

# Harry Whitby

*Training Depot Bedfordshire Regiment    Died 19<sup>th</sup> April 1916*

Henry, known as Harry, was born in 1900 in Pidley, the youngest son of Charles and Elizabeth (nee Pratt) Whitby one of 8 children. He is the brother of **Reuben Whitby** who is also on the War Memorial. Charles was a farm labourer and by 1911 the family were living in Warboys.

Although his elder brother Reuben had died 2 months after war had begun this did not deter Harry as he went to Ramsey to enlist when he was only 16 and began his training at Ampthill Park in Bedfordshire.

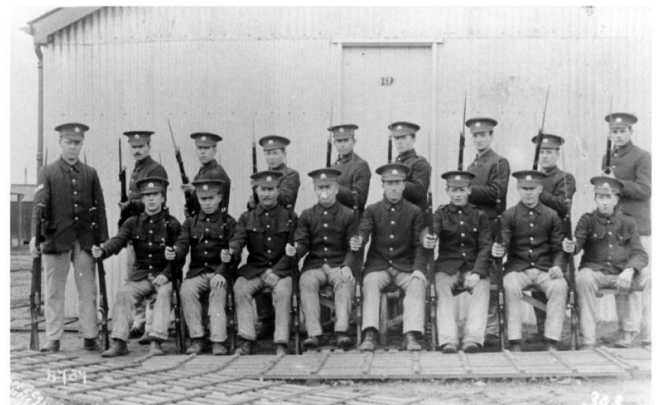
This was the Depot Battalion of the Bedfordshire Regiment set up by the Duke of Bedford in Ampthill Park for 1000 men. Personally funded by the Duke it was very comfortable for the time. Huts were draught proofed, heated and well ventilated. Each recruit had a matted bed, storage, shaving kit, towel and other personal necessities. Food and sanitation were good. The Duke of Bedford's concern was that men were "the **well fed, well housed, well entertained, working with a clear conscience for the noblest of causes.**"

Trained men were supplied to the Bedfordshire Battalions serving in France and Italy. During 1916, after conscription had been introduced, Ampthill Park became a Depot for rehabilitation and remedial training for the wounded.

What Harry was doing there at such a young age is not clear, but he was not the only one as shown by these photographs



**Kevan J. Fadden**



A Squad of troops pose for a photograph.

Probably taken on completion of training, some look suspiciously youthful to go to the front.

Despite the good accommodation and food Harry died there in hospital of pneumonia on 19 April 1916 and is buried in a War Graves Commission Grave in Warboys Church Cemetery. He is also remembered on the memorial in Ampthill Park.

His older brothers also fought in the war; **Reuben** dying in October 1914 and Ernest surviving.

His parents continued to live in Warboys his mother dying in 1942 aged 83 and his father in 1951 aged 95.

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