Keighley** Date of commencement of Pension **19.10.19**

Disabilities:— State whether attributable to or aggravated by Service or non-attributable:—

1. **Wound Ram** 3. **at** 3. **at**

2. **at** 4. **at** 4. **at**

Particulars of Awards for previous Service (if any) **at**

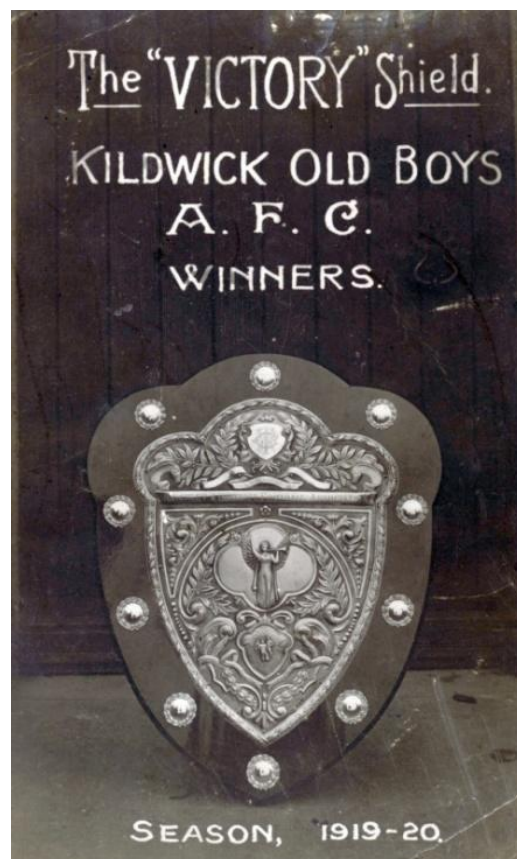
AWARDS OF PENSION, GRATUITY OR WEEKLY ALLOWANCE.										
Date of Award or other Action	Degree of Disablement	Nature of Award		Weekly Rate			No. of Children under 16	Period of Award		REMARKS: Note—This column is to be used for explanatory remarks where necessary, e.g., that an award is made or revised under Article 9, or as the result of an appeal to the Tribunal, or for increase of Pension
		Art. under which granted (and Warrant if necessary)	Whether Pension, Gratuity or Weekly Allowance	Whether Permanent, Conditional or Final	Man	Wife		Child	From	
12.5.20	30%	Art. 11	W	C	12/-			25.5.20	21.8.21	
18.5.21	20%	Art. 11	P	C	6/-			25.5.21	20.6.22	
7-6-22	to have gratuity of £10									

Extracts from Harry Kitson's WW1 pension ledger (SB 36)
Used under licence from the National Archive

Post-war life

Harry Kitson's SB36 pensions ledger entry and the WW1 medal roll for 2/6th battalion the Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regiment show that he was finally discharged from the army on 18th October 1919. By this time, however, Harry must already have been back at home in Farnhill, as he was reported as being present at a whist drive held in the Institute building earlier in the month (Craven Herald 10/10/1919). He won another whist drive, this one organised by the Kildwick Conservative Club, later that month – when it appears his partner may have been the wife of another of the Farnhill WW1 Volunteers, Frank Leese.

Harry was also a playing member of the newly reformed Kildwick Old Boys' Football Club and was in the team that won the Keighley and District second division championship in the 1919-1920 season. (His name appears in a report of the club's success published by the Keighley News.)



The Kildwick Old Boys' Football Club, 1920; including Harry Kitson – position not known.
From the Farnhill and Kildwick History Group archive.

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

Harry's mother, Hannah, died in November 1921, aged 64, and was buried at Crosshills Ebenezer Chapel on the 14th.

On 28th November 1925, Harry Kitson married Alice May Hancock at Skipton Registry Office. She was a local girl and lived just a few doors down the street from Harry, at number 59 Main Street, Farnhill.

Their only child, a son called Charles, was born on 9th January 1926. The Kildwick School pupil admissions records for 1918 to 1931 (the only years for which records have been found) record that Charles started on 4/6/1929 (aged just 3 years and 5 months).

Harry resumed his association with Kildwick Albion Cricket Club, and at its annual meeting, held on 9th February 1926, was re-elected as club secretary. He was also congratulated on his recent marriage and presented with a barometer.

FARNHILL ALBION CRICKET CLUB.

The annual meeting of the Kildwick Albion Cricket Club was held in the Institute on Tuesday evening. There was only a small attendance, presided over by Mr. H. Tattersall. The Secretary, Mr. H. Kitson, in his report, said that last season had been a very poor one for the Club.

