

Bury Grammar School Centenary Roll of Honour
Captain Austin Patrick Hudson, 1/5th Battalion Lancashire
Fusiliers, died 31st August or 1st September 1917 aged 24



Austin Hudson was born in Bury on 2nd February 1893, the youngest of three children of the Reverend Richard Plantagenet Hudson and his wife Violet (nee Dawber or Dauber; the family seem to have used both spellings). Revd. Hudson was the vicar of St. John's in Bury and Austin was baptised at the church on 2nd April 1893. At the time of the 1901 Census the family was living at 127 Walmersley Road in Bury.

Austin Hudson started at Bury Grammar School in September 1903 and left at Easter 1905, transferring to St Bee's School in Cumbria. The reason for the move is not known. Austin was at St Bee's from 1905 to 1910 and was a member of Grindal House. After school Austin Hudson gained a job with the Bank of England and at the time of the 1911 Census was living at the YMCA's Ingram House Residential Club in Stockwell Road, Lambeth in London. By 1914 he was working as an Assistant at the Bank of England's office in Manchester. The bank granted him 'War Leave' on 19th August 1914 and he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the 5th Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers, serving as an officer in C Company. This Territorial battalion, recruited almost entirely of men from the immediate Bury area, included several other BGS old boys amongst the officers and men. In peacetime it had been closely linked to the school's Officers Training Corps (OTC). The Territorial Force had originally been designed for home defence while the Regular Army was sent abroad, but while undergoing training at Turton with other Lancashire Fusilier Territorials, the men were invited to volunteer for overseas service. The vast majority, including Austin Hudson, quickly did so and the battalion travelled to Southampton in early September as part of the 42nd (East Lancashire) Division. They embarked on the SS 'Neuralia' on 9th September, bound for Alexandria in Egypt. There they were stationed at Abbassia Barracks in Cairo as part of the British garrison of Egypt guarding the vital Suez Canal. Although Turkey came into the war on Germany's side in November 1914 there was no immediate attack on Egypt and the Fusiliers settled into a dull routine of training and parading in the enervating heat.



Officers of 5th Lancashire Fusiliers in Egypt, shortly before departure for the Gallipoli Campaign in 1915. Ten are former pupils of Bury Grammar School, including Austin Hudson. Fellow old boys William Yapp, John Bridge and Geoffrey Kay, who happen to be standing together on the back row, would also die during the war (Fusilier Museum).



Left: Men of 1/5th Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers observing the enemy through a trench periscope at Gallipoli. Right: Major, later Lieutenant Colonel, F.A. Woodcock, who took command of 1/5th LF in July 1915. In civilian life, Fred Woodcock was a prominent Bury solicitor. As a pupil he had been a founder member of the Bury Grammar School Cadet Corps in 1892. (Fusilier Museum)

In early May 1915 the 42nd Division sailed from Egypt on HT 'Menominee' to reinforce the Allied landings at Gallipoli in Turkey. The 1/5th Lancashire Fusiliers landed on W Beach,

eleven days after the Regular 1st Battalion had captured the beach, in the process winning the famous ‘Six VCs Before Breakfast’. No sooner had they arrived than they, together with the other Territorial battalions, were pushed forward to take part in what became known as the Second Battle of Krithia. The 1/5th deployed on the extreme left of the attack and attempted to capture the feature later known as Gurkha Bluff. However, the battalion came under heavy machine gun and artillery fire. Second Lieutenant George Horridge recalled that:

‘We didn’t get more than ten or fifteen yards before it was quite obvious that if we didn’t lie down we were just going to be hit. We lay down. You could see the bullets cutting the grass in places. I said to Captain Milnes: “Sidney, d’you think we should stop here? What about going down to the cliff?” He said: “Yes, I think we perhaps we’d better. It’s no good stopping here. We can’t go on against this fire. You go first.” So I got up and ran to the cliff edge. A fellow called Hudson followed me and he was hit in the neck. What happened to the others I really don’t know. We got under the cover of the cliff edge, got Hudson down to the shore. A naval cutter came and gave us some water which had some rum in it which tasted very nice. They took Hudson off and we just waited for orders because what we had to do then didn’t concern me as a Second Lieutenant.’ The attack was called off after the battalion had suffered 180 casualties. By chance, George Horridge would also be present at Austin Hudson’s death two years later.

Austin Hudson’s wound turned out not to be serious and he returned to duty on the Gallipoli peninsula in June 1915. On 7th August he is recorded in the Regimental History as commanding a bombing party in support of the right of the battalion’s attack during the Battle of the Vineyard. The battalion suffered heavy casualties, including BGS old boy Lieutenant William Yapp, who was killed leading C Company in the first wave of the assault.



BGS old boy Lieutenant William Yapp, from Whitefield, who was killed at the Battle of the Vineyard in August 1915 (left). Austin Hudson’s uncle, Lieutenant Colonel John Henry Dauber RAMC, who died on his way to Gallipoli the same month (right).

