

St Peter's Church, Little Aston

Review of the Seven Commonwealth War Graves in the Graveyard By Mike Fletcher



Introduction

This review has been prepared to commemorate the seven graves in the graveyard that meet the published criteria of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) which honours the 1.7 million men and women who died in the armed forces of the British Empire during the First and Second World Wars, and ensures they will never be forgotten. The CWGC work began with building, and now maintaining, cemeteries and memorials at 23,000 locations in more than 150 countries and territories and managing the official casualty database archives for their member nations. The CWGC core principles, articulated in their Royal Charter in 1917, are as relevant now as they were over a hundred years ago:

- Each of the Commonwealth dead should be commemorated by name on a headstone or memorial
- Headstones and memorials should be permanent
- Headstones should be uniform
- There should be equality of treatment for the war dead irrespective of rank or religion.

CWGC are responsible for the commemoration of:

- Personnel who died between 04 August 1914 and 31 August 1921; and between 03 September 1939 and 31 December 1947 whilst serving in a Commonwealth military force or specified auxiliary organisation
- Personnel who died between 04 August 1914 and 31 August 1921; and between 03 September 1939 and 31 December 1947 after they were discharged from a Commonwealth military force, if their death was caused by their wartime service
- Commonwealth civilians who died between 03 September 1939 and 31 December 1947 as a consequence of enemy action, Allied weapons of war or whilst in an enemy prison camp.

Military casualties buried in a grave are commemorated with a CWGC headstone or pedestal marker. If they have been identified, their military details are engraved in a standard layout. Some may also have a religious emblem and personal inscription chosen by their family (we have four). Those with no known grave are commemorated on one of the Memorials to the Missing, according to where and when they died.

Individuals who died away from the battlefield, or after they were discharged may have been buried by their family in a churchyard or civil cemetery and their grave marked by a private memorial (we have three).

Commonwealth civilian casualties from the Second World War are commemorated in specially bound volumes of the Roll of Honour held at Westminster Abbey in London.

Background

My interest was initially raised in 2020 when I learned that a CWGC plaque had been erected at my previous church, St Peter's Church (see p1), Formby and no one knew officially how and when this occurred. I undertook similar research in time for the 75th VE Day celebrations later that year but the Covid-19 pandemic intervened. Whilst I enjoy undertaking family research, it is not helped when around 60% of service records from WWI were destroyed in a bombing raid during WWII which struck the War Office repository in Arnside Street, London. Where a record of enlistment is available, I have given the information although such data is not strictly necessary for this review.

I asked myself during early research "Why are these graves here at all?" After all, I have visited WWI graves in France and the Menin Gate in Belgium; I've seen civic memorials in Formby and those more formal like the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, Staffordshire and the Cenotaph in Whitehall, London. Many didn't serve overseas in France, Belgium or Germany. So why are there CWGC graves in St Peter's Churchyard? Well, the answer came with the realisation that there was a Home Theatre of War in addition to the perhaps more familiar theatres such as the Western Front, Italian Front, Battle of France, Battle of Britain. Those killed in action were buried where they fell whereas the sick and wounded were transferred from their individual theatre of action to the Home Theatre. All seven along with thousands of others signed on the dotted line not knowing what lay ahead. They were not only willing but actually gave their lives so that others might live and for that, we will remember them.

At the time of drafting this review, we are slowly emerging from another challenging time with the Coronavirus pandemic. This time it is 2022. Appendix 4 – "Spanish Flu" explains an earlier pandemic in 1918 and the numbers involved. At the time of drafting this review and according to the World Health Organisation's provisional figures, Covid-19 has resulted in 615 million confirmed cases globally resulting in 6.5 million deaths, around 1.0% or 1 in 94. The respective UK figures are 23.7 million cases and 190 thousand deaths, around 0.8% or 1 in 124.

I have added footnotes when appropriate where additional information can be given either about an individual or point to a broader, common interest in the Appendices. On a lighter note, an interesting family history emerged during the research, linking two of the seven families. Two sisters in one family married two brothers in another and the patriarchs of two families each owned Little Aston Hall.

I am grateful to the invaluable help given to me by individuals and by websites in preparing this review. I have listed them formally in Appendix 7 - Acknowledgements. I would like to record my special thanks to Revd Philip Daniel for proof reading and keeping me going, to Margaret Pye for providing locally held Parish records upon request and to Lynne Gibson for the loan of a local history book about Little Aston and the surrounding area. I am deeply grateful to them all.

Finally, a map of the seven Commonwealth War Graves in the churchyard is at Appendix 8.

