RUSSELL MACGILLIVRAY

LARBERT AND THE GREAT WAR

THE MEN OF LARBERT WAR MEMORIAL

Larbert and the Great War

The Men of Larbert War Memorial

Russell MacGillivray

FALKIRK LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Larbert and the Great War
published in 2017 by

Falkirk Local History Society
11Neilson Street,
Falkirk.

©Russell MacGillivray 2017

No part of this publication may be reproduced, or transmitted in any form, without the prior permission of Falkirk Local History Society

ISBN 978 0 9560480 6 6

Falkirk Local History Society is very grateful to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the generous grant that has allowed the author to conduct his extensive research and the Society to publish the results. The grant is part of the national World War 1 project which was established to encourage the study of the impact of the Great War 1914-18 on local communities.

Cover Design by James Hutcheson

Printed in Scotland by Bell and Bain Limited, Glasgow

Contents

FOREWORD

PREFACE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1	Larbert in 1914	1
2	The Great War	2
3	Larbert's War Memorial	7
4	War Medals	9
5	Western Front Memorials to the Missing	10
6	The Men of Larbert War Memorial	13
7	Deaths by Regiment	219
8	Deaths by Theatre	234
9	Calendar of Deaths	250
10	Larbert Officers	258
11	Morale and Discipline	260
12	The War Memorial	267
APPENDIX	Analysis of the Men of Larbert War Memorial	270
ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY		273
BIBLIOGRAPHY		275
INDEX		279

Reverend John Fairley
Minister of Larbert Parish Church
(1902-1931)

"Shall Larbert ever forget them? Should their names not be handed down to unborn generations as those who helped to save their nation in its hour of need."

August 1917

"Every man in the ranks who slowly climbed out of the protecting trench and at the bidding of his officer laboriously started on his journey across 'no man's land' to attack an entrenched enemy deserved the highest honour his country could give him. There was no sound of drum, pipes, or trumpet to encourage him, no gallant charge, no cheers from onlookers, no excitement, only a tired and often very weary man, heavily loaded with ammunition, bombs, kit, gas mask and rifle, getting out with difficulty from his trench where he felt comparatively safe and slowly moving across an open space, with the certain knowledge that it was fairly long odds that he would be killed or wounded. Millions did it and many lived to do it more than once."

Captain Alexander Stewart, "A Very Unimportant Officer"*, writing in 1928*

"In civilian life it is extremely difficult for the average man to discover and sort out the Men from the Monkeys: in war there is no such difficulty; for when death is a near neighbour the mask of convention is torn away, and one can gaze into a man's soul."

Lieutenant-Colonel W D Croft, "Three Years with the 9th (Scottish) Division *(1919)*

"We are often tempted to ask ourselves what we gained by the enormous sacrifices made by those [to whom this memorial is dedicated]. But that was never the issue with those who marched away. No question of advantage presented itself to their minds. They only saw the light shining on the clear path to duty. They only saw their duty to resist oppression, to protect the weak, to vindicate the profound, but unwritten, law of nations. They never asked the question 'What shall we gain?' They only asked the question 'Where lies the right?'

Winston Churchill, speaking on 25 April 1925 at the unveiling of a memorial to the Royal Naval Division

Foreword

When Falkirk Local History Society was formed back in 1981 one of the aims was to encourage research into the rich history of our district and to help bring the results to the public in whatever form seemed the most appropriate. Since then we have produced many articles, journals and books and built up a comprehensive website covering everything from Roman times to the modern era. My own interest has always been in those events that have both a local and national dimension and in this we are very fortunate because our geographical position has meant that soldiers, civil engineers and industrialists have often crossed our land, or chosen to fight here or build their new enterprises in this central part of Scotland.

Of course there are other ways in which external events visit our towns and villages and the world wars of the 20th century are examples; the eighteen local war memorials remind us that over 3000 men of the district gave their lives in the 'Great War' of 1914-18. Each year when people from each small community gather in remembrance they promise never to forget the sacrifice of the fathers, brothers, sons and husbands who left the foundries, farms, mines, shops, offices and factories to answer the call and did not return. Inevitably perhaps, after 100 years, they are most often remembered as a group with their individual stories lost with the passing of their immediate families, which is a great pity. These ordinary young men who did extraordinary things surely deserve more.

