

CHRIST CHURCH PARISH MEN AT WAR.

THE WORLD WAR ONE

(1914-1918)

MEMORIAL AT CHRIST CHURCH

WESTON SUPER MARE



This booklet has been produced as a service to Christ Church and the parish, with the aid of the Heritage Lottery Fund, as part of the tower and spire refurbishment project. It is not meant for sale but limited copies are available from Christ Church Office, 18 Montpelier, Weston super Mare, BS23 2RH. 01934 641016. It can also be viewed on the church website ccwsm.org.uk. 2018

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*The story of the men of
Christ Church Parish
Who died in the First World War
And whose names
Are engraved on
The Christ Church Memorial.*

Researched by:

John Hinchliffe and

Roderick Crocker

Written by:

Brian Kellock.

“Greater love has no man than that he lay down his life for his friends”

John 15:13

The Christ Church World War One memorial contains the names of 63 men who died as a result of taking part in that war. Their names and the year they died are listed below together with the relevant opening page numbers.

Our men who died in 1914 – page 6

Sidney A Fear. 15th September. Age 24
Clifford Day. 26th October . Age 17
John D Gould. 19th October . Age 24
Leonard T Dickinson. 17th November. Age 29

Thomas H Thomas. 17th November . Age 26
Frank Harris. 17th November. Age 19
Bert Mayled. 25th November. Age 24
Herbert P Cox. 19th December. Age 23

Our men who died during 1915 – page 16

Henry Morle. 13th May. Age 33
Stanley Cole. 14th May. Age 24
James Lane. 16th May . Age 26

William S Tancock. 9th August – (Gallipoli). Age 22
Frederick Pitman. 16th August – (Gallipoli). Age 23

Our men who died in 1916 – page 22

Ernest Edward Gabriel. 14th June 1916. Age 23
Arthur Edwin Young. 16th August 1916. Age 24
Percy George Addicott. 18th August 1916. Age 23
Frederick Lewis. 3rd September 1916. Age 27
Frank Channing. 4th September 1916. Age 22

Walter John Browning. 16th September 1916. Age 24
Percy Ernest Gillard. 16th September 1916. Age 21
Charles Hamilton Poole. 14th October 1916. Age 32
Clarence Henry Parker. 7th December 1916. Age 29

Our men who died in 1917 – page 29

George Hobbs. 8th April. Age 40
Hubert John Tanner. 9th April. Age 27
William Walter Radford. 24th April. Age 34
Charles Gibbons. 4th June. Age 32
Ernest Wilfred Raines Andow. 7th June. Age 26
Harold Mattick. 24 July. Age 22

Frederick Theodore Pfaff. 31 July. Age 37
Charles Walter Curtis. 4 August. Age 26
Alfred Widlake. 16 August 1917. Age 27
Milton Frank Parsons. 12 October. Age 32
Harry Channing. 30 November. Age 24

Our men who died in 1918 – page 36

Reginald Ballam. 20th January. Age 26
Frank Edwards 22nd March. Age 31
Harry Palmer 18th April. Age 18
Lewis Addicott 29th April. Age 27
Cyril Hadley 7th May. Age 23
Wilfred Westlake 27th May. Age 18
Charles Woollacott 27th May. Age 27
Charles Boulton 14th June. Age 24
William Tanner 15th June. Age 21
Frederick Way 3rd July. Age 39
Arthur Webb 10th August. Age 29
Victor Young 21st August. Age 21
Thomas Urch 21st August. Age 19

Frank Sydenham 25th August. Age 24
William Poole 24th August. Age 27
Arthur Fear 1st September. Age 32
William Dodge 6th September. Age 45
George Radford 22nd September. Age 39
William Weakley 26th September. Age 22
Cecil Godby 2nd October. Age 21
Harry Sampson 6th October. Age 24
Gilbert Day 13th October. Age 28
Percy Austin 24th October. Age 21
Arthur Poole 16th November. Age 28
William Wilson 16th November. Age 21
Samuel Sweet 19th November. Age 21
Ernest Beecham 25th December. Age 25

Our men who died after the war – page 56

John Eric Jackson Barstow RAF. 27th January 1919. Age 23
Stephen Leslie Hibbard . 21 August 1922. Age 28
Samuel James House RN. 24 February 1919. Age 38

We must remember them

Main Introduction and credits.

The aim of this book is to tell the story of the men who died either in action during WW1 or as a result of injuries received. It covers the full period 1914-1918 plus a short period in 1919. We have written it as one story in which our men are highlighted as they appear in that story. It aims to bring home the fact that all of these men had family connections in the Christ Church parish (see street map and list inside back cover) and have their names listed on the WW1 memorial in the church.

It also attempts to show that as individuals these men played a part in a major war that affected not just the whole of Europe but well beyond. It was justifiably named a world war. The basic information in this book is the result of research carried out by John Hinchliffe and Roderick Crocker with additional details (mainly sources from the internet) supplied by Brian Kellock who is also responsible for the words.

Much of the information has come from the two local newspapers of the time (The Mercury and The Gazette). In addition the internet has been used extensively. The most frequently used websites have been Wikipedia, the Commonwealth Graves Commission (CWGC), the Long- Long Trail, and the Forces War Records.

The passage below is taken from *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Erich Maria Remarque. This is the famous fictional account of life on the Western Front during WW1 as seen from the German side. It makes the point that for the ordinary soldiers on both sides the war was seen as both foolish and pointless.

"I am young. I am twenty years of age; but I know nothing of life except for despair, death, fear and the combination of completely mindless superficiality with an abyss of suffering. I see people being driven against one another, and silently, uncomprehendingly, foolishly, obediently and innocently killing one another. I see the best brains in the world inventing weapons and words to make the whole process that much more sophisticated and long-lasting. And watching with me are all my contemporaries, here and on the other side, all over the world – my whole generation is experiencing this with me. What would our fathers do if one day we rose up and confronted them, and called them to account? What do they expect from us when a time comes in which there is no more war? For years our occupation has been killing – that was the first experience we had. Our knowledge of life is limited to death. What will happen afterwards? And what can possibly become of us?"

Caveat

Where possible we have stated where we think an individual was wounded or killed. In most cases this will be conjecture based on where a particular battalion was at the time and which battle it was taking part in on a particular day or period the man was reported killed, wounded or missing. A conjecture is defined as 'the formation of a conclusion based on incomplete information', in other words a guess. So all such statements need to be treated with caution.

The National School

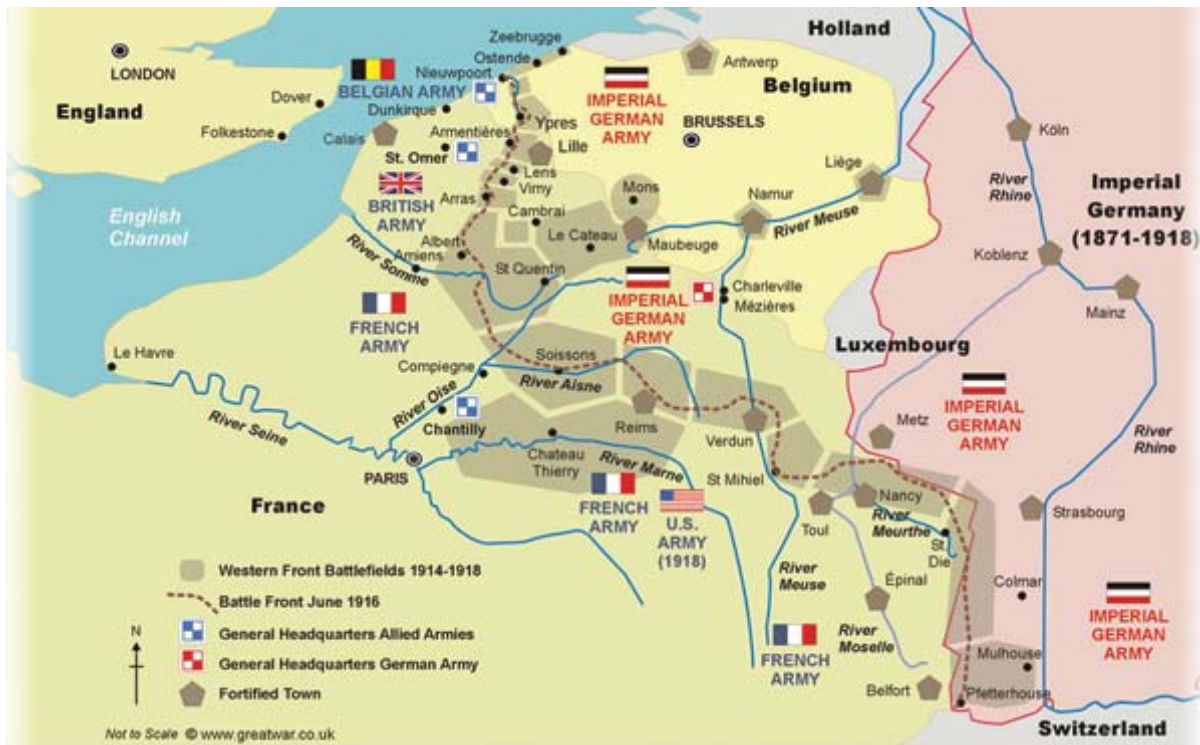
There is frequent mention in this booklet of The National School and of Christ Church School. The following information has been gleaned from the Christ Church 150th anniversary booklet.

At the time Christ Church was built in 1855 all education, except at private schools for the fee-paying wealthy, was the responsibility of the church. In Weston the first church school, called The National School, was built in 1845 on the initiative of Archdeacon Law, a benefactor to the town and at that time the Parish Rector. It later became known as St John's School.

Then in 1863 Christ Church School was built through the vision of the Revd Lanfear, the first vicar of Christ Church. This is the school that still exists today on its original site in what is now Baker Street but was then surrounded by fields and allotments. St John's School was on the site of the existing Weston Technical College and was closed in 1964.

We must remember them

1914



*The Western Front showing the main battle areas and key rivers.
(Source: www.greatwar.co.uk. Drawn by Joanna Legg.)*

The Great War. 1914 – its beginnings.

The first phase of the war (1914) ran from its declaration in August to the First Battle of Ypres and the beginning of trench warfare and winter stalemate.

For the first 14 months of The Great War, as it was originally known, Britain relied on men who either volunteered to fight or were already members of the armed forces. Men like Sidney Fear who was killed during the Battle of Aisne (12th -15th September), just six weeks after war was declared; or seventeen year old Clifford Day who accidentally died as the ship he was serving on as a boy first class was setting out to sea.

These are just two of the eight young men who signed on early in a war that was reckoned would be over by Christmas, and who were dead before the year was out. All but one died on the Western Front. This stretched 400 miles from the Straits of Dover at the Franco-Belgian border to the Swiss border. The British section went south as far as the River Somme.

Our men who died in 1914

*Sidney A Fear : 15th September. Age 24
Clifford Day: 26th October. Age 17
John D Gould: 19th October. Age 24
Leonard T Dickinson: 17th November. Age 29*

*Thomas H Thomas: 17th November. Age 26
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We must remember them

Events leading up to the Battle of Aisne and Sidney Fear's death

Germany declared war on France on the 3rd August 1914 and British troops were mobilised the same day. The following day Germany invaded neutral Belgium and Britain declared war. Between then and the end of the month, through a series of battles on the Belgian/French border, known as the Battles of the Frontier or the Great Retreat, notably at Mons and Le Cateau (see the first map for the regions of the Western Front), the Germans pushed the British and French (collectively the Allied) troops back in retreat and began its Westerly sweep towards Paris.

This movement, known as the Schlieffen Plan which had been conceived back in 1905, did not succeed and the Germans were forced to take a more easterly route. They got within binocular viewing distance of the Eiffel Tower but were halted at the River Marne which fed into the Seine. Here took place a battle – Germans against the Allies – which became known as the Miracle of Marne (6th – 10th September) which checked the German advance.

Named after General Alfred von Schlieffen who planned Germany's pre-war strategy, the plan essentially involved, in the event of it declaring war, entering Belgium and circling westward to enclose Paris (arrows in pale blue on the map below).



This figure shows the original 1905 Schlieffen lines the Germans planned to take together with the actual limit of the German advance in September 1914 and the front line at the end of December 1914. (Source: Roger Smith. Geographix Ltd. geographixNzhistory.govt.nz)

The Battle of Marne involved 39 French divisions and six British divisions (total 1,071,000) against 27 German divisions (1,450,000). It saw the German armies forced to retreat north some 40 or so miles to the heights above the River Aisne. Here the British attacked but were repelled and it was during this, the Battle of Aisne, that Fear was killed. Both sides dug themselves in and this battle has since been seen as the root of trench warfare that lasted through much of the war. It also began what is known as 'the race to the sea', to Flanders and the English Channel (more on this later).

Sydney Fear and the Battle of Aisne.

Private Sidney Augustus Fear (3467). Family address Meadow Street (he had married and was living in Aldershot). He served with the 2nd Dragoon Guards (Queen's Bays) of the Household Cavalry and died of his wounds on 15th September 1914. His regiment was stationed at Aldershot at the start of the war when it was mobilised and on the 16th August it went to France, landing at Le Havre as part of the British Expeditionary Force. It was one of the first to

We must remember them

go. It formed part of the First Cavalry Brigade in the Cavalry Division, renamed the 1st Cavalry in September 1914. The regiment served with this Brigade and this Division for the duration of the war.

They landed that evening (16th August), in pouring rain and were transferred by train in box wagons to Mauberge via Rouen where they stopped for feeding and watering of the horses. Within weeks they were in action and the regiment was frequently engaged during the first months on the Western Front including the famous battle of Nery (1st September) in which the 1st Cavalry Brigade (1500 men and their horses including the Queen's Bays) repelled a surprise attack by the German 4th Cavalry Division (comprising 5000 men and their horses) leading to the capture of 12 German guns.

On the 12th September the Bays were ordered to clear the village of Braise on the Vesle, a tributary of the River Aisne and then seize the heights which overlooked the Aisne. C Squadron advanced on the village and found the bridge barricaded. The Germans opened fire causing casualties. The remainder of the regiment dismounted and went into action, supported by Z Battery RHA who prevented German reinforcements entering the village. The Bays advanced through Braisne engaging in house-to-house fighting. By 3pm the battle was over and they had captured 200 prisoners. One of the bridges was still intact and they handed Braisne over to an infantry brigade before securing the heights at Dhuizel.

On 13 September The Queen's Bays crossed the River Aisne, and moved onto high ground near Pargnan on the extreme right of the British line, while an attack was launched to capture the Chemin des Dames. On the 15th the Germans counter-attacked but were beaten off, and on the 16th Sir John French, recognising that both sides had reached a position of stalemate, ordered the British to be 'strongly entrenched', and on the 16th the British army began to engage in trench warfare which was later to be seen as the beginning of trench warfare on the Western Front. Fear died between those two dates. He is remembered at the St Germain-En-Laye Communal Cemetery some 17 km west of Paris.

He was born in Weston and went to school locally. He was reckoned to be one of the finest footballers in the Army. Although both of his parents had already died, his sister was still living in Weston which probably accounts for his name being on the Christ Church memorial.



Advance to the Aisne.

*The Royal Garrison
Artillery (19th Brigade)
on the move on the
12th September 1914.
IWM*

An eyewitness account written the day after Sidney Fear was killed in the same battle. Taken from the Long-long trail website without editing.

Extracts from the personal diary of Captain C. J. Paterson of the 1st South Wales Borderers (3rd Infantry Brigade, 1st Division, I Corps). Paterson's diary is, rather unusually, included with the battalion's war diary and covers the period in September 1914 as the battalion advanced from the Marne to the slopes above the Aisne. The horrors of attacking up the slopes of folds towards the Chemin des Dames ridge and then of determined German counter attacks typifies the Aisne of 1914.

Wednesday 16th September, 1914

*"I have never spent and imagine that I can never spend a more ghastly and heart-tearing 48 hours than the last. Not a moment in which to write a word in my diary. We have been fighting hard ever since 8am on the 14th and have suffered much. At about 6am at Moulins we hear a good deal of firing going on and shells begin dropping about. We are then on the road moving north. **The Queen's** have been re-directed to the north-east some little time before and we are head of the Brigade. The 2nd Brigade is already engaged and we are sent to the high ground to the left to assist them. As we go we get some six shrapnels at us but mercifully are not touched. We reached the shelter of the high ground which rises quickly and steeply from the plain and then we advance over the crest and take up our position in a wood, ready to move out when required. Shrapnel and rifle fire fairly heavy. The first casualty is my mare who was shot in the head. Nothing very bad at present and she is able to go on carrying my stuff. Though I do not ride her. The General and Staff and CO and I watched the fight in the neighbouring valley in front.*

It is a high ridge opposite, i.e west of us, that we have got to go for and nasty work it will be. Jenkinson, the Brigade Major, is killed, poor fellow, and soon afterwards we begin to suffer in the wood, chiefly from ricochets. We get several men down with small wounds, and then as C Company goes to attack, Lieutenant M T Johnson of A shot through the body. We hope he is not mortally wounded, but feared he is. C, D, and A Companies go out, leaving B in support. Swarms of the Germans on the ridge, rather massed. Our guns opened on them at 1800 yards, and one can see a nasty sight through one's glasses. Bunches of Germans blown to pieces.

We again suffered some casualties and eventually had to retire, or rather the Companies which have gone out have to come back to our ridge again. Here we stay firing and being fired at for some 8 hours and then another effort. Meanwhile our guns are having a huge duel. Not much success, and Germans are too numerous to really push back properly. Richards is hit in the arm and leg. Nothing very bad I fancy. Several men killed.

At dusk we are ordered to move up the valley towards the T of Troyon, which we did. As D Company was leading the wood a melanite shell burst at head of 1 Platoon. Poor young Vernon and a few men were knocked out. Vernon mercifully and miraculously not killed. On we go. It is now too late to be fired at by rifle fire and we go on well, but in the dark C and A Companies go ahead, and D lost touch. Most annoying.

On reaching the ridge at the head of the valley we find only B and D companies, and as we were looking for the others, shots rang out and we were soon at it again. Short and sharp. Germans withdrew.

I have a horror of a night firing. One is so very likely to kill one's own men, and from wounds I have seen since, I am sure some of them were hit like that on this very occasion. The Brigadier and his staff came along and rode right past us, and in a few minutes they were fired on. General and Staff Captain of an Brigade Major, and one or two NCOs and men have got away, the rest were missing the next morning and have just been found by some of our search parties some distance ahead of our position. They have been fed by the Germans and looked after, but have been there for two days. We then spent the night in trenching our position, and at dawn a force of enemy was seen advancing. One of the officers called up to us that he wished to speak to an officer, but after the episode at Landrecies with the Guards, we weren't having any of that. I have no doubt that they really did wish to surrender but they must do it properly as one man did this morning and march up with his hands above his head and no arms upon him. So we opened fire, and although we lost some men we wiped them out at 200 yards, and there they lie in front of us. Poor devils. Later on the enemy's guns enfiladed us. We were told we were to hang on at all costs, and at all costs it had to be. We lost severely and it was a very bad business."

We must remember them

The boy who died at sea

Boy 1st Class Clifford Day RN (J/27048). Marie Villas, Ashcombe Park Road. He was a boy in the Royal Navy serving on the battlecruiser HMS Tiger. He was just 17 when he slipped and fell from the ship rigging onto the deck as his ship was putting out to sea to take part in active service as part of the Battle Cruiser Squadron (BCS). It was early Sunday morning and his duties took him into the rigging. He died of his injuries on the 26th October 1914, in the Royal Naval Hospital in East Stonehouse, Plymouth.

He had been just 18 months in the Royal Navy. An inquest into his death, 'adjourned indefinitely as the vessel is on active service' later gave brain haemorrhage as the cause of death. He was brought back to Weston for burial in Milton Road Cemetery .

He had four brothers and two sisters. At the time one brother was serving on HMS Marlborough while another was a member of the Weston Comrades Company which subsequently became part of the Somerset Light Infantry.

The *Tiger* was a 35,160-ton battlecruiser launched from John Brown's Clydebank shipyard in 1912. She was completed in October 1914, and with eight 13.5-inch and twelve 6-inch guns. She was the largest and fastest capital ship in the fleet as well as being the only battlecruiser to mount 6-inch guns and the last coal-burning capital ship. She served throughout the Great War and saw action at the Battle of Dogger Bank (1915) and Jutland (1916) and was scrapped in 1931. In Wikipedia it is stated that the ship was still under construction when the war broke out and was considered not yet fit for fighting when she joined the 1st BCS.



HMS Tiger, battlecruiser of the Grand Fleet, at Rosyth. IWM

The Race to the sea and the First Battle of Ypres.

Following the stalemate of the Battle of Aisne, which is seen as the root of trench warfare, the race to the sea (the English Channel) began. This took place from the 17th September and the 19th October with Allied and German forces attempting to outflank each other through the regions of Picardy, Artois and finally Flanders with the race ending on the North Sea coast of Belgium around the 19th October. After the opposing forces had reached the North Sea both tried to conduct offensives culminating in the First Battle of Ypres (19th October – 22nd November), during which five of our men lost their lives.

We must remember them



The map shows the main battles of the Race to the Sea, with their generally accepted start dates. The blue line marks the front line of 1915, (Source: J Rickard, history of war. org.) The race culminated with the First Battle of Ypres (19th October – 22nd November 1914).

A death on day one of the Battle of Ypres.