October 2022

In Memory of
Sergeant

John Wollaston Keith Allen

740664, 18 Sqdn., Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve who died on 04 Sep 1940 Age 27

Son of Edwin G. and Dorothy Allen, of Streetly

Remembered with Honour

John was the only child of Edwin and Dorothy (nee Wollaston) and was born in 1913. The 1921 Census finds John at home The Coppice, Middleton Road, Streetly with mum and dad. His father's occupation is shown as bread bakery manager with Scribbans & Co, Hockley, Birmingham which soon led to an interesting back story. Note John's middle name taken from his mother's maiden name, not uncommon at this period in time.

Whilst John was an only child, his father Edwin (1880) had four siblings: Nellie (1874), Gilbert (1875), Ada (1878) and Elsie (1886). Edwin served in the South Africa Campaign 1899-1901 with the Imperial Yeomanry. He was wounded in the neck at Frobisher Bay, was subsequently discharged as medically unfit for further service and received a service pension. He married Dorothy in 1908 and by the 1911 Census was already the manager of a bread bakery, presumably Scribbans as subsequently revealed in the 1921 Census.

As a recent import to the West Midlands from the North West, I had not heard of Scribbans bakery but many of my friends at St Peter's Church had of course. This prompted further research that reminded me that the volume of information available and published on Scribbans bakery might distract me from my original purpose so we will swiftly move on. Two dynasties were about to successfully merge. Aged 17, Thomas Charles Scribbans Snr (1843) was employed as a labourer in a Berkshire flour mill. Within 10 years and by the 1871 Census, he had moved to Birmingham, married Ruth Tilbury and had two children Mary (1868) and Bertha (1871). His occupation was baker employing one boy. Another 10 years two more children Thomas Charles Jnr (Charlie) (1875) and John Henry (Harry) (1877) now employing three men. By the 1891 Census two more children Ellen (1881) and Mary (1886), with Thomas Snr a baker and confectioner and Thomas Jnr a baker. In 1901, two of the three Allen sisters Nellie and Ada married the two Scribbans brothers Thomas Jnr and Harry respectively. Perhaps not seven brides for seven brothers but two from three is good! Uncle Harry and Aunt Ada Scribbans purchased Little Aston Hall in 1925¹.

By 1924 father Edwin, wife Dorothy and son John were living at Westdene, Featherstone Road, Streetly. Dorothy died in 1932 and the 1939 National Register finds Edwin now a governing director and John a director and production manager of the bakery still resident at Westdene.



On 03 Sep 1940, Blenheim Mark IV L9188 took off from RAF West Raynham, Norfolk at 20:00 with five other aircraft to take part in a bombing raid on Le Touquet. The weather was fair. Three aircraft located the target and successfully bombed it, two failed to locate it and the sixth crashed whilst trying to land at RAF Great Massingham, Norfolk. Pilot Allen and Observer Walsh were killed, Air Gunner Kane survived. Widower Edwin resided at Moor Hall, Sutton Coldfield until his death in 1963.

¹ See Appendix 7 – Acknowledgements - "Gone are the Days"

In Memory of
Sergeant

John Henry Hicken

1143768, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve who died on 21 Apr 1943 Age 21

Son of Henry Alfred and Ada Maud Hicken, of Erdington, Birmingham

Remembered with Honour

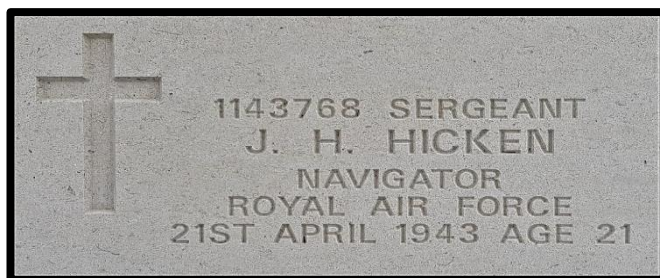
Henry Alfred (Jnr) (1895) and wife Ada Maud (nee Jackson) were married in West Bromwich in 1920 and the following year had their first child, John. The 1921 Census shows the three of them living with John's grandfather Henry Alfred (Snr) (1868) and step-grandmother Martha Hannah (1864) at 14 South Road, Smethwick. In 1926 a sister for John was born, Joyce. By the 1939 National Register, the family were living at 339 Kingstanding Road, Kingstanding. Before we leave the register, it was interesting to see that living some 5 doors away at 329 Kingstanding Road was the de-Ville family. In 1947, John's sister Joyce married Anthony de-Ville.

Henry Snr is recorded in the 1891 Census as a Private in the Gloucester Regiment. He then experienced an unexpected and heavy loss in 1895. Henry Snr had married Clara Edna Keen in 1894 and a year later, on 07 Dec 1895, Henry Jnr was born. Whilst his birth must surely have been a joyous occasion, the outcome was not. Clara died on 23 Dec 1895 aged 23 at 2 Back 42, Upper Ryland Road, Birmingham. The cause of death was "(i) Nephritis: premature labour on 07 Dec and (ii) Bronchitis"; and the informant was Henry Snr. On 01 Jan 1899 he was reported as a deserter. The following year, in 1900, Henry Snr married one of first wife's Clara's elder sisters Martha Hannah Keen. Having been involved in raising his grandson John, Henry Snr died in 1945 after his grandson and without further issue.