Russell MacGillivray is very much a local man, born and brought up beside Bellsdyke Hospital. The War Memorial outside the Dobbie Hall with its 286 names was an ever-present feature of his schooldays. When he became a history teacher at Larbert High School the First World War was always an essential topic in the syllabus and this led to a determination to find out as much as he could about each man on the local memorial. But more than this, he wanted to tell the story of the most terrible of wars through the lives of those who fought and died.

So here are the men of Larbert and Stenhousemuir facing near certain death at Ypres and the Somme, struggling in the mud of Passchendaele, landing on the Suvla beaches in Gallipoli or following the tanks into no-man's land at Amiens and Cambrai. Russell has used many different types of source material to piece together their lives before the war and while in service including where possible the circumstances of their deaths in action. It is an outstanding piece of research and writing and it has been a great privilege for Falkirk Local History Society to be involved in the production and publication of this excellent book. It is a true gift to future generations and a fitting tribute to the fallen.

My own part has included assembling as many images of the fallen soldiers as possible and I spent many hours poring through copies of the Falkirk Herald. Each week from about April 1915 on the paper carried a section called FOR KING AND COUNTRY with anything from 6 to 36 small grainy images of young men in uniform, recording for the community that they had 'died of wounds' or were 'missing presumed killed'. Their faces appear throughout this book and will live with me for a very long time to come.

Russell is now planning research for a second volume which will tell the stories of the many men with Larbert connections who died in the war but whose names are not on the Larbert Memorial but appear on other plaques in churches, companies, sports clubs and the rest. In addition he will record the memories of local people who lived through the war either at home or in service and have left us a record of these astonishing times. We hope this will be completed and published in 2018 as the centenary commemorations draw to a close

Ian Scott
Chairman
Falkirk Local History Society
August 2017

Preface

I began to read the *Falkirk Herald*s of the First World War when preparing for the first Larbert High School pupils' trip to the battlefields sites in France and Belgium. I thought it would make the trip a more impressive and relevant experience if we could locate where local soldiers had been buried or commemorated.

The first thing I had to do was to go along to the War Memorial at the Dobbie Hall and make a list of the names. Then the questions begin. Who were these men named on the memorial? How old were they when they went to war? What jobs did they do before they joined up? What family did they leave behind? How did they die? Fortunately, as I now know, the local newspaper, the *Falkirk Herald*, provides plenty of information about a majority of the men on the memorial. Nowadays, gathering the basic information about the soldiers who died in the First World War is comparatively easy.

But when the award of Heritage Lottery funding to Falkirk Local History Society allowed me to extend my researches, I was determined to find out as much as I could about everyone named on Larbert War Memorial. I wanted to ascertain what is called in the archives of the Canadian Army the "Circumstances of Death" – where was he serving, what happened on the day of his death, so that his death could be placed in the context of the war. I was sure that out of this research, it would be possible to assess the contribution of the servicemen of the parish of Larbert to the Great War. It wasn't just the servicemen who were needed for the war effort, especially in the kind of place that Larbert was. With its foundries and mines it became a highly important centre of war production

When I was a university student in the second half of the 1960s, I had a summer job as a bus conductor, working out of Alexander's Depot in Larbert Road. Travelling round the district in the various bus routes, I learned then what kind of place, meaning the parish of Larbert, was; and the astonishing thing is that Larbert in the 1960s was still very much like Larbert at the time of the First World War - four villages, Larbert, Stenhousemuir, Carron and Carronshore running into one another but in a rural setting. There was plenty of employment in the Larbert area, in more or less the same factories as in 1914-18, particularly the foundries. The domination of heavy industry meant that the community's efforts in the Great War would be affected in particular ways. Larbert was also known for its hospitals, Bellsdyke Hospital and the Royal Scottish National Hospital; these names arrive after 1918. Both had large numbers of patients and staff. The shops, churches and houses of the early 20th century mostly survived to the 1960s; and the pubs and the sports. Of course there were changes as indicated by the inter-war council housing schemes and the more extensive post-1945 schemes. In the early 1960s private housing estates were being built in Larbert and Stenhousemuir, beginning the trend that now means that the 'rural setting' has gone. Larbert has become an urban dormitory town whose residents in large numbers are employed outside their home area.

Given the basic change in the kind of community that Larbert is, it seems important to define what its history and its heritage are. In my view the community well deserves to retain its own identity. This history of Larbert and the Great War is intended to be part of this process.

In this volume, the contribution of the men of Larbert War Memorial is described in detail, where possible. A second volume is planned and it will describe the experiences of individuals from Larbert of important events in the War and tell the stories of those whose names are not on the Dobbie Hall Memorial but are recorded elsewhere.

