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| **Name** | **JOHN ISMAY ATKINSON** |
| **Birth** | 1895 Earsdon Northumberland |
| **Enlistment/Occupation** | Unknown |
| **Death, date, location** | 29/06/1916  Killed in action  (Posted to France 09/09/1915(medal rolls)) |
| **Age** | 21 |
| **Unit, rank, service no:** | Lieutenant  Northumberland Fusiliers  13th Bn  THE LONDON GAZETTE, 15 DECEMBER, 1914.  The under mentioned Cadets and ex~  Cadets of the Officers Training Corps to be  Temporary Second Lieutenants. Dated 14th  December, 1914: —  John Ismay Atkinson |
| **Family acknowledgement CWGC** | Son of John Ismay Atkinson and Ada Margaret Atkinson, of 38, St. George's Terrace, Newcastle-on-Tyne. (CWGC) |
| **Family** | The name ‘John Ismay’ had been used for several generations of sons in the Atkinson family.  John Ismay Atkinson (1895-1916) who was killed in action at Fricourt, France in World War I was the only son of John Ismay Atkinson (1864-1906) of Ovingham and Ada Margaret Maddison (1867-1955) who married in 1893. He was also grandson of Dr. John Ismay Atkinson (1816-1883) who was village doctor for the Wylam locality and his wife Hannah (nee Armstrong 1826-1908) of Heddon on the Wall. Dr.Atkinson and his wife Hannah are recorded in the 1851 census living at West House, Ovingham Road, Wylam  Dr. Atkinson and his wife had nine children of whom John Ismay (1864-1906) was the sixth. He has been traced in the 1871 census as a 7 year old staying on his maternal grandmother’s farm at Heddon banks. He has not yet been found in subsequent censuses. He married Ada Margaret Maddison of Earsdon and they had two children John Ismay (1895-1916) and Enid (1890-1978) The family were living at 38 St. George’s Terrace, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne in the 1901 census. Father died on 19th July 1906 aged 42.  By the 1911 census son John Ismay is a 16 year old boarder at Tonbridge School, Tunbridge Wells in Kent. He is also recorded on the War Memorial of Christ’s Hospital School (Blue Coats) in Sussex so at some point he must have changed schools.  We do not yet have any information on John Ismay’s occupation between leaving school and enlisting, but he became a 2/Lieutenant in the 13th (service) Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers in December 1914 and was posted to France 9th September 1915. He was wounded at the Battle of Loos later that month on 29th September 1915. In June the following year he was killed in action at Fricourt 29th June 1916.  Two of his father’s younger brothers and sisters Jane and Charles Atkinson lived at the family home West House, Ovingham Road, Wylam throughout their lives and were very active in the village affairs especially during and after the First World War. This included helping soldiers convalescing at Holeyn Hall the home of Sir Charles and Lady Parsons which was used as a Northumberland Auxiliary Hospital and assisting families bereaved by the war. Charles Atkinson was also a leading figure in the planning of the village war memorial, its construction and unveiling in 1923.  The Wylam School War Memorial Plaque was unveiled 08/10/1920 by Miss Jane Atkinson of West House, Wylam. This was John Ismay’s aunt. |
| **Battalion War Diary**  **13th Bn. Northumberland Fusiliers** | The War Diary for June 1916 records that on 1st June the battalion marched to billets in **La Neuville** and 2nd Lt. J.I. Atkinson took charge of B Coy for the march. On 19/06/1916 the battalion moved up to **Meaulte.** There is no record of John Ismay after the 1st June entry either on duties, or wounded or killed. These were the days leading up to the 1st July 1916, the first day of the major battle of the Somme. If the diary was written after the 1st July then it may account for the brevity of the records. |
| **Battalion** | **The 13th (Service) Battalion The Northumberland Fusiliers** was formed at Newcastle in September 1914 as part Kitchener's Third New Army and joined 62th Brigade, 21st Division. The Division concentrated in the Tring area, training at Halton Park before winter necessitated a move into local billets in Tring, Aylesbury, Leighton Buzzard, High Wycombe and Maidenhead. The artillery was at High Wycombe and Berkhamsted, Royal Engineers at Chesham, and Army Service Corps at Dunstable. In May 1915 the infantry moved to huts at Halton Park, whilst the artillery moved to Aston Clinton with one brigade staying at Berkhamsted and the Royal Engineers to Wendover. On the 9th of August they moved to Witley Camp. They proceeded to France during the first week of September and marched across France withtheir first experience of action being in the British assault at Loos on 26th September 1915, suffering heavy casualties, just a few days after arriving in France. In 1916 they were in action in the Battles of The Somme, including The Battle of Morval in which the Division captured Geudecourt. In 1917 they were in action during The German retreat to the Hindenburg Line, the Arras offensive. In August 1917 they joined with the 12th battalion to form the 12/13th Battalion. |
| **Memorials** | Pier and Face 10 B 11 B and 12 B.  THIEPVAL MEMORIAL  Also commemorated in:-  War memorial Plaque St.Oswin’s church, Wylam  War Memorial Monument, Village Green, Wylam  John Ismay Atkinson is Listed on Christ’s Hospital School, Blue Coats, Sussex. ‘Old Blues’ war memorial.  Memorial on family grave, Ovingham Cemtery. |
| **Comments** | There is little to link John Ismay Atkinson (1895-1916) with Wylam in any of the records so far accessed. However, Dr. Atkinson of West House, Ovingham Road, Wylam was his grandfather and Dr. Atkinson’s ‘children’ were in effect John Ismay’s aunts and uncles. It can only be assumed that he visited his grandmother, aunts and uncles in Wylam. The likelihood is that his father was frequently at sea as an officer and died when John Ismay was aged 11 years. John Ismay was privately educated at boarding schools. It maybe that these factors made Wylam and his Wylam family even more than usually significant. The two uncles living at West House were ships-brokers. It was John Ismay’s aunt Miss Jane Atkinson who unveiled the war memorial plaque in the village school on 8th October 1920. |
| **Sources** | UK Soldiers died in Great War 1914-1919 ancestry.  Commonwealth War Graves Commission  1901 &1911 Census.  Medal Rolls  War Diaries 13th battalion Northumberland Fusiliers, Fusiliers Museum of Northumberland, Alnwick.  London Gazette. |
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