



Photograph, found in Senate House Library Archives, Central File series, 1916-17 Staff Records (ref. UoL/CF/1/17/636)

Early life

Harry Alden Whitby was born in Kingston upon Hull in Yorkshire and raised in Sculcoates, a suburb of the city. He was the son of Stafford B. Whitby, a hosiery manufacturer, and Harriet 'Hettie' Whitby, who assisted her husband in the business. He had an older brother, George, and a younger sister named Elsie. Whitby was educated at the Hull Grammar School.

WHITAKER, Owen	19 Sept., 1914.
WHITBY, Harry Alden ...	B.A.; Univ. Coll. ...	Temp. 2nd Lt.	13th (S.) Batt. The King's Royal Rifle Corps.	12 Sept., 1914
WHITE, Archie Cecil Thomas ...	B.A.; King's College	Temp. 2nd Lt.	6th (S.) Batt. Yorkshire Regt....	28 Nov., 1914.
...	...	Temp. 2nd Lt.	6th (S.) Batt. Princess Charlotte	...

Commission to the King's Royal Rifle Corps, September 1914, found in Senate House Library Archives, Military Education Committee minutes, 1914-17 (ref. UoL/ME 1/1/3)

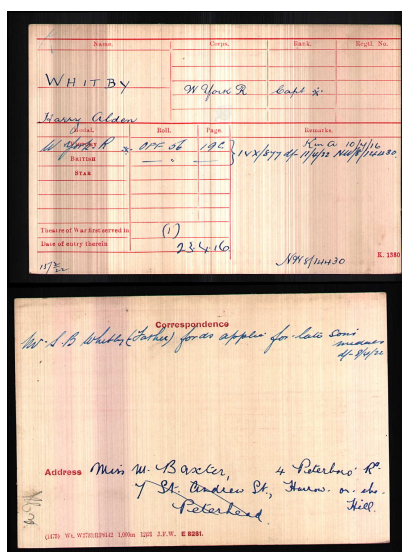
University of London

Whitby was matriculated at University College in 1905, and achieved his B.A. degree in 1908. He attended lectures at the University of Paris, and spent two and a half years in Germany. In 1911, Whitby was teaching at Crewkerne Grammar School, and subsequently found work as an HM Inspector of Schools. He returned to University College in November 1913, to study History at M.A. level. He was subsequently hired as a Secretary in the Academic Department in July 1914, and was to begin his work in September. He also signed up as a cadet in the Officer Training Corps. He did not have the chance to take up his duties in the department, as he received his commission almost immediately after starting work. In the circumstances, the Secretary post was to be kept open for him in case he should return. Whitby was engaged to Miss Mary Baxter, and their marriage was postponed as he was ordered to the front.

The Great War

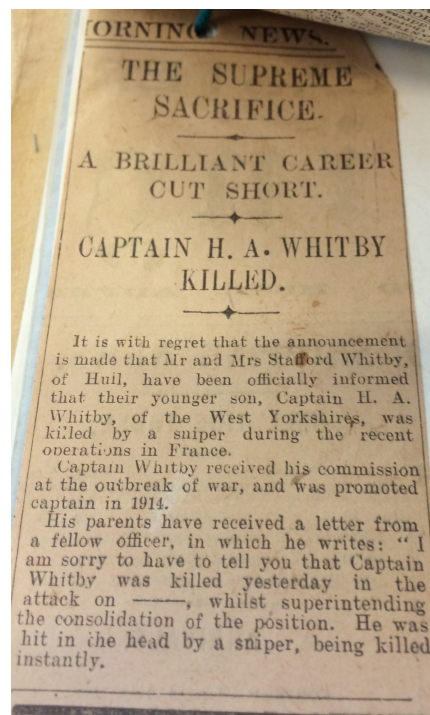
Whitby was appointed as a temporary Second Lieutenant in the 13th Battalion, The King's Royal Rifle Corps, and was commissioned on 19th September 1914. The 11th Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment was formed in York, on 10th October 1914. Moving south, the infantry were engaged in constructing defences to the south of London, before proceeding to France in August 1915. Whitby joined up with the regiment in September 1915, having been promoted to Captain. At this time, the regiment were being guided in trench familiarisation. Later taking over some of the front line sector, the 11th Battalion were involved in the Battle of Loos and in the Battle of Albert, during the early stages of the Somme Offensive. Whitby was killed in action by sniper fire during this campaign on 10th July 1916, whilst leading his men in a successful attack on the village of Contalmaison. He was subsequently praised for his courage and his role in carrying out the assault.

He was buried in the Pozieres British Cemetery, Ovillers-la-Boisselle. In addition to the memorial at Senate House, his name can be seen in his hometown, on the Kingston upon Hull memorial 1914-1918. Whitby was awarded the British War Medal and a Victory Medal for his service with the West Yorkshire Regiment. His father made the application for these medals, which were addressed to his fiancée, Miss Baxter. In his will, it was requested that the amount of £392, 5 shillings and twopence was to be left to his father.



Whitby's medal card, found in Findmypast.co.uk War Records

Mr. & Mrs. Stafford B. Whitby and Family are deeply touched with the many very kind expressions of sympathy in their great sorrow. Nevertheless, they are thankful to God that their son Harry lived 27 years of strenuous and glorious life, the memory of which will be for ever cherished by them. His fiancée, Miss Mary Baxter, joins in all their heartfelt thanks.



Family obituaries, found in Senate House Library Archives, Central File series, 1916-17 Staff Records (ref. UoL/CF/1/17/636)