Russell MacGillivray
Stenhousemuir
August 2017

Acknowledgements

I have two people to thank particularly. First, Ian Scott, who has done more than anyone else to bring this project into print. I asked Ian merely for some advice about how I might get researches into Larbert and the Great War published. Within five minutes I had a wonderfully enthusiastic and knowledgeable collaborator, who has directed this book to completion in truly too many ways to mention. I have to point out that the responsibility for the text is mine. I shall be pleased to be informed of any errors or omissions so that the text can be updated. Please contact me at grmacg@outlook.com I do have additional information about some of the soldiers; usually from their Medical Examination Records. Again, please contact me as above.

I particularly want to thank the following. These are the people who don't get named but I know how much you all have helped me; firstly, the staff, past and present, of Falkirk Libraries, particularly at Falkirk and Larbert; the staff of the National Library of Scotland, the Mitchell Library, Glasgow, the National Records of Scotland; the Clackmannanshire Family History Centre; Falkirk Archives; the National Archives, Kew; Stirling Council Archives; Stirling University Archives Department; Glasgow Un iversity Archives Services; the staff of the Royal Scots Museum, Edinburgh Castle, the Highlanders Museum, Fort George, the King's Own Scottish Borderers Museum, Berwick-upon-Tweed. The *Falkirk Herald* archive has been an essential source for a great deal of this work and I am grateful for permission to use extracts and photographs published during the war.

My thanks also to the *Heritage Lottery Fund.* for supporting my research and covering the costs of publication as part of their national World War 1 project.

My thanks to the following for their help and contribution: Fraser and Morag McCord (especially for the visits to Belgium and France); Geoff Bailey; Andrew Bain; Teresa Barker and Graeme Fraser; Malcolm Brooke; Susan Craig; the late Dr Alex Crookston; Melville Crosthwaite; Alan Cumming: Terry Denham; Colin Douglas; Alex Duncan; Irene Easton; Steve Fuller; Rowland Hill; Graham Herriott; Rosemary Holmes; John Jenkinson; Simon Jones; Adrian Kitchen; Larbert, Stenhousemuir and Torwood Community Council; Ian Laird; Gordon Masterton; Anne McBride; Rod McKenzie of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders Museum, Stirling Castle; Jim McLachlan; Kenny McLennan; Ed Norman; Alan Parr; David Paterson; Nan Paton; Ugesh Rattay and Shehna Raghoonanan; James Reid; Lind-Anne Reid; Jenny Service; Edward Spiers; Betty Scott; Ann Stenhouse; Gordon Taylor; Syd Thomson; Duncan Walker; Brian Watters and all the family and friends for their encouragement and support. If I have omitted anyone, I do apologise – it must have been a transient forgetfulness!

Last but not least – this position was chosen by the Lady herself – my wife, Elspeth, whose support and inspiration has been absolutely essential to the completion of this project.

This book is for our grandsons Evan, Saul, Coen and our late granddaughter Laya; our grandsons Calvin and Hudson; and Lawrie.

May they, and you, the reader, always know peace.

Photographs

The photographs used in this book come from a variety of sources. The images of the soldiers are reproduced from the *Falkirk Herald* (1915-19) which each week published a 'FOR KING AND COUNTRY' section with the faces of those whose deaths had been reported. Most of these are small, grainy and indistinct and difficult to reproduce but they are used here because they are all we have. Thanks are due to the Falkirk Library staff for their assistance with this. Some others have come from family sources and from the 'two Ronnies', Cheape and Laing, from their extensive collection of Larbert Old Parish Church WW1 photographs. The excellent images of the Larbert War Memorial and a number of gravestones are by Syd Thomson and many of the general images are taken from a series of illustrated magazines published in 1938 entitled 'The Great War: I was there!' A great many of these images have appeared in books and newspapers over the decades and it is difficult to be sure what their point of origin might be. We apologise in advance if we have used anything without the formal permission of someone with a claim on the material.

The contemporary images of Larbert are from Falkirk Local History Society's own collection.

Larbert in 1914

In 1914 about 13,000 people lived in the parish of Larbert, in and around the villages of Larbert, Stenhousemuir, Carron and Carronshore. Stenhousemuir, with a population of 5,500 people, was the largest of the villages in the parish. The villages had their own churches – this was a church-going community. The villages had their schools, co-operative societies and other community organisations from bowling clubs to temperance societies and not forgetting the football, cricket and golf clubs nor the public houses.