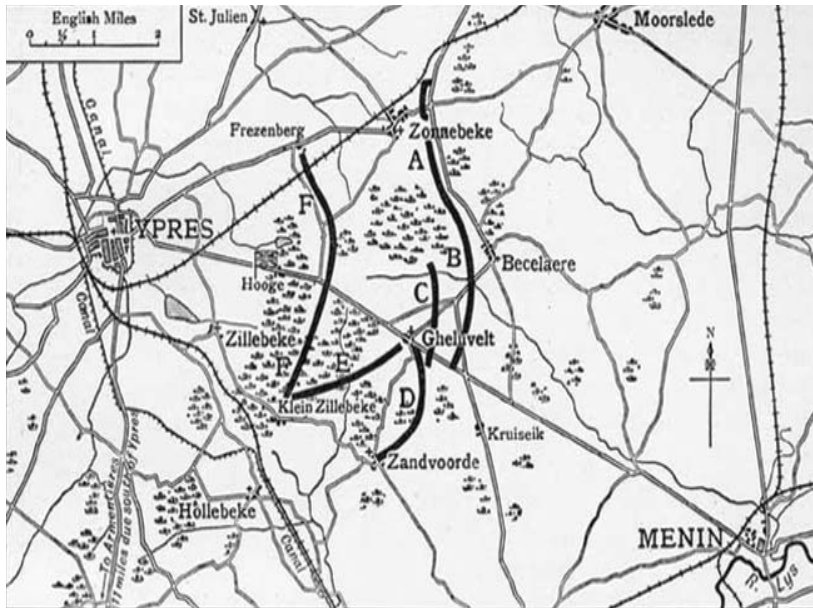
Corporal John Douglas Gould (28767). Swiss Road. He served in the Royal Engineers, 7th Signal Troop Company and was killed at Moorslede on the 19 October 1914 some 10 miles east of Ypres on the first day of the battle. He served as a motor dispatch rider. The following 5th June 1915 The Mercury reported that his parents had received 'the following communications from the Records Office at Brompton Barracks:

"I am desired by the Head Office to inform you that the following report has been received: from a Horse Guardsman. 'About 3pm I saw Corporal Gould lean his motor cycle against the wall of a house. A moment later a shell struck the house and Gould fell on the ground. He rose, and at the same time another shell burst over his head and he fell again. Nothing has been heard of him since'."

Flanders and Ypres in 1914.

Ypres was fought over throughout the war. High ground dominated this battlefield, north, south and east of the town. Following the First Battle of Ypres and a brief period of warfare of movement, trenches were dug in and the area around Ypres ending up in late 1914 as a large difficult-to-defend salient with trenches on the British side jutting out into enemy territory. There was fighting around the town for the next four years. After the German Spring Offensive in 1918 the British finally drove them back.

We must remember them



Map shows the British front lines between 29th and 31st October 1914 (Source: C R Weeks).

The map also shows the location of Moorslede where Gould was killed and its position relative to Ypres. At the beginning of the First Battle of Ypres Moorslede was right on the front line and the village was in German hands for most of the war. So although Gould's death sounds rather casual he was in fact in a very dangerous position and as a dispatch rider no doubt doing an important job.

Prior to the war John Gould worked for Messrs Roe Brothers (picture frame makers and oil and colour-men in Meadow Street). He is remembered at the Ypres Menin Gate Memorial, Belgium.

Three of our men from Weston die on the same day during the First Battle of Ypres A fourth, died at home from his wounds. All were in the North Somerset Yeomanry, B Squadron. [Dickinson, Thomas H Thomas and Frank Harris – 17th November 1914. Mayled 25th November 1914 (A to D)]

A. Trooper Leonard Taylor Dickinson (BA Oxon) (637). Park House, Arundell Road . Some years before the war he had joined the North Somerset Yeomanry as a trooper but met with an accident near the end of his term of service and did not re-engage.

When war broke out he rejoined his old squadron as a trooper without waiting for a commission. He was killed in action on 17th November, dying reportedly of shrapnel wounds age 29 and is remembered on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, Belgium.

On the 13th October B Squadron came under the orders of the 6th Cavalry Brigade the history of which states that it took part in the First Battle of Ypres which ended on the 22nd November, five days after Dickinson was killed.

The history of the 6th Cavalry Brigade (see box item below) states that on the day he was killed (17th November) they were attacked by the Prussian Guard that came to within 20 yards of the trenches but the attack was repulsed with heavy losses to the Germans. This was later that day followed by another attack in which the B Squadron, along with others suffered heavy losses, probably including Dickinson [although he may have been wounded earlier].

Prior to the war he had been a solicitor, admitted in 1911 and practicing with his brother William as a partner in their father John's firms. He managed the Bristol office. He had been educated at Bradfield College, near Reading, and Oxford University.

B. Corporal Thomas Henry Thomas (5). Alfred Street. He too was killed in action in Flanders on 17th November 1914, aged 25/26 taking part in First Battle of Ypres and died during that battle. He is remembered at the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, Belgium.

We must remember them

Before the war he had been head assistant hairdresser at J G Phipps in Regent Street. He attended the National School (under GWH Pearce) and later the Central Council Schools. As a lad he was the treble soloist in the choir of the Parish Church, where he continued to serve for some years after his voice had broken. He had a brother who had fought in the Boer War and was reported killed in action but later turned up and rejoined his regiment.

Mention is made of B squadron in action on the 17th November during The First Battle of Ypres in THE HISTORY OF THE 6th CAVALRY BRIGADE by LIEUTENANT J.B.BICKERSTETH. M.C. (as written, without editing).

17th November.

At 9am on the 17th November the sector held by Colonel Smith-Bingham's detachment was subjected to heavy and continuous shell fire, and at 1.00 p.m. an infantry attack developed against his right and centre. The enemy who belonged to the Prussian Guard advanced with gallantry, coming to within 20 yards of our trenches. But the attack was repulsed with heavy loss to the Germans, "C" Battery's fire being very effective during their retirement.

Shortly afterwards these trenches underwent a second bombardment, and at 4.45 p.m. - another infantry attack took place, this time against the left of Colonel Smith-Bingham's line, held by "C" Squadron 3rd Dragoon Guards and **"B" Squadron North Somerset Yeomanry, who suffered heavily in officers and men.** The fire trenches were reinforced by "B" Squadron 3rd Dragoon Guards and "A" Squadron North Somerset Yeomanry, who came up from support, where their place was taken by two Companies of the Coldstream Guards. This attack, which proved the most determined of the two and was also made by the Prussian Guard, was likewise repulsed with heavy loss to the enemy.

It was estimated that between 350 and 400 dead Germans lay out in front of the trenches held by the Brigade. The Prussian Guard advanced so close to our trenches, in front of which there was no wire, that the Field Police could be seen threatening their men and urging them on to the attack. In the vicinity of the trenches held by "C" Squadron 3rd Dragoon Guards, there was a farm building which the enemy had succeeded in occupying. Twice it was attacked by "C" Squadron, the attacking party in each case being either killed or wounded.

At the third attempt, which was led by Captain Wright, the farm was captured, Captain Wright himself shooting four Germans with his revolver. This officer, who was killed shortly afterwards by a shell, was subsequently recommended for the Victoria Cross. About noon the same day an attack was also delivered against the line held by Colonel Steele's detachment. The enemy massed under cover of a farm in front of the sector held by the 10th Hussars.

C. Trooper Frank Harris (532). Clarendon Road. He served with the North Somerset Yeomanry and he was just 19 when he was killed on the 17th November in the First Battle of Ypres, reportedly by 'a bullet to his brain'. First news of his death was conveyed in a letter from a fellow Trooper whose parents lived in Meadow Street.

Prior to the war he worked for the Phillput stationery and publishing business (EF Phillput was his uncle) in the High Street. His early years had been spent in South Wales where his father had been a collier. They subsequently moved to Weston which was his father's home town. He is remembered at the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial.

D. Private Bert Mayled (13). Rennick Villa, Milton Road. He served with the North Somerset Yeomanry and died on the 25th November of his wounds in Manchester Hospital, age 24. Before the war he served five years in the NSY before retiring. When war broke out he re-engaged with his old Squadron.

We must remember them

The Mayled family had received a telegram from Manchester Hospital stating 'Son dangerously ill come at once.' Before members of the family could get to Weston Station a second wire was received to say he had died. His body was brought home and interred in Milton Road Cemetery. His father was a butcher by trade.

Entrenched siege warfare begins and Herbert Cox is killed

Following the race to the sea war on the Western Front reached a stalemate and entrenched warfare began.

Rifleman Herbert Pomeroy Cox (2089). Oxford Street. He served with the London Regiment (Queen's Westminster Rifles) 16th Battalion and was killed in action in Flanders 19th December 1914 age 23 as entrenchment took hold. At the outbreak of the war his battalion was stationed at Buckingham Gate as part of the 4th London Brigade of the 2nd London division. It then moved to Hemel Hempstead and in November mobilised for war and embarked to France, to Le Havre, and shortly afterwards posted to the 18th Brigade of the 6th Division where it stayed until February 1916.

For the first six months the battalion was stationed in the Armentieres section, arriving there just as the (first) Battle of Armentieres had ended (13th October – 2nd November). In this battle the German and the Franco-British forces had been fighting during the on-going reciprocal attempt to envelop the north flank of their opponents as part of the race to the sea.

Cox is remembered in the La Chapelle D'Armentieres Old Military Cemetery. The village of La Chapelle D'Armentieres was in the hands of British forces from October 1914 until the fall of the nearby town of Armentieres (1.5km east of the village in Northern France), on the 10th April 1918. During the allied occupation the village was very close to the front line (on the French Belgian border) and its cemeteries were made by fighting units and field ambulances in the early days of trench warfare (which would fit in with Cox's death). The Old Military Cemetery was begun in October 1914 by units of the 6th Division and used until October 1915.

Before the war Cox is believed to have worked at one time (1911) as an ironmongers' salesman and was living in St Pancras, London..

An insight into the lighter side of life for the Queen's Westminster Rifles in the flooded trenches is provided by the account from another rifleman of Christmas 1914.

Rifleman F Morley in a letter dated December 26th.

'The first hint of a truce came on Christmas Eve. We had decided to give the Germans a Christmas present of three carols. We started the strains of 'While Shepherds'. We had finished that and paused preparatory to giving the second item on the programme (a volley of rifle fire) but lo! We heard answering strains arising from their lines.'

Another rifleman Rifleman E E Meadley from the same battalion later wrote: 'You will be very much surprised to hear I had one of the best Christmas Days I have had for years. On Christmas Eve I went to the trenches and the Germans were singing carols to our men and we were singing to them. They then shouted to us "A Merry Christmas British Comrades. You English are fine singers".'

Unfortunately Cox had been killed just a few days before such festivities.

Conditions in the trenches in Flanders at this time taken from:

A SHORT HISTORY OF
THE 6th DIVISION
Aug. 1914--March 1919
EDITED BY
MAJOR-GEN. T. O. MARDEN
LONDON
HUGH REES, LTD.
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1920

From the PREFACE

*THIS short history has been compiled mainly from the
War Diaries. [as written with errors included]
1914-15*

ACTIVE fighting now died away on this front, but its place was taken by constant shelling and the deadly sniping which claimed so many victims at this time. The weather during November and December was truly appalling.

All trenches were knee-deep and more in mud and water, and it is on record that the B.G.C., 19th Infantry Brigade, had his boots sucked off by the mud and went round trenches without them. Parapets would not stand and were so flimsy that many men were shot through them. But the weather eventually improved, material for revetment began to appear, and by the commencement of 1915 if, was possible to move in the trenches in comparative safety.

The next few months were uneven ones, the only incidents worthy of remark being a visit from the King on the 2nd December; a minor operation by the North Staffordshire Regiment on the 12th March, resulting in the inclusion in our line of the unsavoury Epinette Salient; the sudden move of the 16th Infantry Brigade to Ypres at the time of the enemy's attack at St. Eloi in the middle of March, and a little mining and counter-mining on the Frelinghien and Le Touquet fronts in May.

The minor operation at l'Epinette was a very well-planned night affair, whereby the 17th Infantry Brigade advanced their line 200-300 yards on a frontage of half a mile. It was carried out by the 1st Battalion: North Staffordshire Regiment and 12th Field Company, and Sir Lt. Smith-Dorrien (Army Commander), in congratulating the regiment, mentioned particularly Lieuts. Pope and Gordon

We must remember them

1915

Stalemate and waterlogged trenches

Through the winter of 1914-15 it was stalemate on the Western Front with both sides fighting from waterlogged trenches. It wasn't until March 1915 that things began to move again. It was in that month that the British Forces took their first offensive action of the war with action at Neuve Chapelle (10th -12th March) in an effort to break through German lines. The French had been putting pressure on the British to show that they were capable of more than just holding defensive positions. They did succeed in taking the village but at a heavy cost (around 12 000 casualties on both sides).

The first battle in 1915 on the Western Front to concern us was the Second Battle of Ypres (10th -12th) in which Stanley Cole was killed. It is otherwise notable for the first use of poison gas by the Germans. The chlorine gas surprised the Allies despite earlier clues, such as captured Germans soldiers carrying gas masks.

It was not until the 25th September, at the start of British offensive at Loos, that the British were forced to use chemical weapons for the first time. These had been captured from the German side. British made chemical weapons were not in use until 1918.

But the Western Front was not the only theatre of war in 1915 that our men at Christ Church were involved in. On the 19th February the Gallipoli Campaign began with French and Royal Navy ships bombarding Turkish positions.

Our men who died during 1915

Henry Morle: 13th May (At sea). Age 33

Stanley Cole: 14th May. Age 24

James Lane: 16th May. Age 26

William S Tancock: 9th August – (Gallipoli) Age 22

Frederick Pitman: 16th August – (Gallipoli) Age 28

The disastrous Gallipoli Campaign

With the war on the Western Front having reached a stalemate and lines of trenches stretching through Flanders and France, Russia was struggling to resist the forces of Germany and Austria-Hungary in the east. In response to a request for aid from its ally, the British government sanctioned a plan to attack the Ottoman Empire. On 25th April, Commonwealth forces landed on the Gallipoli peninsula and met fierce Ottoman resistance. Men from across the British Empire, along with their French allies, fought across the peninsula: from Helles in the south, through the ridges and gullies of Anzac, to the plains of Suvla in the north. Unable to break the deadlock, Allied forces had evacuated the peninsula by early 1916, leaving their fallen comrades behind. [Taken from CWGC website].

Time line for Gallipoli Campaign.

25th April. Allied troops land in Gallipoli and face heavy Turkish resistance.

4th June. Battle of Krithia in Gallipoli.

6th August. Suvla Bay landing in Gallipoli.

6th -21st August. Battle of Sari Bair (Tancock died 9th August) (Pitman died 16th August)

21st August. Final Allied offensive in Gallipoli.

20th December. Allies complete evacuation of Suvla Bay and ANZAC cove.

9th January 1916. Allies complete their evacuation from Gallipoli.

We must remember them



The Gallipoli peninsular and key sites of the campaign. IWM

Located at the junction of Europe and Asia, the Gallipoli peninsula became the focus of intense and prolonged fighting over many months, with the Turks, supported by their German allies, feeding tens of thousands of troops into the peninsula to contain the Allied landings.

Stoker Henry Morle RN (200718). 2 Jubilee Road. He served as AB First Class on HMS Goliath and was killed in action at sea on the 13th May 1915 when his ship was torpedoed in the Dardanelles. Only 180 of the 750 crew survived. He came originally from Rowbarton, Taunton but lived with his wife and family in Weston super Mare for nine years up to his death with his wife and family. He had been on active service with the Royal Navy up to three years before the war and then entered employment with the Weston Gas Company in Drove Road before again being called up at the outbreak of war. While he was away his wife lived with her sister and brother in law in Jubilee Road. He was a member of the Victoria Brotherhood in George Street where men of the town were able to 'spend their spare evenings playing games such as billiard and bagatelle'.



Battleship HMS Goliath. IWM

The sinking of HMS Goliath.

HMS Goliath was a Canopus class battle ship built in 1898. In March 1915 it was ordered to the Dardanelles to take part in the Gallipoli Campaign as part of the Allied Fleet supporting the landing of Cape Helles. Following the amphibious landing on 25th April 1915 Allied warships continued to give fire support to the troops.

The following account is taken from The Tickenham War Memorial booklet compiled by David Franks. It gives detail of the sinking because another Somerset man, Lance Corporal William Bryant, also lost his life on that occasion.

We must remember them

On the night of 12th - 13th May Goliath was anchored in Morto Bay off Cape Helles, along with the Cornwallis and a screen of five destroyers in foggy conditions. Around 1am on the 13th May the Turkish torpedo boat destroyer Mualvenet-i Milliye fired two torpedoes which struck Goliath almost simultaneously abreast of her fore-turret and abeam the fore-tunnel causing a massive explosion.

Goliath began to capsize almost immediately and was lying on her beam ends when third torpedo struck near her after-turret. She then rolled over completely and began to sink by the bow taking 570 of the 750 strong crew to the bottom including her commanding officer. The strong current made it impossible for men to swim to shore.

Although sighted and fired on after the first torpedo hit, the M-i-M escaped unscathed.

The Second Battle of Ypres, 1915

The Second Battle of Ypres comprised the only major attack launched by the German forces on the Western Front in 1915. Begun in April and used primarily as a means of diverting Allied attention from the Eastern Front, and as a means of testing the use of chlorine gas, it eventually concluded in failure in May. As a consequence of the failure of this attack the German army gave up its attempts to take the town, choosing instead to demolish it through constant bombardment. By the end of the war Ypres had been largely reduced to piles of rubble.

Second Ypres (as it was usually referred to) is generally remembered today as marking the first use of gas on the Western Front. Although introduced with minimal effect on the Russian Eastern Front at Bolimov by the Germans earlier in the war (where it was so cold the gas had frozen), and in conflict with the Hague Convention which outlawed gas warfare, its impact during Second Ypres was startlingly effective.

The effectiveness of the gas attack was so complete that it surprised the German infantry who followed up the release of the chlorine gas. The stunned Allied troops fled in panic towards Ypres, the heavy gas settling and clogging the trenches where it gathered.

Covering four miles of trench lines, the gas affected some 10,000 troops, half of whom died within ten minutes of the gas reaching the front line. Death was caused by asphyxiation. Those who lived were temporarily blinded and stumbled in confusion, coughing heavily. 2,000 of these troops were captured as prisoners of war.

The two advancing German corps wearing primitive respirators paced through a clear seven kilometre gap in the Allied lines, wary of traps. In planning the attack no reserves had been thought necessary, the German command considering it inconceivable that a major breakthrough could be achieved.

In consequence the actual breakthrough was not exploited to the full. After advancing three kilometres into Allied lines the Germans halted under the hail of a counter-offensive. Even so, the loss of high ground to the north significantly weakened the Allied position.



*Gas attack photographed from the air.
IWM*

Trooper Stanley Frank Cole (297). Alma Street (he was living at Belmont Villas, Locking Road with his sisters). He served in the North Somerset Yeomanry and had been a member of its B Squadron four or five years prior to the outbreak of war. He was killed in action on 18th May, age 24 taking part in the Second Battle of Ypres.

We must remember them

The first news of his death received by his parents was from a fellow trooper Bond whose parents lived in Glebe Road who stated 'my chum Stanley Cole was killed by the side of me.' Before the war he had worked for his father who was a cab proprietor. He came from a large family with four brothers and four sisters.

The Battle of Festubert (15th -25th May 1915)

The battle of Festubert was in effect a second phase of the recently failed attack on Aubers Ridge. Once again, the attack would take the form of a pincer attack with two assault frontages: a northern one along the Rue du Bois near Port Arthur and Richebourg l'Avoue, and a southern one at Festubert.

Lance Corporal James Lane (9187). Ashcombe Park Road (parents' address). He served in the 1st Battalion of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers (RWF) and was killed in action on the 16th May 1915 in Flanders age 26. Educated at Christ Church School, he began his working life apprenticed to the bakery and confectionery trade, with a Mr Wreford.

He later joined the RWF and on completion of his term he emigrated to Australia. As a reservist, at the outbreak of war he returned to the UK and after a short while was posted to the Front. His father was a nurseryman and gardener and his family were members of St Jude's Church, Milton. He came from a large family with three brothers and eight sisters.

Originally based in Malta his battalion embarked for England on the 3rd September and joined the 22nd Brigade of the 7th Division. It was mobilised for war on the 7th October and landed in Zeebrugge. At the time of his death and as part of the 7th Division his battalion was involved in the Battle of Festubert (15th -25th May). This was part of a series of attacks by the British and French armies in the Second Battle of Artois (13th May – 15th June).

The tactical objectives of The Battle of Festubert as outlined on The Long, Long Trail website.

"The general plan of the main attack will be as follows:- To continue pressing forward towards Violaines and Beau Puits, establish a defensive flank along the La Basse road on the left and maintaining the right at Givenchy. The line to be established in the first instance if possible on the general line of the road Festubert – La Quinque Rue – La Tourelle crossroads – Port Arthur.

The position to be consolidated and the troops reformed and communication established. While this line is being established, a general bombardment on the whole front will continue with a special bombardment of the next objectives, viz: Rue d'Ouvert – Rue du Marais. When ready a fresh advance will be ordered on these objectives"



British troops watching German prisoners being marched to captivity at Festubert, May 1915. IWM.

The Long, Long Trail website also gives details and a daily account of the Battle of Festubert and the 7th Division's involvement, including for the 16th May as in the item that follows.

We must remember them

Battle of Festubert timeline - 16 May with the RWF references in bold.

12.45am: 2nd Division orders a further bombardment as planned, to coincide with the attack to be made by 7th Division. The support battalions of 6th Brigade (2/South Staffordshire and 1/King's) are unable to leave the British front trench to move up to the captured position due to heavy cross-fire from the area between the two Divisional attacks, which had not been suppressed by the bombardment. German resistance in the area to the front of the captured trenches is stiffening. The support battalions of the Gharwal Brigade also attempt to move forward, but are immediately cut down and the movement ceases (1/3 London and 2/3 Ghurkas).

2.45am: The bombardment intensifies on the 7th Division front, including six field guns firing from the front line, opening gaps in the German breastwork (a tactic tried with some success by the Division at Aubers), although in places the lines are only 80 yards apart and great care is taken to avoid shelling the British troops forming up.

3.10am: first platoons of the 20th Brigade (led by 2/Scots Guards and 2/Border) leave their front line, to close up with the German before the barrage lifts. Considerable casualties are incurred as they advance too far, into the British shells.