Two members of the Club, Mr. S. W. Sunderland and Mr. H. Kitson, having recently been married, were the chief figures in a pleasant little ceremony. Mr. Tattersall, on behalf of the members, presented to Mr. Sunderland a clock, and to Mr. Kitson a barometer, both suitably inscribed, with the best wishes of the Club for their future happiness. He also expressed his regret at losing so valuable a member as Mr. Sunderland. Mr. Sunderland said he was sorry he was leaving, but if at any time he had an opportunity of assisting the Club he would be very pleased to do so; and Mr. Kitson said he would keep on doing his best and if possible do better in future. The presents had been subscribed for by members. A new set of rules had been drafted by the committee, and the meeting adopted them. The following officers were elected;—President, Mr. G. Sunderland; vice-president, Mr. H. Tattersall; committee—Messrs. E. Green, R. Inskip, T. Addy, M. Bracken, C. Hargreaves, T. Hargreaves and H. Kitson; secretary, Mr. C. Kelterman; treasurer, Mr. E. A. Darby; captain, Mr. R. Inskip; vice-captain, Mr. C. Kelterman; selection committee—Messrs. H. Barker, H. Mosley, W. Sunderland. Captain and Vice-Captain: League representative, Mr. C. Hargreaves; umpires: Messrs. W. Sunderland, J. Hargreaves, J. Bottomley, H. Barker and T. Thornton.

The family made their home with Harry's father, Richard Green Kitson, at number 67 Main Street. Richard died in February 1927 but 67 Main Street would continue to be Harry and Alice's home until Harry's death.

By 1931, if not earlier, Harry Kitson had, in addition to his full-time job working at the mill, taken over from his cousin, Herbert, as secretary of Farnhill Water Company.

Note: The Water Company seems to have been something of a Kitson family business. From as early as 1910 Albert Kitson had been its president and Herbert Kitson the secretary.

On the 1939 Register, created in September 1939 when WW2 ration cards were being issued, Harry was recorded as being a "Silk Piece Looker". This probably means that he was employed creating items using silk or artificial silk (Rayon).



1	Kitson Harry	✓	M	4 Nov 97	M	Silk piece looker
2	Kitson Alice M	✓	F	7 May 98	M	Unpaid household duties
3	Kitson Charles	✓	M	9 Jan 26	5	At School

1939 Register entry for 69 Main Street, Farnhill
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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.

Towards the end of WW2 Harry became involved, as treasurer, in plans made jointly by Farnhill Parish Council and Kildwick Parish Meeting to put on "Welcome Home" events for returning servicemen and women, and to raise money to be distributed amongst them. The collection was a significant success and the target figure of £1000 was reached in less than 16 months. Two distribution events then took place, on 27th April 1946 and 8th March 1947, at which recipients were each presented with a commemorative card and a cheque for £10.



Sgt. Arthur Lofthouse receiving his cheque and commemorative card from Mr. GH Drayson, MP for Skipton.
 With Mrs. Drayson looking on and Harry Kitson stood, left.
 Photograph by kind permission of John Lofthouse



Arthur Lofthouse's commemorative "Welcome Home" card – Harry Kitson, treasurer
 By kind permission of John Lofthouse

In 1948 Harry and Alice's son, Charles, married Patricia Blanche Roberts. The couple lived at number 9 and then later at number 11 Staincliffe Street, Farnhill.

Note: Staincliffe Street (or Back Staincliffe Street, as it was sometimes known) was the name given to a terrace of small dwellings, each typically just two or three rooms, that formed the rear basements of properties that had their fronts on Main Street, close to its junction with Grange Road. The rooms have since been incorporated into the Main Street properties.

Harry Kitson died on the 5th February 1974. He was aged 76.

Postscript

Alice May Kitson died in 1975, aged 77.

Harry and Alice's son Charles, and his wife Patricia, lived in 67 Main Street for a few years before they moved out of the village. Charles is believed to have died in 1992. The couple are known to have had children, and it is likely that descendants of Harry Kitson still live in the local area.

Harry Kitson – a life in summary

Born: 4/3/1897, Farnhill

Baptised: 10/4/1897, Farnhill Methodist Chapel

Died: 5/2/1974, Raikeswood Hospital, Skipton **Aged:** 76

Home address: 67 Main Street, Farnhill

Parents

Father: Richard Green Kitson; b. 1854, Farnhill; d. 18/2/1927, Farnhill;
buried 18/2/1927, 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 Methodist Chapel;
m. Mary Ann Hopkinson, 21/5/1907, Cowling; d. 1954, Staincliffe (Registration district)

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

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

Albert; b. 26/11/1888, Farnhill; bapt. 27/12/1888, Farnhill Methodist Chapel;
m1. Annetta/Annette/Annie Haslam, 15/4/1922, Farnhill Methodist Chapel
m2. Alice Jobling, 15/8/1942, Ickornshaw Methodist Church
d. 21/12/1956, Farnhill

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 Methodist Chapel;
d. September 1894, Farnhill

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

Relationship to other volunteers

Albert Kitson – brother

Herbert Kitson – paternal cousin

WW1 service

Service period: March 1916 to 18/10/1919

Regt.: 2/6th battalion Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regt. (Pte. no. 267297)

Medals: Victory Medal, British War Medal

Home address: 67 Main Street, Farnhill

Marriage

Wife: Alice May Hancock; b. 7/5/1898; d. 1975, Staincliffe (Registration district)

Date: 28/11/1925 (by licence), Skipton Register Office

Children

Charles; b. 9/1/1926; bapt. 25/4/1926, Farnhill Methodist Chapel;

m. Patricia Blanche Roberts, 1948, Staincliffe (Registration district);

d. 1992, Keighley (Registration district)

