



Holt

World War I Casualty Biographies

Turner, Harold Frank Barclay



Harold Frank Barclay Turner was born at Uxbridge on June 22nd 1895. His parents, Frank and Harriet Turner died when he was young and he was brought up by an Uncle Harry in Sutton, Surrey and his Aunt Helen at the Courts, Holt.

He was educated at Chigwell School, where he took a keen interest in sports. In October 1914 he was granted his commission, and was gazetted 2nd Lieutenant in the 6th Battalion, the Wiltshire Regiment. He was promoted Lieutenant in October 1915 and went out to France and after taking part in the heavy fighting on the Somme, he was invalided home in June 1916. Once recovered he returned to France, and was transferred to the 1st Battalion, The Wiltshire Regiment; receiving his captaincy early in June 1917; he did excellent work at Messines Wytshaete Ridge being recommended for the M.C. After a brief leave he returned to Flanders and died near Ypres on 1st September 1917, of wounds received the previous evening. His Colonel wrote: "He was absolutely fearless, always keen and considerate to his men and

one of the most popular Company Commanders the battalion has ever had. He will be very difficult to replace and his loss will be felt for a very long time” and a brother officer: “He was a deservedly popular officer in the battalion and was much liked by his company, which he commanded with great tact and skill and constant thought for the men and their comfort, most successfully keeping up the traditions of C Coy. He was brave, almost at times to recklessness and cool in danger and it is wholly lamentable that so promising a Company Commander has been taken from us”

*Capt. Turner of C Company was badly wounded by an enemy sniper on 31st
There were the following casualties on September 1st; Captain H. F. B. Turner died of wounds 3rd
September 1917
War Diaries of the Wiltshire Regiment*

YOUNG HERO OF THE SOMME

Gazetted Captain and Died Same Day

The death occurred from wounds on September 1st of Captain H. F. B. Turner, Wilts Regiment, by which sad event General Sir John H. Dunne says the Regiment has lost one of its last year’s young heroes of the Somme

Capt. Harold Frank Barclay Turner, who was a nephew of Miss Barclay of the Court, Holt, gave up a very promising career in response to his country’s need, joining the Army at the commencement of the war, at the beginning of September 1914. While awaiting his commission he joined the Universities and Public Schools Corps and was only in training for a few weeks at Epsom before he was granted his commission as Second Lieutenant in the Wilts Regiment. In October 1915, he went out to France, being at the time gazetted First Lieutenant. He was invalided home June 1916, reported at Weymouth (3rd Battalion) in July, and again returned to the Regiment in France on 20th September, being with it in the big push of the Somme. After being in command of his company several times he received his captaincy early in June, and (quoting his Colonel’s written words “did splendid work on the Messines Ridge, leading his men splendidly and very greatly assisting his whole battalion in the fight for Wyschaete Ridge”. He came home just afterwards for brief leave, rejoining his battalion in France June 25th last. After nearly two years’ active service, he fell mortally wounded by a German sniper, while reconnoitring the ground in front of his section of trenches on September 1st, and was laid to rest with full military honours in a military cemetery on Sunday, September 2nd. He was loved by both officers and men, personally for his great courage and coolness in danger. In the words of a fellow officer he was “loved by his men for his constant thought for them and their comfort, whom he commanded with great tact and skill and most successfully keeping up the traditions of C Company which has always relied on the Suaviter in modo system”

His Colonel says of him, “He was absolutely fearless always so keen and considerate to his men and one of the most popular Company Commanders the Battalion has ever had. He will be difficult to replace and his loss will be felt for a very long time”

He was gazetted Captain on the day that he laid down his life for his God, his King and his country.

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Harold Frank Barclay Turner was awarded:
Victory medal Off 113 27

British Medal Off 113 27
1915 Star Off 113 9

Harold's Aunt Helen applied for the 1914-15 Star on his behalf in 1919 and raised money for the memorial to him and other fallen servicemen at St. Katharine's Church in Holt.

He is buried in Menin Road South Cemetery, Ieper, Belgium
Grave Reference: II A 12

Harold Frank Barclay Turner, Captain, C Company, 1st Battalion, Duke of Edinburgh's (Wiltshire Regiment).



References

Ancestry
De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour 1914-1918
War Diaries of the Wiltshire Regiment
Holt Village Hall