

HORNTON WW1 COMMEMORATIONS FLIP BOOK



**More about the
Hornton men
who served
and died
in World War I**

Please do have a browse through...

The Hornton Chapel Roll of Honour of Men Who Served their Country in The Great War

Ernest Miles Royal Flying Corps. Steward of this Parish.

Rowland Miles Bucks Tank Corp. Organist and S.S. Teacher

John Sumner Royal Warwickshire Steward of this Church

John H. Webb Canadian Infantry A worker of this Church

James Turner Royal Warwickshire A member of Chapel com.

Willie Colman Oxon & Bucks A member of this Church

Emmanuel Freeman Queens Own Oxford Regiment A member of the Choir – [died](#)

Reginald Cassel Canadian Infantry Local Preacher & S.S. Teacher

Joseph Hillman Royal Field Artillery A member of P.M. Band

Walter Cassel Hants A member of P.M. Band

John Gilkes Royal Field Artillery A member of P.M. Band

Eli Gilkes Machine Gun Corps. A member of P.M. Band

John Gardner Royal Naval Air Service A member of P.M. Band

Lewis Griffiths Army Service Corp. A member of P.M. Band

Tom Hillman Canadian Infantry A member of P.M. Band

Laurence Evans Army Service Corps

Oscar Beesley Army Veterinary Corp.

Edgar Grimstone Oxon & Bucks

William England

Not on Chapel list -

Osmand Robbins

Sid Colman

Alfred Gilkes

George Burden

Emanuel Freeman of Hornton – more about his family and descendants

By Rob Freeman, The Green, Hornton

"My grandfather was Charles Arthur Freeman, the second son of 10 brothers and two sisters. His father went to America about the time of the Gold Rush. His mother died and his father remarried and produced another eight sons and two daughters. Emanuel, who was killed in the First World War, was one of the eight sons by the second marriage.

"There is a stone in Balscote churchyard with his and his father's name on it and another one with my grandparents' names.

"Emanuel had two sons – Nelson, born in 1910, and Arthur William, born in 1914, and known as 'Bill'. From the Parish Records, Barbara Greenhalgh has noted that Nelson was married to Chrissie Annie Jeffs from Bodicote, daughter of a blacksmith.

"Bill told me he had a vague memory of a man in uniform coming to the cottage when he was very young, which would probably have been his father on leave during WWI.

"Bill was born in the cottage on The Green, now called Linden Cottage and, apart from service in WWII, he lived in it until his death in 2003. His occupation throughout his life was as a stonemason and we have several examples of his work."

More about John Robbins, one of the Hornton men who died

By his grandson David Robbins and wife Diana, of Monks Risborough - and still regular visitors to Hornton to this day, even though they moved from the village in 1970 when they married. Here's what David recalls and has checked with his family:

"Stonemason John was one of five children and the second son of shepherd William and Sarah Robbins of West End Cottages, Hornton - where the family grew up.

"Sarah was a Hicks by birth and was brought up in the cottages on the corner of West End, as you turn from The Green.

"John married his wife, Amy, née England (she was from Ratley) at the Methodist church in Church Lane, Banbury. They lived at in Spring Cottage, West End and they also had five children. They kept chickens and pigs in the back yard, where the bungalow is today.

"John was an early volunteer. At 36, he was killed among the trenches on the first day of a sustained attack on Turkish forces along the Gallipoli peninsula. Inadequate artillery support brought a huge sacrifice of lives to little purpose: the Hampshire lost 18 officers and 224 other ranks on that day.

"When John Robbins died the youngest of his five children was only three years old. With no father at home, Grandma Sarah played a big part in helping to support the family and some of the children had to be boarded out to other relatives. My father, Ron, stayed in Hornton and lived with his grandma for quite some time, while his sister Brenda stayed at home in Hornton. Doris went to live in Bournemouth with a relative of Amy, on the England side of the family. Fred and Bill went to live at Coventry with another relative and stayed there through their school years and until they married. Freddie is buried in Hornton Church graveyard (he died in 1974) as is his mother, Amy.

"My father said that it was quite a struggle after the War and things were very tight. I think his mother, Amy, used to earn some money as a seamstress. Grandma Amy died at the age of 71 in 1953."



John Robbins:

Date & Place of Death: 6 August 1915, Helles Front, Gallipoli

Rank: Private Service No.: 17201

Regiment/Service: Ox & Bucks Light Infantry, then Hampshire Regiment 2nd Bn

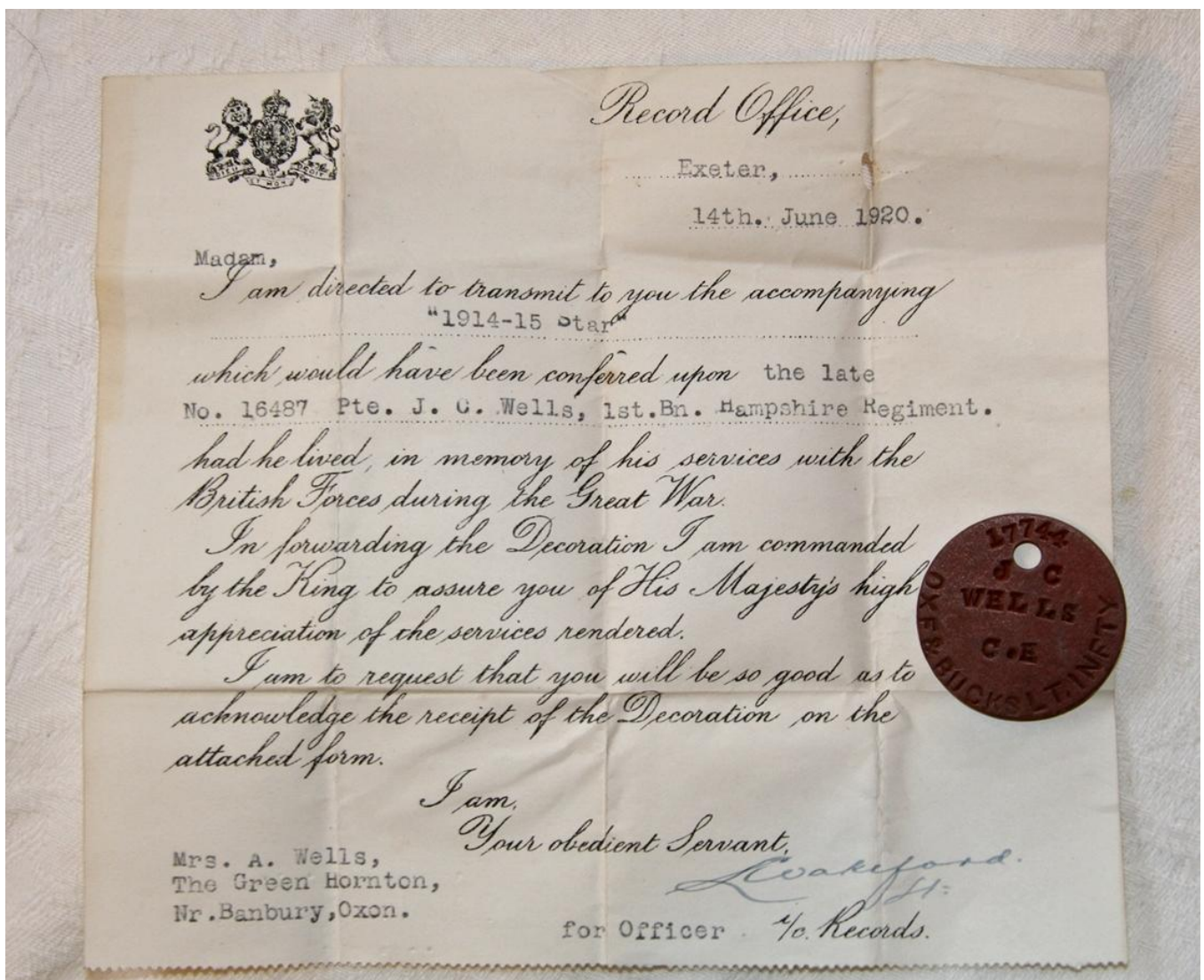
Medals: Star, Victory Medal, British War Medal

A little more on John Cornelius Wells, one of the Hornton men who died



Paul Burden is a descendent of John Wells, one of the Hornton men who died in World War I. Sadly, John is one of those about whom we have managed to find out very little.