John's father Henry Jnr also served having joined up aged 17 in Mar 1913 prior to the advent of war. He was posted to the Royal Army Medical Corps and was discharged as unfit on 28 Sep 1914². Henry Jnr died in 1965. Whilst eligible for the Silver War Badge³, there is no evidence of its issue and receipt.

On 21 Apr 1943 Bristol Beaufighter Mk 1c T4757 took off from RAF Catfoss in East Yorkshire on a routine training flight with Coastal Command, 2 (C) Operational Training Unit, Royal Air Force. The crew, pilot Flying Officer John Gerald Rappaport and navigator John Henry Hicken, were undertaking the flight when it stalled coming in for a night landing at RAF Catfoss and crashed some 400 yards west of the airfield. Both airmen on board died.

The death certificate shows the cause of death "Due to war operations" and the informant was F Grayston, Officer Commanding, RAF Catfoss. John was buried on 28 Apr 1943.



² See Appendix 2 – King's Regulations

³ See Appendix 3 – Silver War Badge

In Memory of
Private

William Kingzett

74999, 20th Coy, Royal Army Medical Corps who died on 30 Dec 1916 Age 38

Husband of Alice Mary Kingzett, of 7, Forge Lane, Little Aston, Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham

Remembered with Honour

William Kingzett was born at home in Alfred Street, Kings Heath, Kings Norton in 1878 into a large family headed by father Charles (1849) and mother Mary Ann (1848) (nee Bossom). He had 7 siblings: Henry Charles (1873), Arthur (1875), Edith Margaret (1876), Alice (1880), Emily (1881), Edith (1884) and Sidney (1886). William's mother and father were both born in Oxford. At age 21, the 1871 Census finds his father Charles as Master of canal barge Sardinia moored at Ashby de la Zouch with a 14 years old mate. A year later he married Mary Ann in Oxford and shortly after moved to the Birmingham / Sutton Coldfield area where all 8 children were born. There were two infant deaths in the family, a not uncommon occurrence at this time, when Emily survived less than 3 months in 1881 and Edith died in 1882 aged 6. Also note the not uncommon occurrence of using the name of a deceased child again, in this case the name Edith with the next female birth.

In the Apr 1901 Census, William is recorded as a boarder living at 37 Coles Lane, Sutton Coldfield and working as a house painter. In Jun 1901 he married Alice Mary Nicholls (1875) in this church. By the 1911 Census, William was still working as a house painter, the family were now living at Hill Hook and had grown with the births of Arthur Sydney (Snr) (1902), Olive Mary (1906) and Stanley William (1909) although yet another infant death took Stanley after just 4 months. At some point, William enlisted⁴ in Birmingham and was posted to the RAMC.

William died at Fargo Military Hospital, Larkhill, Salisbury Plain, Wiltshire. The cause of death is recorded as "(i) Cellulitis (ii) Septicaemia". His WWI Pension Ledger card provided a little more insight with the words "Cellulitis after vaccination on active service". He was buried on 05 Jan 1917. Whilst a temporary allowance had been in payment to Alice for her and the two surviving children, the pension was finally awarded on 24 Jul 2017 at £1. 2s.11d per week. The pension payment for each of the children would end on their 16th birthday. The UK Army register of soldier's effects shows Alice had earlier received £2.17s.6d but that a war gratuity of variable amount was "not admissible". The 1921 Census shows widow Alice, Arthur Sydney (Snr) and Olive still living in Little Aston. Arthur (Snr), now 19, is working as a gardener for Mr Hedge of Rosemary Hill and Olive, now almost 15, is working as a shorthand typist for Four Oaks Spraying Machine Company. Arthur (Snr) married Winifred Wilson in this church in 1923 and had two children Mary Winifred (1924) and Arthur Sydney (Jnr) (1925). Olive married Victor Cox in 1931.

*Inscription: Sacred to the memory of Pte W Kingzett RAMC
who died at Fargo Military Hospital, Salisbury Plain Dec 30th 1916. Peace, Perfect Peace*



⁴ See Appendix 1 - Conscription

In Memory of
Private

Edward Kyte

11870, 2nd Bn., Worcestershire Regiment who died on 30 Oct 1914 Aged 24

Son of William Thomas and Elizabeth Kyte of Great Barr, Birmingham

Remembered with Honour

It would be remiss of me not to record that, as an amateur genealogist, this family history has been the most difficult to follow. The name above is the one known to the CWGC although even their official record shows only E Kyte. I now understand why! We have to remember that, at the time of the first Census in 1841, only a small percentage of the population could write. Correct spelling was even further away. This applied to the enumerators completing the forms as well as to the individuals concerned. I found evidence in Kyte, Kite, Keyte and even Deman. In fact, his birth certificate registered in Walsall, sub district Aldridge, records Edwin Kite on 02 Feb 1890 at Great Barr, a boy, to William Thomas Kite a farm labourer and Elizabeth Kite (nee Smith). He was known as Edward Kyte and fought, died and was buried as Edward Kyte. We will respect that.

