

‘...the lads that will never be old ...’

Surname	ATCHISON				
Forenames	Ralph Graham				
Date of birth	4 th January 1892	Place of birth	Idle	BGS years	1904-1907
Parents	Son of the late James R. S. and Eliza D. Atchison, of Thackley, Bradford, Yorks.				
Wife/children					
Address	Fernbank, 536 Leeds Rd, Thackley	Occupation	Stuff manufacturer's warehouseman		
Death date	21 st July 1917	Age	25	Cemetery/Memorial	CANADA FARM CEMETERY, IEPER, BELGIUM I.E.22
Rank	Acting Bombardier	Service number	21977		
Regiment/Corps	RFA 'B' Coy 92 nd Bgde				

1861 Census Eliza Dorothy Haxby, dau of Robert Haxby, master saddler, living Burnt Yates, wi Francis Ann, 6 kids; **1871** moved to Bowling, no Francis Ann, Robert no occupation given, but eldest son = saddler,
1878 Marriage Bradford ¾ James Ralph S Atchison m Eliza Dorothy Haxby



1879 Birth Charles Graham Stanley Atchison fa, Warehouseman **7 Victoria Terr** Bapt St Luke Eccleshill

1881 Census 14 Victoria Terr
 James R S Atchison, Commission agent; Eliza Dorothy; Charles GS 1, Margaret 1mo, Mary Ann Haxby sis-in-law, Bedale, Master Weaver (Unemployed). **Charles died** 1881

1881 Census Robert Haxby, Eliza Dorothy's brother, also a Warehouseman. " **1901**
1911 Looker over Stuff Warehouse, worker, living alone 47 Thorpe Garth Idle, 2 rooms.

1891 Census 48 Leeds Rd Idle
 James Ralph Stanley Atchison 36 Manufacturer's Agent Textile. Employer
 Eliza Dorothe Atchison 34, Burnt Gates
 Harold Vivian Atchison 6
 Marguerite F Atchison 10
 Florence E Atchison 1, Thackley
 Henrietta E Bradlee 12, Bradford neice

Atchison & Haxby, Manufacturers' agent, 6 Drake St.

1892 Birth 4th January 1892
 Bapt 22-3-1909! Holy Trinity, Idle.

1901 Census 118 New Cross St Bowling
 James Ralph S Atchison 46 Manufacturer's agent. Textile. Worsted Own acc
 Eliza D Atchison 44
 Harold V Atchison 16
 Florence E Atchison 11
 Ralph G Atchison 8

BGS 1904-1907

1905YB 3rd Modern Middle Fr2, Ger1, Eng4, Gg4, Hi12; 1gamma Ma14, Phys2, Chem14, Art8
Mod Lang prize, Form prize hon ment.

1906Yb 4th Mod Middle Fr8, Ger12, Eng7, Gg20, 19Hi, Art15 /24; Div2b Ma6, Phys6, Chem11

1907YB 5th Mod Upper Fr8, Ger13, Eng9, Gg9, Hi14, Art9; Div3b Ma14, Chem5, Phys7.

1911 Census 12 Cross Rd Idle 8 rooms

James Ralph Stanley Atchison	56, Liverpool	Manufacturer's agent	Textile trade	Own acc
Eliza Dorothy Atchison	54, Ripley Yk	32, 5, 4, 1		Died 4-7-17 Widow
Margeurite Frances Atchison	30, Eccleshill	-		
Florence Ethel Atchison	21, Idle	Lady clerk typist	Stuff warehouse	
Ralph Graham Atchison	18, "	Warehouseman	Stuff warehouse	
Mary Ann Haxby	69, Ripley	-	sister-in-law	single

1914 Death 536 Leeds Rd Thackley James RS Atchison, 27-1-1914, to Eliza & Harold V manufacturers' agent. £1589.

1917 Death Fernbank, Leeds Rd, Thackley Eliza Dorothy, Widow, to Marguerite. £614.

YorksObsDec14: younger son of the late JRS Atchison of Thackley, of the firm of Atchison & Haxby, manufacturers' agents, Bradford; BGS & Technical Coll. Joined the RFA at the outbreak.

Brother KiA. 1918

Bradford Roll of Honour <https://www.flickr.com/photos/bradfordww1/9342736488/in/album-72157634750552180/>

Harold V Atchison	12 Bourne Terrace	May 1916	SecLt RGA	26-8-1918
Ralph G "	12 Bourne Terrace	27-8-1914	Bomb. RFA	21-7-1917

Campaign :-		(A) Where decoration was earned.	
1914-15		(B) Present situation.	
Name	Corps	Rank	Reg. No.
(A) ATCHISON	RFA	Gnr	21977
(B) Ralph G.		a/c	
Action taken		Dead	
THEATRE OF WAR.		(1) France	
QUALIFYING DATE.		21. 7. 15	
(6 34 46) W234-HP5590 500,000 4/19 HWV(P240) K608			[OVER.]