Knowing we were short of material relating to John, Paul kindly caught up with his relative, Beryl Wells, of Middleton Cheney. When the conversation got round to John Wells, Beryl let him borrow John's medals, a Record Office note that came with the medals and his dog tag. They are all pictured here.



More about William Cawley, one of the Hornton men who died

Horntonian, Graham Vint, visited some of the WWI battlefields in spring 2014.

He sent the information we had on William Cawley to Pam and Ken Linge who manage and maintain the Thiepval Memorial 'information of the fallen' pages for visitors to find their relatives.

We knew that William Cawley was killed on the Western Front at the age of 36 and is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial in Picardy, France. Now we know a little more...

William Cawley:

Private, 18421, 11th Battalion, Royal Warwickshire Regiment

Died 13th August 1916, aged 36

Born in Hornton, Oxfordshire.

Son of Hugh William and Isabel Cawley (nee Cripps). William was a shepherd. They had at least six children:

- Ann Fields Cawley (b. 1878)
- **William Cawley (b. 1880)**
- Thomas Cawley (b. 1881, d. 1881)
- Isabel Cawley (b. 1883)
- Emma Cawley (b. 1886, d. 1897)
- Oscar Charles Cawley (b. 1888)

Resident of Hornton.

Enlisted at Banbury, Oxfordshire.

Formerly Private 23812, Somerset Light Infantry.

His brother **Oscar Charles Cawley** served as Private 13787, 7th Battalion, Ox and Bucks Light Infantry.



Thiepval Memorial

2014:

**Hornton Villagers'
Memories,
Anecdotes &
WWI Ancestors**

With the kind permission of: Sally Buchan, West End, Hornton

John Buchan

Sally Buchan's husband was William (William James de L'Aigle Buchan, 3rd Baron Tweedsmuir, 1916-2008) who saw distinguished service as an RAF pilot in WWII.

William's father was author John Buchan. Plagued by ill health, John was unable to join up in 1914 but he wrote his many-volumed *History of the Great War*, served on General Haig's staff, was a Times correspondent and later the first Director of Information.

WWI was a major influence on his writing. His famous novel, "The Thirty-Nine Steps", was published during WWI, in 1915. His 1919 novel "Mr Standfast" included powerful impressions of trench warfare.

When John wrote "These for Remembrance" and had a few copies printed for family and friends in 1919, it was never intended for general readership. Fortunately, for readers interested in an intimate look at a sample of the cost of the Great War, these personal memoirs were published in a general edition in 1987.

Addressed to his four children, Buchan's Preface movingly sets the stage for the six profiles that follow. 'In these short chapters I have tried to set down how those friends of mine appeared to me.... I am convinced that few men have ever had more lovable, more brilliant, more generous, more gallant friends.... So I want you to cherish the memory of the war because of the price that was paid for victory-victory for you.'

The friends he paid tribute to were Tommy Nelson, killed in action at Arras in April 1917; Bron Lucas, shot down over enemy lines in November 1916; Cecil Rawling, killed in action near Ypres, October 1917; Basil Blackwood, killed in action near Ypres, July 1917; Jack Wortley, killed in action at Bullecourt, March 1918; and Raymond Asquith, killed in action on the Somme, September 1916.

Alastair Ebenezer Buchan

John's much-loved younger brother Alastair was killed at Ypres on 9 April in 1917. Earlier, he was injured in the fighting at Arras.

He was a 22-year-old Lieutenant and served in the 6th Bn. Royal Scots Fusiliers. He has a grave (1.N.14) at Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun.



Lieutenant ALASTAIR BUCHAN.



Obituary (a transcription of the obituary on the previous page)

Alastair Buchan was the youngest son of the late Rev. John Buchan, of Glasgow. He had just taken his degree at Glasgow University when war broke out, and he enlisted in the Cameron Highlanders along with many other men of his year. In february 1915 he got his commission in the Royal Scots Fusiliers, and went out to France in December. He was wounded in February 1916. In December of that year he returned to France, and was killed on Easter Monday 1917, while leading his company into action at the battle of Arras. Before he fell he knew the day was won, and that his splendid Division had maintained their great record. At the aid post he was so cheery that the men who saw him thought that his wounds were slight, and wrote home that he would soon be in Blighty. But his wounds were mortal, and when at five o'clock in the afternoon, they carried him into the Casualty Clearing Station nothing could be done. Kind hands did what they could to ease him, and he smiled at the doctor and nurse, and said he was "quite all right". He died in about an hour. He lies in a little graveyard on a bit of moorland that might be Leadburn, and round him lie many other "kindly Scots".

The most remarkable thing about Alastair Buchan was his gift for winning affection. If life is but one chance of gaining love then his twenty-two years were well spent. A man who knew him at Glasgow University wrote – "There was no man iin his year at college more generally beloved than Alastair. ...I have never met anyone more honourable, more careless of spending himself for others, more fearless of fighting any ugly injustive than he was."

His men loved him. In one of his letters he said – "There's a decent wee lad in my platoon who heard me say that my dug-out was draughty, and he went and filled in all the cracks with sand-bags and made a shutter for the window." And again – "There are two Corporals in my company that I love. They form my body-guard, and every time I fall nto a shell-hole or dodge a crump, you can hear them shout, `Are ye hurt, Mr Buchan?`."

His brother officers loved him. One of them (since dead) wrote – "He kept us all up, for he was the only one whose spirits never went down. He was the Happy Warrior, if ever there was one. I don't like to say he was my great friend, but he was my hero and I hung on his words."

A poem by John Buchan on the death of his younger brother Alastair at Arras in 1917

A mile or two from Arras town
The yellow moorland stretches far,
And from its crest the roads go down
Like arrows to the front of war.

All day the laden convoys pass,
The sunburnt troops are swinging by,
And far above the trampled grass,
The droning planes climb up the sky.

In April when I passed that way
An April joy was in the breeze;
The hollows of the woods were gay
With slender-stalked anemones.

The horn of Spring was faintly blown,
Bidding a ransomed world awake,
Nor could the throbbing batteries drown
The nesting linnets in the brake.

And as I stood beside the grave,
Where 'mid your kindly Scots you lie,
I could not think that one so brave,
So glad of heart, so kind of eye,

Had found the deep and dreamless rest,
Which men may crave who bear the scars
Of weary decades on their breast,
And yearn for slumber after wars.

You scarce had shed your boyhood's years,
In every vein the blood ran young,
Your soul uncramped by ageing fears,
Your tales untold, your songs unsung.

As if my sorrow to beguile,
I heard the ballad's bold refrain:
'I'll lay me down and bleed a-while,

And then I'll rise and fight again'.

Written by: Lorna Abbott, Horley Road, Hornton

In memory of her father, Gordon Bruce, and his brother Jimmie

My father, Gordon Bruce, died when I was five years old. One of my few memories of him is of a hole in his right arm. It was made by a German machine-gun bullet in August 1918, when he was 18.

He wrote from his bed in a base hospital in France to his mother in Edinburgh, saying: *"If only I'd had my arm a little higher I'd have got it beautifully through the muscle of my arm and been set for Blighty but I'm not grumbling. In fact, I'm a jolly sight happier than I've been for a long time. The smile hasn't been off my lips since my arrival at the first dressing station. Since then, everything has been the goods. Hot tea, motor rides, train ride and finally here with a good bath, clean change, clean suit of blues, nice comfy bed and good hot meals. No more cramped up in funk-holes, no more hopping over the top, no more bully, no more lice – what a merciful relief. Oh, I'm as happy as can be."*

My father concluded his letter by asking for news of his older brother, Jimmie. Sadly, Jimmie was already dead. He had been shot through a lung and died on 30 July 1918 in a French hospital, aged 24. On learning of this, Gordon wrote again to his mother, trying to comfort her: *"I think Jimmie himself would have preferred it to have happened in a hospital, in a bed, with some resemblance to a quiet peaceful life,"* he said. *"He was like me in his absolute hatred of all things military."*

My father did not return to the trenches. He recovered from his wound but before he could be sent back to the front he fell very ill with tonsillitis. By the time he was fit enough for action, the war was over.