William Thomas (Snr) (1870) married Elizabeth (1867) at Christ Church, Blakenall Heath, Walsall in 1889. The 1891 Census shows the young family living on Aldridge Road, Great Barr now with 1 year old Edward. Ten years on to 1901 the family have grown with another 5 children: Ethel May (1891), Elizabeth (1892, yet another infant death in 1893 after 6 months), William Thomas (Jnr) (1894), Annie (1895) and Nellie (1897). In 1903, life changed dramatically when their mother Elizabeth died at home on Chester Road, Great Barr. The cause of death was "(i) Confinement (ii) Ovarian Tumour". The informant present at the death was the father William Snr who made his mark – with a reference here back to the paragraph above.

Now aged 33, William Snr found himself a widower with 6 young children between the ages of 6 and 13. What was he to do? He found one answer by marrying Annie Percival in 1905. Two more children were born, Winifred (1907) and Wilfred (1909). Around the time of step-brother Wilfred's birth, Edward joined the Worcestershire Regiment on 15 Jul 1909, served for just over 5 years before the outbreak of WWI and was wounded in action soon afterwards. He was moved to Queen Alexandra Military Hospital, Millbank, Westminster where he died. The death certificate records the cause of death as "(i) Gunshot wound of pelvis (7 days) (ii) Secondary haemorrhage (1 day)". Edward was buried on 12 Nov 1914 and died without issue.



The 1911 Census finds William Snr living with wife Annie and their two children living on Hardwick Road, Streetly but where are the other siblings? Edward was in Albany Barracks on the Isle of Wight; Ethel was a servant in Soho, Birmingham; William Jnr may have emigrated to Detroit, Michigan; Annie was a servant in Great Barr; and Nellie was a servant living with her uncle Robert Smith and family. I get the feeling that the marriage of William Snr to Annie in 1905 was not well received and the family scattered. Worse was to follow. I could find no trace of William Snr and Annie after 1911 but I did find in the 1921 Census: Winifred now adopted by the Rayner family, later to marry John Littlewood in 1933 and to have 4 children before her death in 2002; and Wilfred at Dr Barnardo's Boys' Home, East Street, Epsom, Surrey. He may have relocated to Cardiff and, if so, died in 1977.

In Memory of
Private

Douglas Foch Morgan

5049985, 7th Bn., North Staffordshire Regiment who died on 26 Sep 1941 Age 22

Son of Thomas and Lucy Morgan, of Four Oaks, Warwickshire

Remembered with Honour

Douglas Foch Morgan was the youngest of the 10 children born to Thomas (1873) and Lucy Elizabeth (1873) (nee Benton) - 7 boys and 3 girls. Married in 1899, their first child came just before the turn of the century George Thomas (1899) followed by May (1902), Jack (1903), Harry (1905), Cecilia Annetta (1907), Frank William (1910), Frederick (1911), John W (1913), Maud Elizabeth (1915) and Douglas Foch (1918). But then both parents already had experience of living in large families. Thomas grew up with 11 other siblings and Lucy spent her childhood surrounded by 19 siblings!

The 1921 Census shows Douglas Foch entered as "Foch" Morgan rather than as Douglas. Now my interest was even more aroused. Douglas yes, but why Foch? An internet search revealed that Foch is pronounced "Fosh" and is predominantly a French name. I didn't find any reference to a family maiden name Foch during my research and wondered why someone born on 19 Oct 1918 might otherwise be baptised with the very unusual name. The most famous Foch at that time was Ferdinand, born on 02 Oct 1851 in Tarbes, France. In Mar 1918 Foch was appointed Supreme Allied Commander. In Aug 1918, Foch was made a Marshal of France. Along with the British commander, Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, Foch planned the Grand Offensive, opening on 26 Sep 1918, which led to the defeat of Germany. By the late fall in 1918, the German army was on the point of disintegration. Between Nov 8 and 11, 1918, in a railway carriage at a forest siding near Compiègne, he personally dictated armistice terms⁵ to a German delegation. The 1921 Census shows the Morgan family living at Maisemore, Belwell Lane, Sutton Coldfield. By now Thomas was a builder and three of the resident children were either builder, bricklayer or carpenter. The 1939 National Register showed Thomas and Lucy, now alone, living at The Bungalow, Walsall Road, Sutton Coldfield.

