

JOHN WILLIAM HUTTON

1/4TH KING'S OWN YORKSHIRE LIGHT INFANTRY

Early Life

John William Hutton was born on 13th May 1881 to George and Margaret Hutton of 35 Seymour St, he was baptised in Holy Trinity church on 5th June that year. Their address on the Census in 1891 is given as 21 Thryberg St (Leeds Rd), the family would live here till the Great War period. John had two brothers Albert and Fred, John being the middle brother.

On 27th January 1909, John married Edith Darling at Holy Trinity church. On the 1911 Census they had set up home at 49 Thryberg St. Married two years, they had no children .



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BIRTHS registered in the Parish of Holy Trinity in the Year One thousand eight hundred and eighty one

| Year | Month | Day | Name | Sex | Parents | Address |
|------|-------|-----|---------------|-----|-------------------|----------------|
| 1881 | May | 13 | John William | M | George & Margaret | 35 Seymour St |
| 1881 | June | 5 | Edith Darling | F | John & Edith | 21 Thryberg St |
| 1881 | June | 12 | Albert | M | George & Margaret | 35 Seymour St |
| 1881 | June | 19 | Fred | M | George & Margaret | 35 Seymour St |

CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911

| Household | Name | Sex | Age | Married | Single | Widowed | Divorced | Religion | Profession | Place of Birth |
|----------------|---------------------|-----|-----|---------|--------|---------|----------|----------|---------------|------------------|
| 49 Thryberg St | John William Hutton | M | 30 | Married | | | | Anglican | Banker | Leeds, Yorkshire |
| | Edith Darling | F | 27 | Married | | | | Anglican | Banker's Wife | Leeds, Yorkshire |

Birth/Baptism Record and 1911 Census Entry

The Bradford Roll of Honour suggests John Hutton enlisted on 25th August 1916.

His Medal Index Card states he was a member of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry initially with a Regimental number of 5756 that later was changed to 202555 from January 1917 along with other soldiers of the Territorial Force. His Medal Roll shows he was a member of 1/4th KOYLI initially transferring at some stage to the 1/5th KOYLI. Both these battalions were in the same 148th Brigade of 49th Division which also included the 1/6th West Yorkshire - Bradford Territorials.

It is likely John would have joined his battalion as part of a draft of replacements sometime in early 1917. The summer of 1917 saw the battalions of the 49th Division on the Belgian coast in the vicinity of Nieuport, the very northern end of the Western Front. As with the Battle of the Somme in 1916, the 49th Division troops were being held back to become the spearhead troops when the breakthrough came. As on the Somme in 1916, the expected breakthrough in the Ypres Salient did not occur at the Battle of Passchendaele.

The plan had been for the 49th Division and other troops to push northwards along the coast to what were thought to be weaker defences and capture the German submarine pens on the Belgian coast whose submarines were causing havoc to British merchant shipping. However, the German presence here was much stronger than was anticipated. So much so that nearing the start of the main battle at Ypres in July 1917, they were able to launch their own attacks southwards and spoil any plans the British may have had for their own spearhead attack.

Mustard Gas

Although normally a quiet sector, these actions in July 1917 also allowed the Germans to test a new type of poison gas – mustard gas. In December 1915, men of the 49th Division had been some of the first to be exposed to the new German gas, phosgene. Now these same units would be some of the first British troops to be exposed to mustard gas. Although toxic if inhaled, British gas masks would keep this gas out. However, mustard gas on contact with moist skin would cause massive blistering and deep chemical burns, it would attack the eyes and in worst cases also blind men.

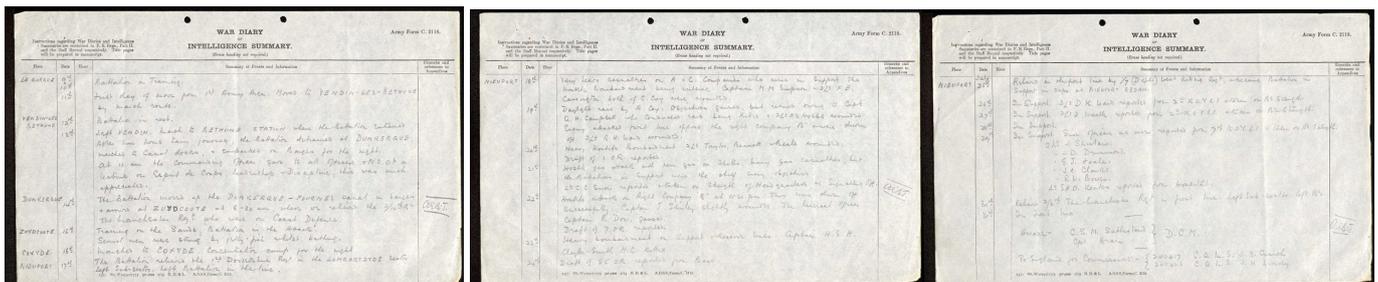


Mustard gas victim, showing effects of this gas on the skin.

This terror weapon was a tactical one as the effect in the rear support medical services from a massive influx of gassed soldiers would be greater than killing a smaller number in the front lines. Mustard gas was also ‘persistent’, if clothing was also saturated with it, other personnel and medical services could be gassed too.



The 1/5th KOYLI War Diary



17/7/1917 – Nieuport – The Battalion relieved the 1st Dorsetshire Regt in the LOMBARDZYDE Sector, left sub-sector, left battalion in the line.

18/7/1917 – Nieuport – Very heavy casualties on A and C Companies who were in support. The hostile bombardment being intense. Captain M.M.Simpson and 2/Lt F.E.Carrington, both of C Company were wounded.