This is the army form sent by the Record Office in Perth to inform the family of James Hay Bruce (Jimmie) that he had died in a French hospital. The only cause is cited as "died of wounds received in action".

Jimmie was a Lance Corporal in the Seaforth Highlanders regiment. On 24 July 1918, he had been just getting over his third bout of flu and had written to his mother (calling her "Dear Mere") and was hoping to get away in August for some kind of holiday: *"...the prospect of a fortnight at Dunbar is very tempting. With a bit of luck I might manage away in August, but these are great days, and I fancy the end isn't far distant..."*

For him, the end came only six days later. For the war, the end was in November of that year.

No. (If replying, please quote above No.)

RECORD OFFICE
PERTH
2 SEP 1918

Infantry Record Office,
Perth
2nd September 1918

Sir,

It is my painful duty to inform you that a report has been received from the War Office notifying the death of:

(No.) S/3443 (Rank) Lance Cpl.
(Name) James Hay Bruce
(Regiment) Seaforth Highlanders
which occurred in a French Hospital.
on the 30th July 1918.
The report is to the effect that he died of wounds received in action.

By His Majesty's command I am to forward the enclosed message of sympathy from Their Gracious Majesties the King and Queen. I am at the same time to express the regret of the Army Council at the soldier's death in his Country's service.

I am to add that any information that may be received as to the soldier's burial will be communicated to you in due course. A separate leaflet dealing more fully with this subject is enclosed.

I am,
Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
Accum. Licut
for Officer in charge of Records.
No 1 District

18540. Wt. 5529/M 2529. 150w. 7/17. R. & L., Ltd. Forms B 104-82/2. P.T.O.



George Burden 1897-1986

Written by his grandson, Kevin Wain

"Being late sometimes has its benefits! ...George was coming home on leave. The ship he was due to travel on was sunk and George was presumed 'missing in action', the dreadful fate of so many men. But, due to his late arrival at the port, it turned out that George had literally 'missed the boat'. What an impact that would have had on my family: 20 people and counting would not be here today."



"My grand-dad George was born in Hornton and was brought up by the Robbins family who lived in West End. Tracing George's family history, he appears as a visitor, aged three, on the 1901 census with William and Sarah Robbins, their son John and daughter Rhoda.

Ironically, this was John Robbins parents' family - John was killed in Gallipoli in 1915 and is featured in the main sections of our WWI Centenary display.

On the 1911 census, George appears with just William and Sarah, classified as a Boarder, aged 13 and at school. George joined up in 1917, aged 20, as a private in the Army Service Corp, Motor Transport.



12634 W.L.W.D.S.G. 200,000 1/10 D.D. & L. 3 4413 Army Form Z, 18.

CERTIFICATE OF EMPLOYMENT DURING THE WAR.

(To be completed for, and handed to, each soldier.)

A soldier is advised to send a copy rather than the original when corresponding with a prospective employer.

It is particularly important that an apprentice whose apprenticeship has been interrupted by Military Service should have recorded on this form any employment in a trade similar to his own on which he has been engaged during such Military Service.

Regt. No. M/289474 Rank Pte.

Surname BURDEN

(block letters)

Christian Names in full GEORGE CYRIL

Regt. R.A.S.C., M.T. Unit Rhine Army V.R.D.

I. Regimental Employment.

Nature of (a) Army Driver Period Feb '17 To Oct '19

(b)

Trying to track his army life and the places he served has been very difficult, although he did stay on after the war as part of the Rhine Army.

I remember conversations with him when I was a teenager and we spent mid-week nights watching the World at War series. He would sometimes tell me of his experiences.

I wish now I had recorded his recollections but, at that time, unfortunately, I didn't realise the significance of those precious memories. I do remember his thoughts on the life of the horses, which have left a lasting impression. (See next page...)



George returned after the war and continued his life in Hornton. He married Florence England and they lived with her mother in Church Lane. George and Flo had two children. George worked for Edge Hill quarries and then for Alcan in Banbury during the Second World War. My parents started married life living with them in Church Lane and I spent my first five years living there with my sister."



George & Flo being served tea by the Brownies

By kind permission of: Barbara Greenhalgh, Millers Lane, Hornton

Memories of her Grandfather - Joseph Jones, 1876-1947: King's Own Shropshire Light Infantry

Barbara's grandparents, Joseph and Elizabeth Jones, lived all their lives in a village called Morda, near Oswestry in Shropshire. In the 1911 Census, Joseph was 34 with four children, the eldest being Mary Ann, Barbara's mother. So, he was aged 36/7 in 1914, relatively old to be joining up.

"My grandfather, Joseph Jones, was buried in a collapsed trench.

He was the only one taken out alive.

He was invalided out of the army.

*My grandmother, Elizabeth, said he suffered nightmares
for a long time afterwards.*



Edith Cavell, 1865-1915

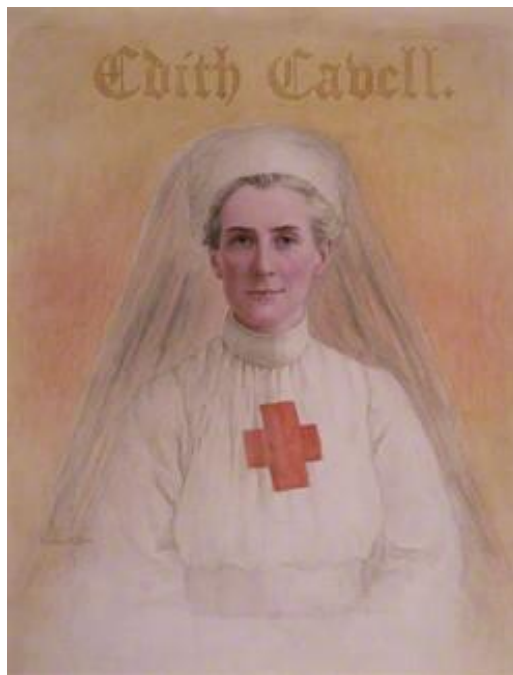


King Leopold II, 1835-1909

*I remember visiting their home in Shropshire and seeing
medals in a frame on the wall.*

There was a picture of Edith Cavell in the bedroom.

They named their youngest son Leopold, after the King of the Belgians."



This is the same portrait of the celebrated World War I British nurse, Edith Cavell, that Barbara remembers seeing at her grandparents' home, with the name lettering at the top. The original of this portrait is in the National Portrait Gallery in London. She is celebrated for saving the lives of soldiers from both sides without distinction and in helping some 200 Allied soldiers escape from German-occupied Belgium.

*"I realise that patriotism is not enough.
I must have no hatred or bitterness towards anyone."
Edith Cavell*

By Isabel King, West End, Hornton

Capt. The Revd. James Thomas Tunstall

My maternal grandfather was born in Darlington in 1875 and offered for the Methodist ministry in 1901. He was sent for his probationary period to Port of Spain, Trinidad.

In 1906 he returned for a brief leave and married my grandmother, Isabella Dowson. He returned with her to the West Indies - this time to James Street, Barbados, where I visited with Michael three years ago. He is particularly remembered for his work with young people.

He returned to England in 1910, with his wife and two sons, Will and Arnold, and was sent to serve as minister in Reeth in the Yorkshire Dales. His next circuit was in St Neots in 1913, where my mother, Ruby Esther, was born on 28 February 1916.

It was from here that this quiet, self-effacing man volunteered as a combatant. The far-sighted secretary of the Army and Navy Board urged him to become a chaplain. So he joined the Royal Army Chaplains' Department and, as his Obituary recounts, he proved to be extremely well-suited to the task: "His fearless devotion won him the highest esteem of all ranks. He was always with his men - at rest, in the trenches and in action - strengthening the weak, tending the wounded and comforting the dying."

Twice, the London Gazette named him for outstanding courage and devotion. He was awarded the Military Cross near Ypres in October 1917 for "conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty in dressing the wounded, succouring the dying and burying the dead under fire". He was awarded a Bar To Military Cross at Ovillers in October 1918. He stayed out there after the war had finished for a further four-five years, laying out and burying the dead.