Foch's eldest brother George Thomas had enlisted in the Army on his 18th birthday, 20 Nov 1917 and was quickly transferred to the newly formed RAF as an experienced motor fitter. He survived WWI and remained in the RAF for 4 years in total. I believe that his father was so grateful for George's survival that he added the Foch name to their latest child Douglas, born on 19 Oct 1918 a month before the end of WWI - especially when the birth was not registered until 12 Nov 1918. Foch's death certificate records the place of death as Barrack Room, Nunykirk Hall (Rothbury, Northumberland), address and profession as The Bungalow etc (see above) and Private 5049985, North Staffordshire Regiment (Grocer's Assistant), cause as "Bullet shot wound in the head, deceased having committed suicide whilst in a state of unbalanced mind", the informant H J Percy, Coroner for Northern Division of Northumberland following inquest held on 29 Sep 1941.



⁵ See Appendix 5 - The Armistice on 11 November 1918

In Memory of
Wing Commander

Ronald Neville-Clarke DFC

29063, 224 Sqdn., Royal Air Force who died on 04 Mar 1941 Age 36

Son of Charles and Lilian Neville-Clarke, of Four Oaks, Warwickshire.

Remembered with Honour

Ronald Neville Clarke was the firstborn son in 1904 of Charles Neville and Lilian Clarke (nee Ashley). Mum and dad had four more children all of whom had the middle name Neville: Seymour (1905), Ena Lilian (1906), Thomas Oliver (1908) and Denis (1910). In the 1921 Census, the family were living at St Pirians, Lichfield Road, Four Oaks. Ronald Neville's birth was registered with these two as forenames as were the others baptised with two, or even three, forenames. Once again, we will respect the surname developed by father Charles as Neville-Clarke (including daughter Ena Lilian Neville). The real patriarch of the family was granddad Joseph Bennett Clarke, an eminent solicitor in Birmingham, who purchased Little Aston Hall in 1907⁶ and was later instrumental, along with son-in-law William Derry, in securing charges on the land now known as Little Aston Park when parcels were sold as farms and building plots. Indeed, St Peter's Church still has a small family burial area within the graveyard known locally as 'private ground'.

Ronald was educated at Four Oaks College and Bishop Vesey's Grammar School. He married Lilian Clarke on 20 Feb 1930, was commissioned as a pilot officer on 11 Apr 1930 and posted to a fighter squadron. He was promoted to flying officer in Oct 1931. In Nov 1932 he was appointed for seaplane instruction and, during the next four years, served on the staff of the School of Naval Co-operation. In 1937-38 he was with a general reconnaissance squadron and in 1938 was executive officer at one of the stations of the Coastal Command. Promoted to Squadron Leader in Oct 1938. Appointed to command No.235 Squadron in May 1940. In 1941 he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross as per London Gazette dated 17 Jan 1941 (citation held). He took part in the Battle of Britain and became one of "The Few"⁷.

Ronald was killed when Hudson I N7235 QX-A of 224 squadron crashed near Loch Braden,



Ayrshire on a training flight from Leuchars to Aldergrove. Also lost were F/Lt E Ostlere, Sgt AC Davidson, AC1 J Cordiner and AC1 TEB Price. The death certificate records his usual address as Merrilands, Crown Lane, Streetly, Birmingham, profession Solicitor, cause of death "Fractured skull, multiple injuries sustained in flying accident".

His brother Lieutenant Seymour also died in WWII on 21 Nov 1940 as a prisoner of war which made me think of the film "Saving Private Ryan". In fact, third eldest son Thomas Oliver survived without service as far as I know, as did fourth eldest Denis who named his firstborn son somewhat poignantly Ronald Seymour after each of his two elder brothers. Sister Ena's husband, Raymond, died in the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool on 27 Feb 1941.

⁶ See Appendix 7 – Acknowledgements - "Gone are the Days"

⁷ See Appendix 6 – Battle of Britain – "The Few"

In Memory of
Lance Serjeant

Alfred Newbold

202821, West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own) who died on 27 Nov 1920 Age 37

Son of Thomas and Jane Newbold; husband of Florence Newbold, of 39, Cromwell Rd.,
Muswell Hill, London.

Remembered with Honour

Alfred was born in 1882 in Little Aston and was the 11th of 12 children born to Thomas (1834) and Jane Newbold (nee Jeynes) (1842). The first Census in 1841 shows Thomas living in Hill Hook aged 7 with parents Edward and Charlotte. Thomas resided in Hill Hook, Little Aston and Mill Green throughout his life and all the subsequent Censuses up to 1911, the last preceding his death in 1914. Alfred's siblings were Alice (1860), Eliza (1861), Mary (1863), Thomas (1866), Charlotte (1869), George (1871), William (1874), Jane (1876), Harriet (1877), John (1879) and Ellen (1885).