The population belonged to the industrial working class. They worked in the iron works and foundries and down the mines in the parish. Carron Company operated the largest iron works in Europe in 1914. Foundry Loan in Larbert was the location of Dobbie, Forbes and Company and Jones & Campbell, both ironfounders. The station at the foot of Foundry Loan had brought these businesses to Larbert. One result was that the population of Larbert parish more than doubled between 1871 and 1911.

A very distinctive feature of the parish was that it was the location for two large psychiatric institutions, Stirling District Asylum and the Royal Scottish National Institution (as it was called from 1916). The Asylum had 900 patients and over 150 staff while the RSNI cared for 500 children and had 100 staff. These two institutions, even though in a real sense isolated from the community, were hugely important to the parish.

The majority of people lived in rented houses. Carron Company, as well as being the largest employer, was the largest landlord in the parish. The *Falkirk Herald* correspondent for Larbert and Stenhousemuir said that the parish had "no slums" and it was also claimed that the people of Stenhousemuir thought they lived in "a model village".

This was a predominantly working class community but their employers and bosses also lived in the parish with their families in grand houses like Torwoodhall (James Jones), Hopedale (George Dobbie), and Carrongrange (George Pate, Manager, Carron Company. These men and others like them gave a leadership to the community through their involvement in virtually every organisation in the parish.

The ordinary people of Larbert and district were praised for "their thrifty, independent stamp". They lived what was described as a settled and gracious life. They then had to contend, from August 1914 and over the next four years, with a truly brutal upheaval the scale of whose challenges had never been experienced before. And afterwards it was true to say that nothing, absolutely nothing, could ever be the same again.

The Great War

The British Army fought mainly in Western Europe between 1914 and 1918. The war began in August 1914 with the German Army's invasion of Belgium and France. The small British Expeditionary Force was sent to help the French. The German advance continued towards Paris until it was halted on September 5 and then driven back. It was then that trench warfare, one of the outstanding features of the war, began. The German and British lines of trenches were extended northwards towards the Belgian coast as each army tried to outflank the other. This was known as the Race to the Sea.

At the end of October and the beginning of November the crucial battle of 1914, the First Battle of Ypres, was fought. The battle determined that the German Army could not defeat the BEF but it continued to occupy virtually the whole of Belgium and a large part of northern France. A stalemate on the Western Front existed.

During the winter of 1914-1915 the size of the BEF was steadily built up. On 16 December 1914, Larbert's local battalion, the 7th battalion of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, arrived in France to do their bit.

In 1915 the main German effort to defeat the BEF took place in April and used poison gas to break through the trenches. This was part of the Second Battle of Ypres, which was the first major engagement of the 7th Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.

The BEF's first "big push" on the Western Front was the Battle of Loos, whose first day was 25 September 1915. For the first time the British Army used poison gas but conditions weren't really suitable for the use of gas as the wind was too light to blow the gas towards the German trenches. The fighting at the start of this battle was very fierce and involved many local soldiers.

The Battle of the Somme (July 1-November 18, 1916) is the most famous battle of the First World War. Its first day was the British Army's worst-ever single day in its history. 20,000 British soldiers were killed that day and 40,000 were wounded. It was meant to be a joint operation by the British and French armies in the area where their respective trench lines met. But, in February, the German Army attacked the French at Verdun. Casualties were huge and the French scaled down their contribution on the Somme. Few Larbert soldiers fought on the first day; one was **Thomas Tough** (page 203).

On 14 July another attack on the German Army at the Somme was a success. It used a way of attacking with significant differences from the first day of the battle.

The Western Front

The final phase of the Battle of the Somme began on November 13 and involved many of Larbert's soldiers. Many belonged to the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division. Conditions were extremely difficult for the attackers, though they eventually made some gains, including the capture of Beaumont Hamel. **Alexander Robertson** (page 171) was killed in action on November 13.

At the end of the Battle of the Somme the casualty totals were enormous – 420,000 British casualties and 200,000 French casualties. (German casualties in the battle totalled 500,000.)