THE REV. JAMES T. TUNSTALL, M.C.

The following paragraphs are the official citations concerning the awards bestowed upon the Rev. James T. Tunstall during the 1914 - 1918 War:-

THE MILITARY CROSS

TUNSTALL, Capt. The Rev. James Thomas - Royal Army Chaplains' Dept.
(I/LINCOLN)

Near YPRES, 4/5 OCTOBER, 1917. For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty in dressing the wounded, succouring the dying and burying the dead under fire. On two occasions when the aid post in which he was working was blown in he succeeded in extricating all the wounded although under heavy fire.

BAR TO MILITARY CROSS

OVILLERS, 23/24 OCTOBER, 1918. For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty tending and evacuating wounded during the attacks. He followed close behind the leading troops throughout the attack, and by collecting and locating wounded under heavy shell fire, and by bringing ambulances forward, was personally responsible for the evacuation of large numbers of casualties.

By kind permission of: Joan Horsley, Perkins Close, Hornton

Remembering her grandfather, Sydney John Coleman

Service number: 17794 WW1 Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry

Sydney was 25 in 1914, married to Isabel (Cawley) Coleman, aged 29, with three children.

He was the son of John and Georgeanne Coleman, farmer and innkeeper of the Rock Tavern, who in turn was the son of Thomas and Elizabeth Coleman of the Rock Tavern, Hornton Quarry, and brother-in-law to William Cawley, one of the Hornton men who was killed in WWI.



(Right) This is the back of one of Sydney's three medals (above), bearing his rank, name, regiment and service number.

By kind permission of: Juergen Fricke, Millers Lane, Hornton

Memories of his father, Otto Fricke, recruited to the German Army in 1914 aged 18.

Anecdotes:

Otto Fricke:

"My most terrifying moment was when I came face to face with a Mongolian soldier attacking me with a bayonet. I had no choice - either be killed immediately or shoot him. So that is what I had to do."

"On a lighter note," recalls Juergen, "I remember him saying that at least on the Western Front he managed once to exchange some kisses with a Belgian or French girl."

Otto was born in December 1896 and died July 1974. At the time of the war and thereafter he lived in the city of Lueneburg, south of Hamburg.



By kind permission of: The Miles family, Hornton

Commemorating their great-uncle, Roland Miles

The name of Private W R Miles is recorded on the Chapel Roll of Honour. He was born in 1900 and, on leaving school, joined the family firm as a carpenter. In his youth he made crystal sets as a hobby and was a keen photographer.

In October 1916 he enlisted, aged 16, in the Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry and was sent for six weeks' training to Catterick in Yorkshire. Here he wrote that he "had arrived safely at 4.30" and that "there was a good fire in our hut and plenty of food".



Roland was sent to France and served in the trenches near Ypres. He told his family that it was "*very tough in the trenches*", that the food "*was awful, dirt still in the potatoes. Biscuits often mouldy and maggots. You do not need to be fussy or you would starve*".

While fighting in France he was hit by flying shrapnel and was sent back to Cheltenham to convalesce. During this time he sent a postcard to his mother:

"Thanks for the cake and letter. Am sending a long letter in case I should not be able to post my letter tonight. Will tell you all news in my letter, which I shall write tonight. Hope you are all well, also Father. Your loving son"

When recruits were invited to volunteer to train in the Tank Corps, Roland didn't hesitate. He went to Bovington Camp in Hampshire where he passed all his exams. He was subsequently posted back to France with the 22nd (Light) Tank Battalion, affiliated to the 3rd Battalion. He was praised whilst on active service when he drove a tank through a very narrow gap into enemy territory doing surveillance work. On their return the officer was awarded a medal, but not Roland, who drove the crew back to safety.

By kind permission of: Jean Cleaver of Heron Way, Banbury

Remembering her father-in-law, William Robert (Bill) Cleaver

Bill was born in Hornton in 1881, the fourth child of Charles and Mary Cleaver, although the military wrongly recorded his birth as 1885.

Cleavers were living in Hornton from the early 19th Century and some of them were publicans. The house opposite the garage on Quarry Road was called Cleaver Holme.

Bill was a stonemason. The family was told he fought in the Second Boer War of 1899-1902 in the Ox & Bucks Regiment. In WW1 he was in the Royal Engineers doing reconnaissance and sending messages by flag semaphore. He was involved in the Battle of the Somme.

He stayed on in the Territorials until 1928. He lived with his wife and son Ken, and their other children, in the end cottage by the church in Church Lane. He died in 1961.

Jean came to Hornton as a young teacher in 1945 and married Ken.



4. Military qualifications as shown in A. D. 64.

Stone Mason (Very Superior)

5. Special Remarks as to qualifications, work done, or skill acquired during service with the Colours. This is required as a help in finding civil employment.

Soldier's Signature (For identification purposes) _____ Signed _____ (Rank) _____

Commanding _____ (Unit) _____

NOTES.—The object of this certificate is to assist the soldier in obtaining employment on his return to civil life. The form will be completed as soon as possible in accordance with Demobilization Regulations.

As soon as signed and completed it will be given to the soldier concerned and will remain his property. He should receive it as early as is compatible with making the necessary references in order that he can either send it home or keep it in his possession.

One form will be issued to each man, and no duplicate can ever be issued.

NOTES:—

(1) Here insert Section "B" Army Reserve, Section "D" Army Reserve, "Supplementary Reserve", "Territorial Army" as the case may be.

(2) The word "Nil" is to be inserted where necessary.

(3) To be struck out if inapplicable.

(4) Applies to a Section "B" Army Reserve who fails to return to the O's Reserve his A.P. 3.12 for completion as to discharge. To be struck out if inapplicable.

(5) Applies only to men who enlisted direct into Section "D" Army Reserve and are discharged from that section 222 237 to Section "D". Reservists who re-engage into that section either from the Colours or from Section "B" Army Reserve. To be struck out if inapplicable.

(6) Applies only to men who are being discharged from the Supplementary Reserve. To be struck out if inapplicable.

(7) Applies only to men who are being discharged from the Territorial Army. To be struck out if inapplicable.

(8) Each name is to be filled in and the word "Nil" inserted where necessary; numbers to be written in words.

(9) This Certificate is to be issued without any alterations in the manuscript.

WARNING.—The person to whom this Certificate is issued should on no account part with it or forward it by post when applying for a situation but should use a copy attested by a responsible person for the purpose. If the Certificate is lost it will be replaced only when its loss can be proved to have been due to very exceptional circumstances.

Application should be made to the Officer in charge Records.

DISCHARGE CERTIFICATE.

ANY PERSON finding this Certificate is requested to forward it in an unstamped envelope to the Under Secretary of State, The War Office, London, S.W.1.

(312) W/255—GD/105 2,000,000 1/15 H.V.(P/20) Army Form Z. 18.

CERTIFICATE OF EMPLOYMENT DURING THE WAR.

(To be completed for, and issued to, each soldier.)

A soldier is advised to send a copy rather than the original when corresponding with a prospective employer.

It is particularly important that an apprentice whose apprenticeship has been interrupted by Military Service should have recorded on this form any employment in a trade similar to his own on which he has been engaged during such Military Service.

Regt. No. *9820* Rank *Spl*

Surname *CLEAVER*

Christian Names in full *WILLIAM ROBERT*

Regt. *RE.* Unit *1st Coy. RE.*

1. Regimental Employment.

Serial No. *4097* Army Form B.100a.

Certificate of discharge from (a) *1st Coy. RE.*

No. *1842006* Rank *Sapper*

Name *CLEAVER* *William Robert*

(Signature) _____ (Signature) _____

Corps from which discharged *Royal Engineers*

N.B.—The following particulars refer only to the engagement from which the man is now being discharged—

Enlisted at *Oxford* on *6 Dec 1920*

(b) _____

Medals, Clasp, Decorations, Mentions in Dispatches, Any special acts of gallantry or distinguished conduct brought to notice in brigade or superior orders.

NIL

Serial No. *R. 8 9388*

Army Form B. 2067.

NOTE.—The character given on this Certificate is based on holder's conduct throughout his military career.