Alfred was baptised in this church on 23 Sep 1882. The 1901 (aged 18) and 1911 (aged 28) Censuses show Alfred working as a domestic gardener. He joined the Prince of Wales Own (West Yorkshire) Regiment. In 1918, he married Florence Hayfield (1884) of Cheltenham who had moved with her widowed father into the area and, in 1911, had worked as a servant in Streetly. In adulthood, Alfred was known locally as "Fred". Two years after the marriage, he was dead.

Alfred's death certificate registered in Walsall records that he died at home in Mill Green, Aldridge, profession gardener, cause of death "Malignant Endocarditis", the informant John Newbold, brother, of Hardwick Road, Great Barr. He was buried on 02 Dec 1920. The 1921 Census shows widow Florence living with her married sister Alice and the Bott family at Sandy Way Farm, Lichfield. Shortly afterwards, Florence received a £5.00 grant in Jul 1921 and had relocated to Muswell Hill in London. Florence didn't remarry and her probate in 1957, recorded in Birmingham, shows that administration was granted to her niece Dorothy Muriel Bott. Alfred died without issue.

I believe that the informant on the death certificate, elder brother John Newbold (1879 - 1970), is in fact the same "Jack" Newbold referenced in Ted Hiscock's book "Gone are the days"⁸.

Inscription: "To the dear memory of Alfred Newbold who entered the higher life on Nov 27th 1920. Nearer my God to Thee"



⁸ See Appendix 7 – Acknowledgements - "Gone are the Days"

Appendix 1 - Conscription - the First World War

Your Country Needs You

Within a year of Great Britain declaring war on Germany in Aug 1914, it had become obvious that it was not possible to continue fighting by relying on voluntary recruits. Lord Kitchener's campaign promoted by his famous "Your Country Needs You" poster had encouraged over one million men to enlist by Jan 1915. But this was not enough to keep pace with mounting casualties.

Conscription introduced

The government saw no alternative but to increase numbers by conscription - compulsory active service. Parliament was deeply divided but recognised that because of the imminent collapse of the morale of the French army, immediate action was essential. In Jan 1916 the Military Service Act was passed. This imposed conscription on all single men aged between 18 and 41, but exempted the medically unfit, clergymen, teachers and certain classes of industrial worker. Conscientious objectors - men who objected to fighting on moral grounds - were also exempted and were, in most cases, given civilian jobs or non-fighting roles at the front. A second Act passed in May 1916 extended conscription to married men. Conscription was not applied to Ireland because of the 1916 Easter Rising, although in fact many Irishmen volunteered to fight.

Effects of conscription

Conscription was not popular and in Apr 1916 over 200,000 demonstrated against it in Trafalgar Square. Although many men failed to respond to the call-up, in the first year 1.1 million enlisted. In 1918 during the last months of the war, the Military Service (No. 2) Act raised the age limit to 51. Conscription was extended until 1920 to enable the army to deal with continuing trouble spots in the Empire and parts of Europe. During the whole of the war conscription had raised some 2.5 million men.

Appendix 2 - King's Regulations

King's Regulations for the Army set out the various reasons (causes) for which a soldier could be discharged. In WWI, paragraph 392 of the 1912 edition of King's Regulations contained all the official causes of discharge, and these were set out in sub-paragraphs, numbered from (i) to (xxvii), omitting (xvii). In 1919 a new cause of discharge was introduced, numbered (xxviii).

Sub-para Cause of Discharge

- (i) References on enlistment being unsatisfactory
 - (ii) Having been irregularly enlisted
 - (iii) Not being likely to become an efficient soldier
 - (iv) Having been claimed as an apprentice
 - (v) Having claimed it on payment of £10 within three months of his attestation
 - (vi) Having made a misstatement as to age on enlistment
 - (vii) Having been claimed for wife desertion
 - (viii) Having made a false answer on attestation
 - (ix) Unfitted for the duties of the corps
 - (x) Having been convicted by the civil power of _____, or of an offence committed before enlistment
 - (xi) For misconduct
 - (xii) Having been sentenced to penal servitude
 - (xiii) Having been sentenced to be discharged with ignominy
 - (xiv) At his own request, on payment of _____ under Article 1130 (i), Pay Warrant
 - (xv) Free, after _____ years' service under Article 1130 (ii), Pay Warrant
 - (xvi) No longer physically fit for war service
- "Sick" was often added to this cause to indicate that he was discharged due to sickness, rather than wounds
- (xvii) Surplus to military requirements (having suffered impairment since entry into the service)
 - (xviii) At his own request after 18 years' service (with a view to pension under the Pay Warrant)
 - (xix) For the benefit of the public service after 18 years' service (with a view to pension under the Pay Warrant)