3.15am: although the 2nd Division has failed to reorganise ready for a supporting advance, the 850-yard frontal attack of the 7th Division goes in. 22nd Brigade on the right, attacking across Duke's Road towards the School House and the Northern Breastwork (a sandbag-parapet German communication trench), with 2/Queens and **1/Royal Welsh Fusiliers** in the first wave, is hit by heavy machine-gun fire. The advance is halted for an extra 15 minutes shelling. On their left, 20th Brigade are slowed by a deep ditch, and crossfire from the Quadrilateral position on their left front, untouched by the bombardment as it lay in the area between the two Divisional attacks.

3.45am approx.: 22nd Brigade moves forward, now supported by 1/South Staffordshire on the right. Despite suffering more casualties, they reach the German front and work along the trench system using bombs (grenades). **5.40am:** Haig redraws the boundary of the area to be attacked, and halts any fresh attacks by the Meerut Division, directing the Sirhind Brigade to move to the support of 2nd Division.

6.00am: the Queens and Staffords of 22nd Brigade reach the Northern Breastwork, and the bombers of the latter battalion continue to move through the system of communication and support trenches facing Festubert. They secure the position from Stafford Corner to the old German front, and also La Quinque Rue in the area: the objective of the attack had thus been achieved. By **6.30am**, the **Royal Welsh Fusiliers** have advanced too – now joined by some 2/Royal Warwickshire and 2/Scots Guards of 20th Brigade – and meet up with the Queens near the Orchard. The Scots Guards are forced to withdraw a little, after being hit by British artillery (firing by the map and timetable, unaware of the precise position of their infantry) and by German fire from Adalbert Alley. They also repulse a German counter-attack. Further attempts proved fruitless and costly, and by **9.00am** the attack has come to a halt. The men in the most advanced positions near the Orchard and along the Northern Breastwork were by now under intensive German shellfire. **Monro.**

10.00am General **Monro** (I Corps) directs attacks to close the gap between the Divisions, by converging advances towards Ferme Cour d'Avoue. The 1/Grenadier Guards of 20th Brigade, having moved across No Man's Land by a new trench being dug by the 1/6th Gordon Highlanders, bomb their way along 300 yards of enemy trench, but can not advance over open ground, being assailed by fire as they make the attempt. No units of the 2nd Division are yet in position to make an attack. Meanwhile the bombers of 1/South Staffordshire (joined now by some bombing specialists from Brigade) continue to take more of the German trench system, 800 yards as far as Willow Corner (facing the front of the 47th Division) being captured in yard by yard fighting: they capture more than 190 Germans in doing so. **7.30pm** The 1/Royal Welsh Fusiliers near the Orchard end of the Northern Breastwork withdraw to La Quinque Rue, forced out by lack of support from 20th Brigade on their left, and heavy German shelling. During the night, the remnants of the Queens, RWF and Border were withdrawn.

Gallipoli tragedies – Sari Bair and Suvla Bay

Private William Stanley Tancock (18547). George Street. He served in the 6th Battalion East Lancashire Regiment enlisting in Cardiff (it was formerly the 11580 Welsh Regiment). He died in Gallipoli 9th August 1915 age 22 and is remembered at Helles Gate Memorial, Turkey. His Regiment embarked 16th June for Gallipoli from Avonmouth via Alexandria and Mudros and landed at Gallipoli on 7th July. It was engaged in various actions against the Turkish Army

We must remember them

including the Battle of Sari Bair (6th -21st August 1915). And this is likely to be the battle in which Tancock died. The Battle of Sari Bair was the final attempt made by the British in August to seize control of the Gallipoli Peninsular from the Ottoman Empire. It ended in a humiliating defeat for the Allies and eventual victory for the Turks and withdrawal of the British. Nothing is recorded about his home life before the war.



Map showing Sari Bair and Suvla Bay landings from 6th August 1915 IWM

Private Frederick Pitman (907). Alfred Street. He served in the 5th Battalion the Royal Irish Regiment and was killed in action in Gallipoli on 16th August 1915, age 28. Exactly where he died is not known. At the time of his death his battalion had landed at Sulva Bay on the Gallipoli Peninsular on the 6th August 1915, having embarked at Liverpool on the 7th July, as part of the August Offensive during the Battle of Gallipoli. This landing along with others along the coast was designed to capture the peninsular from the Turkish troops defending it and to open up the Dardanelles Straits to British warships to enable a planned naval attack on Constantinople (Now Istanbul). The Gallipoli Campaign ended in failure and high casualties on the British side (including Frederick Pitman). The following month the remainder of the battalion moved to Salonika.

Originally from Banwell, prior to the war he worked with the Portishead Co-operative Society. The family had moved to Weston before the outbreak of war but he lived in Portishead. After joining up he trained in Ireland and Basingstoke. The news of his death was by letter from the officer in charge of the Record Office in Cork.

The Banwell Parish magazine states he had become a bakers' assistant on leaving school and had enlisted in the Army Service Corp. He was a widower; his wife had died four years before him. On the 20th September a muffled peal of bells was rung in his memory. His father had for several years been one of Banwell's bell ringers.

1916

The Somme and beyond



Two other fields of war in which our men took part were Mesopotamia, and Macedonia which is central to this map. IWM

A significant factor of 1916 was the beginning of conscription in Britain, at that time the only European power not having compulsory military service. The decision which came into force on the 2nd March initially affected all men aged 18 to 41 unless they were married, widowed, had children or were ministers of religion. Two months later conscription was extended to include married men.

The disastrous Gallipoli Campaign finally came to an end with the evacuation of British forces from Helles at the beginning of January 1916. But during the year there were two more theatres of war, besides The Western Front, that are relevant to our story; Macedonia and Mesopotamia. More of these two later under Parker and Gabriel respectively.

Of the nine Christ Church men killed in 1916, six died in the various battles that made up the Battle of the Somme which lasted from July to November and for the British was the dominant feature of the Western Front that year. Three of the six are commemorated at the Thiepval Memorial in France. A fact which signifies that they were never found or identified.



The Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme is a war memorial to 72,195 missing British and South African servicemen, who died in the Battles of the Somme of the First World War between 1915 and 1918, with no known grave. CWGC

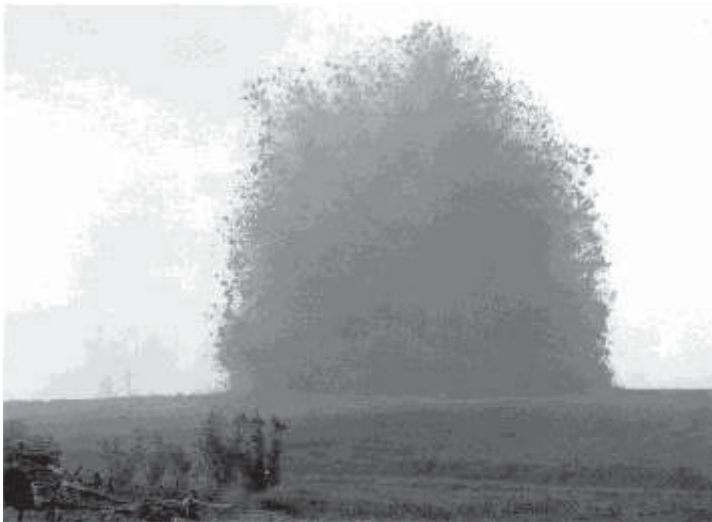
The Battle of the Somme, involving mainly British troops, and the Battle of Verdun, involving mainly French troops, between them occupied almost all of that year, Verdun being the longer, in fact the longest battle of the war.

We must remember them

The need for German forces to be on both fronts, as well as on the Russian front, affected the progress of the war during 1916 on the Western Front. It was largely one of attrition with little progress made on either side.

Germany launched the Verdun offensive against the French on the 21st February and it lasted up until 18th December.

'After a bombardment using a million shells, 100,000 German troops attacked the French city of Verdun. Rather than a frontal attack, small groups of German storm troopers went forward using flame throwers and grenades. The French suffered 540 000 casualties and the Germans 430 000. After Verdun the Germans would not undertake a large Western Front offensive for two years' [Quoted from THE FIRST WORLD WAR A MISCELLANY by Norman Ferguson]



Battle of Albert. A mine explosion below Hawthorn Ridge at 7.22am on the 1st July 1916. This was the largest mine of the campaign; it made a crater in the German Front Line 150 yards long, 100 yards wide and 80 feet deep. IWM.

The Battle of the Somme

[From History's Worst Battles by Joel Levy]

'In 1916 the Western Front crossed the valley of the River Somme in Northern France. Here the British and French sectors of the line met and it was chosen as the place to mount a joint British-French operation to punch a hole through the German line.

The operation was originally meant to feature greater French involvement and take place later in the year but in February the Germans had begun an offensive against the French to the east at Verdun. So the main burden fell on the British. The operation began with a week-long artillery bombardment with the firing of over one and a half million shells.

Then on the 1st July at 7.30am in the morning the whistle blew and British men went over the top. By the end of the first day 57, 450 had been lost (killed, missing or wounded) and by the end of the campaign 144 days later, on the 18th November, the total killed, missing or wounded was 420 000 British, 200 000 French and 500 000 Germans. The Battle of the Somme comprised several phases including twelve individual battles.'

A horse-drawn limber takes ammunition to the forward guns along the Lesboeufs Road, outside Flers, November 1916, during the final stages of the Battle of the Somme. The horses are up to their knees in mud. IWM

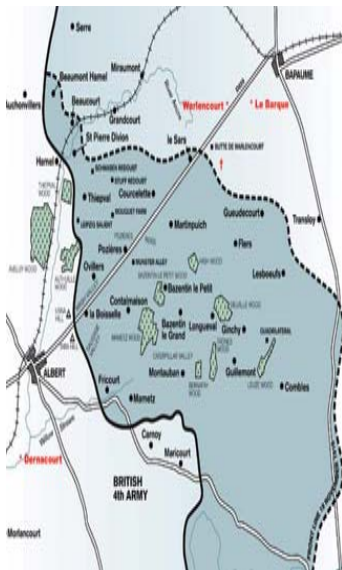
We must remember them



A horse-drawn limber taking ammunition to the forward guns along the Lesboeufs Road outside Flers, November 1916. The horses are up to their knees in the mud. IWM.

The Battle of the Somme 1916 comprised several attacks and twelve individual battles:

- the Battle of Albert (1st - 13th July)
- the Gommecourt Salient subsidiary attack (1st July)
- the Battle of Bazentin (14th - 17th July)
- the Attacks at High Wood (20th - 25th July)
- the Battle of Delville Wood (15th July- 3rd September)
- the Battle of Pozières (23rd July- 3rd September)
- the Battle of Guillemont (3rd - 6th September)
- the Battle of Ginchy (9th September)
- the Battle of Flers-Courcelette (15th - 22nd September)
- the Battle of Morval (25th - 28th September)
- the Battle of Thiepval (26th - 28th September)
- the Battle of Le Transloy (1st - 18th October)
- the Battle of the Ancre Heights (1st October- 11th November)
- the Battle of the Ancre (13th - 18th November)



After four months of fighting and more than a million men from both sides had been killed or wounded while the Allies had advanced a mere five miles along a frontier initially 20 miles long. Source: Steve Wilson. Ossett.net)

We must remember them

Our men who died in 1916

Ernest Edward Gabriel: 14th June. Age 23
(Mesopotamia)

Arthur Edwin Young: 16th August,

Percy George Addicott: 18th August. Age 23

Frederick Lewis: 3rd September. Age 27

Frank Channing: 4th September . Age 22

Walter John Browning: 16th September. Age 24

Percy Ernest Gillard: 16th September. Age 21

Charles Hamilton Poole: 14th October. Age 32

Clarence Henry Parker: 7th December. Age 29

(Macedonia)

Private Ernest Edward Gabriel (3735). Milton Road served as a private with the 2nd/4th Battalion of the Somerset Light Infantry. He died in Mesopotamia (now Iraq) aged 23 from an attack of enteric (intestinal) disease on the 14th June 1916 and is remembered in Basra War Cemetery. Prior to the war he worked as chauffeur to a Mr Osmond of The Shrubbery.

He and another brother (Arthur) did their initial army training together on Salisbury Plain and subsequently sailed together to India (the Andaman Islands). From there they volunteered to take part in operations in the Persian Gulf. They arrived too late to take part in the first battle of Kut but were active in follow-up operations.

The first battle of Kut (7th December 1915 – 29th April 1916), was the besieging of an 8,000 strong British-Indian garrison in the town of Kut Al Amara, 100 miles south of Baghdad, by the Ottoman Army. Following the British surrender of the garrison on 29th April 1916, the survivors of the siege were marched to imprisonment at Aleppo. Letters home from the two brothers while in the Persian Gulf give a picture of the unhealthy living conditions:

April 13th. *'Here we are again, still merry and bright. We are in a different camp to the one I wrote from last week. It's like living in a cow shed, places built of bamboo, and mud outside.'*

April 17th (post card). *'We are still a few miles from the firing line, in reserve trenches.'*

April 30th. *'We had our first mail this morning, in three parts. We had a lovely parcel from the Congregational Church, also Fred's box of cigars. We were in the trenches when they arrived, handed to us at six o'clock in the morning. This really is an awful country, what with the heat and no shelter from the sun. Three miles for water. No good telling you where we are as the censor will only make a mess of it, but we are in reserve trenches, about five miles from base. They don't think we will be wanted up here again and the rumour is we have to start road making.'*

May 8th. *'We are still travelling. Marched about eight miles to the river and embarked on a steamer; don't know where we will finish up but we hear we are going to India. It is not half hot going down the river, sweat streams down, doing nothing.'*

May 17th. *'We are still at Bassah (possibly the small town in north west Syria) under canvas, got a canteen here but the worst about the place is the water. It's all got to be doctored. It's like medicine to have a cup of tea, but it goes well with the heat here.'*



Turkish troops proceeding down the River Tigris on rafts to join the besieging army at Kut-el-Amara. IWM

Private Arthur Edwin Young (201909). Wooler Street. He served with the Gloucester Regiment and was killed in action in Flanders 16th August 1916, first reported wounded and missing. He had taken part with his Company in an

We must remember them

attack on the Germans that night and did not return. A Captain G S Castle reported to his father that they had heard from his comrades that he was hit in the head by a bullet and he was therefore reported as wounded and missing. Prior to joining the Army he worked as a boot repairer for Messrs Jefferies and Son, bootmakers in Orchard Street.

Private Percy George Addicott (19104). Alfred Street. Killed in action in France on the 18th August aged 23. He served with the 6th Battalion of the Somerset Light Infantry which had been mobilised for war in May 1915 and landed in Boulogne to engage in the Western Front. On the day he died his battalion was taking part in the Battle of Delville Wood which had begun a month earlier (15th July).

Until the 19th July Delville Wood was a thick tangle of trees and had been held by the South African Infantry Brigade but with heavy losses. The Germans had been forced back but further British attacks and German counter-attacks on the wood continued for the next seven weeks. The outcome was a success for the British but with heavy losses including Percy Addicott who is remembered at the Thiepval memorial.



Trench map of Longueval and Delville Wood. IWM

Private Frederick Lewis (14719). George Street. He served with the 12th Service Battalion of the Gloucester Regiment and was killed in action on the 3rd September aged 27. This was the first day of the Battle of Guillemont in which his battalion was involved (3rd - 6th September). (See also Frank Channing below). This was an attack by the Fourth Army on the village of Guillemont to the south east of Delville Wood.

The capture of the village was the culmination of British attacks which had begun towards the end of July. German defences ringed the wood and had observation over the French Sixth Army area to the south, towards the Somme river. Frederick Lewis's story illustrates the fate of the many men killed at The Front. A letter home from a cousin in the same battalion gives some idea.

'Poor Fred was killed when our brave boys did such great and gallant work at (Guillemont) on the 3rd September. He was first reported to be wounded, but on enquiring at our dressing station I found he had not passed through there. Then, only the other day, we had the sad news that he had been killed and was buried by (shells of) the Artillery section alongside another of our boys named Alec. They were found by men of the R.F.A. A small cross marks the spot where your poor brave son is buried.'

Before the war Fred Lewis worked for a Weston super Mare decorator, S.T. Bucknoll and was a member of the town's football club. He is remembered at the Thiepval Memorial.

Private Frank Channing (14994). Alfred Street. He died in France of his wounds on the 4th September 1916, aged 21, serving with the 12th Service Battalion of the Gloucester Regiment. At the time of his death his battalion was taking part in the Battle of Guillemont (3rd - 6th September 1916), an attack by the British Fourth Army on the village of Guillemont.

The Fourth Army had advanced close to Guillemont during the Battle of Bazentin Ridge (14-17 July) and the subsequent capture of the village was the culmination of British attacks which began on 22nd July. The attacks were intended to advance the right flank of the Fourth Army and eliminate a salient (a forward line projection) further north at Delville Wood.

We must remember them

Frank Channing was an old Christ Church School boy and before joining the army was apprenticed to James Salisbury, a tailor in West Street. He also had two brothers serving in France (Harry) and in Egypt (Percy). Harry was killed in 1917 and his details are included later in this booklet. Following notification of their son's death (in a field hospital) Frank's parents received a letter from his sergeant (AH Poole later killed and also detailed in this booklet), containing the following details:

'He was in my platoon and we had just completed the first stage or what our Divisional-General told us was the most rapid and effective advance that had taken place since the Battle of Marne (in 1914 when more than half a million men on both sides were lost), when he was hit by a piece of shell. I was within yards of him at the time.

He was quite cheerful and was able to walk back with a little assistance. We were all very grieved to hear this morning that he had since died. The only consolation we can offer is that your son met his death while doing his duty and that he did it without faltering although we were advancing in the face of very heavy machine-gun and artillery fire.'

Another letter, from a lance-corporal, detailing the incident states: *'We had just reached our objective, a line of German dug-outs, when a shell exploded, wounding him and three others. He received practically immediate attention and one of the boys helped him back.'*

He is remembered at the Corbie Communal Cemetery Extension on the Somme.

Private Walter John Browning (20438). George Street. Killed in action on the 16th September aged 24, he served with the 7th Battalion of the Somerset Light Infantry and died during the week-long battle of Flers-Courcelette. This battle took place between the 15th and 22nd September and involved both British and French forces against the German 1st Army. Although no victory was achieved the infliction of many casualties on the German front divisions and the capture of the villages of Courcelette, Martinpuich and Flers was a considerable tactical victory. It was here that tanks were used in battle for the first time in history. Almost 30 000 men from both sides were lost among them Walter Browning who is remembered at the Thiepval memorial.



Battle of Flers-Courcelette. A Mark One tank in the Chimpenzee Valley on 15 September 1916, the day tanks first went into action. IWM

Private Percy Ernest Gillard (20443). George Street. He served with the 6th battalion of the Somerset Light Infantry and was killed in action 16th September aged 21. At that date his battalion was taking part in the Battle of Delville Wood (for details for this see Percy Addicott) He is remembered at the Delville Wood Cemetery, Longueva. Initially he was reported missing. This extract from a letter to his wife from a lance-corporal who served with him in the same regiment tells some of the story.

'We went into action side by side, and the night before we made the attack we were together in a big shell hole, with whiz-bangs and shells falling around us, sometimes too near to be comfortable. On the morning of the attack we were as usual side by side, and poor Percy went over the top with the first wave. We attack generally in two waves, the second to support the first. Being in charge of a small section I could not go with him, but followed a few moments later. He was quite calm and cheerful. I did not see him again.'

We must remember them



Delville wood in September 1917. IWM

Private Charles Hamilton Poole (23778). Clarendon Road. He was killed in action aged 33 on the 14th October while serving with the 2nd Battalion of the Wiltshire Regiment. After training at Weymouth he went to France and was in the thick of heavy fighting on the Somme from the start. As part of the 21st Brigade, the 2nd Wilts arrived in France in October 1914, in time to take part in the First Battle of Ypres, where it suffered heavy casualties in helping to stop the German advance.

In three years of action on the Western Front, the 2nd Wilts took part in most of the major engagements, possibly including either the Battle of the Transloy Ridges or the Battle of the Ancre Heights both of which took place between the 1st October and 11th November, coinciding with Poole's death .

Charles Poole was a former Christ Church School boy and a member of Boys Brigade. He took up a position with local branch of shoe company Stead & Simpson. Later he joined the Public Benefit Boot Company during which time he managed several branches in South Wales. Before being called up he was with Hilton & Sons in Andover.

Corporal Clarence Henry Parker (972). Anstice Terrace. 'Clarry' was killed on the 27th December aged 29 serving with the Royal Engineers (1st /2nd Wessex Company). At the start of the war he sailed with his Company to France.

During fearful fighting in the disastrous battle of Hill 60 near Ypres on the Western Front he was both gassed and wounded, but had a remarkable escape. A bullet struck him just above the heart and he fell under impact. Although bleeding he quickly regained his feet and applied a field dressing to his wound. At that point he realised that the bullet had been deflected away from his heart by a brass tobacco box in his tunic pocket. The box, complete with bullet and cigarettes, later became a memento for his parents.

He was then posted to Salonika as part of the 27th Division of the Balkan Force on the Macedonian Front and was killed during an advance. He had earlier been recommended for promotion as sergeant. At the time of his death he was with a small party dealing with barbed wire work when an enemy shell landed near him killing him outright along with another soldier, from Clevedon. He had been in Salonika for eleven months having previously been in France for twelve months.

As a boy Clarence Parker was a member of the Boys Brigade. He later became apprentice to Taylors the stonemasons and subsequently he worked for the Weston Gaslight Company. For seven and a half years he was also a chorister at the Parish Church. He is remembered on the Doiran Memorial in Greece.

We must remember them



*A linesman of the Royal Engineers
Signals repairing wirer in Salonika,
November 1916.IWM*

The Macedonian Front

The Macedonian Front of World War I, also known as the Salonica Front, was formed as a result of an attempt by the Allied Powers to aid Serbia, in the autumn of 1915, against the combined attack of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria. The expedition came too late and in insufficient force to prevent the fall of Serbia but the Macedonian Front remained quite stable, despite local actions, until the great Allied offensive in September 1918, which resulted in the capitulation of Bulgaria and the liberation of Serbia.



