

## The Great War Record for William John Tutton

*On the death of my great Uncle Bill in 1979 my father gave me a small suitcase of some of his possessions to remember him by. This suitcase contained some old newspapers and a collection of photographs. At the time these were only curios with little context about the life of my late great uncle. More recently other items have come to light and with a little research we have been able to pull together something of his time in the Army during World War 1.*

William Tutton, Bill, was born 4th July 1896 and lived with his family in the district of Freemantle in Southampton. We know little of his early life or schooling but there are photographs of him at a Scout camp before the Great War. At the age of eighteen, with the general atmosphere of a build up to war he volunteered to join the Hampshire Regiment on August 8th 1914.

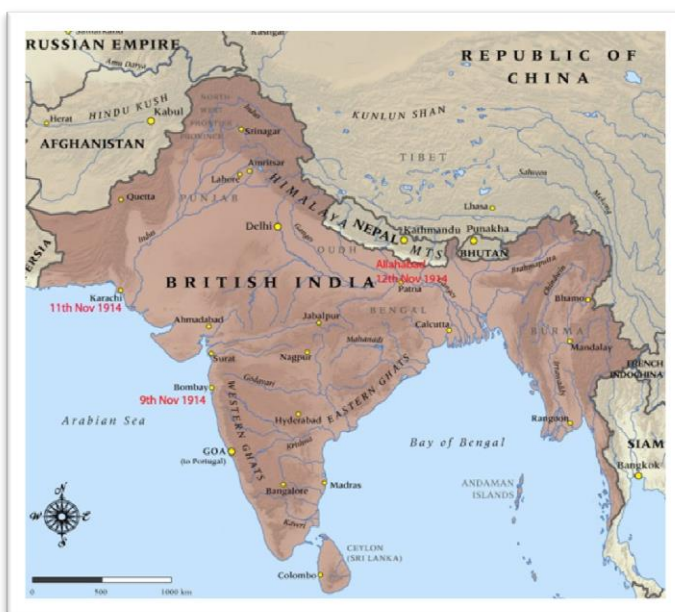
On August 7th the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) under Sir John French had landed in France and on August 10th Britain declared war on Austria-Hungary.

Part of Hampshire Brigade, was the Wessex Division. The Wessex Division was a Territorial Force Division that was already in existence at the outbreak of the war. The Division was quick to form its "Foreign Service" units and on September the 26th it was selected for service in India. They were based around Southampton and Bill would have received some basic training. This could only have been very basic training at the Regiment set sail for India on 9th October 1914.

Before he left Bill was presented with a book of devotional texts for each day of the year called "Daily Light on the Daily Path". This small book was presented to Bill by his then employer and contains the inscription " W. Tutton, with best wishes from R Claude Ashby "Fight the good Fight" Sept1914.

R Claude Ashby was the director of the brickworks in Bursledon to the east of, this is now an industrial museum. He also owned a cement works in Northam in Southampton and owned a boat called the "Albatross" that was trading in the waters inside of Isle of Wight between 1894 to 1912. Claude Ashby was also in business with Herbert Collins the famous Architect who lived in

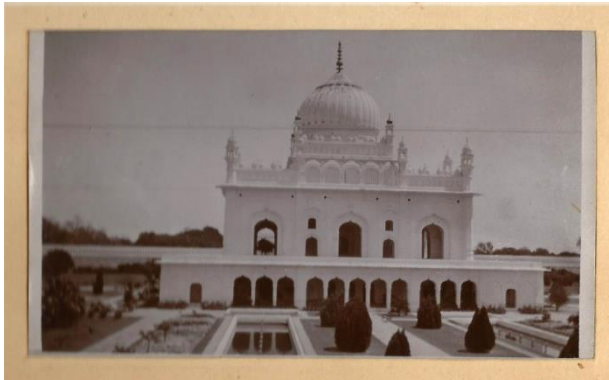
Southampton and designed much of Welwyn Garden City and the large Swaythling estate in Southampton.



It must have been an exciting time for an eighteen year old to take such a journey. From Southampton they were at sea for a month. According to notes in Bill's small prayer book they landed in Bombay on November 9th 1914. Here the four divisions separated and Bill in the 1-5th finally disembarked at Karachi on the 11th November 1914. The following day they were half way across India in Allahabad that must have involved a long train journey. Allahabad is in the Uttar Pradesh region of India and on the 16th November 1914 they moved to the close by city of Benares that is also known as Varanasi.

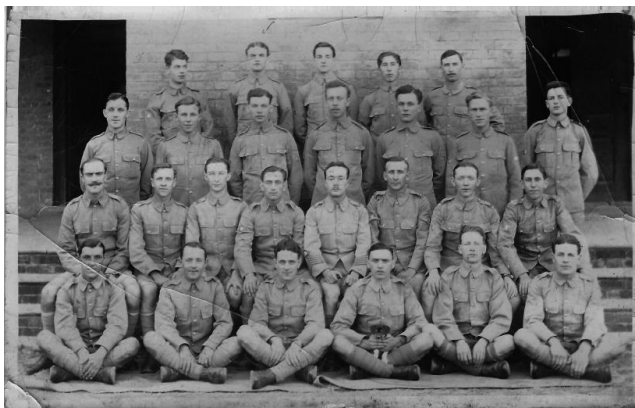
From the few notes that he was allowed to keep we know that Bill spent Christmas and new year 1914 at Benares.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, India had a large standing army made up from both British and Indian men. At the beginning of the First World War four divisions were sent to the Western Front and were known as the Indian Expeditionary Force. The Hampshire's replaced these regular units filling the vacuum left behind in India. Other Hampshire Divisions were then sent to fighting units in the Middle East. The role of the Hampshire's within India was to be ready to defend the borders but also act as a force to control any civil unrest.



Bill spent the next four years in the Uttar Pradesh region and we have a wonderful photo album containing pictures of Temples, Mosques, Palaces, forts and of course the Taj Mahal.

He also sent back photographs of typical military groupings. This photograph below has a simple inscription on the back that says "This was taken at Fyzabad 1916, To Mother with love from Bill".



In 1918 the Hampshire 1/5th Battalion were in Burma and returned to India in October. They were also sent to Ambala, in a neighbouring region of India, and relieved the 9th Battalion and they remained there until spring 1919. When riots broke out in the Punjab they found themselves on internal security in and around Ambala. Two hundred men were also sent to Simla, where they trained escorts for Europeans being sent up into the hills. Just as things had settled down, trouble threatened with

Afghanistan and this led to hostilities and the 5th were sent to Kohat in what is now Northern Pakistan where they joined the 46th Mobile Brigade. Kohat was in a bad state, unsanitary conditions, hot weather, and a poor water supply that turned out to be bad.

They moved out to Mohammed Zai Fort to man some partly constructed lines the lines were attacked twice by Afghans or local tribesmen who were easily beaten off, the second time largely by artillery without any loss to the 5th Battalion who remained until the end of June. In Kohat Cholera broke out and spread to the 5th who lost 6 men others succumbed to the heat wave. The end of June saw them moved back to Ambala and the end of hostilities the 5th went to the hills.

In September the 5th Battalion moved to Bombay to embark and left on the 15th October and arrived in Southampton on November 8th 1919.

William John Tutton was awarded the "British War Medal" this was awarded to all those who left their native shores as part of their active service. He also received the battle honour "Afghanistan 1919" He finally left the Army on the 5th January 1920.

Bill returned home and lived with his sister for the rest of his life in Lemon Road in Southampton. His occupation was described as Shipbuilder's labourer. He died at the age of seventy two in 1979 and was still living in Southampton.