A few days later Austin’s uncle, Lieutenant Colonel John Henry Dauber of the Royal Army Medical Corps, was drowned in the sinking of HMT ‘Royal Edward’ when it was torpedoed in the Aegean Sea on its way to deliver reinforcements to Gallipoli. From July to October 1915, according to his record of service in the Bank of England archives, Austin Hudson held the temporary rank of Captain. In December 1915, as the Gallipoli campaign was being wound up and the 1/5th Lancashire Fusiliers were evacuated from the peninsula, Austin Hudson was invalided home to England, subsequently returning to service with the 5th (Reserve) Battalion of the Lancashire Fusiliers, stationed in southern England. In August 1916 he re-joined 1/5th Battalion in Egypt. Following their evacuation from Gallipoli, the four Territorial Battalions of Lancashire Fusiliers (1/5th, 1/6th, 1/7th and 1/8th) were sent to the Sinai Peninsula to assist

with the defence of the Suez Canal. There they took turns in training, working on the defences and manning them. During November 1/5th Battalion formed part of the outpost troops protecting the advanced railhead in the desert. At the end of November the Fusilier Brigade advanced east towards El Arish on the border of Palestine. Hopes of action were dashed when the defending Turks retreated without putting up a fight. In February the Territorials were informed that they were being transferred to France.

On 22nd February 1917 the battalion sailed from Alexandria on board HMT 'Megantic', together with the men of the 1/7th Lancashire Fusiliers. On 24th the ship was attacked by a U Boat, a torpedo missing the stern of the ship by thirty yards. The ship arrived at Marseilles without further incident and the battalion spent the next few months undertaking regular spells of trench duty in the Somme sector while the battles of Arras, Messines and Third Ypres raged elsewhere. Austin Hudson was promoted to Captain and for some time was attached to the Brigade staff. On 22nd August the battalion travelled by train from Albert to the Belgian border, moving to the Ypres Asylum on 29th August. The next day they went into the front line at Frezenburg in readiness for an attack to be made in the next few days. It was here, on the night of 31st August/1st September, that Austin Hudson met his death, while bringing rations up to the Battalion's positions. Once again, Lieutenant George Horridge was an eye witness:

'The ration party consisted of two parties and we'd arrived at this trench. At the side of the trench was a steel plate, about nine feet long by three feet wide, which someone had put up. The first party were dumping the rations against this steel plate. I was on one end of it, another officer was in the middle and another on the left. I happened to look up to the right and could see shadowy forms approaching. I said "Hello, here's the second ration party, I'll give them a shout, tell them where we are." I took two steps, not more, when a big shell fell on the plate I had just been leaning against. A tremendous flash and I was blown down against the side of the trench. I picked myself up' realising that as far as I knew, nothing had hit me. There was dead silence. I enquired of the two officers who had been with me: "Are Mr. Mashiter and Mr. Hudson here?" There was no reply. Then a sort of commotion broke out. Not only had this shell killed the two officers, it had killed five of the ration party, one of whom had both his legs blown off, and wounded about eight others. The whole thing was a dreadful shock. We had to get the wounded away in the dark, and we knew the gun was pointing at the same place and might fire another shell at any moment.'

The bodies of Austin Hudson, Lieutenant Thomas Mashiter from West Dulwich in London, Private John Maughan from Newcastle-on-Tyne and Private Richard Smethurst from Heywood were not recovered and they are commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial to the Missing. Austin Hudson is one of seven Bury Grammar School old boys commemorated on this memorial. The other three soldiers killed by the same shell: Lance Corporal William Henry Taylor and Privates William Livesey and Sydney Lowe, are buried together in Ypres Town Cemetery Extension.

The family were told by a 'fellow officer' that Austin had been killed by a shell. His obituary in the 1917 volume of the 'Lancashire Fusiliers Annual', written by fellow BGS old boy Bob Butcher MC, records that:

'All ranks, from the Brigadier-General downwards, speak of his courage and unfailing cheerfulness, of his courtesy, and devotion to duty. His friends lament the loss of one who possessed, beneath a quiet and somewhat serious demeanour, a whimsical and attractive wit'. As well as two Bury Grammar School war memorials, Austin Hudson is commemorated in the memorial in the chapel at St Bees School, the Bank of England War Memorial in London and there is a plaque 'in proud and loving memory' of him in the Memorial Chapel of his father's old church, St. John's in Bury. His name and photograph are part of the display at the Tyne Cot Visitor Centre in Belgium.



Austin Hudson's name appears on the Bank of England War Memorial in London
(Bank of England Archive)

Sources: Bury Grammar School Archives; UK Censuses; Bank of England Archive; Commonwealth War Graves Commission; 'Bury Times'; Fusilier Museum, Bury; 'Lancashire Fusiliers Annual 1915 and 1917'; 'The History of the Lancashire Fusiliers 1914-1918' by J.C. Latter; George Horridge interview, Imperial War Museum Sound Recording 7498; 'RAMC in the Great War' website; David Skidmore; Contributors to the Great War Forum.

Written by M.J. Hone 2017