*The Doiran Memorial, near Doiran
Military Cemetery in Northern
Greece.CWGC*

1917

The beginning of the beginning of the end

This is the year that the Americans declared war on Germany and the German troops moved back to their Hindenburg Line (See box). Of the eleven Christ Church men killed in 1917 nine died as the result of fighting on the Western Front. The first major conflict was the Battle of Arras in which Hubert Tanner was killed. This was a British offensive from 9th April to 16 May 1917, attacking German defences near the French city of Arras.

The British achieved the longest advance since trench warfare had begun, surpassing the record set by the French Sixth Army in July 1916. The British advance slowed in the next few days and the German defence recovered. The battle became a costly stalemate and by the end of the battle the British Third and First armies had suffered about 160,000 casualties and the German 6th Army 125,000 casualties.

We must remember them

From Wikipedia

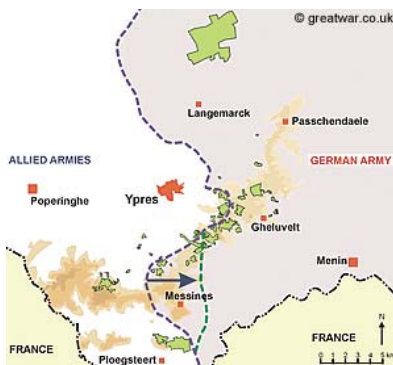
*The **Hindenburg Line** (**Siegfriedstellung** or Siegfried Position) was a German defensive position of World War I, built during the winter of 1916–1917 on the Western Front, from Arras to Laffaux, near Soissons on the Aisne. In 1916, the German offensive at the Battle of Verdun had been a costly failure. The Anglo-French offensive at the Battle of the Somme had forced a defensive battle on the Germans, leaving the western armies exhausted. Construction of the Hindenburg Line in France was begun by the Germans in September 1916, to make a retirement from the Somme front possible, to counter an anticipated increase in the power of Anglo-French attacks in 1917.*

By the beginning of 1917, the strategic outlook for the Germans made a retirement inevitable. German divisions on the Western Front numbered 133 on 25 January 1917, reducing the German manpower shortage but not by enough to contemplate an offensive.

The retirement to the Hindenburg Line took place as part of Operation Alberich from February–March 1917, after local withdrawals on the Somme had been forced on the 1st Army in January and February, by British attacks up the Ancre valley. News of the demolitions and the deplorable condition of French civilians left behind by the Germans, were serious blows to German prestige in neutral countries.

The Hindenburg Line was attacked several times in 1917, notably at St Quentin, Bullecourt, the Aisne and Cambrai and was broken in September 1918, during the Hundred Days Offensive.

The major Western Front event of 1917 was the British Flanders Offensive between 7th June and 10th November. It began with the Battle of Messines (7th - 14th June) which had the objectives of breaking out of the Ypres Salient and of relieving pressure on the French Army. Described as a brilliantly planned and carried out attack it resulted in the capture of the Messines ridge south Ypres. The infantry assault was preceded by the explosion of nineteen huge mines under the German front line along the ridge and said to have been heard in London and plans for which had begun the previous year. The attack pushed the Germans off the ridge.



The Ypres Salient before and after the Battle of the Messines Ridge. (Source: www.greatwar.co.uk)

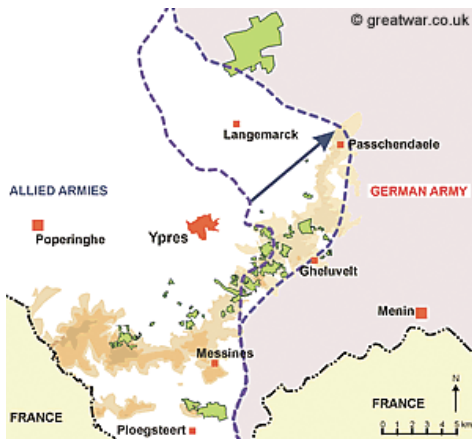
Then came the Third Battle of Ypres, the next phase in the offensive which lasted from 31st July until the 10th November. It comprised eight individual phases:

- Battle of Pilckem Ridge (31st July – 2nd August)
- Battle of Langemarck, 1917 (16th - 18th August)
- Battle of the Menin Road Ridge (20th - 25th September)
- Battle of Polygon Wood (26th September – 3rd October)
- Battle of Broodseinde (4th October)
- Battle of Poelcapelle (9th October)
- First Battle of Passchendaele (12th October)
- Second Battle of Passchendaele (26th October – 10th November)

We must remember them

The final battle of the Third Battle of Ypres, the Second Battle of Passchendaele, became synonymous with the mud, blood and human loss that was the trench warfare of the war. In this one battle the British sustained over 300 000 casualties. Before the battle there was a 10-day bombardment during which time 3000 guns fired 4.25 million artillery shells. The village of Passchendaele was all-but eliminated. Within hours of the start of the battle it began to rain and continued for weeks, making it impossible to move men, horses or artillery or tanks.

The battle, however, continued to grind on in short phases for several weeks throughout the late summer, the autumn and into the winter until the eventual capture of the crest of the Passchendaele Ridge and Passchendaele village on 6th November. The final phase of the battle, called **The Battle of Passchendaele**, was a name which became synonymous to the British nation with the mud, blood, horror and terrible human loss that was the trench warfare of the Great War.



The Third Battle of Ypres, before and after Passchendaele.

(Source: www.greatwar.co.uk)

The year ended on the Western Front with the Battle of Cambrai which saw our first large scale use of tanks. It came as such a surprise to the Germans that British troops were able to break through the Hindenberg Line for up to five miles. A major German counter-attack reversed this success but it did raise the hopes of the Allies that new tactics could succeed.

Our men killed in 1917:

George Hobbs: 8th April. Age 40
Hubert John Tanner: 9th April. Age 27
William Walter Radford: 24th April. Age 34
Charles Gibbons: 4th June. Age 32
Ernest Wilfred Raines Andow: 7th June. Age 26
Harold Mattick: 24 July. Age 22

Frederick Theodore Pfaff: 31 July. Age 37
Charles Walter Curtis.: 4 August. Age 26
Alfred Widlake: 16 August. Age 27
Milton Frank Parsons: 12 October. Age 32
Harry Channing: 30 November. Age 24

All except two of these men died on the Western Front. William Radford died in Macedonia and Charles Curtis died in Mesopotamia.

Private George Hobbs (27109). Sandford Road. He served in the 15th Battalion of the Hampshire Regiment and he died on the 8th April age 40. He is remembered at the Dickebusch New Military Cemetery which contains 624 burials. The 15th Battalion was one of a large number of battalions added to the Regiment as part of 'Kitchener's Army' of volunteer soldiers. It took part in several battles of The British Flanders Offensive including the opening Battle of Messines but Hobbs was killed before this began on the 7th June. However, because he is remembered at Dickebusch, a small village not far from Ypres which was the focal point of this offensive, he may have lost his life

We must remember them

during the extensive preparations made for this battle. The 1911 Census records him as being a mason's labourer, married with two children. He was at one time a Sunday School teacher at Christ Church Mission in Alfred Street.

Captain Hubert John Tanner. Meadow Villas. Serving with the 1st Battalion of the Somerset Light Infantry, he was killed in action 9th April in Flanders, aged 27. This was the first day of the Battle of Scarpe and his battalion took part in this. It was in fact three battles which formed the first phase of the Arras Offensive.

The major British assault on the first day was directly east of Arras. The ultimate objective of this and following assaults was a trench which formed an important component of the German defences. The British made big gains but suffered heavy casualties.

Hubert Tanner's mother had died in 1891 and his father in 1916. He had been adopted by his father's brother and sister-in-law. After leaving school he trained for the Civil Service and firstly worked for the Admiralty before transferring to the India Office.

At the outbreak of the war he enlisted with the Civil Service Rifles and went to the Western Front where he rose to the rank of corporal followed by a commission. At his request he was then gazetted to the Somerset Light Infantry and was made a captain. He went to Christ Church School and sang in the Parish Church choir. His later education was at the Merchant Venturers' School in Bristol. He is remembered at the Arras Memorial, France.

Private William Walter Radford (34816). Ashcombe Park Road. Serving in the 11th Battalion of the Worcestershire Regiment, he was killed in action in Salonika on the 24th April aged 34. His battalion took part in the First Battle of Doiran (22 April - 8 May). The battle for a breakthrough in the Bulgarian positions began with a bitter four-day artillery barrage in which the British fired about 100,000 shells. As a result, the earthworks and some wooden structures in the Bulgarian front positions were destroyed.

The Bulgarians also opened fire from their batteries. The initial several-hour struggle between the British and Bulgarian batteries was followed by a one-hour Bulgarian counter-barrage in which 10,000 shells were fired.

The British infantry began its attack on the night of the 24th and 25th April and after a bloody fight managed to take several positions. But after a Bulgarian counter-attack the British were repulsed with heavy casualties and by 8 pm had retreated. The British attacks in the next two days were defeated by constant Bulgarian fire and counter-attacks. Due to this fire the British withdrew to their initial positions on 27th April and the Bulgarians immediately started to reconstruct the destroyed fortifications.

William Radford was married to Alice Kate and had an eight year old son Leslie. He is remembered on the Doiran Memorial, Greece.

Sapper Charles Gibbons (1722). Baker Street. He served in the Corp of Royal Engineers (H Cable Section) as a sapper (RE equivalent to private) and died of his wounds in France 4th June age 32. The date of his death coincides with the Battle of Arras. The Battle of Arras (also known as the Second Battle of Arras) took place between 9th April and 16th May.

British troops attacked German defences near the French city of Arras on the Western Front. There were big gains on the first day, followed by stalemate. The battle cost nearly 160,000 British and about 125,000 German casualties.

From October 1916 the Royal Engineers had been working underground, constructing tunnels for the troops in preparation for the Battle of Arras in 1917. Beneath Arras itself there was a vast network of caverns called boves, consisting of underground quarries and sewage tunnels.

The engineers came up with a plan to add new tunnels to this network so that troops could arrive at the battlefield in secrecy and in safety. The size of the excavation was immense. In one sector alone four Tunnel Companies of 500 men each worked around the clock in 18-hour shifts for two months.

He attended Christ Church School and on leaving school he joined the telegraph branch of the local Post Office. At the end of the second South African War (better known as the Boer War) he got a Government job in the Dependency (as it was then), working again in telegraphy.

This experience gave him the desire to travel and at the end of his contract in South Africa he spent time exploring Canada. On returning home he joined the Royal Engineers and at the outbreak of The Great War he had just completed his first period of service with them. He was drafted to Southampton, en-route to France to work on the communication lines. Although not in a danger zone he died from injuries received when a bomb was dropped by an enemy aircraft.

We must remember them

The first aeroplane raid of the war had taken place 28th November 1916. Previously it had been mostly individual air combat. He is remembered at the Military Cemetery at Roelincourt a village a little to the east of the road from Arras to Lens.



An FE2b aircraft of No 100 Squadron, Royal Flying Corps, preparing to set out on a night bombing operation in France during 1917. IWM

Private Ernest Wilfred Raines Andow (16749). Meadow Street. He served with the 8th Service Battalion of the Gloucestershire Regiment and was killed in action in Flanders on the 7th June 1917, age 26. At the time of his death his battalion was taking part in the Battle of Messines. It was the first day of the British Flanders Offensive and it commenced with one of the heaviest artillery bombardments of the war and long-prepared underground mines.

Prior to the war he was a cabinet maker and upholsterer working for Edgar Baker of Orchard Street. He was educated at Locking Road Council School. At one stage while serving at the front he was invalided home suffering from trench feet. After recovering, having been attached to another Battalion of the same regiment, he volunteered for an early draft.

A letter of sympathy from his commanding officer (Captain Ernest Emmet) soon after his death included the following: *'.....I am indeed sorry to have lost him. I am glad to tell you that he was killed instantly by a shell and did not suffer. He was buried by his own men. You must try and derive consolation from the fact that he died fighting for a noble cause.'*

He is remembered on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, Belgium.

Corporal Harold Mattick (850). George Street. He was a corporal in the Royal Engineers (1st/2nd Wessex Field Company). His army career had begun in July 1908 when he was just 14 years 11 months. He had been a boy plumber and had enlisted with the Royal Engineers with his "master's permission" for four years service in the United Kingdom.

At the outbreak of war he had re-enlisted and drafted to France with his unit. During the engagement at Loos (1915) he was both gassed and wounded and was invalided home and given his discharge. He did not recover from his wounds. He died at home on the 24th July 1917 aged 22. He is buried in Weston cemetery.

His certificate of discharge, as 'no longer physically fit for war service', was dated 30th March 1916 and his place of discharge was given as Cranham Sanatorium near Stroud. His military character was given as 'very good'. He died just over one year later.

The Battle of Loos took place from 25th September to the 8th October 1915 and was the biggest British attack of 1915, although only as a supporting role to a larger French attack in the Third Battle of Artois. It was the first time that the British used poison gas and the first mass engagement of New Army units.

The French and British tried to break through the German defences in Artois and Champagne and restore a war of movement. Despite improved methods, more ammunition and better equipment, the Franco-British attacks were contained by the German armies, except for local losses of ground. British casualties at Loos were about twice as high as German losses.

We must remember them

Private Frederick Theodore Pfaff (225285). Family home George Street. A private serving with the Royal Fusiliers, 1st Battalion City of London, he was killed in action in Flanders on 31st July age 37. This was the first day of the battle of Pilckem Ridge in which his battalion could possibly have been involved.

The Battle of Pilckem Ridge (31st July – 2nd August 1917) was the opening battle of the Third Battle of Ypres. The attack had mixed results; a substantial amount of ground was captured and a large number of casualties inflicted on the German defenders. After several weeks of changeable weather, heavy rainfall began in the afternoon of 31st July and this had a serious effect on operations in August, causing more problems for the British who were advancing into the area devastated by artillery fire and partly flooded.

The 1st Battalion Royal Fusiliers had landed in St Nazaire in September 1914 under the command of the 6th Division and proceeded to the Western Front, where it remained throughout the war. The Division arrived in time to reinforce the hard-pressed British Expeditionary Force on the Aisne, before moving north into Flanders.

Although born in Weston, his family home, he had been away 18 years working in the Army & Navy Stores in London before joining up. He was married and lived in West Ealing. He had been a hat shop assistant and his future wife a milliner. He initially enlisted with the Essex Regiment, later transferring to the Royal Fusiliers.

As a boy he attended Christ Church School and later was apprenticed as a cutter with local tailor John Tytherleigh. For several years he was a tenor member of the choir at Holy Trinity Church. He had also been a member of the Weston Swimming Club and played football with the 'Thursday' teams (in London he had been secretary of the Westminster Swimming Club).

A younger brother Emil was also serving and had received his commission in the North Somerset Yeomanry. An older brother William worked in an outfitters in the High Street.

Corporal Charles Walter Curtis (200052). Jubilee Road. He served with the 1/4th Battalion of Somerset Light Infantry and died in Mesopotamia on the 4th of August age 26 following surgery to remove an abscess on the liver. He had expected to be posted to France 'to fight the Huns' but when his battalion was mobilised it was ordered to India and here after a time he had his first experience of fighting which after a few sharp engagements resulted in a native uprising just outside the North West Frontier being put down.

The battalion was then moved to Basra in January 1916 to become part of the 3rd Indian Division, eventually transferring to its 41st Indian Brigade defending lines of communications. He is reported at the time of his death (by the Mercury) to have taken part in the Battle of Ctesiphon. This was part of the four-year Mesopotamia Campaign but it took place in November 1915, so the dates do not tally. There was however a Second Battle of Kut in February 1917, not so far away. This followed the siege of Kut the previous year by Turkish troops referred to earlier.

He was also said to have seen 'plenty of hard fighting'. In his last letter home dated 27th June he wrote: *'At present we are getting a good share of sand storms; every day it is a case of wind and sun, but still we manage to live through it all. We get plenty to eat and plenty of dust mixed with it. What doesn't fatten will fill.'*

A Corporal Briton later writing home on the 14th August said: *'Charlie was buried on Saturday evening and all the fellows who were not on guard or other duties attended the funeral. Four Corporals of his Company, including myself, acted as bearers. Three volleys were fired over his grave and the Regimental bugler sounded the Last Post. I will see to it that a cross is erected to mark the last resting place of poor Charlie and will send you a photo of the grave.'*

The Matron at the hospital also wrote: *'I am glad to be able to say that your son, so good and so beloved by all in this hospital, suffered no pain after the operation and a great deal of relief. He must have been very popular in his Regiment for so many used to come and see him and make enquiries after him and his death this morning has cast a gloom over the whole hospital.'*

The nursing sister and his commanding officer Captain Stafford Morse, (Somerset Light Infantry, Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force) also wrote. The latter stated that *'he lies in the Church of England Cemetery, Nasiriyeh.'*

He is remembered and buried at the Basra War Cemetery, Iraq. Before the war he was a tailor by trade and worked firstly for Russell Bailey and then S A Langmead. He was an accomplished musician and played clarinet in Mogg's Military Band, best remembered for accompanying volunteer troops to Weston station in 1914.

We must remember them

Mesopotamia Campaign.

The Mesopotamian campaign was a campaign in the Middle Eastern theatre of World War One fought between the Allies represented by the British Empire, mostly troops from Britain and the Indian Empire, and the Central Powers, mostly of the Ottoman Empire. It ran for the entire length of the war (from 6 November 1914 to 14 November 1918).



Harry Mogg's Military band leading recruits to Weston station. (Source: North Somerset Council and South West Heritage Trust, 2018.)

Harry was 54 years old when the First World War started. Throughout the war, his Military Prize Band played at recruitment events, gave patriotic concerts and entertained soldiers.

Private Alfred Widlake (25859). Ashcombe House Lodge, Milton Road. He served with the 7th Battalion, Somerset Light Infantry and was killed in action on the 16th August age 27. On that day his battalion took part in the Battle of Langemarck (16th -18th August).

This was the second general allied attack of the Third Battle of Ypres and the main British gain of ground was near Langemarck. The allied attack succeeded to the North but early advances in the South were forced back by powerful German counter attacks.

The exceptionally wet August weather turned parts of the Ypres battlefield into a quagmire. Both sides were hampered by the rain. This greatly affected the British who occupied lower-lying area and advancing onto ground which had been frequently and severely bombarded.

On the 16th August eight British divisions attacked along a frontage of about 12 000 yards with limited success and costly failure and heavy British casualties estimated at 15 000. Alfred Widlake is remembered at the Tyn Cot Memorial, Belgium. He was married with a three-year old son.

Private Milton Frank Parsons (25827). George Street. Serving with the 7th Battalion Somerset Light Infantry he was killed in action Flanders 12th October aged 33, on the first day of the First battle of Passchendaele.

On the day he was killed, having had his home leave cancelled, he had written home to his wife: *'It may not be long before I get it (leave) now, and you can be sure I am looking forward to it quite as eagerly as you are.'*

Private Parsons left behind a wife and three young children; a son aged nine and daughters aged ten and eleven. Before joining up he had worked as a jobbing gardener. His obituary in the Mercury stated:

'He was responsible for the upkeep of some of the best gardens in the town, and it was through his efforts that the garden of Dr Brice Bunny of Bristol Road twice received first honours under the Weston super Mare Garden Scheme.'

He is remembered at the Fins New British Cemetery, Sorel-le-Grand, France.

We must remember them

Private Harry Channing (20440). Alfred Street. Serving in the Somerset Light Infantry 7th Battalion (attached to the Machine Gun Corp) he was killed in action Flanders 30th November, aged 24. At that time his battalion was taking part in the The Cambrai operations (Battle of Cambrai. 20th November - 30th December).

Three days after his wedding at Worle Parish Church he returned to France and on the 30th November after heavy fighting he was reported missing. Enquiries were made through his regiment and both the Swiss Embassy in Berlin and the British Red Cross. In January 1918 his captain wrote that he was missing after action on 30th November; *'and there is yet a possibility that he was taken prisoner by the enemy.'*

The Cambrai operations were conceived as a large scale raid using new artillery techniques and massed tanks. Initially large gains of ground were made but German reserves brought the advance to a halt. Ten days later (the day Harry Channing was reported missing) a counter-attack regained much of the ground. The outcome was disappointing and costly but it is now seen as a blueprint for the successful "One Hundred Days Offensive" of 1918.

It wasn't until July that confirmation came from the Swiss Embassy that he had died on the battlefield and had been buried by the enemy; the place and number of his grave were given. At about the same time Lord Lucan, on behalf of the British Red Cross, wrote:

'Although we are still causing every enquiry to be made we fear we ought to tell you that as a long time has gone by since he was reported missing, we do not think there is now very much hope that we shall have good news to send you.'

He is remembered at the Cambrai Memorial, Louverval, France and was the younger brother of Frank Channing killed earlier in the war (4th September 1916 at the Battle of Guillemont).

1918

The end is in sight; at a price.

(Almost half the Christ Church men killed in WW1 died during 1918.)

Early in 1918 there were clear signs on the Western Front of the beginning of the end for Germany. Reinforced by half a million troops from the Eastern Front following its treaty with Russia, Germany began its Spring Offensive on 21 March with Operation Michael which it called off three weeks later. A similar pattern followed with Operation Georgette, the Lys Offensive, and Operation Gneusnau which lasted just three days. The final phase of the collapsing Offensive was the second Battle of Marne (15th July – 5th August).

Then at the beginning of August began the Battle of Amiens the outcome of which was the beginning of the Allied advance to victory. The battle of Amiens was the start of the Allied One Hundred Days Offensive, the final campaign on the Western Front during the Great War. During this period a series of sequential Allied offensives finally broke through German resistance and compelled the German army to seek an armistice.

A series of engagements put continuous pressure on the retreating Germans and which ended on the 11th November 1918. Some 24 battles took place on the Western Front in the last four months of the war (which probably explains why the Christ Church casualty figure was so high).