WARNING.—If this Certificate is lost a duplicate cannot be issued. You should therefore on no account part with it or forward it by post when applying for a situation, but should use a copy attested by a responsible person for the purpose.

ARMY NO 1842.025.
 Character Certificate of No. *19829* Rank *Corporal*
 Name *Clearer* *William Robert*
Surname. Christian Names in full.
 Unit and Regiment or Corps from which discharged *Sec. B. Army Reserve*
R. 8.

This is to certify that the ex-soldier named above has served with the Colours for *Ten* years *Six* months, and his character
To be inserted in words.

during this period *has been Exemplary*
Honest, sober & very reliable.
A "Very Superior" Mason
Third Class Certificate of Education

W. W. Hudson } Signature and Rank.
Major R. E.

For Officer i/c. *R. E.* Records.
 Date of discharge *22. 10. 20* *Chatham* Place.

To safeguard the holder of this Certificate from impersonation it should be noted that, in the event of any doubt arising as to the *bona fides* of the bearer, reference should be made to the description, when he left the Colours, of the soldier to whom this Certificate was given, which is recorded on his Discharge Certificate (Army Form B. 2079, Serial No. *R. 8 9388*), and should be in his possession.

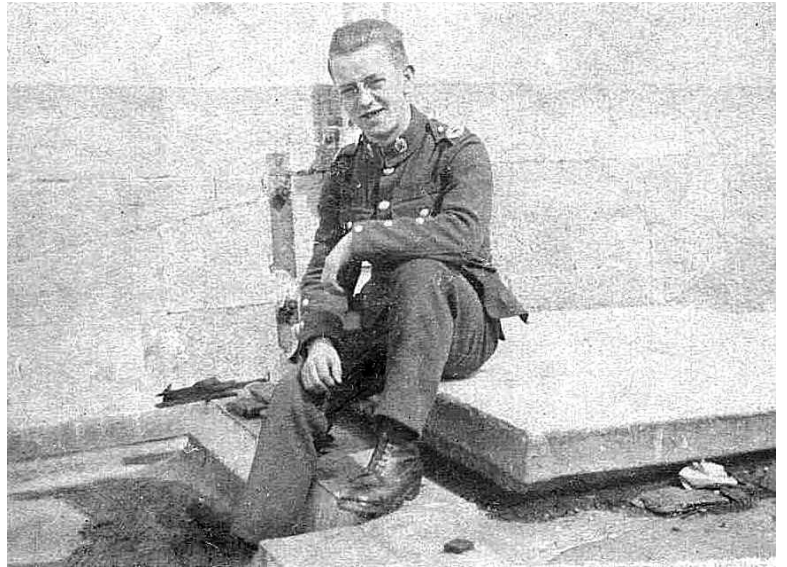
NOTE.—This Certificate is to be issued without any alteration in the manuscript.

By kind permission of: Barbara Greenhalgh, Millers Lane, Hornton

Remembering her father, Percy Sharrocks 1900 -1971 of Wardle, Rochdale, Lancashire

He was conscripted in January 1918 on his 18th birthday and sent to an Irish Regiment in Ennis.

He wore glasses from being a young boy – you can clearly see them in the standing picture below.



In Ireland, he was attached to a prison and training to be a cyclist messenger. He was struck by the powerful influence of the priests on the local people.
He was still there in 1919.

By kind permission of: Eileen Lewis, Millers Lane, Hornton

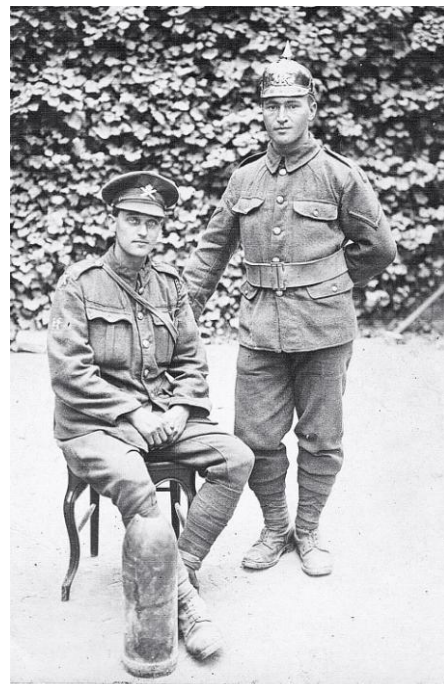
Commemorating her ancestors, Alfred, Eli, Jack and John Gilkes

Alfred and Eli were Eileen Lewis's uncles - brothers of her mother, Ivy (Gilkes) Groom, who was one of 13 children. They lived where Eileen lives now, on Millers Lane. Alfred, Eli and Frank were all thatchers.

Eli, who called himself Robin, is on the Hornton Chapel Roll of Honour and was a member of the Primitive Methodist (PM) band, which had 20 members before the war and was one of several popular local bands.

He was in the Machine Gun Corps. The picture of him here, below left, carrying a bugle, was sent in a postcard format to a Frank Gilkes at his lodgings in Brackley, but we're not sure what relation Frank was to Robin. The message on the back of the postcard says:

"Dear Frank – Just a line to let you know I am at home, got here Tuesday night. So come as soon as you can get off so we can have as long locally as we can. Yours, Robin."



(Right, above) This second picture of Robin, seated, has him wearing a different cap badge. Despite the fact that we know he was in the Machine Gun Corps, the badge is not a Royal Artillery one. The standing soldier is probably Belgian. There is a shell in front of them and notice how worn their boots are.

Alfred Gilkes is pictured (right) in a typically staged pose. He is wearing a bullet sash.

The cap badge may be the Hampshires – it has woven leaves round the edge with a crown on top.



A very young and fresh-faced John Albert Gilkes is pictured here (right) in a bust format made into a postcard. It was dated by hand at the base as 1918, with the wrong spelling of his surname.

On the back of the postcard someone has written that he was Sam Gilkes' son. The cap badge denotes a soldier in training.

There is a John Gilkes listed as belonging to the Royal Field Artillery and being a member of the PM band on the Chapel Roll of Honour.



This group of six soldiers has an asterix penned on the front of the photograph to mark the tall and striking figure of Jack Gilkes, seated front right.

Jack lived in Shenington. He is an officer, bearing one pip on his shoulder, and they are all wearing leather Sam Browne belts.

Their cap badges are the same as that of Alfred Gilkes, so may again be the Royal Hampshires.

Women in World War I

Don't write first world war women out of history



By Kate Adie, The Guardian, Monday 23 September 2013



Women war workers feed the charcoal kilns at a sugar refinery in Scotland, 1916.
Photograph: IWM/Getty Images/IWM via Getty Images

The spy and the nurse. Two women have lingered since the first world war. Mata Hari had been a circus performer and exotic dancer, and therefore satisfied traditional prejudices when she was accused of espionage and shot by the French. Edith Cavell was a brave and pious nurse whom the Germans arrested for helping British soldiers escape occupied Belgium. She too was executed and became a near-martyr. Both fitted acceptable and conventional roles for women in wartime.

Though most wars before the 20th century had been men-only events, the first world war should have given women a much greater claim to be remembered for the part they played, not least because it produced more published material from those women directly affected by its course.

Women were, for the first time in Britain, part of the government's war machine: the munitions industry depended on nearly a million of them; thousands upon thousands of injured soldiers were nursed and cared for by myriad women's organisations; the country's meagre welfare systems were buttressed by countless voluntary groups of well-organised, dedicated members who raised money, distributed supplies, visited families and staffed scores of canteens at ports and stations for exhausted troops. Others drove ambulances in France under fire and put on concert parties to the sound of artillery. On the home front, 80,000 were in uniform in non-combatant roles in the new Women's Services, and several million were undertaking work hitherto thought unsuitable or impossible for a woman – welders, train cleaners, policewomen, taxi-drivers ...

They were not invisible while the fighting raged: newspapers cautiously praised them for being "splendid" and having "pluck". Many gained national fame and described their wartime experiences in the press,

touring extensively and addressing public meetings.