War Diary 92nd Brigade RFA 20 Div

Diary missing for July, Aug, Sept

LLT
1916

The Battle of Mount Sorrel, a local operation in which the Division recaptured the height with the Canadians

The Battle of Delville Wood*

The Battle of Guillemont*

The Battle of Flers-Courcelette*

The Battle of Morval*

The Battle of Le Transloy*

The battles marked * are phases of the Battles of the Somme 1916

1917

The German retreat to the Hindenburg Line

The Battle of Langemarck**

The Battle of the Menin Road Ridge**

The Battle of Polygon Wood**

The battles marked ** are phases of the Third Battles of Ypres

The Cambrai Operations

<http://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/army/regiments-and-corps/the-royal-artillery-in-the-first-world-war/batteries-and-brigades-of-the-royal-field-artillery/xc-xci-xcii-howitzer-and-xciii-brigades-20th-divisional-artillery/>

XCII (Howitzer)

This brigade was originally comprised of numbers 286, 287 and 288 (Howitzer) Batteries RFA and the Brigade Ammunition Column. It was placed under command of the 20th (Light) Division. The brigade then remained with the division throughout the rest of the Great War: you can see details of its battles and movements on the page describing the division.

On 15 February 1915 the three six-gun batteries were reorganised to become four four-gun batteries and were titled as A, B, C and D Batteries.

A (Howitzer) Battery left on 9 August 1915 and went to 27th Division, where on 6 September it became B (Howitzer) Battery of 129 (Howitzer) Brigade.

92 (Howitzer) Brigade was completely reorganised on 11-12 May 1916. B, C and D (Howitzer) Batteries all left, becoming the D (Howitzer) Battery of 90, 91 and 93 Brigades respectively. They were replaced by the D Batteries from those three brigades, which were renamed as A, B and C Batteries of 92 Brigade.

The Brigade Ammunition Column left between 12 and 15 May 1916 to merge with others in the divisional artillery to form the 20th Divisional Ammunition Column.

Between 30-31 August 1916 C Battery was broken up with a two-gun section joining each of A and B Batteries. A Battery joined from 90 Brigade and was renamed as C Battery. D (Howitzer) Battery joined from 90 Brigade and became 92 Brigade's D (Howitzer) Battery.

On 8 January 1917 the brigade left 20th (Light) Division as it was being redesignated as an Army Brigade. On the same date, a section of two howitzers from D (Howitzer) Battery of 93 Brigade joined the brigade's D (Howitzer) Battery.

Register of Effects to Marguerite, Harold, Florence

Probate Ralph Graham acting bombardier RFA, 536 Leeds Rd Thackley, admin to Marguerite Frances Atchison spinster. £487

Memorials

BGS

Idle War Memorial

ATCHISON	Ralph Graham	21977	Bombardier	"B" Coy. 92nd Bde.	Royal Field
Artillery	1917 07 21	25	Son of the late James R S and Eliza D Atchison, of Thackley, Bradford		

http://www.calverley.info/idle_ceno.htm The Cenotaph at Idle.

Holy Trinity, Idle

Thorpe Middle School

<http://www.shipleyyw1.org.uk/mws%20atchison,%20ralph.htm> accessed 13.11.2018

We are fortunate to have several references to Ralph's war in the *Shipley Times & Express*, starting on 25 September 1914 - just a few weeks after war was declared - when he was included in a list of Idle men who had signed up for Kitchener's army. On 7 January 1916, we read:

LETTER FROM THE TRENCHES Bombardier Ralph Atchison, Royal Field Artillery, of Thackley, had been in the thick of the fray in France, sent his brother Harold some details of his living conditions. 'The sleeping accommodation is fine. Most of us have beds to sleep on, consisting of wooden frames with canvas drawn across. Of course, they are not big, being 6ft by 3ft but they are simply grand. 'It is very cold here. Our chief occupation when off duty is to find the warmest place but it is all right when on duty for we have usually a good fire.' Just as an example of how cold it is, the other morning when I woke up my boots were frozen so stiff that I could not manage to get them on do as I would; subsequently I was obliged to put a pair of "waders" on. 'In the afternoon my boots had sufficiently thawed as to allow of my putting them on but even then I had a difficult job on. 'The Germans must have spotted us one night at dusk when we were mending a telephone wire because they turned a machine gun full on us. 'A companion and myself jumped headlong into a trench and there we lay flat behind some sandbags. We stayed there about a quarter of an hour with bullets pinging past us all the time. 'Later, going back to the battery, it was pitch dark except when the starlights went up. As we had to cross ploughed fields it was very hard walking and every now and again one of us would put his foot into a shell-hole and down he would drop. Still we got back eventually - dead beat!' A week later the paper carried another piece:

CHRISTMAS AT THE FRONT An interesting letter has been received from Bmdr Ralph Atchison who has been at the Front a considerable time. He says: "We had a splendid time here on Christmas Day when we had a grand dinner. A small room was got ready for the occasion and we made tables of forms and sandbags. Newspapers were used as tablecloths." "We had twelve chickens, roast mutton, carrots and onion, then plum pudding, cheese and an orange and apple. "To drink we had French beer, two bottles of port and a bottle of grenadine. "The major and section officer came in at the commencement of each sitting and made a little speech and we didn't forget to cheer him. "There was one thing which spoiled the dinner. We received orders the day before that there had to be no firing on the 24th and 25th except in retaliation but the Boches kept on firing at dinner time so we had to retaliate. "The gunners were called out about four or five times at each sitting though that made no difference to us telephonists. "I think the Germans thought they would catch us napping at Christmas but we soon showed them we were quite ready for all emergencies. "We all had a parcel given to us, the gifts of the officers. Each contained 40 cigarettes or a pipe, a packet of butterscotch, a writing pad and envelopes and a bar of toilet soap."

On 6 July 1917 the paper reported: DEATH OF MRS ATCHISON. We regret to have to record the death of Mrs Eliza Dorothy Atchison of Fernbank, 536 Leeds Road, Thackley, which occurred at her residence on Wednesday night. Mrs Atchison was the widow of Mr J R S Atchison, manufacturers' agent, who died three and a half years ago. She had not been in good health for some time but became worse in May. Death was due to heart failure, notwithstanding all the care and attention which was bestowed upon her by her medical adviser, Dr Hirst. Mrs Atchison attended the Idle Parish Church. She was 60 years of age, leaves two daughters and two sons and will be much missed in the district, where she was held in high respect. Her two sons are serving in the army. Ralph, the younger, has been in France for two years and efforts are being made to obtain leave of absence for him to attend the funeral. Harold, the elder son, who is married, is in training at Grimsby

And less than a month later, on 3 August 1917: BOMBARDIER ATCHISON KILLED IN ACTION. News has been received that Pte Ralph Atchison has been killed in action. About a month ago Ralph was home on leave in consequence of the illness of his mother who subsequently passed away. He was 25 years of age and was a very promising young man. His genial disposition made him exceedingly popular amongst the people with whom he came in contact. He was an indefatigable

worker for the Parish Church and Sunday School and his demise will be deeply deplored by a large circle of friends.

The following week, 10 August 1917, the *ShIPLEY Times & Express* carried these tributes from Ralph's pals: Bombardier Ralph Atchison of Fernbank, Leeds Road, Thackley, whose death we reported in our last issue, joined the Royal Field Artillery in August 1914 and he had been two years in France. Ralph was connected with the Parish Church Young Men's Institute and he was exceedingly popular amongst the members. Of a genial disposition he was like wherever he went. Before the war he was associated with the firm of Atchison and Haxby, manufacturers' agents. Writing to Miss Atchison, the deceased hero's friend, Gunner J D Cockcroft, says: "I am very sorry to say that he was killed by shell-fire yesterday morning. "More details I cannot give at present but if ever I get home I will do my best either to see you or write to you if you should desire it. My home is at Todmorden, not far from Leeds." "We have lost a good pal in Ralph; he was always cheerful and generous and made one of our careful little band of telephonists. The night before we were joking and laughing together with never a thought of war and in the morning we had a terrible awakening. "So little is there between life and death out here and it is as well we do not often realise it." "He will be buried in a military cemetery near here and the grave will be looked after. I will try to visit the place later. It is but little that words can do to help you but I assure you of the deepest sympathy for you felt by all; we shall ever remember him as a true pal." Cpl H Wade, of the same brigade, writes: "Ralph was a very dear friend of mine and I felt that I must write to you to offer my deepest sympathy in this awful trial." "I first met Ralph at Cosham in September 1914 and ever since then we have worked side by side up to his death." "He was always of a very cheerful disposition even in the most trying times. Many times when I have been downhearted he has cheered me up with his talk of different places that we were both familiar with." "He was very popular in the Battery. Everyone spoke very well of him and many were the expressions of sorrow when the news reached the wagon line." "He is buried properly some little distance behind the line in a soldiers' cemetery. If at all possible his grave will be kept and tended well by the men of the battery while we are on this front and afterwards we will try and make arrangement for it to be well looked after." "I will try and see you personally after this terrible war is over and explain to you exactly the situation of his grave." "All the battery staff and the sub-section to which he belonged have asked me to say how extremely sorry they are to lose so good a friend. He will never be forgotten in this battery, especially among the signallers with whom he was in constant touch." "If there is anything you would like to know or anything that I can do for you, please let me know and I will do all in my power to help you."