On the 27th September the Cambrai Offensive and the Battle of St Quentin began and the Allied and American troops finally broke through the Hindenburg Line. Seven days later came the first German and Austrian request for an armistice, the Austro-Hungarian part of which was signed on the 3rd November. It wasn't until the 11th November that the Germans signed at 5 am to take effect at 11 am (today remembered as Armistice Day). In the meantime Kaiser Wilhelm had abdicated and fled to the Netherlands. Finally on the 12th December the Allies crossed the Rhine and occupied Cologne and other German cities.

In the other fields of battle of concern to us, in September the Allies gained victory in the Balkans and captured Damascus. At the end of the following month the Turkish army surrendered in Mesopotamia and Turkey signed an armistice with the Allies. One other of our men, serving with the Gloucestershire regiment, fought and died in Italy, helping the Italian Army in its fight against Austro-Hungary.

1918 also saw the unusually deadly flu pandemic (January 1918 – December 1920). It infected 500 million people around the world, from the remote Pacific islands to the Arctic, and resulted in the deaths of 50 to

We must remember them

100 million (three to five percent of the world's population), making it one of the deadliest natural disasters in human history. During 1918 four of our men died as a result of initially contracting flu’.

Our men who died in 1918:

Reginald Ballam: 20th January aged 26

Frank Edwards: 22nd March aged 31

Harry Palmer: 18th April aged 18

Lewis Addicott: 29th April aged 27

Cyril Hadley: 7th May aged 23

Wilfred Westlake: 27th May aged 18

Charles Woollacott: 27th May aged 27

Charles Boulton: 14th June aged 24

William Tanner: 16th June aged 21

Frederick Way: 3rd July aged 39

Arthur Webb: 10th August aged 29

Victor Young: 21st August aged 21

Thomas Urch: 21st August aged 19

Frank Sydenham: 25th August aged 24

William Poole: 24th August aged 27

Arthur Fear: 1st September aged 32

William Dodge: 6th September aged 45

George Radford: 22nd September aged 39

William Weakley: 26th September aged 22

Cecil Godby: 2nd October aged 21

Harry Sampson: 6th October aged 24

Gilbert Day: 16th October aged 28

Percy Austin: 24th October aged 21

Arthur Poole: 16th November aged 28

William Wilson : 16th November aged 21

Samuel Sweet: 19th November aged 21

Ernest Beecham: 25th December aged 25

Reginald Charles Ballam RN (M/2689). Alfred Street. He served in the Royal Navy on the HMS monitor* M28 as a Leading Cook's Mate and was killed on the 20th January aged 26, when his ship was sunk in the Aegean Sea at the battle of Imbros (see below). Along with other ships M28 had been stationed in Kusu Bay and was attacked by two Turkish ships. She was hit amid-ship and her magazine exploded so that she blew up and as a result was sunk. Of the 69 officers and men on board eleven were killed, including Ballam. The rest were rescued by Allied vessels. M28 had been built, launched and completed between March and August 1915.

During most of her WW1 service she was attached to the Aegean Squadron and tasked with coastal bombardment of Turkish positions. On the 20th January she had been stationed at Kusu Bay on the island of Imbros (now called Imroz; see map) along with HMS Raglan (another monitor) and two destroyers HMS Lizard and HMS Tigress when she was attacked by two Turkish vessels (known as SMS Goeben and SMS Breslau when owned by Germany and renamed by Turkey).

These two ships managed to trap M28 and HMS Raglan in the bay, engage them and sink them, the latter with the loss of 127 lives. Subsequently the two Turkish ships ran into a minefield. The Breslau struck a mine and sank immediately. The Goeben was damaged but managed to escape.

Reginald Ballam had joined the Royal Navy seven years prior to his death and before that he worked in Georges Restaurant in the High Street. He had been a pupil at Christ Church School. Another employee at Georges who joined the Royal Navy at about the same time was Douglas Preece (killed while serving on HMS Lion).

**A monitor was a relatively small warship which was neither fast nor strongly armoured but did carry disproportionately large guns. It was designed for shallow waters and for coastal use and shore bombardment.*

Imbros

[In 1915 during the Gallipoli Campaign Imbros had been a staging post for the Allied Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, prior to and during the invasion of the Gallipoli peninsula. A field hospital, airfield and administrative and stores buildings were constructed on the island. The British used the island as a supply base and built a 600m-long airstrip for military operations.

The Battle of Imbros was a naval action that occurred on 20 January 1918 when an Ottoman squadron engaged a flotilla of the British Royal Navy off the island of Imbros in the Aegean Sea. A lack of heavy Allied warships in the

We must remember them

area allowed the Ottoman battlecruiser renamed *Yavûz Sultân Selîm* and light cruiser *Midilli* to sortie into the Mediterranean and attack the British monitors and destroyers at Imbros before assaulting the naval base at Mudros.

Although the Ottoman forces managed to complete their objective of destroying the British monitors at Imbros, the battle turned sour for them as they sailed through a minefield while withdrawing. *Midilli* was sunk and *Yavûz Sultân Selîm* heavily damaged.]



Map of northern Aegean, showing the Turkish islands Imbros (largest), Samothrace and Tenedos off the coast of Gallipoli.

(Source: naval-history.net)

Trooper Frank Edwards. (230) Ashcombe Park Road. He served in the Household Cavalry (15th Hussars) and was killed in action in France aged 31 on the 22nd March, the second day of the First 1918 Battle of the Somme (part of the failed German Spring Offensive). The first information concerning him came from the Cavalry Records Office. This was followed by a letter written to his mother from his troop leader Lieutenant J C Thompson dated 15th April which read:

'I have been meaning to write to you for some time to express my very sincere sympathy in the loss of your son but unfortunately have not had any spare time until now. He was killed by a bullet instantaneously during the first engagement we were in, at a small village called (name not revealed but probably Roisel which is in the Somme region of France eight miles east of Peronne) As his troop leader I valued his services greatly, and he was one of my most trusted men.'

It was the day before Frank Edwards was killed that the Germans launched their final 'Spring Offensive'. The *History of 15th King's Hussars* dealing with the morning of 22nd March gives the following account of events:

'Early in the morning of the 22nd March. The German attack was particularly successful north of Roisel, where they advanced to some depth. At 7.35 a.m. the 15th Hussars were ordered to retake the Brown Line east of Roisel. Owing to the very unfavourable situation in other parts of the line, it did not seem likely that the attack even if successful could effect any material change, as it appeared that the party making it would become quite isolated.

Nevertheless, as the situation was desperate, the counter-attack was ordered to take place, in spite of the almost hopeless conditions under which it had to be carried out.

The regimental headquarters and dressing station were in Roisel village, and A and C Squadrons were on the eastern edge of the village, with B Squadron in support. Roisel itself was under very heavy fire, and on both flanks the enemy could be seen advancing in considerable numbers. Major J. Godman, who led the attack, took with him A Squadron and four machine-guns. B Squadron covered the advance on the left or northern flank, whilst C remained in reserve. By 9.30 a.m. the attack was in progress. It was Major J. Godman's intention to secure the high ground north of Hesbecourt, and having secured the high ground, he intended to turn east and attack the Brown Line.

We must remember them

In spite of the heavy hostile fire the attack succeeded and A Squadron occupied the Brown Line, but as was anticipated, they found themselves isolated. By this time it had become quite manifest that any attempt to hold the Brown Line was doomed to failure, as north of Roisel the enemy had overrun our positions, and was already well established west of the railway. Meanwhile both sides had concentrated their artillery fire into the village of Roisel, which had become absolutely untenable. At 1.30 p.m. orders were received to abandon the village, and to take up a position behind the marshy ground which lay to the west of Roisel.'

Trooper Edwards would have been killed during this time. The account given in The History makes it clear that the battle was futile. The few soldiers who remained were eventually marched off to Germany as prisoners of war.

As a boy Trooper Edwards had attended Milton School and later the Central Council School. He enlisted in Pontypridd, South Wales. Prior to his death he had taken part with the cavalry in the First Battle of Mons in 1914. He had also served with his regiment both in Africa and India. He is remembered on the Pozieres Memorial in France.



Pozières Memorial to the Missing, Somme Battlefields, France. CWGC

The Pozières Memorial is a World War I memorial, located near the commune of Pozières, in the Somme department of France, and unveiled in August 1930. It lists the names of 14,657 British and South African soldiers of the Fifth and Fourth Armies with no known grave who were killed between 21 March 1918 and 7 August 1918, during the German Spring Offensive (21 March–18 July), and the period of Allied consolidation and recovery that followed. The final date is determined by the start of the period known as the Advance to Victory on 8 August.

Private Harry Palmer (34441). Ashcombe Park Road. He Served in the 2/4th Battalion the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Regiment which was taking part in the one-day Battle of Bethune (18th April 1918) which was the day on which he was killed.

Until he signed up in August 1917 having reached his 18th Birthday (July) Harry Palmer had been working as an under-gardener at The Lodge (possibly the home of the Jackson-Barstow family) which suited him well because he is said to have an interest in nature. He had been educated at Christ Church School .

On joining up he was attached to the Mule Depots (see box) before being transferred to the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Regiment. After training on Salisbury Plain he went to France the following Easter (1918?). Two of his four brothers (all older) were serving in the Royal Navy. He also had six sisters. He is remembered on the Loos Memorial.

The Battle of Béthune

Béthune was an important railway junction and hospital site, holding the 33rd Casualty Station until December 1917. The Battle of Bethune was part of the Lys Offensive which was in turn part of the third German offensive Operation Georgette. German forces had the objective of capturing key railway and supply roads and cutting off British Second Army at Ypres. After initial successes the German attack was once again held off after British and French reserves were somehow found and deployed. This took place on the 18th April 1918, the day on which Harry Palmer died aged 18. The Long Long Trail.

We must remember them

Mule Depots

The Somerset or Taunton Mule Depots were set up because Avonmouth was being used as the port of disembarkation, changed from Southampton in an attempt to avoid U Boats. The mules were grazed at twelve local farms around Bridgwater, Taunton, Highbridge, Wiveliscombe, Minehead and Wellington.

[FROM THE HISTORY OF THE 2/4TH OXFORDSHIRE AND BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LIGHT INFANTRY BY G K ROSE. UNEDITED]

Events during April-May 1918

Throughout April 13 and for several days afterwards desultory fighting, in which our trench-mortars under Miller performed good service, was maintained for the possession of Baquerolle Farm and another lying 150 yards south of it and christened Boase's Farm. Both remained in our hands. With the troops on our left flank there was some difficulty. Their line bent back awkwardly, and when the enemy shelled the houses on the Calonne road, where their right flank rested, they showed signs of withdrawing and leaving our C Company 'in the air.' The Germans quickly benefited by this irresolution, for they commenced to push forward from house to house along the Calonne road, until Baquerolle Farm was in danger of being taken in its rear.

The prompt determination of Lodge, the officer I have already mentioned as commanding C Company, served to avert critical consequences. He delivered a local counter-attack, capturing a machine-gun and killing several of the enemy. Our neighbours thus reoccupied their former positions, but were warned in Divisional Orders not to give up any more of the Robecq-Calonne road. This incident, which rightly earned for 'Tommy' Lodge a Military Cross, had a vexatious sequel a few days later. In quoting where the left flank of the Battalion in fact rested I made a slip in the co-ordinates of its map reference. By that mistake I was trapped, when it appeared as black and white in relief orders, into having to hand over 100 yards of extra frontage, and had the mortification of causing several hours of troublesome delay to the front line, besides innocently saddling my successors with responsibility that was not honestly theirs to receive.

By April 16 the tactical situation was already stable. On that night—in reality during the early hours of April 17—the Battalion was relieved almost in the ordinary way by the Gloucesters, who came forward from the luxury of St. Venant and took over the line between Carvin and Baquerolle. St. Venant had been Portuguese G.H.Q. but was so no longer. It was by now receiving plenty of 5.9s and was rapidly losing the character of the quiet, well-to-do little town in which part of the Division was to have been billeted when it left the Amiens district. Still, for the time being, what St. Venant received in shells it paid for in choice vintages and fine houses. The Germans were not the only people to taste a glass of French wine during the Great War. About this time Colonel Boyle, who had commanded the 6th Oxforas until their disbandment, arrived to assume command of the Battalion. He remained till Wetherall, whose wound had taken him to England, returned.

For the rest of April and during May the Battalion continued to do tours in the Robecq sector, which, owing to its proximity to Givenchy and Béthune, was never quiet so long as the enemy was planning to attack those places. An alteration of the front was brought about on April 23, when the Gloucesters under Colonel Lawson advanced in co-operation with the 4th Division and captured Riez du Vintage and La Pierre au Beurre. Of this victory some spoils fell to the Battalion, which was holding the front line. Company Sergeant-Major Moss, of D Company, who went out to reconnoitre two hours after the attack had taken place, brought in forty-five prisoners, and during the following night half-a-dozen machine-guns were collected by the company.]

Gunner Lewis Henry Addicott (28698). Alfred Street. He served with the Royal Horse Artillery and Royal Field Artillery 'A' Battery 148th Brigade having enlisted in September 1914. He died on the 29th April, aged 27, killed by shell fire while helping an injured fellow soldier. On the day of his death his Brigade was engaged in the Battle of Scherpenberg (29th April).

The Royal Field Artillery was the most numerous arm of the artillery. The horse-drawn RFA was responsible for medium calibre guns and howitzers deployed close to the front line. This was organised into brigades of which the

We must remember them

148th was one. During April 1918 it took part in the Battle of Lys, which was part of the German Spring Offensive aimed at capturing Ypres and forcing the British forces back to the Channel ports.

The Battle of Lys was made up of a series of battles along the River Lys which formed the boundary between the opposing forces. The last of these battles was the Battle of Scherpenberg which took place on the 29th April, the day Addicott was killed so was most likely where he met his death.

In a letter to his parents informing them of Lewis's death, an army chaplain Revd F S Thompson wrote: *'The death by shell fire must have taken place on the 29th. I buried him with Sergeant Callister on the 30th; it was an honour to be called out to bury these gallant men. The little Church of England service was very solemn. Your son died in doing a very gallant piece of work. A shell fell, wounding a comrade, and he went at once to his succour, as was his duty, and in so doing he was killed.'*

He had already seen a great deal of action on the Western Front. During the Battle of the Somme (1916) he had been wounded in the head. On recovery he rejoined his Battery only to be knocked out again during fierce fighting the following year, suffering shell shock when an enemy shell exploded. He was treated in a French hospital before again returning to duty in January 1918, just four months before his death.

As a boy he attended the Christ Church and Locking Road Schools and prior to the war he had worked for the builders Gilbert Stokes and Son and then for the Cardiff Gas Company from where he enlisted. At the time of his death two other brothers were on active service; Trooper Reginald Addicott serving with the Hussar Regiment, and Sergeant Frank Addicott serving with the Wiltshire Regiment and twice wounded in action. A third brother Percy had been killed on the Somme in 1916 having gone missing at the battle of Delville Wood (see 1916 section).

He is buried and remembered at the Lissenthoeck Military Cemetery in Belgium.

[According to historyofwar.org: On the 26-27th April the Germans achieved the last major victory of the Battle of Lys by capturing Mount Kemmel part of a range of hills half way between Ypres in the north and Armentieres to the south. A final attack on another high point in the range, Scherpenberg, although resulting in its capture the progress made was so slow that the Germans called the whole offensive off. The damaged caused to the German army helped to prepare the way for the Allied counter attack of the last 100 days of the war.]

Private Cyril Stanley Frank Hadley (16714). Camden House, George Street. He served in the Gloucester Regiment 2/5th Battalion (Territorials). He died on the 7th May 1918 aged 23 having initially been recorded three weeks earlier as seriously wounded (in the abdomen) and operated on in the No5 General Hospital, a base hospital in Rouen in France*. According to hospital sister AC Mackey, though his wounds had been serious, it had been hoped he would recover and be sent home. She had written to his family at that time:

'I am sorry to say there is yet no improvement in your son's condition. He is seriously ill. He is very anxious to get back to England and we are trying our utmost to have him sent. Your son has received several letters from you, but cannot write very well, and I have told him that I am doing this for him. He sends you his very best love.'

Twelve months earlier he had received shrapnel wounds to the face and head while fighting at Vimy Ridge. He had been badly scarred.

His battalion moved down to the Somme at the end of October 1916, too late for any of the battles but in time to follow up the German retreat to the Hindenberg line in March/April 1917. Then came the Third Battle of Ypres, and the Battle of Cambrai, and the German counter attack the March Spring offensive during the first two weeks of which the division suffered some 6000 casualties (among them probably Hadley). He is remembered at the St Sever Cemetery Extension in Rouen in Northern France.

Before the war he had worked as a painter and decorator. He had three brothers and five sisters. He was educated at the Central Council Schools and, according to the Mercury at the time *'he developed a pronounced ability at water colour painting, his work evidenced not only technical skills but also a real freshness of view and method.'*

He had been involved in activities at both Christ Church and Hill Road Wesleyan Church. His three brothers all served in the forces; William with the Army Service Corp probably as a motor technician, Thomas in the Durham Light Infantry and Jack in the Royal Navy as a stoker. Jack who was the youngest was 16 when he took part in the Battle of Jutland in 1914.

We must remember them

**In the First World War the French city of Rouen on the Seine, was safely behind enemy lines and became a major centre for several base hospitals. These included No 5 General Hospital to which Hadley would have been moved following his wounding.*

What was a Base Hospital?

Base Hospitals were part of the casualty evacuation chain, further back from the front line than the Casualty Clearing Stations. They were manned by troops of the Royal Army Medical Corps, with attached Royal Engineers and men of the Army Service Corps. In the theatre of war in France and Flanders, the British hospitals were generally located near the coast. They needed to be close to a railway line, in order for casualties to arrive (although some also came by canal barge); they also needed to be near a port where men could be evacuated for longer-term treatment in Britain.

There were two types of Base Hospital, known as Stationary and General Hospitals. They were large facilities, often centred on some pre-war buildings such as seaside hotels. The hospitals grew hugely in number and scale throughout the war. Most of the hospitals moved very rarely until the larger movements of the armies in 1918. Some hospitals moved into the Rhine bridgehead in Germany and many were operating in France well into 1919. Most hospitals were assisted by voluntary organisations, most notably the British Red Cross.



Nurses attending a wounded soldier at No 9 Red Cross Hospital at Calais, July 1917. IWM

Private Wilfred Benjamin Westlake. (77537). Swiss Road. He served with the 22nd Battalion, the Durham Light Infantry having enlisted in Nottingham, and was killed in action 27th May 1918 aged 18. After brief training he was already in France before he was 18. On the first day of the German Spring Offensive, Operation Michael, soldiers of the Durham Light Infantry were in the front line. All the regiment's battalions suffered heavy losses as a result of the large numbers and the new tactics of the Germans.

On the 27th May the 22nd Battalion was fighting as infantry on the River Aisne after losing 513 officers and men in continual withdrawal. It would seem there was wide dispersal because reports concerning Westlake place him in the village of Gommecourt well north of the river Aisne. Defences had been dug in around the village and it was here he was wounded and taken prisoner as the letters below would seem to confirm.

Regular letters from Westlake had stopped before Whitsun and he was officially posted missing on the 27th May although the final report of his death did not appear in the Mercury until 4th January the following year. Enquiries were made through the Red Cross, resulting in the following letter to his mother:

'Dear Madam. It is with very great regret we send you the following report from a returning prisoner of war Private J McQuire (81813). Same Company. Home address. 3 Coburg Street Darlington.

"Westlake died of wounds just after we were taken prisoners on May 27th at Gommecourt. We were taken out of the trenches and gathered together by the side of the road. I helped him along with another boy. We laid him down by the side of the road to rest and he died there before we started again. He was tall, slender, 19 to 20 years of age, medium complexion."

We must remember them

The letter goes on: *'We are sorry to have to say that if the personal description is correct, or if McQuire on being shown the photograph, identifies it, there will not be hope.'*

Mrs Westlake at once got into communication with Private McQuire and forwarded a photo of her son, with the result that on the 22nd December she received the following letter.

'Dear Madam. I received your letter this morning, and am sorry to tell you of your son's misfortune. I recognised the photos to be that of the boy I made the statement about. I do not know much about him but before going out of France I believe he did a bit of training at Stockton on Tees. When I went to France I joined the 22nd Battalion and I was with that battalion until I was captured. Your son was in A Company, 4 Platoon, 13 Section, and I think he was with the Lewis Gun Section. He was badly wounded when captured on the 27th May. I and another boy helped him along the road until he got too bad. We had to leave him there as the Germans were hurrying us on. One of the boys who was with our company got his pocket wallet and his pay book. I do not know the boy's name or you would be able to get further information. I remain yours sincerely J McQuire.'

He is remembered on the Soissons Memorial in the town of Soissons on the River Aisne, France. This memorial lists 3887 names of British soldiers with no known graves who were killed in the area from May to August 1918. The battles fought by those commemorated include the Third Battle of Aisne.

He was educated at Christ Church School and shortly after leaving school age 14 he began a printing apprenticeship with Mr Paine in Swiss Road. During that time and before reaching his 17th birthday he had enlisted with the Durham Light Infantry, his employer having moved in 1915 to Nottingham.



Soissons Memorial. CWGC

Private Charles Woollacott (21241). Alfred Street. He served in the Royal Army Medical Corp (1st Northumberland Field Ambulance) having enlisted in Bristol. He was born in Barry in Glamorganshire. The date of his death is given as 27th May, in France, age 27. He had been in France since 11th February and is remembered on the Soissons Memorial France. He had been reported missing on the 27th May but it was much later (3rd August) that he was safe and an unwounded prisoner of war – this information came as an 'official card' from Germany at the beginning of August. So the situation is confusing and nothing else is known. So presumably he did not arrive at POW camp.

The 1st Northumbrian Field Ambulance, RAMC, served with the 50th (Northumbria) Division. They had just departed for their annual summer camp when war broke out and they were recalled to their bases and mobilised for war service on the 5th August (just 48 hours after war was declared). Throughout the war they saw action during many of the key battles. In 1918 they fought on the Somme, in the Battle of Lys, and the Battle of Aisne (27th May – 6th June) the start of which coincided with Charles Woollacott being reported missing.

