

ALNE PARISH AT WAR

On the 4th August 1914 Great Britain declared war on Germany, and from the 5th items such as the following were displayed prominently in the nation's papers:

YOUR KING AND COUNTRY NEED YOU.

**Will you answer your Country's Call?
Each day is fraught with the gravest
possibilities, and at this very moment the
Empire is on the brink of the very greatest
war in the history of the world.**

**In this crisis your Country calls on all her
young unmarried men to rally round the
Flag and enlist in the ranks of her Army.**

**If every patriotic young man answers her
call, England and her Empire will emerge
stronger and more united than ever.**

**If you are unmarried and between 18 and
30 years old will you answer your
Country's call? and go to the nearest
Recruiter – whose address you can get at
any Post Office, and**

JOIN THE ARMY TO-DAY!

Each month over the next four years I will be remembering those men with connections to the local parish who took up this challenge, often at the expense of their lives or their health, to defend King and country. I cannot guarantee this to be an exhaustive list, but I have included all those men I can find who had a connection with the parish. For those men who were fortunate enough to survive the war, I will tell their story on the centenary of the month in which they enlisted, and those who lost their lives will be remembered on the centenary of their death.

William Buxton

Born in 1890-1891, William Buxton was a farm labourer living and working in Tholthorpe but originally from Chiswick in London. I can find no certain record of him prior the war, although it is possible he is the William Buxton cited in the 1911 census as living with his parents in Walthamstow and working as a brass fitter on the railways. When and why he moved to Yorkshire is not possible to say.

Nevertheless, William joined up at the Northallerton recruiting station on 31st August 1914, and was attached to the Royal Fleet Artillery, 16th Battery as a driver. Although nowadays this would suggest a mechanised vehicle, it is probable that he would be driving horse-drawn vehicles, and his farm work would doubtless have given him previous experience in this area.

Although we have no photo of William, we can get a good idea of his appearance from his service record: aged 23 he was 5 ft 4 ½ and weighed 10 stone 5, with grey-brown eyes, brown hair and a ruddy complexion. He also had scars on his right thigh and on the back of his head.

However, having been certified fit in Northallerton and then transported down to Aldershot to begin his training, it was soon discovered that he had flat feet and he was discharged as 'not likely to become an efficient soldier'. Having to return to the farm after only 36 days' service, one can imagine his chagrin, although as the war developed and the world became aware of the bloody nature of the conflict, it may well be that he came to see his flat feet as a blessing.

What became of William Buxton after the war, whether he stayed in the area or moved on again, got married and had children, may be revealed when the 1921 census is released in 2022. In the meantime, his life during and after the war is as unknown as his life before.