

The 6th Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Cadet Battalion

This local cadet battalion had been formed prior to the start of WW1. Its aims were to train young men from the age of 13 to 17 in military skills with the intention of them enlisting in the local territorial regiments on attaining the age of 18.



Hellifield cadet William Lewis of Midland Terrace (note the West Riding Regiment cap badge worn by the battalion).

At the start of World War 1 the battalion was accepted by the military authorities and was attached to the 1/6 Duke of Wellington's West Riding Regiment. This was the local regiment for the Skipton and Craven areas. The cadet battalion was made up of 7 companies, Skipton, Settle, Keighley, Barnoldswick, Hellifield, Haworth and Crosshills. The battalion headquarters was established at the Drill Hall in Skipton with the Hellifield company HQ being the new council school. Two prominent local Gentlemen, Mr. William Nicholson of the Peel, Hellifield and Mr. Walter Morrison MP of Malham Tarn, provided much of the financial costs of equipping the battalion (William Nicholson was later made Honorary colonel).

Part of the cadet's training was a two-week annual summer camp with the local territorial regiments. For several years this had taken place in Morecambe but in the summer of 1914, this was taken at Marske on the East coast. The cadets were at camp when war was declared.

A former Hellifield cadet, Albert Hailwood, was at the camp. Albert, who had transferred to the territorial battalion just three days before on reaching the age of 18, was mobilised on the 4th August 1914 making him the first Hellifield young man to enlist. Albert landed in France in April 1915. He saw much action and was wounded twice before sadly losing his life in

1918. Albert has no known grave, but he is remembered on the memorial wall of Tyne Cot Cemetery near Ypres in Belgium and also on Hellifield's village War Memorial and the Memorial Plaque in Hellifield Methodist chapel.

Most of the battalion's officers enlisted immediately, some obtaining Commissions and others electing to join the ranks. Several former members of the cadet battalion were to pay the ultimate price during the great war.

John Pearcy



The full battalion marching down Hellifield's main street on route from the railway station for a parade and inspection at the Peel in 1916.