Private Charles Frederick Boulton. 31918. Jubilee Road. He served with the 6th Battalion of the Somerset Light Infantry and died while a prisoner of war. He is remembered/buried at the Niederzwehren Cemetery, Kassel, Germany. He served on the Western Front and went missing in March 1918 at the start of the German advance Operation Michael. The 6th Battalion had been involved in the first battle of this operation (Battle of St Quentin; 21st - 23rd March).

Although he was not officially reported missing until May no news has been heard of him since 21st March since which date he had been regarded as 'missing'. He had been at home on leave in January. The War Office later

We must remember them

(October) told his family he had been taken prisoner and was in the Puchheim POW camp in Germany. There he had died on the 14th June of pneumonia but his family did not learn of this until February 1919 (well after the armistice). They had been hoping up to that time that he would come home as a released prisoner.

The Puchheim POW camp, some ten miles from Munich in Bavaria, had previously been a civil airfield. As a POW camp it held 24 000 prisoners mostly French and Russian. Prisoners from the camp were kept busy drying out and clearing an area around the camp so that houses could be built. Today Puchheim is a town of 19 000 people.

Prior to signing up in 1916 Boulton had worked for Langmead's an outfitters in Orchard Street. He was also a member of the choir at Wadham Street Baptist Church (now the Blakehay Centre).

Germany's Operation Michael.

Launched in March 1918, Operation Michael (also known as the Second Battle of the Somme; 21st March to 5th April) was designed to split the British and French armies on the Western Front in a desperate last attempt by Germany to win before the American troops arrived. It initially succeeded in driving the allies back. But the arrival of fresh allied troops stopped the advance and by July it was over.

Although losses were high during this time (the British lost 236 000 men between 21st March and 29th April) the nature of the losses were unusual because most were 'lost in action'. For the most part this meant they had been taken prisoners and Charles Boulton was one of them.

Private William Arthur Tanner (242527). (In the Mercury the home address for the family was given as Tarrants Cottages, Alfred Street.) He served with the 1/5th Battalion (Territorial) Gloucestershire Regiment (part of the South Midland Brigade and 48th Division) and was killed in action in Italy 15th June 1918, age 21. The previous year he was in the trenches in France.

His battalion moved with the Division to Italy in November 1917 and saw action there during the Second Battle of the Piave River fought between 15th and 22nd June 1918. This was a decisive victory for the Italian Army against Austro-Hungary and much later this battle was seen as the beginning of the end for the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

From the CWGC website. *The Italians entered the war on the Allied side, declaring war on Austria, in May 1915. Commonwealth forces were at the Italian front between November 1917 and November 1918. In March 1918, XIV Corps (including the 48th Division) relieved Italian troops on the front line between Asiago and Canove. The front was comparatively quiet until the Austrians attacked in force from Grappa to Canove in the Battle of Asiago (15th -16th June 1918).*

The Allied line was penetrated to a depth of about 1,000 metres on 15 June (the day Tanner died) but the lost ground was retaken the next day and the line re-established. Between June and September, frequent successful raids were made on the Austrian trenches. The 48th Division, which remained in the mountains as part of the Italian Sixth Army, played an important part in the Battle of Vittorio Veneto (24 October-4 November 1918) in which the Austrians were finally defeated.

He is remembered in the Boscon British Cemetery, one of five Commonwealth cemeteries on the Asiago Plateau in the province of Vicenza in the Veneto region of Northern Italy containing burials relating to this period. Here 166 First World War servicemen are buried or commemorated by special memorials.

Private Tanner's mother received the following letter (extract) from Captain Colin Coote:

'Dear Madam. I regret to have to inform you that your son Private Tanner was killed in action on the morning of the 15th June. His platoon advanced to make good a portion of the line which threatened to give way, and he was hit by a machine gun bullet and killed instantly so that I do not think he suffered any pain.'

His older brother Richard was serving in Salonika at the time.

Prior to enlisting William was employed by the builders Messrs C Addicott & Son. His father Dick Tanner was a driver of the Ashcombe and Clarence Park bus and had spent a time (18 months) on the East Coast defence (see note below) early in the war.

Historic England describes WW1 East coast defences:

At the beginning of the First World War there was a very real fear of German invasion. Prompted by this fear many Victorian coastal forts were modernised. On the threatened east coast new defences were added. Half a million men were retained in Britain for Home Defence. Lines of defence works, including the first concrete pillboxes in England,

We must remember them

were established at likely invasion points in Norfolk, Essex and North Kent and bicycle battalions were created to provide a mobile force capable of reacting quickly.

Private Frederick John Way (T.F. 292539). Swiss Road. He served with the 18th Battalion, Middlesex Regiment (Duke of Cambridge's Own) having enlisted in Winchester and died of his wounds 3rd July 1918, age 39. The Middlesex Regiment formed a total of 49 Battalions; this was mainly due to a surplus of volunteers seeking to enlist.

The first bad news, received on the 2nd July from the War Office, was that he had been dangerously wounded by shrapnel in the back, penetrating his lung. News of his death arrived the following day in a letter from a chaplain from the 2nd Canadian Clearing Station Captain J W Wayman who wrote to his sister:

'Dear Miss Way. I am very sorry to have to break to you the sad news of the death of your brother. He was brought here this morning after having been wounded in the back, and he died a few minutes after his admission. His pay book contained no address of next-of-kin, but among his effects I found several letters bearing your name and address. He will be buried tomorrow in the military cemetery at(location not stated in the letter), the well kept cemetery near to our hospital. Please accept my sympathies'

He is remembered at the Esquelbecq Military Cemetery. Esquelbecq is a village near the Belgian frontier. The cemetery was opened in April 1918 during the early stages of the German offensive in Flanders, when the 2nd Canadian and 3rd Australian Casualty Clearing Stations came to Esquelbecq. His four other brothers also served in the war; one in France with motor transport attached to the Royal Marine Artillery, two in Salonika and one in a home camp.

Casualty Clearing Stations were the closest facilities to the front lines that could provide surgical treatment. They cared for patients until they could be further evacuated to a General Hospital by Ambulance Train. The 2nd Canadian Casualty Clearing Station was one of a large collection of such stations close to the Ypres Salient.

Prior to the war he had worked as a cycle and motor engineer at Mr Appleton's Works. He had attended the British School in Hopkins Street (under Mr M S Lyon) and had been a Sunday School scholar at the Boulevard Congregational Church where his mother had attended for some years.

Private Arthur Edgar Webb (no service number). Parents home Alma Street, His married address is given as Gordon Road. He served with the Royal Army Service Corp (known simply as the Service Corp until 1918) and died in the UK of tuberculosis on the 10th August age 29. He is buried and remembered in Weston Cemetery (Milton Road).

The RASC was the unit responsible for keeping the British Army supplied with provisions, with the exception of munitions and weaponry (that was with the Royal Army Ordnance Corp). It received its Royal prefix in 1918 in recognition of its services during the war.

Although among the first to seek to enlist he was turned down on physical grounds. He tried several times but with the same medical rejection each time. Eventually he found a place in the Army Service Corp in France, presumably as a driver in view of his past employment. He served with the Corp for three and a half years before being invalided home suffering from tuberculosis, in May 1918. He was admitted to Stockport Military Hospital. His wife Alice obtained permission from the military authorities to spend the last few weeks with him.

After attending Christ Church School he worked for the grocer O J Rossiter, also for the Webb and Hardy bus service, as a driver out to the Cheddar, Wells and Glastonbury area.

Able Seaman Victor George Young (Bristol Z/1403). Alma Street. He served in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (Drake Battalion. Royal Navy Division) and died on the 21st August 1918 age 21 most likely at the Battle of Albert (21-23 August 1918) a phase of the Second Battle of the Somme 1918. He is remembered at the Vis-En-Artois Memorial in France. He enlisted in 1915 and after training at the Crystal Palace and at Blandford he went to France in 1916. He is stated to have been killed instantly. In March 1918 he had been badly gassed and had been returned home for convalescence. He returned to France the following month.

His story raises the question as to how a naval man gets to be fighting like a soldier on the Western Front. The Long-Long Trail's information about the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division provides the answer.

At the declaration of the war there were too many Royal Naval reservists to find places on ships of war. As a result two new Naval Brigades and a Brigade of Marines were created to form a Division. After involvement in the Gallipoli Campaign the Division was left with insufficient men with sea service experience. It was re-designated the 63rd (Royal

We must remember them

Naval) Division and moved to France in May 1916 to spend the rest of the war on the Western Front, taking part in numerous engagements including the Battle of Albert.

Some idea of the conditions he might have fought under is given by the story of another member of the Royal Drake Battalion who was awarded the VC for his bravery in a later Somme battle. Below is an extract from The London Gazette dated 29th October 1918.

'During an advance a portion of his company became disorganised by heavy machine gun fire from an enemy strong point. Chief Petty Officer George Prowse (also commemorated at the Vis-En-Artois Memorial) took what men were available and attacked this strong point capturing it together with 23 prisoners and five machine guns'.

The report goes on to mention other brave acts in one of which Prowse ended up as the only survivor. Prior to enlisting George Young had been employed by J J Leaver (then in the High Street) and had been a pupil at St John's National Schools.

Private Thomas Urch (68016). Hill Road. He served with the Devonshire Regiment, 1st Battalion having signed on in Bristol as soon as he reached the age of 18. He was killed in action on the Somme on the 21st August 1918. and is remembered at the Gommecourt British Cemetery No2, Hebuterne, France. The 1st Battalion had been in France since 21 August 1914. In 1917 as part of the 95th brigade of the 5th Division it had been transferred to Northern Italy where the Italians had been routed at Caporetto.

Here they held the line near Vicenza (see Private Tanner above) and served on the Piave Front, until Germany began its Spring Offensive in March 1918 when the Battalion was returned to France and the Somme. In mid April the 1st Battalion held a salient near Nieppe, successfully defending their position against repeated German counter-attacks

They remained around Nieppe until late July. In August the German army began to fall back and the Devons took part in the rapid Allied advances that characterised the rest of the war. Between the 21st (the day Urch was killed) and 31st August they attacked and captured German positions, repulsing some fierce counter-attacks. During one German attack on 22nd August one lance-corporal and one private alone took 200 German prisoners. But in those ten days they suffered heavy casualties.

The last letter received by his parents was dated 20th July and it was nearly a month before they got notification from the War Office that he had been killed. This was followed by a letter from his friend Private Marsdon who wrote:

'I am writing to fulfill a promise made to your son, Thomas, in case anything should happen to him, and it is my painful duty to tell you that the poor lad was killed on the morning of the 21st August, the first day of the big advance on this front, when our Battalion went over the top,...

The news came as a a nasty blow to me, as I have known him for so many years, and since he has been with this Battalion he has been my greatest chum. The news was received with sorrow by the remainder of his pals in the Company for he was well liked by all. He was an extremely good lad in the line, as may be judged by the fact that he had been put in charge of a section of men who had a good deal more experience than he had himself. I am sorry I cannot give you any particulars as to how he met his death, although I have made enquiries. He was found shortly after the commencement of the battle, and buried with Lieutenant Thorpe of this battalion.'

He was educated at Christ Church School (under Mr J J Lovell) and was then employed at Messrs Oliver's boot warehouse in High Street. His older brother Herbert served in the Pioneer section of the Royal Engineers during the war. He also had two younger brothers.

Private Frank Sydenham (14979). George Street. He joined the Weston Comrades as part of Kitchener's New Army (see note below) and served in the 12th (Service) Battalion of the Gloucestershire Regiment. He was killed in action 25th August 1918 aged 24. In 1916 he had been wounded in action and returned to England. On returning to France he was attached to another regiment and experienced heavy fighting and again was wounded and spent time in hospital and convalescence camp before rejoining his old battalion.

The 12th (Bristol) Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment was raised at Bristol on the 30th August 1914 by the Citizens Recruiting Committee as part of Kitchener's New Army. They proceeded to France on the 21st November 1915. And in July 1916 they moved south to reinforce The Somme and were in action in numerous battles there before moving to Festubert and remaining there until March 1917 when they moved in preparation for the Battles of Arras.

We must remember them

On 7th September 1917 the 5th Division moved out of the line for a period of rest before being sent to Flanders where they were in action during the Third Battle of Ypres. The 5th Division was sent to Italy and took up positions in the line along the River Piave in late January 1918. They were then recalled to France to assist with repelling the German Advance in late March 1918 and were in action during the Battles of the Lys. In August 1918 they were withdrawn for two weeks rest before moving again to The Somme. Here they were more or less in continuous action over the old battlegrounds until late October 1918.

At the time of his death his battalion was taking part in the Second 1918 Battle of the Somme in the basin of the River Somme. This began with the Battle of Bapaume to the north of the river. This developed into an advance which pushed the Germans back over a 56 km front. The attack was part of what was later called the Hundred Days Offensive which was the final period of the war pushing the Germans out of France forcing them to retreat beyond their original Hindenberg Line.

He is remembered at the Queens Cemetery. Bucquoy, France. He came from a large family (he was the youngest. and had six brothers and two sisters). According to the Mercury in pre-war times he had lived with Mr and Mrs John Merrick in George Street and later at the Assembly Rooms. At the outbreak of the war he had been working as a gardener in Clarence Park for the Urban District Council At the time of his death two other brothers were also on active service in France.

Kitchener's Army

The New Army, often referred to as Kitchener's Army or, disparagingly, as Kitchener's Mob, as initially an all-volunteer army of the British Army formed in the United Kingdom from 1914 onwards following the outbreak of hostilities. It originated on the recommendation of Horatio Herbert Kitchener, then the Secretary of State for War. Kitchener's original intention¹ was that it would be formed and ready to be put into action in 1917, but circumstances dictated its use before then. The first use in a major action came at the Battle of Loos (September–October 1915).



The artwork is that of Alfred Leete who was one time a resident of Weston super Mare. Son of a farmer, he was born in Northampton on 28th August 1882. The family moved to Weston-super-Mare and he was educated at Kingsholme School before leaving at the age of 12 to be an office boy in a surveyor's office in Bristol. This was followed by jobs as a draughtsman in a furniture company and a lithographer.

The famous Lord Kitchener poster design first appeared on the cover of the weekly magazine *London Opinion* in September, 1914. The Parliamentary Recruiting Committee changed the wording and turned it into a poster. Its striking visual appearance was picked up by other artists, including in the USA where the image of Kitchener was replaced by Uncle Sam. IWM

Sergeant William George Poole (Dispenser). (456049.) Clarendon Road (married address Camperdown Terrace, Exmouth). He served in the Royal Army Medical Corp (2nd South Western Mounted Brigade, Field Ambulance), and 69th General Hospital in Egypt and is remembered at the Deir El Belah War Cemetery in Israel. He died on the 24th August 1918 of pneumonia age 27.

Five days before he died he had written home *'I am in bed with pneumonia but am in no pain whatever, and having not at all a bad time. The worst was over long ago. I saw a Weston lad a few days ago – George Smith – who is in a concert party touring up and down the line. He gave me lots of news about Weston lads. Yes dad, the war is*

We must remember them

going to 'bust up' and quickly, of that I am certain. This year I am sure will see it finished, and in our favour absolutely.'

At about the same time there was a letter from his officer Captain W Gorrie RAMC who wrote: *'I regret to say that I can see no ray of hope of his recovery and we thought it right that you should be informed of this. Your son does not know how critical his illness is and we do not think it wise that he should know'*

He enlisted at the end of August 1914, in the RAMC under a Major Carey and went to Frome where after exams he was made a sergeant and then underwent a course of training at Bristol University, and Bristol Infirmary. After gaining honours he was made a pioneer sergeant when his company went into camp at Exmouth (this maybe where he met his future wife?). From there his company went to Blackpool and drafted to Egypt and later to Palestine. It was from there that his parents received the first notification that he had gone down with pneumonia. Presumably he was transferred to the 69th General Hospital and died there.

After leaving school he chose to become a plumber. As a student of the local Science and Arts school he gained a first class final silver medal in 1912 and a first prize in plumbing in the City and Guilds London Institute exam. He subsequently became an instructor in plumbing at the school. Later he joined the WSM Urban District Council as chief assistant to the sanitary inspector (Mr Thomas Jones MRSI), a position he held at the time of his enlistment.

Some background on Egypt in the war, according to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission:

On the 28th February 1917, the cavalry of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force entered Khan Yunus midway between the Egyptian border and Deir el Belah causing the Turks to withdraw to Gaza and Beersheba. The railway was pushed forward to Deir el Belah which became the railhead in April 1917, and an aerodrome and camps were established there. The cemetery was begun towards the end of March and remained in use until March 1919. Most of the burials were made either from field ambulances from March to June 1917, or from the 53rd, 54th, 66th and 74th Casualty Clearing Stations, and the 69th General Hospital, from April 1917 until the Armistice with Turkey.

Corporal Arthur Cecil Fear (34221). Family home, Moorland Road, Weston super Mare. Although he came from Weston his wife and son (born 1918) were living in Bridgenorth, Shropshire at the time of his death. He served in the Royal Warwickshire Regiment 18th Battalion (formerly 926 Dragoon Guards) and was killed in France on the 1st September 1918 aged 32.

At the time of his death his battalion had recently returned from serving in Italy and the 5th Division to which his battalion was attached was involved in various actions on the Western Front. It had gone to Italy in December 1917 but returned to France in April 1918. Here it was involved in the Second Battle of Bapaume which took place between the 21st August and the 3rd September, dates which coincide with Arthur's death. He is remembered at the Favreuil British Cemetery which is just two kilometres north of Bapaume.

It was while waiting at Weston station with his cab that he heard of a proclamation recalling reservist to re-enlist. According his obituary in the Mercury (28th September 1918): *'He drove straight to the police station and made enquiries respecting the proclamation, which had only just been received. Having read it he took his cab to the company's depot and straightway proceeded to report himself.'*

The Mercury report goes on to state: *'Within a few weeks he was in the thick of the battle and he figured in the fighting in those disastrous days of 1914 which included the Mons retreat.'*

After serving with his previous regiment he was transferred to the Veterinary Corp. until August 1917 and attached to the Warwickshire Regiment where he served in both France and Italy. He finally returned to France in March 1918 having been in the forces for thirteen years. He had two brothers also serving, one joining up in November 1914, serving with the Dragoons (subsequently transferred to the Somerset Light Infantry) in India, and the other in France.

His father was at one time a county court baliff although at the time of his death he was manager of the Three Queens Hotel, Oxford Street. After leaving school Frank worked for a fishmonger Mr Findlay but as soon as he reached 18 he enlisted with the 5th Dragoon (that would have been in 1904) and with them served in South Africa, Egypt and India. When his enlistment period came to an end he found work with the Bristol Tramway and Carriage Company as a taxi driver staying with them until the outbreak of the war, working first in Bristol and then in Weston.

We must remember them

Leading Stoker William Henry Dodge (280087). He served in the Royal Navy and died 6 September 1918 age 45 and is stated to have 'died at sea of a disease'. At the time he was stationed at HMS Pembroke which was the name given to the Royal Naval Barracks at Chatham. At the outbreak of the war some 205 ships were manned by Chatham Division men who saw action across the world at sea and on land including Gallipoli in 1915 and the Somme in 1916.

Which ship or ships he actively served on is not so far known. Nor as yet is his connection with Weston super Mare or Christ Church although he is on both war memorials. All the address details we have of him and his family are in Kent. He was born in Maidstone in Kent and lived at Farleigh Hill, near Maidstone and is buried in the churchyard at St Mary's, East Farleigh. He had two sons and five daughters. Chatham Division men also took part in the Zeebrugge Raid in April 1918 so the following details from Wiki may be relevant.

The Zeebrugge Raid on 23rd April 1918, was an attempt by the Royal Navy to block the Belgian port of Bruges-Zeebrugge, sinking obsolete ships in the canal entrance to prevent German vessels from leaving port. The port was used by the German Navy as a base for U-boats and light shipping, which were a threat to Allied shipping. The first attempt was made on 2nd April 1918 but cancelled after wind direction changes made it impossible to lay a smokescreen.

Another attempt was made on 23rd April with a concurrent attack on Ostend. Two block-ships were scuttled in the narrowest part of the Bruges Canal and one of two submarines rammed the viaduct, which linked the shore and the mole (a breakwater), to isolate the German garrison. The block-ships were sunk in the wrong place and after a few days the canal was open to submarines at high tide. British casualties were 583 men and German losses were 24 men.

Sergeant George Edward Radford (117038). Wadham Street (family home). Queen Victoria Road, Llanelly, South Wales (married home). He served with the Royal Garrison Artillery (RGA), 331st Siege Battery and died of his wounds 22nd September 1918 age 39. The previous year the Weston Gazette had reported that he, at that time a corporal, had been laid aside with an 'acute attack of trench fever.' He enlisted in the RGA in May 1916 and went to France May 1917, as a bombardier (an ordinary soldier in the Royal Artillery) but was quickly promoted to sergeant.

The 331st Siege Battalion had been formed along with 13 others at Prees Heath in Shropshire in December 1916 and comprised four 6-inch Howitzers. In September 1917 it joined the 69th Brigade of the RGA and served with it until the end of the war.

At the end of 1917 the battery was still in place on the outskirts of Ypres. The Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele) had just ended. But sometime in 1918 it had moved south to the Somme basin and it was here that he was wounded on the 21st September. He died the next day at the 12th Casualty Clearing Station which had just arrived at La Chapelette on the 19th September.

Exactly where on the Somme he was when wounded is unclear but the Battle of Amiens had recently taken place and this was seen as the opening phase of the Allied offensive known as the Hundred Days Offensive which itself was the beginning of the end of war by pushing the Germans out of France. It may be as part of this offensive that he received his fatal wounds.

He is remembered at La Chapelette British and Indian Cemetery, Peronne on the River Somme. The town of Peronne is approximately 20 kilometres east of Amiens. La Chapelette British Cemetery lies a little south of Peronne. The town was occupied by British troops on the 18th March 1917, lost on the 23rd March 1918, and regained on the 1st September 1918.