- (xx) Inefficiency after 18 years' service (with a view to pension under the Pay Warrant)
- (xxi) The termination of his ____ period of engagement
- (xxii) With less than 21 years' service towards engagement, but with 21 or more years' service towards pension
- (xxiii) Having claimed discharge after three months' notice
- (xxiv) Having reached the age for discharge
- (xxv) His services being no longer required
- (xxva) Surplus to military requirements (Not having suffered impairment since entry into the service)
- (xxvi) At his own request after 21 (or more) years' service (with a view to pension under the Pay Warrant)
- (xxvii) After 21 (or more) years' qualifying service for pension, and with 5 (or more) years' service as warrant officer (with a view to pension under the Pay Warrant)
- (xxviii) On demobilization

Appendix 3 - Silver War Badge

During the Great War of 1914-18 more than 8.6 million men and over 57,000 women served in the British Army. Many families were losing loved ones at the Front, so when men ended up being sent home due to sickness or injury they had suffered, although distressing, it was often somewhat of a relief to their relatives. Those young men, once at home, would come under closer scrutiny of the public, since many were perceived to be shying away from their duties to the country and were treated with contempt and sometimes violence. It had even been the practice of some women in England to send white feathers, a traditional symbol of cowardice within the British Empire in an attempt to humiliate men not in uniform. It was therefore important that those who had served their country and returned home due to sickness or injury could be identified in some way, and this was recognised by King George V. So, in 1916 the following order was given, though there were subsequent amendments, including the granting of the badge to eligible civilians, as well as members of the VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment) and nurses:

Army Order 316 of 1916 – His Majesty the King has approved the issue of the Silver War Badge to officers and men of the British, Indian and Overseas Forces, who have served at home or abroad since the 4th Aug, 1914, and who on account of age, or physical infirmity arising from wounds or sickness caused by military service have, in the case of officers, retired or relinquished their commissions, or, in the case of men, been discharged from the Army.

First issued in 1916 and continuing to 1920-22, the Silver War Badge, also known as the Services Rendered Badge, Discharge Badge or Wound Badge, was therefore issued to service personnel who had been honourably discharged due to wounds, disability or sickness (caused otherwise than by misconduct).



Appendix 4 - “Spanish Flu”

The Influenza pandemic of 1918 was one of the greatest medical disasters of the 20th century. This was a global pandemic, an airborne virus which affected every continent.

It was nicknamed “Spanish flu” as the first reported cases were in Spain. The pandemic occurred during World War I when certain newspapers were censored including in Germany, the United States, Britain and France. All had media blackouts on news that might lower morale so, although there were flu cases elsewhere, it was the Spanish cases that hit the headlines. One of the first casualties was the King of Spain.

Although not caused by WWI, it is thought that in the UK, the virus was spread by soldiers returning home from the trenches in northern France. Soldiers were becoming ill with what was known as ‘la grippe’, the symptoms of which were sore throats, headaches and a loss of appetite. Although highly infectious in the cramped, primitive conditions of the trenches, recovery was usually swift and doctors at first called it “three-day fever”. The outbreak hit the UK in a series of waves, with its peak at the end of WWI. Returning from Northern France at the end of the war, the troops travelled home by train. As they arrived at the railway stations, so the flu spread from the railway stations to the centre of the cities, then to the suburbs and out into the countryside. Not restricted to class, anyone could catch it.

Young adults between 20 and 30 years old were particularly affected and the disease struck and progressed quickly in these cases. Onset was devastatingly quick. Those fine and healthy at breakfast could be dead by tea-time. Within hours of feeling the first symptoms of fatigue, fever and headache, some victims would rapidly develop pneumonia and start turning blue, signalling a shortage of oxygen. They would then struggle for air until they suffocated to death.

Hospitals were overwhelmed and even medical students were drafted in to help. Doctors and nurses worked to breaking point, although there was little that they could do as there were no treatments for flu and no antibiotics to treat the pneumonia.

During the pandemic of 1918/19, over 50 million people died world-wide and a quarter of the British population were affected. The death toll was 228,000 in Britain alone. Global mortality rate is not known but is estimated to have been between 10% to 20% of those who were infected. More people died of influenza in that single year than in the four years of the Black Death Bubonic Plague from 1347 to 1351. The pandemic in that single year killed more people than WWI at somewhere between 20 and 40 million people.

Appendix 5 - The Armistice on 11 November 1918

Every year we remember that the guns of the First World War ceased firing at 11am on 11 Nov 1918. We imagine universal relief at the carnage of war finally ending, at least in the victorious countries. The armistice was agreed at 5.10am on 11 Nov to come into effect at 11am. The news was conveyed around Europe within the hour. The original armistice was for a period of 36 days, after which it had to be renewed. This was done four times before the Treaty of Versailles was signed. The only problem is that the war did not completely stop at 11am on 11 Nov.