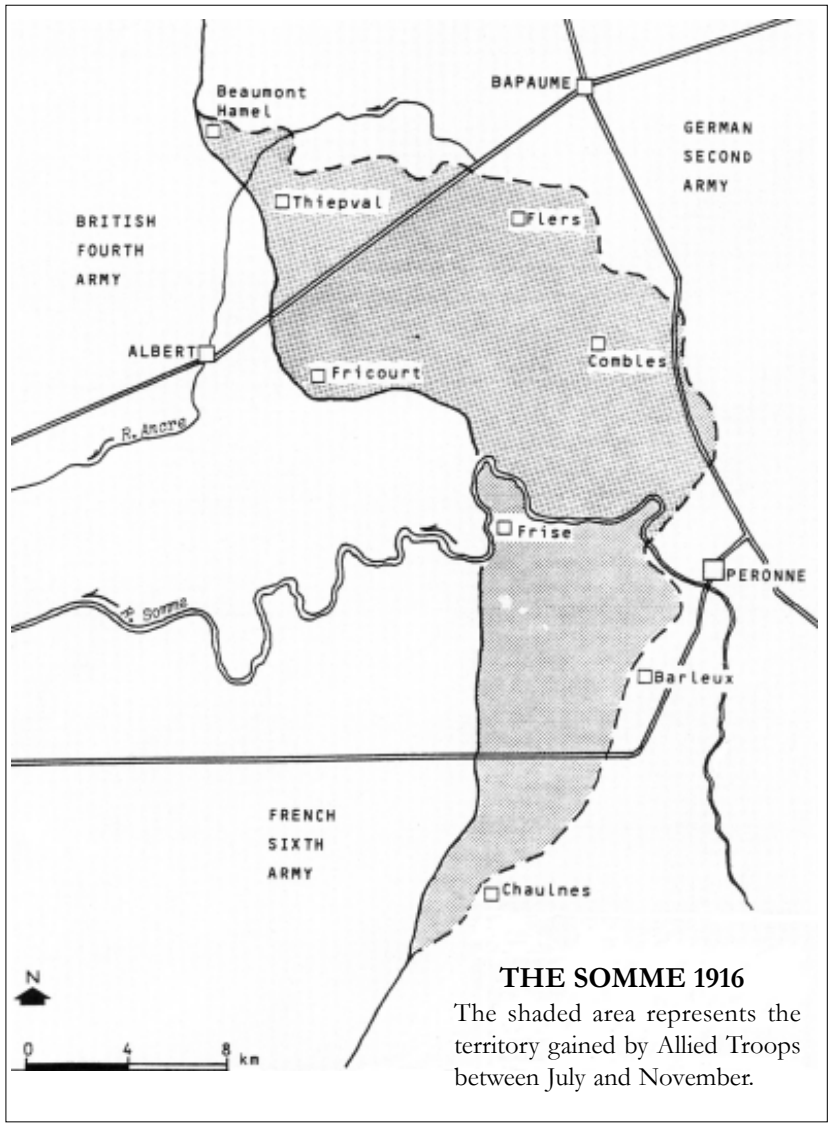
In 1917 the BEF had to take a leading role on the Western Front as the French Army weakened as a result of the huge scale of its losses since August 1914. In March 1917 the German Army withdrew to a new defensive system called the Hindenburg Line. It was immensely strong and stretched from Lens to Reims.

On April 9 the BEF, along with the Canadian Expeditionary Force began the first major battle of 1917 by attacking the German position at Arras. This was judged to be "one of the great days of the war" for the BEF. Significant gains were made but blizzards of snow the next day meant that further advances could not be achieved. **Hugh Martin** (page 115), one of the many local soldiers involved, was killed in action on April 9. A fortnight later, **Robert G Hunter** (page 91) was one of several Larbert casualties in the third phase of the Battle of Arras. He was killed on April 23, which was described as "one of the blackest days" in the history of the 7th Battalion of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. The Battle of Arras was the bloodiest battle of the First World War, as judged by the average daily BEF casualties.

The biggest battle of 1917 was the Third Battle of Ypres, also known as the Battle of Passchendaele. The first day was reasonably successful. **Andrew McKendrick** (page 136) was killed in action on the first day. On the second day it rained heavily and it kept raining during the rest of the battle, which finished in November. The battle became infamous for the muddy conditions everywhere the battle was fought. It is estimated that 35,000 British soldiers were drowned in the mud of the battlefield.

The Battle of Cambrai was fought from November 20th to 30th. It is famous for the first effective use of tanks which were very successful on the first day. Great gains of territory were made but only a few tanks survived the first day. Though a great effort was made to continue the offensive in the following days, especially on November 23, when **Thomas Whittet** (page 215) was killed, a German counter-attack on the 30th regained all the territory they had lost.