Flora Sandes was much in the headlines as the only British woman serving officially in uniform in the Serbian army. Mabel St Clair Stobart, commander of the Serbian Relief Fund's field hospital, thrilled the public with her pictures and tales of the epic retreat over the mountains to Albania where tens of thousands died. Elsie Inglis was a national heroine in Scotland through her pioneering work under fire as a surgeon. Suffrage campaigners, often depicted as having abandoned campaigning in order to work for the defence of the country, relentlessly held meetings, bombarded newspaper editors and badgered MPs and ministers as they spotted the opportunity to gain the vote at the war's end. Maude Royden was regularly in public spats with various bishops as she argued for women to be given more status and responsibility in the Church of England – there being few men available to fulfill parish work.

For all their ability to meet the challenge of war, and to publicise women's efforts – and many published memoirs — somehow their story faded, paling before the torrent of military memoirs, battle analysis, personal diaries and books from the men who had endured hell at the front.

It's understandable that the frontline experience dwarfed all other voices. There is reason to feel, however, that the progress women made during the war was exactly what disturbed the men who returned, who wanted life as it always had been: they had fought for their country and wanted what was familiar and reassuring. At a trivial level, the sight of raised hemlines provoked anger and disgust in many men, who were not interested in hearing that dangerous factory machinery, climbing ladders (lady windowcleaners had had a lot of trouble), crawling inside locomotive engines to clean them and ploughing squelchy fields had resulted in practical measures. Shorter skirts seemed improper. Trousers – as sported by munitionettes and many engineering workers – were downright immoral. That women felt a degree of freedom in less cumbersome clothes (steel for corset stays had been diverted to the war effort) raised fears of more independence and less deference. So the women were patted on the head and their achievements classified as "temporary, only for the duration".

Postwar conditions did not help: adventurous women found themselves at odds with the mood; ordinary workers were thrown out of jobs to make way for returning troops. While they were wanted, the government and the public were content to let women prove they could do it; afterwards, there was marked reluctance to allow them to continue, and decades of prevarication – and lingering hostility – as to whether they should.

Then, and subsequently, the history of the war has been almost entirely written by men. Only a small number of female historians – notably Barbara Tuchman – have specialised in military subjects, while feminist academics have highlighted specific contributions made by women. But many general histories have no female names in the index, and somehow assume that the war machine runs itself. Even today the battlefield remains territory that does not welcome women. Much reporting still concentrates on the tactics and weaponry, to the exclusion of the non-fighting majority, refugees being the exception. Considering war touches all lives where it is fought, I have always wanted to hear – and to tell – the wider picture. But conventions die hard. The fascination that toy guns traditionally hold for small boys never seems to lose its grip.

The suffrage campaigners would probably not have been surprised at a still unequal society today. They were grim realists, horribly aware of the depth of tradition and prejudice they faced in pursuit of the right to vote. Many had trenchant views on the war, but held their fire because of patriotism and the need to fight their own battles.

At least we have made some progress. During a debate on women's suffrage in 1917, the all-male House of Commons was told triumphantly by an MP that the only woman member of the US Congress "had, when the question of whether there should be peace or war came up, become hysterical and could not give her vote". We have the vote. We are more than just spies or saints. We have views on war and peace. War touches all of us. We should ensure we are not written out of its history.

Life at the Front

A Churchill Vignette

Written and researched by John Bridgeman

November 1915: Winston Churchill joins his Regiment in France

Churchill's connection with the Queen's Own Oxfordshire Hussars

In the aftermath of the crushing defeat of Allied Forces in the Dardanelles under General Sir Ian Hamilton, Winston Churchill - then First Lord of the Admiralty - advised that the Royal Navy should be deployed to retrieve the situation; but his advice was not taken. Already with considerable military experience, he subsequently asked to be given a field command on the Western Front but this was refused and Churchill became increasingly marginalised by Prime Minister Asquith. Eventually, he had no alternative but to resign. On 12 November he wrote to Asquith saying that he could not sit in a post of "well paid inactivity" and that he now proposed to place himself "unreservedly at the disposal of the Military authorities, observing that my regiment is in France".

The days after his resignation Churchill spent largely in preparing for his departure to France to join his regiment - the Queen's Own Oxfordshire Hussars. This is the same regiment in which some of our own Hornton men served. He was reported to have been pleased with reactions to his resignation speech - "a Parliamentary triumph" (*The Times*) - and to his resignation - "a grave public misfortune" (*Manchester Guardian*). On 18 November Churchill donned his uniform, that of a Major in the "Oxfordshire Hussars, Territorial Army", and started his journey to join his regiment at St Omer. "I have no plans except to remain with them," he wrote to a close friend.

With his already massive reputation, Churchill was met in France by a staff car sent by General Sir John French, the Commander in Chief, stationed near St Omer. He was soon posted to the Grenadier Guards for battlefield familiarisation, prior to winning command of his own battalion, the 6th Battalion Royal Scots Fusiliers.

On the whole the front was inactive while Churchill was serving with his battalion. This bored him. He was never more pleased than when in the midst of a hail of bullets and shells (*The Henry Pelling Biography*). He also made sure, to the delight of his troops, that all visitors made a tour of his trenches, thus ensuring that their elegant service dress was often torn on barbed wire and their highly polished boots became covered in mud.

Inevitably, the call back to national politics became irresistible and, in late May 1916, the London Gazette



announced: "Major the Rt. Hon W L S Churchill, Oxfordshire Yeomanry (Territorial Army), had relinquished his temporary rank of Lieutenant- Colonel". His active military career was effectively over.

The Army Service Corp

By Kevin Wain

These were the unsung heroes of the British Army in the Great War - the ASC, *Ally Sloper's Cavalry*. Soldiers cannot fight without food, equipment and ammunition. In the Great War, the vast majority of this tonnage, supplying a vast army on many fronts, was supplied from Britain. Using horsed and motor vehicles, railways and waterways, the ASC performed prodigious feats of logistics and were one of the great strengths of organisation by which the war was won.

The ASC is the same as the RASC: it received the Royal prefix in late 1918.

At its peak, the ASC numbered an incredible 10,547 officers and 315,334 men. In addition, there were tens of thousands of Indian, Egyptian, Chinese and other native labourers, carriers and stores men, under orders of the ASC.

It is difficult to comprehend just what it means to supply to an army that, in France alone, built up to more than two million men. Here are some statistics that give us an idea:

	Size of forces on Western Front		Monthly issues in lbs (Pounds weight) or Gallons			
	<i>Men</i>	<i>Horses</i>	<i>Meat</i>	<i>Bread</i>	<i>Forage</i>	<i>Petrol (Galls)</i>
1914 August	120,000	53,000	3,600,000	4,500,000	5,900,000	842,000
1918 November	3,000,000	500,000	67,500,000	90,000,000	32,250,000	13,000,000

These huge tonnages were moved through a complex chain of supply, which usually went broadly like this:

- > From Britain via sea to a Base Port;
- > By rail from the Base Port to a Divisional Railhead or an Advanced Supply Depot;
- > By motor transport from Railhead or Advanced Supply Depot to a Divisional Refilling Point;
- > By horsed transport to the forward dumps where goods were taken over by a unit's quartermaster;
- > The unit itself would then move material by horse transport and man to the front line positions.



Trenches in World War I

During trench warfare, opposing armies conduct battle, at relatively close range, from a series of ditches dug into the ground.

Trench warfare is necessary when two armies face a stalemate, with neither side able to advance and overtake the other.

Although trench warfare has been employed since ancient times, it was used on an unprecedented scale on the Western Front during World War I.



A French Soldier standing in a muddy trench, WWI. (circa 1916)

(Photo by Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

Why Trench Warfare in WWI?

In the early weeks of the First World War, both German and French commanders anticipated a war that would involve a large amount of troop movement, as each side sought to gain -- or defend -- territory. The Germans initially swept through parts of Belgium and northeastern France, gaining territory along the way.

During the First Battle of the Marne in September 1914, however, the Germans were pushed back by Allied forces. They subsequently "dug in" to avoid losing any more ground. Unable to break through this line of defense, the Allies also began to dig protective trenches.

By October 1914, neither army could advance, mainly because war was being waged in a very different way than it had been in the nineteenth century. Forward-moving strategies such as head-on infantry attacks were no longer effective or feasible against modern weaponry like machine guns and heavy artillery; this inability to move forward created the stalemate.