The Entente had already agreed armistices with Bulgaria on 29 Sep, the Ottomans on 30 Oct, and the Austro-Hungarian Government on 3 Nov. Germany was the last of the Central Powers to sue for peace. The Armistice with Germany was agreed to come into effect at 11am to allow time for the news to reach combatants. However, fighting continued in several places during and after that time, including on the Western Front.

General John Pershing, Commander of the American Expeditionary Force, did not approve of the armistice. Consequently, he gave no instructions to his commanders to suspend any new offensive action during the remaining hours until 11am. This gave individual commanders latitude to determine their actions in the last few hours and, in some quarters, there was fierce fighting up to 11am which was difficult to stop. On 11 Nov alone were nearly 11,000 casualties, dead, missing

and injured, exceeding those on D-Day in 1944. Over 3,500 of these were American. Pershing had to face a Congressional hearing to explain why there were so many deaths when the hour of the armistice was known in advance.

The message did not reach East Africa as easily as the Western Front. For 4 years British, Indian and local troops, joined by South Africans, Belgians and Portuguese, had been trying to capture Major General Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, the German commander of 14,000 men. Although he had a much smaller army than the ones he was facing, his practice of targeting forts and railway lines meant he could not be ignored. Throughout the war his force caused British and Indian troops to be diverted from other fronts. The weather, the lack of supply lines and various other conditions caused a high death rate amongst local people in East Africa, particularly from diseases, the numbers for which can only be estimated. A telegram sent to East Africa from Europe could take between a couple of hours and a whole day to arrive. In anticipation of the armistice, on 10 Nov, the British General Staff sent a telegram to the force in East Africa asking them for the quickest way to get a message to von Lettow-Vorbeck. This was not straightforward as he had been evading the Allies for four years and his force was scattered. On 12 Nov, the two sides clashed again and von Lettow-Vorbeck only received notice that the war had ended later. There was a truce and in line with agreed instructions Lettow-Vorbeck formally surrendered his troops at Abercorn on 25 Nov.

The other area where the war did not stop was North Russia, in particular Murmansk and Archangel, the two main British bases in the region. Russia had capitulated in Jun 1917 after the Russian Revolution. Under the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, signed with Germany on 3 Mar 1918, the Russian empire had been split and its constituent countries restored to independence, but they were quickly occupied by Germany. After the armistice, the question of who controlled Russia remained. As winter approached, the British Government had to decide whether to retain forces in the region as with the extreme cold, there was the risk of being frozen in until the following year.

But even before Nov 1918, with Russia engaged in civil war, her former allies were concerned about Bolshevik ambitions. The newly independent countries, Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania, were also anxious, and appealed to the Allied governments for support. In Britain, thoughts of assistance were counterbalanced by fears of being drawn in to a foreign conflict with further loss of life. Part of the armistice agreement was that German troops in the Baltics should remain in the area as a precaution against Bolshevism. After the armistice, the number of allied troops in the region increased. The reasons for engagement had changed, but they still faced loss of life.

An armistice is a ceasefire, not an official end to war. Demobilisation of British, colonial and imperial troops did not finish until 1920, considerably longer than servicemen had anticipated. This caused more than one mutiny. Despite the unlikelihood that the Central Powers would resume combat, troops had to be prepared to fight again. Whilst we remember all those who died, and how 11 Nov represented the end of the war for most, this was not true for all and there was still fighting and dying after the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1918.

Appendix 6 - Battle of Britain – “The Few”

The Few were the airmen of the Royal Air Force (RAF) and the aviators of the Fleet Air Arm, Royal Navy (RN) who fought the Battle of Britain in the Second World War. The term comes from Winston Churchill's phrase "Never, in the field of human conflict, was so much owed by so many to so few." It also alludes to Shakespeare's famous speech in his play, Henry V: "We few, we happy few, we band of brothers....".

The Battle of Britain was considered officially by the RAF to have been fought between 10 Jul and 31 Oct 1940. 2,937 British and Allied airmen were awarded the Battle of Britain clasp for

having flown at least one authorised sortie with an accredited unit of RAF Fighter Command in the period 10 Jul to 31 Oct 1940. During the Battle, 544 lost their lives and a further 795 were to die before the end of the war.

Airmen who fought in the battle have been known as The Few ever since; at times being specially commemorated on 15 Sep, "Battle of Britain Day". On this day in 1940, the Luftwaffe embarked on their largest bombing attack yet, forcing the engagement of the entirety of the RAF in defence of London and the South East, which resulted in a decisive British victory that proved to mark a turning point in Britain's favour. The airmen are remembered on the Battle of Britain Memorial, Capel-le-Ferne, Kent, and their names are listed on the Battle of Britain London Monument. The Battle of Britain Roll of Honour is held in Westminster Abbey in the RAF Chapel, and is paraded annually during the Service of Thanksgiving and re-dedication on Battle of Britain Sunday.

Appendix 7 – Acknowledgements with grateful thanks

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Appendix 8 - Map of Graveyard