Just a week before his death the Mercury had announced that he had been awarded a Military Medal for gallantry and devotion to duty. The circumstances of the award were not reported but he was mentioned in dispatches.

This was followed by the news from the Depot at Dover that he had been severely wounded, and the following day that he had died from his wounds at the casualty clearing station. The fatal injury had been caused by shell fragments penetrating his right side.

Before the war he had been an assistant master at the Central Council Schools in the town, also an honorary secretary of the Ashcombe Park bowling club. He was educated at the National Schools in the town and decided early to become a teacher encouraged by his headmaster. After a period as a pupil teacher at the school he went to the Wesleyan Training College, Westminster and came away with a double first.

He then took up a position as pupil teacher at Newport Elementary School, South Wales followed twelve months later with a move to Weston Central Schools where he continued to teach until he was released to enlist in 1916. While back in Weston he was actively involved with the Philharmonic Society and United Free Church Choir.

We must remember them

Several letters were received home around the time of his death. Below are some details extracted from these:

1. From Gunner John A Booth 160669. B Sub Section 331 Siege Battery. RGA. BEF. 4th October.

This letter to his wife states that he was in charge of the gun team 'boys'. The letter talks of his leadership and manliness and being looked on as friend and father figure who *'helped us to perform many arduous duties and overcome numerous difficulties.'*

2. Lieutenant H Sharratt to Radford's brother also 4th October. This gives details of his wounding and death and of his grave. It speaks of sincere admiration for him. Always very thorough in his work and maintaining a hold of his men, he got his work done by his personality. He was always cheery and kept his men cheery too. *'Sometimes under the most dreary conditions.'*

3. Chaplain Rev. H A Griffiths. 23rd September. *'He was brought in badly wounded and was unconscious until after the operation, when I managed to get a few words with him. I prayed with him and he died three hours later. Yesterday we laid him to rest in a British Cemetery here.'*

4. Chaplain R W Hopkins. Attached to the 12th CCS BEF France.

'He was practically in a dying condition when he was admitted to the clearing station on the evening of the 21st suffering from a severe shell wound that penetrated his side. Everything that the skill of the surgeons and the gentle care of the nurses could do was done to restore him, but his strength quickly gave out and he died at 3.45am on the 22nd. He was buried in a quiet little cemetery behind the lines the same day.'

The Mercury reported that *'On Monday the flag floated at half mast from the Central Council School and Mr Turner the headmaster spoke to the elder boys of the loss they as a school had sustained in the death of George Radford.'*

Also from the newspaper:

'Before joining the Army Sergeant Radford was a member of the VTC (Volunteer Training Corp) and held the rank of sergeant major. Also he was one of the original special police force and in the early days of the war assisted in guarding the railway bridges in and around Weston. He was intensely interested in music, and besides being a valued member of the local Philharmonic Society he acted as Honorary Secretary of the Locking Road United Free Choir, he was a non-conformist and a member of the Bible Christian Church in Locking Road. He also acted as secretary of the Ashcombe Park Bowling Club, and was at one time a keen association football player and for one season at least he played for the Weston S M Rugby Club.'



Four British artillerymen firing a Howitzer gun. Painting attributed to Paul Nash. IWM

Private William Weakley (9646). Ashcombe Park Road. He served with the Somerset Light Infantry 12th Battalion having originally enlisted in 1914 in Taunton with the West Somerset Yeomanry. The 12th Somerset Battalion was formed in January 1917 in Egypt, from the dismounted West Somerset Yeomanry. It embarked from Alexandria landing at Marseilles in France in May 1918. He died on the 26 September as a result of being badly gassed, aged 22, and is remembered at St Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen, France.

(See note below about the first use of British manufactured gas at this time).

The battalion took part on the Second Battles of the Somme 1918 (21st August – 3rd September) and the Battles of the Hindenberg Line (12th September – 12th October) as part of the One Hundred Days Offensive, among the first

We must remember them

phase of which were the Battle of Epehy on the 18th September and the Battle of Canal du Nord (27th September – 1st October). Which of these engagements he was in at the time is not known.

Prior to joining up in 1914 he had been listed with the County Regiment (presumably this is the SLI). After leaving school he had worked for the baker E W Perrett.

Within a few days of the outbreak of the war he went to France as part of the first British Expeditionary Force. After a year under fire and a brief leave he returned to France where he stayed for two years, eventually succumbing to trench foot and returning home where he spent some time at Brighton Hospital. After another period of leave, en-route to Egypt, he returned to France. Before rejoining the fighting he had expected another period of leave and had written home to say so.

His mother had gone to the station on the 18th September but he did not arrive. Instead his mother received a letter dated 20th September from the No 11 Stationary Hospital (Rouen) (see Westlake for stationery hospitals in Rouen) BEF France from the assistant matron in which it was stated that he had been admitted to the hospital having been badly gassed. A second letter followed two days later with the information that he was a little better and then on Thursday his father received the following wire from the Regimental Records Office at Exeter:

'Regret to inform you that 9646 Pte W Weakly S.L.I. is dangerously ill at 11 Stationary Hospital Rouen.'

Then on the 26th came the news from the matron: *'your son passed away this morning. He has been very ill since admission, and has not been able to talk much. We did everything we possibly could for him but without avail. He will be buried at St Sever Cemetery close by and a cross bearing his name erected on the grave.'*

A letter was also received, on the Sunday, from Rev David Mair, Chaplain who stated that *'the gallant young Westonian'* had been badly gassed and burned.

British-made gas:

[From Wiki: The British Army believed that the use of gas was needed, but did not use mustard gas until November 1917 at Cambrai, after their armies had captured a stockpile of German mustard-gas shells. It took the British more than a year to develop their own mustard gas weapon, with production of the chemicals centred on Avonmouth Docks. This was used first in September 1918 during the breaking of the Hindenburg Line with the Hundred Days' Offensive.

The Allies mounted more gas attacks than the Germans in 1917 and 1918 because of a marked increase in production of gas from the Allied nations. Germany was unable to keep up with this pace despite creating various new gases for use in battle, mostly as a result of very costly methods of production. Entry into the war by the United States allowed the Allies to increase mustard gas production far more than Germany. Also the prevailing wind on the Western Front was blowing from west to east, which meant the British more frequently had favourable conditions for a gas release than did the Germans.]

Sergeant Cecil Francis Edwin Godby (49933). Clevedon Road. He served with the Royal Irish Fusiliers 1st Battalion and died in France on the 2nd October 1918 of his wounds, aged 20. At the time of his death his battalion was taking part in the Battle of Courtrai, one of a series of offensives in Northern France and southern Belgium to take place in late September and October 1918.

During 1918 the 1st Battalion took part in The Battle of St Quentin, The Actions at the Somme Crossings, The Battle of Rosieres, The Battle of Messines, The Battle of Bailleul, The First Battle of Kemmel Ridge, The Battle of Ypres, The Battle of Courtrai, The action of Ooteghem and ended the war at Mouscron N.E. of Tourcoing, Belgium.

During his training on Salisbury Plain he was promoted to the rank NCO having proved proficient with the Lewis Gun (a light machine gun) and prior to leaving for France he was recommended for a commission which he declined. His father Francis was a Weston tradesman who served during the war as lance corporal in the Royal Defence Corp.

After leaving school Cecil became an articled pupil with a local dental surgeon C H Midgley of Walliscote Road.. When of age he enlisted at Taunton with the SLI and was transferred to the Royal Irish Fusiliers on his arrival in France (26th January 1917). He was sent to the front in May 1918 and it was reported that *'he engaged in battle and in the thick of the fighting daily.'*

In one of his last letters home he wrote the following revealing account of what he witnessed:

We must remember them

'I would give my bank account just to show you the view from the position we are occupying now – mile upon mile of beautiful country stretching out before one's (at first) enraptured gaze. But take a pair of glasses and look again. Deserted villages, crumbling ruins, devastated homes, big towns practically razed to the ground – and as one looks one thinks of the hearts that have been broken, and the happy homes so rudely and ruthlessly crushed.

It is then we turn to God, and thank Him, and beseech him to preserve our land from such horrible devastation, such a terrible curse; also we pray for strength in order to relieve France and Belgium from the monster which is called War....Take a look at the same country at night, for it is even easier then to realise the horror of war. Those flashes which light up the sky from all parts are dealing out death, destruction, misery and despair ... I don't know what sent me off in such a moralising tone, but I suppose it is natural under the circumstances..I wonder if this year will see an end. What a blessing if it does.'

The region he was stationed at about this time would have been West Flanders east of Ypres. His last letter was dated 29th September and on the 10th October there arrived home a wire (telegram) from the War Office stating, with regret, that he had died on the 2nd October at the Australian Casualty Clearing Station, of a bullet wound.

According to the Weston Gazette reporting his death he came from a musical family and as a boy he played in the YMCA Bible Class orchestra, and later for some time in the orchestra of the Palace of Varieties, and the Weston Wesleyan Brotherhood. He was a member of the congregation of Emmanuel Church. In the Weston Mercury account he played both violin and clarinet and under the Albany Ward scheme (Albany Ward, was a pioneer English theatre proprietor and cinema developer) he was a solo violinist with The Palace Theatre orchestra the director of which was his sister Winifred Godbey. His father played the cornet.

Lance Corporal Harry Robert Sampson, (44274). Alfred Street, Weston super Mare. He served with the 12th Battalion North Staffordshire Regiment (Princes of Wales), (formerly South Lancs Regiment). having enlisted in Penrhiewceiber, Glamorgan. He had spent sometime in South Wales prior to enlisting..

The 12th (Service) Battalion North Staffordshire Regiment was engaged in various actions on the Western Front including in 1918 the Final Advance in Flanders. This took place between the 28th September and the end of the war (11th November 1918). It was when the British Second Army and Belgian Army combined and finally broke out of the Ypres salient. More ground was gained in a day that in the entire Passchendaele offensive of a year before.

The first Phase of this was the Battle of Ypres, 28th September – 2nd October 1918, followed by phase two, the Battle of Courtrai, 14th – 19th October 1918. He died of his wounds 6th October 1918 aged 24 and is remembered at the Erquinghem-Lys Churchyard Extension, France. The village of Erquinghem-Lys is situated approximately 1.5 kilometres west of Armentieres which is south of Ypres. All of which suggests he received his fatal wounding in the first phase.

He is reported to have joined up early in the war and seen 'terrible battles which led to the recent retreat and rout of the enemy'. The chaplain attached to the North Staffs Regiment, Rev. A W Mountford wrote home to Sampson's mother on the 9th October 1918. Here is part of the letter.

'Dear Mrs Sampson. It is with very deepest grief that I write to inform you that your son Lance Corporal H Sampson had died of his wounds received in action on the 6th October. He was wounded in the head and lived only to gain the advanced dressing station. I buried him myself yesterday in the old British Cemetery, his officers and a number of his comrades being present

His older brother Lance Corporal Arthur Sampson, Devon Regiment, had already been invalided home and was an inmate at the Ashcombe House Red Cross Hospital. The Mercury at the time also stated that his mother was a widow, but the official information gives the name of a father. He attended Christ Church School.

Gilbert Day. (Dev237795). Holland Street, Weston super Mare. He was a Leading Seaman in the Royal Navy, based at Devonport (Plymouth) where his wife and small daughter lived. He had joined the navy as a boy and at the time of his death from influenza., 13 October 1918 'at sea' age 28, he had been in the service 13 years. His ship, the light cruiser HMS Talbot had seen service in several key trouble spots.

HMS Talbot's war-time adventures began in the English Channel where in 1914 she captured a German merchant ship. Then in March the following year she arrived at the Mediterranean island of Tenedos (Bocaada today) off the coast of Turkey just south of the Dardanelles to take part in the Battle of Gallipoli. Here she supported the beach landings including assisting HMS Goliath (see entry for Henry Morle 1915). She remained at Gallipoli throughout the campaign and with its failure she covered the evacuation of Anzac Beach in 1915 and Helles in January 1916.

We must remember them

In May 1916 HMS Talbot was operating off the East Africa coast as part of the Cape Command and from then until November she moved between there and the Western Cape in South Africa (see map below). She was active during the German East Africa Campaign and in 1917 she was off the coast of Tanzania when with the second of the German commerce raids the Germans entered Portuguese East Africa and continued their campaign, living off Portuguese supplies.

By 1918 she was off the Cape of Good Hope. Cape Town and nearby Simon's Town were the scene of massive shipping movement, including hospital ships, during the war. She had arrived in Simon's Town from East Africa on the 20th August. At the beginning of October there was an outbreak of Spanish Flu' on board (see note below) with as many as 50 of the crew down with it any one day (according to the ship's daily log). This lasted until the beginning of November.

The log for the 13th October records that Gilbert Day died in the Royal Naval Hospital in Simon's Town. On the following day it records that a funeral party was landed: the log states 'probably for Day's funeral'. He seems to have been the only fatality from the flu' outbreak on board the ship. The ship set sail for Durban on the 19th November.

The Simon's Town Dido Valley cemetery, (where Gilbert Day is buried) contains 77 burials of WW1, most of them naval personnel. Gilbert Day had four other brothers serving during the war. He had been a pupil at the Christ Church School.



HMS Talbot (Source: Photo Ships. naval- history.net)

The influenza pandemic 1918-1920.

The 1918 flu pandemic (January 1918 – December 1920) was an unusually deadly influenza pandemic infecting 500 million people around the world from remote Pacific islands to the Arctic, and resulted in the deaths of 50 to 100 million making it one of the deadliest natural disasters in human history. Most influenza outbreaks disproportionately killed juvenile, elderly, or already weakened patients; in contrast, the 1918 pandemic predominantly killed previously healthy young adults.



Africa movements of HMS Talbot. (Source: naval-history.net)

We must remember them

Percy Edward Austin (second lieutenant). Alfred Street. He served in the Somerset Light Infantry (SLI) 1st battalion and died of his wounds 24th October 1918 aged 21, *'just when the splendid armies of the allies are on the verge of victory'*, as the Mercury put it at the time in its usual flowery way. At the time of his death his battalion was taking part in the Battle of the Selle (17 -25 October), as part of the Hundred Days Offensive and as the war on the Western Front was nearing its end.

Although not named in the letter he is buried in the Wellington Cemetery, Rieux-en-Cambresis in France. Rieux-en-Cambresis is a village 9 kilometres north-east of Cambrai. Wellington Cemetery is 800 metres north of the village which was captured in October 1918, in the Pursuit to the Selle, and the cemetery was made by battalions of the Duke of Wellington's Regiment immediately after.

He had gone to France in 1916 and at one stage had been stationed at a listening post, giving good service that resulted in his being recommended for a commission. In March 1917 he was invalided home suffering from fever and trench foot. After several months in hospital and convalescence in Scotland he joined the home unit of his regiment and a few weeks later entered the Newmarket Cadet School for a three month course of training prior to taking his commission. His father Edward James, then in his 50s, also served in France, with the Royal Veterinary Corp. Another brother, probably Charles, also served in France with the SLI, at one stage alongside his brother.

Percy Austin was born at Long Crichel in Dorset in 1887 and educated at Sturminster Newton. He was one of eleven children. His family had moved to Weston about six years before the start of the war. Prior to his enlistment as a trooper with the SLI early in the war he had worked for a local company Messrs Eastman.

The Battle of Selle; edited from the history-of-war website.

'The battle of the Selle, 17th – 25th October 1918, saw the British force the Germans out of a new defensive line along the River Selle having already been forced out of the Hindenburg Line. It had been preceded by the Battle of Cambrai which had been a success but the Allied advance had then slowed in the face of increasing German resistance. By 10th October the Germans were taking up a new position on the River Selle, close to Le Cateau.

On 17th October the British attacked on a ten mile front south of Le Cateau. Their aim was to reach a line between Valenciennes and the Sambre and Oise Canal. From there the key German railway centre at Aulnoye would be in artillery range. But this attack made slow progress – after two days the right wing had made the biggest advance, a move of five miles. So it was then widened.

By the evening of 19th October a position had been reached from where an attack to the north of Le Cateau could be launched. This took place early on the morning of 20th October and by the end of the day they had advanced two miles.

Early on 23rd October (the day before Austin was killed) an all-out night attack was launched and this time the British advanced six miles in two days. They were now twenty miles behind the rear line of the Hindenburg Line, and the Germans, who were on the back foot, formed another new line but this too was penetrated on 4th November (at the battle of the Sambre), after which the speed of the Allied advance increased.

The British advanced as far between 4-11 November as they had between 27 September and 3 November, and as the war ended the Canadians liberated Mons'.

In a letter to Percy's mother a lieutenant colonel VHB Missendee who was commanding the SLI wrote: *'It is with great regret I have to tell you that your son was wounded in an unsuccessful attack on the 24th October and died the same day at the 10th Field Ambulance. He is buried in the cemetery at the cross roads near Though he had not been with us for long I had formed a high opinion of him.'*

Sergeant Arthur Henry Poole. Clarendon Road. He served with the Gloucestershire Regiment, and died of pneumonia following influenza 16th November 1918 (five days after the armistice was signed.).

He had joined up at the commencement of hostilities and had been in France for nearly two years when he was first reported in the Weston Gazette 20th October 1917 as having been wounded in the shoulder (seriously, partially blown away by shell fire). That is according to a letter to his wife Olive, who was living in Beaufort Road, from the sister in charge of a 'hospital in France'. This date would have coincided with the Third Battle of Ypres and it is known that the Gloucesters were involved with its final battle, the Battle of Passchendaele.

We must remember them

He had already seen action with the Gloucesters on The Somme and at Delville Wood. At one time he was recorded as being part of the regiment's trench mortar battery. His wounds required him to have several major operations and he was ultimately discharged from the Army. He did however continue to be treated, at the Ashcombe House Red Cross Hospital in the town (this later became the maternity hospital). Because of his weak state he eventually succumbed to influenza which turned to pneumonia. He died after two weeks of illness.

He was educated at Christ Church School after which he joined his father as a decorator. He was a regular attendee at the Parish Church. He had a reputation as a sportsman, primarily in swimming and football. As a water polo player he had played at county level for the three years 1908 to 1910. In football he had played for Christ Church Old Boys and the WSM AFC and then later served as a referee.

While at home on leave in 1916 he had got married, to Olive. He had a younger brother William who had been serving with the Royal Army Medical Corp and who had also died of flu, in August 1918. His details are recorded earlier in this section.

According to the WSM family history society: *Ashcombe House was a mansion built off Milton Road, Weston-s-Mare for the Capell family. After being empty for a number of years it was compulsorily purchased by Weston Urban District Council in 1914 under a bill sanctioned by Parliament. It was loaned by the Council for use as an Auxiliary Red Cross Hospital with a capacity of up to 82 beds. In 1917 a large annexe was built in front of the building to increase the bed capacity to 166.*

Private William Richard Purcell Good Wilson (89453). Swiss Road. He enlisted in the Royal Army Medical Corp (Y Company) in November 1913. At that time, age 17 years 10 months, he was declared to be in good physical condition. As an already member of the RAMC he left for active service the day after Britain had declared war on Germany on 4th August 1914. He went with his company to the East Coast and spent the next 18 months serving at home before going to the Gallipoli Peninsular. There he took part in the ill-fated campaign where according to the Mercury at the time he contracted malaria (it was more likely para-typhoid as indicated in official documents). He was sent home via Egypt and subsequently to Chichester Hospital in England.

After convalescence he rejoined his regiment in Colchester. Shortly afterwards he suffered an accident, badly damaging one knee joint and cartilage which several operations failed to correct. Because of this permanent and painful damage and frequently recurring fever (pyrexia) he was discharged with good character and qualified in first aid and ambulance duties. But he was unable to walk without the aid of a walking stick.

There is mention of a medal he had been awarded and/or badge -Silver War Badge No 25592*.

He died in England 16th November 1918, age 21, and is buried at Milton Road Cemetery in Weston.

Prior to being called up for active service he had been apprenticed to the engineering department of the local Bristol Tramway and Carriage Company. But on discharge his health was too poor for him to return to this so he took up an apprenticeship in mechanical dentistry with Mr C H Midgley. It was then he was overtaken by a final bout of illness (presumably recurrence of the typhoid) resulting in his death. He was given a semi-military funeral including union jack and gun carriage. The Mercury carried details of the service at the time.

He had been a regular church attendee and for some years a member of St Saviour's Choir.

According to Wiki. The **Silver War Badge was issued in the United Kingdom and the British Empire to service personnel who had been honourably discharged due to wounds or sickness from military service in World War I. The badge, sometimes known as the "Discharge Badge", the "Wound Badge" or "Services Rendered Badge", was first issued in September 1916, along with an official certificate of entitlement.*

Private Samuel Henry Sweet (29240). Royal Crescent. He served with the 1st/4th Battalion of the King's Shropshire Light Infantry and died 19th November 1918 in France (eight days after the signing of the armistice) of pneumonia, following influenza. He had originally signed up with the Somerset Light Infantry before transferring to the Shropshires. During 1918 the 1st/4th Battalion was actively engaged. The list includes The First Battle of Arras, The Battle of Albert, The Battle of the Scarpe, The Battle of the Canal du Nord, The Battle of the Cambrai, The pursuit to the Selle, The Battle of the Sambre, The passage of the Grand Honelle. And at the end of the war it was still in France.

Samuel Sweet is remembered at Awoingt British Cemetery not far from Cambrai.

We must remember them

Awoingt British Cemetery was begun in the latter half of October 1918 and used until the middle of December; the village had been captured from the Germans on 9th -10th October. By 28th October, the 38th, 45th and 59th Casualty Clearing Stations were posted in the neighbourhood, and the great majority of the burials were made from those hospital.

He was born in Porlock and his family lived in Wrington but at the time of his death his wife and three children were living in Weston. Prior to the war he worked as a gardener in the employ of Mr H Rowles of 'Tyndale' in the town.

He had been looking forward to coming home as war ended. But a 'field card' dated 18th November stated he had been admitted to hospital (probably one of those referred to above). This was followed by a telegram on the 19th to say he had died. On the 16th November one of his brothers had been laid to rest in the churchyard at Hutton. He too had died of pneumonia.