What began as a temporary strategy - or so the generals had thought - evolved into one of the main features of the war at the Western Front for the next four years.

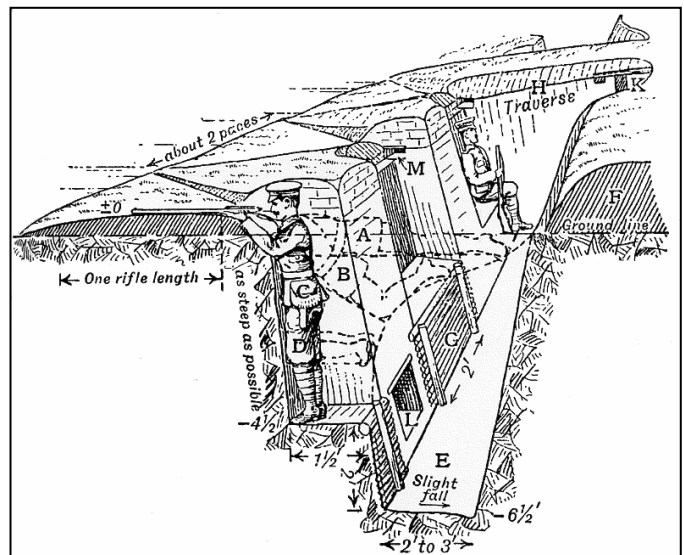
Construction and Design of Trenches

Early trenches were little more than foxholes or ditches, intended to provide a measure of protection during short battles. As the stalemate continued, however, it became obvious that a more elaborate system was needed. The first major trench lines were completed in November 1914. By the end of that year, they stretched 475 miles, starting at the North Sea, running through Belgium and northern France, and ending in the Swiss frontier.

Although the specific construction of a trench was determined by the local terrain, most were built according to the same basic design. The front wall of the trench, known as the parapet, averaged ten feet high. Lined with sandbags from top to bottom, the parapet also featured two-to-three feet of sandbags stacked above ground level. These provided protection, but also obscured a soldier's view.



Trenches of the 11th Cheshire Regiment at Ovillers-la-Boisselle, on the Somme, July 1916. One sentry keeps watch while others sleep.



Trench construction diagram from a 1914 British infantry manual

A ledge, known as the fire-step, was built into the lower part of the ditch and allowed a soldier to step up and see over the top (usually through a peep hole between sandbags) when he was ready to fire his weapon. Periscopes and mirrors were also used.

The rear wall of the trench, known as the parados, was lined with sandbags as well, protecting against a rear assault. Constant shelling and frequent rainfall could cause trench walls to collapse, so they were reinforced with sandbags, logs, and branches.

Trenches were dug in a zig-zag pattern so that if an enemy entered the trench, he could not fire straight down the line. A typical trench system included a line of three or four trenches: the front line (also called the outpost or the fire line), the support trench, and the reserve trench, all built parallel to one another and anywhere from 100 to 400 yards apart. The main trench lines were connected by communicating trenches, allowing for the movement of messages, supplies, and soldiers. Protected by fields of dense barbed wire, the fire line was located at varying distances from the Germans' front line, usually between 50 and 300 yards. The area between the two opposing armies' front lines was known as "no man's land."



Some trenches contained dugouts below the level of the trench floor, often as deep as twenty or thirty feet. Most of these underground rooms were little more than crude cellars, but some -- especially those farther back from the front -- offered more conveniences, such as beds, furniture and stoves. The German dugouts were generally more sophisticated; one such dugout captured in the Somme Valley in 1916 was found to have toilets, electricity, ventilation, and even wallpaper.

Daily Routine in the Trenches

Routines varied among regions, nationalities, and individual platoons, but the groups shared many similarities. Soldiers were regularly rotated through a basic sequence: fighting in the front line, followed by a period of time in the reserve or support line, then later, a brief rest period. (Those in reserve might be called upon to help the front line if needed.) Once the cycle was completed, it would begin anew. Among the men in the front line, sentry duty was assigned in rotations of two to three hours.

Each morning and evening, just before dawn and dusk, the troops participated in a "stand-to" during which men (on both sides) climbed up on the fire-step with rifle and bayonet at the ready. The stand-to served as preparation for a possible attack from the enemy at a time of day -- dawn or dusk -- when most of these attacks were likeliest to occur. Following the stand-to, officers conducted an inspection of the men and their equipment. Breakfast was then served, at which time both sides (almost universally along the front) adopted a brief truce.

Most offensive manoeuvres (aside from artillery shelling and sniping) were carried out in the dark, when soldiers were able to climb out of the trenches clandestinely to conduct surveillance and carry out raids.

The relative quiet of the daylight hours allowed men to discharge their assigned duties during the day. Maintaining the trenches required constant work: repair of shell-damaged walls, removal of standing water, creation of new latrines, and the movement of supplies, among other vital jobs. Those spared from performing daily maintenance duties included specialists, such as stretcher-bearers, snipers and machine-gunners.

During brief rest periods men were free to nap, read or write letters home, before being assigned to another task.



Misery in the Mud

Life in the trenches was nightmarish: forces of nature posed as great a threat as the opposing army. Heavy rainfall flooded trenches and created impassable, muddy conditions. The mud not only made it difficult to get from one place to another; it also had other, more dire consequences. Often, soldiers became trapped in the thick, deep mud; unable to extricate themselves, they often drowned.

Heavy rain created other difficulties. Trench walls collapsed, rifles jammed and soldiers fell victim to the much-dreaded "trench foot." A condition similar to frostbite, trench foot developed as a result of men being forced to stand in water for several hours, even days, without a chance to remove wet boots and socks. In extreme cases, gangrene developed and a soldier's toes - even his entire foot - would have to be amputated.

Unfortunately, heavy rains were not sufficient to wash away the filth and foul odor of human waste and decaying corpses. Not only did these unsanitary conditions contribute to the spread of disease, they also attracted an enemy despised by both sides -- the lowly rat. Multitudes of rats shared the trenches with soldiers and, even more horrifying, they fed upon the remains of the dead. Soldiers shot them out of disgust and frustration, but the rats continued to multiply and thrive. Other vermin that plagued the troops included head and body lice, mites and scabies and massive swarms of flies.

As terrible as these sights and smells were, the deafening noises that surrounded the men during heavy shelling were terrifying. In the midst of a heavy barrage, dozens of shells per minute might land in a trench, causing ear-splitting (and deadly) explosions. Few men could remain calm under such circumstances; many suffered emotional breakdowns.

Night Patrols and Raids

Patrols and raids took place at night, under cover of darkness. For patrols, small groups of men crawled out of the trenches and inched their way into no man's land. Moving forward on elbows and knees toward the German trenches, they cut their way through dense barbed wire. Once the men reached the other side, their goal was to get close enough to gather information by eavesdropping or to detect activity in advance of an attack.

Raiding parties were much larger than patrols, encompassing about thirty soldiers. They, too, made their way to the German trenches, but their role was a more confrontational one than that of the patrols. Members of the raiding parties armed themselves with rifles, knives, and hand grenades. Smaller teams of men took on portions of the enemy trench, tossing grenades in, and then killing any survivors with a rifle or bayonet.

Snipers, in addition to firing from the trenches, also operated from no man's land. They crept out at dawn, heavily camouflaged, to find cover before daylight. Adopting a trick from the Germans, British snipers hid inside of "O.P" trees (observation posts). These dummy trees, constructed by army engineers, provided protection, allowing them to fire at unsuspecting enemy soldiers.

Despite these different strategies, the nature of trench warfare made it almost impossible for either army to overtake the other. Attacking infantry was slowed down by the barbed wire and bombed-out terrain of no man's land, making the element of surprise very unlikely. Later in the war, the Allies did succeed in breaking through German lines using the newly-invented tank.

Poison Gas Attacks

In April 1915, the Germans unleashed an especially sinister new weapon at Ypres in northwestern Belgium -- poison gas. Hundreds of French soldiers, overcome by deadly chlorine gas, fell to the ground, choking, convulsing and gasping for air. Victims died a slow, horrible death as their lungs filled with fluid.