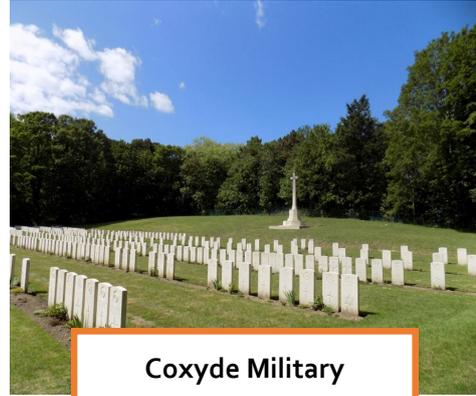
21/7/1917 – Nieuport – Hostile gas attack with new gas in shells. Heavy gas casualties, but the battalion in support were the chief enemy objectives. Lt C.C.Snow reported and taken on strength of Headquarters as Signalling Officer.

23/7/1917 – Nieuport – Heavy bombardment on Reserve and Support lines. Capt H.C.H.Clayton-Smith MC killed.

25/7/1917 – Nieuport – Relieved by 1/7th Duke of Wellington’s Regt and became ‘Battalion in Support’ at NIEUPORT REDAN.”

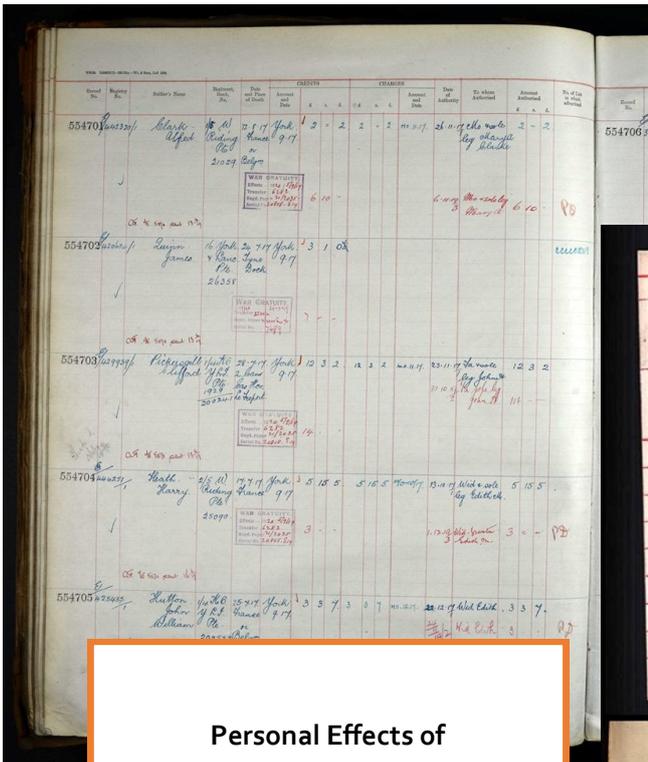
Heavy Losses

The 1/5th KOYLI had suffered a terrible week in the lines at Nieuport. From records it is known that John William Hutton died of wounds on 25th July 1917, he was buried in Coxyde Military Cemetery.



Coxyde Military Cemetery

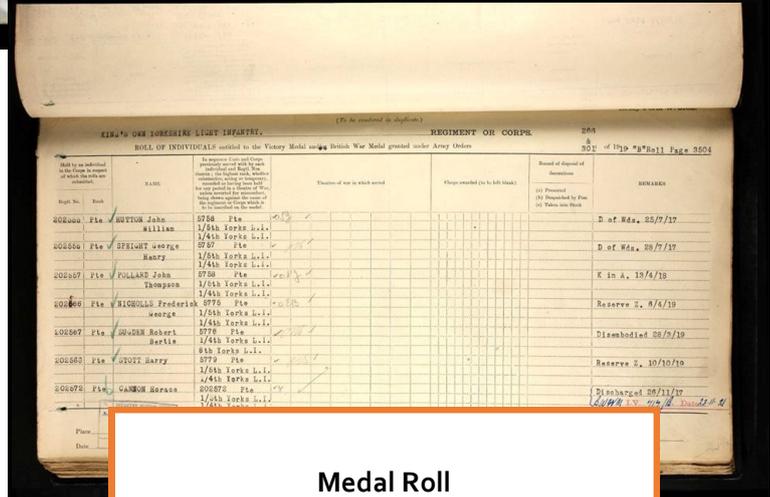
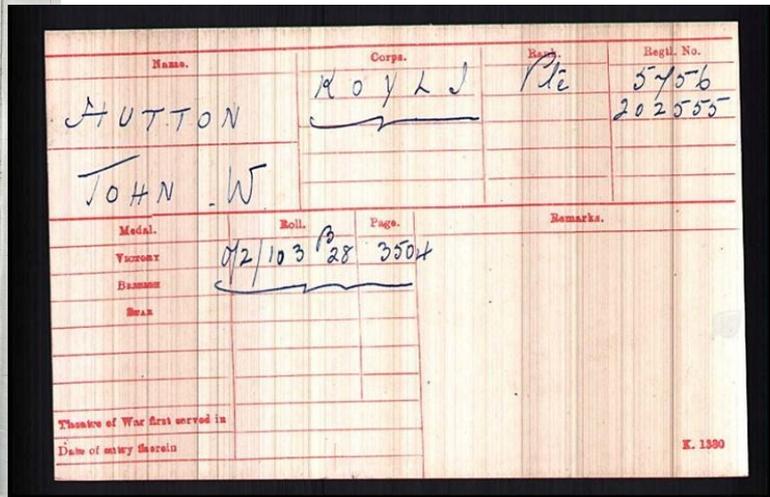
In total, the battalion suffered 49 fatalities during this tour. It is not known under what circumstances John was wounded or whether he was actually a casualty to mustard gas.



Personal Effects of John William Hutton



Medal Index Card



Medal Roll