Driver Ernest Cecil Beacham. (506214). Little George Street. He served as a driver in the 501st Field Company of the Royal Engineers and died 25th December 1918, aged 25 (after the signing of the armistice). He is remembered at the Sarigol Military Cemetery, Kriston in Greece. He was born in 1889 and was married to Alice in 1913. The 1911 census shows his occupation as a carter while the 1891 census shows his father as Dairy Foreman. In 1901 his mother, aged 34, is listed as widowed and working as a charwoman.

As part of the 27th Division, 501st Field Company of the Royal Engineers had served in France and Flanders until the end of 1915 when it was shipped to Salonika and stayed in the Macedonia region until the end of the war.

According to Wiki the 27th Division completed its disembarkation at Salonika on 17th February 1916. Wiki gives a lot of information about its involvement with fighting the Bulgarian Army. Little happened on the British part of the Macedonian front during 1917 and the 27th Division spent almost two years in the malarial Strumica Valley. The only significant action occurring was when the division took part in the capture of Homondos on 14th October. The front became active again in September 1918 when the Allies began the final offensive and 27th Division was engaged in the capture of the Roche Noire Salient, followed by the passage of the Vardar and pursuit to the Strumica Valley.

The Armistice of Salonika was signed by Bulgaria on 29th September 1918, ending hostilities on the Macedonian Front. 27th Division withdrew back down the Struma, but in December it embarked for the Black Sea,

1919.

The war has ended but the casualties continue.

Captain John Eric Jackson Barstow RAF. The Lodge, Bristol Road. Always keen on horses he served with the Household Cavalry and later in the RAF. He died 27th January 1919 when the aircraft he was piloting crashed near Caterham in Surrey. He was aged 23. He is buried in Weston cemetery (Milton Road). Part of the stained glass window at the east end of Christ Church was also given by the family in his memory (see page 62).

At the time of his death it was reported in the national press, and quoted a few days later in the Weston Mercury that: *'Late yesterday afternoon Captain Eric Barstow RAF was flying across country and when near Oxted encountered a snow storm. It was also foggy. He was flying rather low and apparently unable to see his way he crashed on a bank in Marden Park. The machine was badly smashed and the airman was instantly killed.'*

Also a few days later (31st January) a Times obituary stated the following:

"Eric Jackson-Barstow RAF who was killed while flying near Caterham in Surrey on January 27 aged 23 was the only son of Mr J.J. Jackson-Barstow and Mrs Jackson-Barstow of "The Lodge" Weston-Super-Mare. At the age of 19 Captain Barstow enlisted in the North Somerset Yeomanry in Bath and took part in the battle of November 17th 1914 outside Ypres in which a number of the yeoman were killed and others, including Barstow were wounded. He was given a commission after a few weeks sick leave, and was appointed ADC to General Lee, serving on the East Coast.

When thoroughly restored to health he applied for a transfer to the Royal Air Force. He gained his "wings" in 1917, and had since been flying regularly in France and Germany. He was making for Kenley Aerodrome when a heavy snow storm came on and in endeavouring to land he crashed into a bank in Marden Park. His mother was a daughter of Sir Abraham Woodiwiss Derby"

We must remember them

He was the only son of J J Barstow JP, DL and was educated at Farleigh School in Weston and at St Andrews in Eastbourne and later at Malvern College before going on to Pembroke College Cambridge. He was there when war broke out. At Malvern College he had been a second officer in the Officer Training Corp.

On the outbreak of war, rather than apply for a commission he chose to enlist as a trooper in the North Somerset Yeomanry. After training at Forest Row he went with his regiment (by truck) in order to 'take over the thinly held British line just outside Ypres', to quote the Mercury report. It goes on '*it was the 17th November 1914 (First Battle of Ypres. 19th October – 22nd November) that the North Somersets covered themselves with glory repulsing an attack by Prussian Guard.*'

This took place from eight o'clock in the morning to one pm during which time he suffered concussion from an exploding enemy shell. The only other 'injury' was to his cap badge. Later that day as it became dusk he volunteered with others to retrieve his dead or wounded comrade. While doing this he was struck by a machine gun bullet which shattered his left forearm. This severe wounding ended his days with B Squadron, his invaliding home and his obtaining a commission in the RAF.

Captain (later Major) Stephen Leslie Hibbard. For most of the war he served with the Machine Gun Corp (MGC). He died 21st August 1922 in Reading aged 28. At the time of his death his father Harry, a prominent member of the two local golf clubs, was still alive and living in Trewartha Park which presumably explains how he comes to be on the Christ Church Memorial. The cause of his death is recorded as Diabetes Mellitus and at the time of his death he was working as a commercial traveller (salesman) in pickles and jams.

He was educated at Marlborough College and prior to the war worked for the paper, printing and packaging company E S & A Robinson of Bristol. He was originally commissioned into the Royal Fusiliers but was seconded to the MGC in 1916. He was the commanding officer of N° 91 Company in the 7th Division. After drafting into the MGC he went to the Front in 1916, taking part in the whole of the Somme offensive, including Delville and Mametz Woods fighting and the capture of Beaumont Hamel, also at Paschendaele before the Division was sent to Italy in 1918. By that time he had been mentioned twice in dispatches (4/1/1917 and 22/5/1917).

After the armistice he joined the North Russian Expeditionary Force, with rank of temporary major fighting the Revolutionary Army through the winter of 1918/1919, and was at Archangel in 1919. He was mentioned for the third time in despatches (5/6/1919) while serving there. He relinquished his commission on completion of service 23 July 1919, according to the London Gazette 15th August 1919, and retained the rank of major.



Western intervention in the Caucasus and South Russian Civil war, 1918-20 with arrival of first British guns in Baku. IWM

The Machine Gun Corps (MGC) was a corps of the British Army, formed in October 1915 in response to the need for more effective use of machine guns on the Western Front in World War I. It saw action in all the main theatres of war, including France, Belgium, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Salonika, East Africa and Italy. In its short history the MGC gained an enviable record for heroism as a front line fighting force. Indeed, in the latter part of the war, as tactics changed to defence in depth, it commonly served well in advance of the front line.

It had a less enviable record for its casualty rate. Some 170,500 officers and men served in the MGC with 62,049 becoming casualties, including 12,498 killed, earning it the nickname 'the Suicide Club'. At the end of hostilities the MGC was again re-organised in a smaller form as many of its soldiers returned to civilian life. However, the Corps continued to see active service in subsequent wars: **the Russian Civil War**, the Third Anglo-Afghan War, and in the Northwest Frontier of India. It also served prominently in the British army which occupied parts of Germany in the

We must remember them

period between the 1918 Armistice and the Versailles Peace Treaty. Its equipment and training made it possible for a relatively small garrison to control a large population.

Samuel James House RN. (344854). Family home Beaufort Road, Weston super Mare but he was stationed at Devonport. He served in the Royal Navy aboard HMS Auricula as a Shipwright Second Class and died on the 24th February 1919 age 38. His death certificate shows the cause of death simply as suffocation from a coal fire. He is remembered /buried at the Plymouth Weston Mills Cemetery. Prior to the war he was a private in the Royal Marine Light Infantry as a joiner and lived with his wife and three children in Plymouth.

During the war he was awarded the Italy Medal of Valour, exactly why is not known at this stage. But, if we have the correct medal, this is awarded for deeds of outstanding gallantry. The bronze, silver and gold medals were instituted in 1932 'To distinguish and publicly honour the authors of heroic military acts.' The citation on the Gazette reads:

Gazette No. 30386. Bronze Medal for Military Valour. The KING has been graciously pleased to confer with His Majesty the King of Italy to award the officer with the Bronze Medal for Military Valour for distinguished services rendered during the war.

The Auricula was one of 28 Anchuas Class corvettes (lightly armed convoy escort and protection warships) built under the Emergency War Programme for the Royal Navy in World War One in response to the resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare by the Germans and the final recognition of the need for convoys and their suitable escort. These ships were deliberately designed to resemble merchant ships but had many hidden weapons. They were single screw vessels with triple hulls at the bow to give extra protection. It was built by Armstrong Whitworth and launched in October 1917, scrapped in 1923.



HMS Auricula in coastal waters. IWM

Weston Mercury references, where found, to the names on the WW1 Christ Church memorial.

Name (alphabetically)	Date of death	Date in Mercury	Page Number	Remarks in the Mercury
1914				
Cox HP	19 December	No report		
Day C	26 October	31/10/1914	8	Seaman killed accidentally
Dickinson LT	17 November.	28/11/1914	2	Trooper killed (with photo)
Fear SA	15 September	12/12/1914	2	Photo
Gould JD	19 October	05/06/1915	2	Killed
Harris F	17 November.	No report		
Mayled B	25 November.	28/11/1914	2	Died of wounds
Thomas TH	17 November.	No report		

We must remember them

1915					
Cole SF	a)	14 May	22/05/1915	2	Trooper killed
	b)		22/05/1915	5	Photo
	c)		29/05/1915	2	Letter
Lane J	a)	16 May	27/02/1915	2	Letter
	b)		05/06/1915	2	L/cpl RWF killed
Morle H	a)	13 May	15/05/1915	5	Lost on HMS Goliath
	b)		22/05/1915	2	Stoker killed (photo)
Pitman F		16 August	18/09/1915	2	Pte, Royal Irish killed.
Tancock WS		9 August	No report		
1916					
Addicott PG		18 August	No report		
Browning WJ	a)	16September	22/01/1916	2	Letter Killed
	b)		23/09/1916	2	
	c)		30/09/1916	2	
	d)		14/10/1916	3	
Channing F		4 September	16/09/1916	3	Killed + photo
Gabriel EE	a)	14 June	19/02/1916	2	Died of disease
	b)		08/04/1916	2	Letter
	c)		01/07/1916	5	Mesopotamia
	d)		08/07/1916	3	Note and letter
	e)		08/07/1916	5	Photo
Gillard PE		16 September.	No report		
Lewis F	a)	3 September.	07/10/1916	3	Believed killed
	b)		21/10/1916	3	Killed (photo)
Parker CH	a)	7 December	23/12/1916	3	Killed
	b)		06/01/1917	3	
	c)		06/01/1917	5	
Poole CH	a)	14 October	11/11/1916	5	Wilts RGT killed
	b)		11/11/1916	2	Photo
	c)		18/11/1916	4	
Young AE		16 August	No report		
1917					
Andow EWR		7 June	23/06/1917	5	Pte Glos Reg Killed + photo
Channing H		30 November	14/10/1916	3	Recovering
Curtis CW		4 August	18/08/1917	5	Died Mesopotamia
Gibbons C		4 June	16/06/1917	5	Killed + photo
Hobbs G		8 April	21/04/1917	2	Gunner Mortar Btl- killed
Mattick H		24 July	04/08/1917	5	Killed (wounds + gas)
Parsons MF	a)	12 October	21/10/1917	5	Killed
	b)		03/11/1917	5	Photo
Pfaff FT	a)	31 July	25/08/1917	5	Killed
	b)		01/09/1917	5	Photo
Radford WW	a)	24 April	19/05/1917	5	Pte Worcs Rgt missing
	b)		27/07/1918	5	Reported killed + photo
Tanner HJ	a)	9 April	21/04/1917	2	Capt killed + photo
	b)			2	Note
Widlake A	a)	16 August	20/10/1917	5	Missing

We must remember them

b)		20/04/1918	5	Now dead
1918				
Addicott LH	29 April	18/05/1918	5	Gunner RFA killed
Austin PE a)	24 October	21/04/1917	2	Pte Som. Light Inf.
b)		02/11/1918	5	2 nd Light killed
Ballam RC	20 January	26/01/1918	5	Cook's mate drowned, photo
Beacham EC	25 December	No report		
Boulton CF a)	14 June	12/10/1918	5	Signaller POW
b)				Pte Som. Light Inf. died as POW
Day G a)	13 October	26/10/1918	5	Died of 'flu
b)		02/11/1918	5	Photo
Dodge WH	6 September	No report		
Edwards F a)	22 March	12/10/18	5	Pte Royal Bucks killed
b)		19/10/18	2	Photo
Fear AC	1 September	28/09/1918	5	Pte Drag'n Grds Killed+photo
Godby CFE	7 October	19/10/1918	2	Sgt Royal Irish Fusiliers killed +photo
Hadley CSF	7 May	18/05/1918	5	Pte Glos RGT dies of wounds + photo
Palmer H	18 April	01/04/1918	5	Pte Royal Berks Asphyxiated coal fire
Poole AH	16 November	23/11/1918	5	Sgt dies of 'flu + photo
Poole WG	24 August	07/09/1918	5	Died of illness Egypt + photo
Radford GE a)	22 September	14/09/1918	5	RGA awarded M.M
b)		28/09/1918	5	Wounded
c)		05/10/1918	5	Died of wounds
d)		12/10/1918	5	Tributes
e)		08/02/1919	5	Sgt RGA Postumous award M.M
Sampson HR	6 October	19/10/1918	5	Som. Light Inf died of wounds
Sweet SH	19 November	14/12/1918	5	Pte Shrops LI died of 'flu
Sydenham F	25 August	21/09/1918	5	Pte Glos RGT killed + photo
Tanner WA	15 June	29/06/1918	2	Pte Glos RGT killed Italy
Urch T	21 August	14/09/1918	5	Pte Devons killed + photo. <i>(Not recorded on the memorial)</i>
Way FJ a)	3 July	13/07/1918	5	Pte Midd'x Rgt died of wounds
b)		20/07/1918	5	Photo
Weakley W	26 September	05/10/1918	5	Pte Som LI died of gas poisoning
Webb AGE	10 August	17/08/1918	5	Pte ASC MT killed
Westlake WB	27 May	04/01/1919	5	Durham RG Missing believed killed
Wilson WPG	16 November	23/11/1918	5	RAMC with photo
Woollacott CE a)	27 May	03/06/1917	3	Ptr RAMC letter
b)		27/07/1918	5	1 st Northumberland Field Ambulance
Young VGT	21 August	21/09/1918	5	Able Seaman RN killed + photo
1919				
Barstow JEJ	28 November 1914 27 January 1919	Trooper NSY 04/12/1915	2	Previously wounded Memorial Window
Hibbard SL	21 August 1922	25/07/1917	5	Temp Captain Machine Gun Corp
House SJ	24 February 1919	24/02/19	2	Died of wounds at Greenock

We must remember them



Christ Church School today.

List of pupils who attended Christ Church School and who were killed or died as a result of WW1

LH Addicott
RC Ballam
F Channing
C Day
G Day
E Gabriel
C Gibbons

J Gould
S House
J Lane
F Lewis
B Mayled
H Mattick
FT Pfaff

A Poole
CH Poole
W Poole
H Palmer
H Sampson
F Sydenham
HJ Tanner

T Urch
WB Westlake
W Wilson
A Webb

We must remember them



*Two views of the section of East Window
dedicated to Captain John Eric Jackson
Barstow*



PEMBROKE COLLEGE		235
BARLOW, P. Capt., Spec. List (Recruiting Staff)		1885
✠BARNETT, R. W. Capt., King's Royal Rifle Corps; Major, G.S.O. 2. (W.) <i>M.C. and Bar</i> <i>Killed in action 12 Aug. 1918</i>		1911
BARNICOT, H. 2nd Lieut., Labour Corps		1901
BARNINGHAM, V. Lieut., R.A.S.C.		1911
BARRAN, H. B. Capt., R.F.A.(T.F.) (W.) <i>M.C. M.</i>		1908
BARRELL, F. M. Lieut., Gloucestershire Regt.(T.F.)		1911
BARRELL, K. C. Lieut., R.E.(T.F.) (P.)		1914
BARRETT, Rev. W. E. C. C.F. 4th Class, R.A.C.D.		1898
BARROW, P. L. Capt., Worcestershire Regt. and Gen. Staff (Intelligence). <i>M.</i>		1911
BARROW, R. L. Lieut., I.A.R.O., attd. 41st Cavalry		1907
BARRY, A. G. Capt., Manchester Regt.; Lieut.-Col., <i>M.G.C. D.S.O. M.C. M 3.</i>		1905
BARRY, C. B. Capt., I.A.R.O., attd. 17th Cavalry		1905
¹ BARSTOW, J. E. J. Capt., N. Somerset Yeo.; A.D.C.; [1914] <i>Hon. Capt. (A.), R.A.F. (W.)</i>		
✠BARTON, C. G. Capt., R. Inniskilling Fus. <i>M.C. M 2.</i> <i>Killed in action 17 Oct. 1918</i>		1909
✠BARWELL, F. L. Capt., London Regt. (Queen's West- minster Rifles); attd. R.F.C. (W.) <i>Killed in action 29 April 1917</i>	[1914]	
BATES, J. V. Major, R.A.M.C. <i>M.C. m.</i>		1910
BATHURST, H. A. 2nd Lieut., R.G.A.		1901
✠BAXTER, W. H. B. Capt., R. Warwickshire Regt.(T.F.) (W.) <i>Killed in action 27 Aug. 1917</i>		1911
BEAUMONT, J. W. F. Lieut., R.G.A.		1896
✠BECK, C. B. H. 2nd Lieut., Cheshire Regt.(T.F.) <i>Died 18 Aug. 1915 of wounds received in action in Gallipoli 17 Aug. 1915</i>		1910
BECKER, W. T. L. 2nd Lieut., Manchester Regt.; Major, York and Lancaster Regt.		1910
✠BELL, A. F. Pte., London Regt. (L.R.B.); 2nd Lieut., [1914] S. Wales Borderers <i>Killed in action 12 Aug. 1915</i>		
BELL, A. T. Pte., R.A.S.C.		1909
BELLWOOD, K. B. Surgeon Lieut., R.N. <i>O.B.E.</i>		1909
✠BENNETT, S. L. R.N.V.R. (Armoured Car Section); Flt. Sub-Lieut., R.N.A.S. <i>Killed in action 29 April 1917</i>		1910
BENNION, C. F. Capt., R.H.A.(T.F.)		1903
BENNITT, F. W. Pte., R.A.M.C.		1892

¹ Killed in flying accident after the armistice.

The picture above is of the memorial plaque installed at John Barstow's old Pembroke College, Cambridge listing those of the College who died in the 1914-1918 including his name and the fact that he died in a flying accident.

We must remember them

"The **Cross of Sacrifice** is a Commonwealth war memorial designed in 1918 by Sir Reginald Blomfield for the Imperial War Graves Commission (now the Commonwealth War Graves Commission). It is present in Commonwealth war cemeteries containing 40 or more graves. Its shape is an elongated Latin cross with proportions more typical of the Celtic cross, with the shaft and crossarm octagonal in section. It ranges in height from 18 to 24 feet (5.5 to 7.3 m). A bronze longsword, blade down, is affixed to the front of the cross (and sometimes to the back as well). It is usually mounted on an octagonal base. It may be freestanding or incorporated into other cemetery features. The Cross of Sacrifice is widely praised, widely imitated, and the archetypal British war memorial. It is the most imitated of Commonwealth war memorials, and duplicates and imitations have been used around the world."



Two views of the Cross of Sacrifice in Milton Cemetery

Photos by John Hinchliffe.



Information from Milton Road Cemetery concerning our men who were interred there. Courtesy of Weston Family History Society.

Clifford Day. Book 23-42 (11532), aged 17. Son of John Day and wife. Died Devonport Hospital. Buried 30th October 1914.

Bert Mayled. Book 23-45 (11562). Yeoman aged 25. Manchester Hospital. Buried 30th November 1914.

Harold Mattick. Book 25-21 (12335). Discharged soldier. Aged 22. 143 Victoria Road, Swindon. Buried 28th July 1917.

Arthur Edgar Webb. Book 25-46 (12587). Private in ASE. Aged 29. Greek Military Hospital. Buried 15th August 1918.

No detail records on FHS file after 31st October 1918.

William Richard Purcell Good Wilson.

Arthur Henry Poole

Samuel James House.

Christ Church Parish street map.



We must remember them

The streets where the men who died or their families lived (and the men's location where it differs).

Alfred Street

LH Addicott
PG Addicott
PE Austin
RC Ballam
F Channing
H Channing
F Pitman
H Samson (mother - Glamorgan)
WA Tanner (parents – Pottery Cottage)
TH Thomas
CE Woollacott

Alma Street

CH Poole
VG Young

Arundell Road

LT Dickinson

Ashcombe Park Road

C Day
F Edwards (mother)
J Lane
H Palmer
WW Radford (Parents in New Street)
W Weakley

Baker Street

C Gibbons (parents)

Beaufort Road

SJ House (parents -Plymouth)

The Lodge, Bristol Road

JEJ Barstow

St Gabriels, Milton Road

EE Gabriel

Clarendon Road

F Harris
AH Poole
WG Poole (parents - Exmouth)

George Street

W Browning
PE Gillard
CS Hadley (Camden House)
F Lewis
H Mattick
F Parsons
FT Pfaff (parents – London)
F Sydenham
WS Tancock

Gordon Road

AE Webb (parents – Alma Street)

Hill Road

T Urch

Holland Street

G Day

Jubilee Road

CF Boulton
CW Curtis
H Morle

Little George Street

EC Beacham

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Locking Road

SF Cole (parents - Alma Street)
SA Fear (parents - Aldershot)

Meadow Street

WR Andow

Meadow Villas

HJ Tanner

Milton Road

B Mayled (Renwick Villa)

Wadham Street

G Radford (parents - Llanelly)

Ashcombe House Lodge

A Widlake (parents - East Lodge, Upper
Bristol Road)

Sandford Road

C Hobbs (parents - 12 New Street)

Swiss Road

JD Gould
FJ Way
WB Westlake
WPG Wilson

Royal Crescent

SH Sweet

Kingsley Trewartha Park

SL Hibbard (father - Reading)

Wooler Street

AE Young

Clevedon Road

CFE Godby

Rose Vale

AC Fear (parents - Bridgenorth, Salop)

Anstice Terrace

CH Parker

Severn Avenue

HP Cox (mother – London)

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