The Allies began producing gas masks to protect their men from the deadly vapour, while at the same time adding poison gas to their arsenal of weapons. By 1917, the box respirator was standard issue, but that did not stop either side using chlorine gas and the equally-deadly mustard gas. The latter caused an even more prolonged death, taking up to five weeks to kill its victims.

Yet poison gas, as devastating as its effects were, did not prove to be a decisive factor in the war because of its unpredictable nature (it relied upon wind conditions) and the development of effective gas masks.

Shell Shock

Given the overwhelming conditions imposed by trench warfare, it is not surprising that hundreds of thousands of men fell victim to "shell shock." Early in the war, the term referred to what was believed to be the result of an actual physical injury to the nervous system, brought about by exposure to constant shelling. Symptoms ranged from physical abnormalities (tics and tremors, impaired vision and hearing, and paralysis) to emotional manifestations (panic, anxiety, insomnia and a near-catatonic state).

When shell shock was later determined to be a psychological response to emotional trauma, men received little sympathy and were often accused of cowardice. Some shell-shocked soldiers who had fled their posts were even labeled deserters and were summarily shot by a firing squad. By the end of the war, however, as cases of shell shock soared and came to include officers as well as enlisted men, the British military built several hospitals devoted to caring for these men.

The Legacy of Trench Warfare

Due in part to the Allies' use of tanks in the last year of the war, the stalemate was finally broken. By the time the armistice was signed on November 11, 1918, an estimated 8.5 million men (on all fronts) had lost their lives in the "war to end all wars." Yet, many survivors who returned home would never be the same again, whether their wounds were physical or emotional.

By the end of World War I, trench warfare had become the very symbol of futility; it has been a tactic intentionally avoided by modern-day military strategists in favour of movement, surveillance and airpower.

Main Source: About.com 20th Century History



Some WWI Poems

May 1915

by Charlotte Mary Mew



Let us remember spring will come again
To the scorched, blackened woods, where the wounded trees
Wait with their old wise patience for the heavenly rain,
Sure of the sky : sure of the sea to send its healing breeze,
Sure of the sun, and even as to these
Surely the Spring, when God shall please,
Will come again like a divine surprise
To those who sit today with their great Dead, hands in their hands
Eyes in their eyes
At one with Love, at one with Grief: blind to the scattered things
And changing skies.

Non-combatants

by Evelyn Underhill



Never of us be said
We had no war to wage,
Because our womanhood,
Because the weight of age,
Held us in servitude,
None sees us fight,
Yet we in the long night
Battle to give release
To all whom we must send to seek and die for peace.
When they have gone, we in twilit place
Meet Terror face to face;
And strive
With him, that we may save our fortitude alive.
Theirs be the hard, but ours the lonely, bed.
Nought were we spared – of us this word shall not be said.

*This is one of the most eloquent of the many poems that recall
the singular role women were called on to play in war-time.
The title is paradoxical: officially, all women were graded as "non-combatants".*



Munition Workers' Song

Where are the girls of Arsenal?

Working night and day,

Wearing the roses off their cheeks

For very little pay.

Some people style them canaries,

We're working for the lads across the sea,

If it were not for the munition lasses

Where would the Empire be?



In Flanders Fields

By: Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, MD (1872-1918)
Canadian Army

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.



On Passing the New Menin Gate

By Siegfried Sassoon

Who will remember, passing through this Gate,
The unheroic Dead who fed the guns?
Who shall absolve the foulness of their fate, -
Those doomed, conscripted, unvictorious ones?
Crudely renewed, the Salient holds its own.
Paid are its dim defenders by this pomp;
Paid, with a pile of peace-complacent stone,
The armies who endured that sullen swamp.

Here was the world's worst wound. And here with pride
'Their name liveth for evermore' the Gateway claims.
Was ever an immolation so belied
As these intolerably nameless names?
Well might the Dead who struggled in the slime
Rise and deride this sepulchre of crime.



Siegfried Sassoon
1886 - 1967

When you see millions of the mouthless dead

By Charles Sorley, September/October 1915

When you see millions of the mouthless dead
Across your dreams in pale battalions go,
Say not soft things as other men have said,
That you'll remember. For you need not so.
Give them not praise. For, deaf, how should they know
It is not curses heaped on each gashed head?
Nor tears. Their blind eyes see not your tears flow.
Nor honour. It is easy to be dead.
Say only this, "They are dead." Then add thereto,
"Yet many a better one has died before."
Then, scanning all the o'ercrowded mass, should you
Perceive one face that you loved heretofore,
It is a spook. None wears the face you knew.
Great death has made all his for evermore.



*Charles Sorley. He was killed at the
age of 20 on 13 October 1915,
in the Battle of Loos*

Anthem For Doomed Youth

By Wilfred Owen

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?
Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty orisons.
No mockeries now for them; no prayers or bells,
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs, -
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes
Shall shine the holy glimmers of goodbyes.
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,
And each slow dusk a drawing down of blinds.



Wilfred Owen, regarded as the greatest of WW1 poets, enlisted in 1915. In 1917, suffering from shell shock, he spent a period in Craiglockart War Hospital in Edinburgh where he met and became friends with Siegfried Sassoon. Wilfred Owen returned to the front and was killed a week before the armistice was signed.

An Irish Airman Foresees His Death

By W B Yeats

I know that I shall meet my fate
Somewhere among the clouds above;
Those that I fight I do not hate,
Those that I guard I do not love;
My country is Kiltartan Cross,
My countrymen Kiltartan's poor,
No likely end could bring them loss
Or leave them happier than before.
Nor law, nor duty bade me fight,
Nor public men, nor cheering crowds,
A lonely impulse of delight
Drove to this tumult in the clouds;
I balanced all, brought all to mind,
The years to come seemed waste of breath,
A waste of breath the years behind
In balance with this life, this death.



The airman in the poem was Robert Gregory who was killed in Italy in 1918.

Mametz Wood (2005)

By Owen Sheers

For years afterwards the farmers found them -
the wasted young, turning up under their plough blades
as they tended the land back into itself.

A chit of bone, the china plate of a shoulder blade,
the relic of a finger, the blown
and broken bird's egg of a skull,

all mimicked now in flint, breaking blue in white
across this field where they were told to walk, not run,
towards the wood and its nesting machine guns.

And even now the earth stands sentinel,
reaching back into itself for reminders of what happened
like a wound working a foreign body to the surface of the skin.

This morning, twenty men buried in one long grave,
a broken mosaic of bone linked arm in arm,
their skeletons paused mid dance-macabre

in boots that outlasted them,
their socketed heads tilted back at an angle
and their jaws, those that have them, dropped open.

As if the notes they had sung
have only now, with this unearthing,
slipped from their absent tongues.

*Born in 1974, Owen Sheers, a Welsh poet, author and scriptwriter,
wrote this poem after visiting Mametz Wood some years ago.*

*In July 1916, four thousand Welsh soldiers were killed and
wounded in the fighting at Mametz Wood, an action that
was part of the Somme offensive.*



The Veteran

By Margaret Postgate Cole

We came upon him sitting in the sun
Blinded by war, and left. And past the fence
There came young soldiers from the Hand and Flower,
Asking advice of his experience.
And he said this, and that, and told them tales,
And all the nightmares of each empty head
Blew into air; then, hearing us beside,
"Poor chaps, how'd they know what it's like?" he said.
And we stood there, and watched him as he sat,
Turning his sockets where they went away,
Until it came to one of us to ask "And you're – how old?"
"Nineteen, the third of May."



Margaret Postgate Cole
1893 - 1980

The Falling Leaves

By Margaret Postgate Cole

Today, as I rode by,
I saw the brown leaves dropping from their tree
In a still afternoon,
When no wind whirled them whistling to the sky,
But thickly, silently,
They fell, like snowflakes wiping out the noon;
And wandered slowly thence
For thinking of a gallant multitude
Which now all withering lay,
Slain by no wind of age or pestilence,
But in their beauty strewed
Like snowflakes falling on the Flemish clay.

Margaret Postgate Cole was an atheist, feminist and socialist who became a pacifist during WWI, campaigning against conscription. She was a teacher for most of her life.