Germany had tried to defeat Britain in 1917 by submarine warfare. Any ship which entered British territorial waters from February 1 onwards was liable to be sunk. This inflicted serious food and raw material shortages on Britain in the first half of the year and there was quite a strong possibility of the German campaign being successful. The danger was overcome by June. There were only a few from Larbert who served at sea. One was **Andrew Philp** (page 154), whose death shows how dangerous it could be at sea.



THE SOMME 1916
The shaded area represents the territory gained by Allied Troops between July and November.

Two crucial events in 1917 affected the course of the war, and its outcome. The USA entered the war at the start of April and Russia dropped out of the war.

With the close of the Eastern Front, Germany was able to transfer a million soldiers to the Western Front during the winter of 1917-18. Germany prepared to gamble for victory in 1918, a gamble because they had to win before the American Army gave Britain and France an overwhelming numerical advantage on the battlefield.

On March 21 the German Spring Offensive, codenamed Operation Michael, began in the area of the Somme, fighting over the same ground as in the summer of 1916. The German Army stormed through the British Army's defences in the area – they were the weakest on the Western Front. The German success was amazing. 21,000 British soldiers were made prisoners on the first day. The British were forced into headlong retreat over the next seven days. **Hector McPhail** (page 145) was killed on March 28 at the end of that traumatic week for the BEF. But the German Army, despite the significant amounts of territory gained, did not achieve their hoped-for decisive breakthrough and called off the offensive on April 5.

James Gardner (page 63) was killed in action on April 9, the day that Operation Georgette was launched in Flanders. It was quickly successful and Sir Douglas Haig, the British Army's Commander-in-Chief, had to issue a melodramatic – and panicky – Order of the Day for April 11th. It said:

> There is no other course open to us but to fight it out! Every position must be held to the last man: there must be no retirement. With our backs to the wall, and believing in the justice of our cause each one of us must fight on to the end. The safety of our Homes and the Freedom of mankind alike depend upon the conduct of each one of us at this critical moment."

Yet at almost the same time the German Army's attack lost its momentum and petered out.

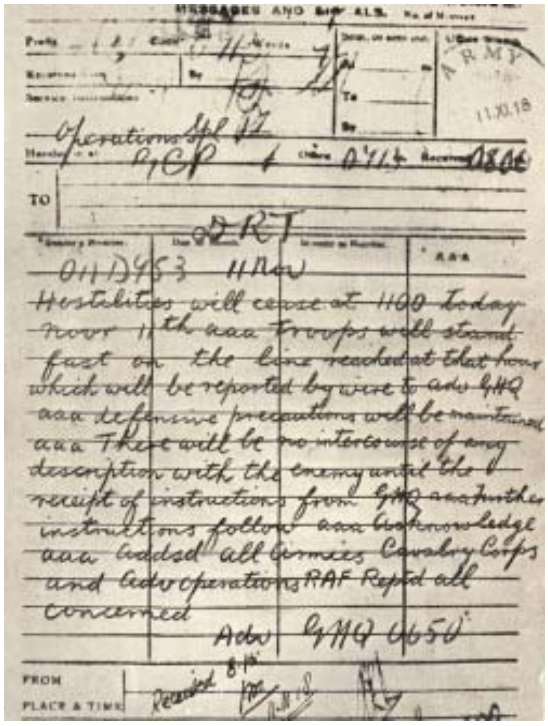
There were three further attempts to gain the vital breakthrough for Germany but to no avail. Instead, on August 8, a devastating blow using over 400 tanks, was struck on the German Army near Amiens. This was "the black day for the German Army". Germany had no longer any realistic chance of winning the war, though there was a reasonable chance of avoiding defeat. The machine gunners and artillery of the German Army continued to fight effectively.

The British, American and French Armies over the next three months launched a series of offensives all along the Western Front. The strategy was to attack where they could be successful, but when the advance began to falter, it was halted and another location found. Consequently the German Army was steadily pushed back, giving up its defensive lines.

A typical attack, in which **James Cowan** (page 33) was killed, was on the Fonsomme system of trenches on the Hindenburg Line near St Quentin. Though casualties in the last three months of the war were still at a serious level, British Army commanders, principally Field Marshal Haig, believed that it was possible for Britain to win the war in 1918 and pressed on with their attacks.

Germany's allies gave up. The spirit of the German people was at breaking point as a result of prolonged severe shortages of food and by the onset of an influenza epidemic. Breaking point came when the German government asked for armistice terms. Only when the armistice request was made did the German people learn just how near to defeat the army was.

The military leaders of the Allies were responsible for negotiating the Armistice. They did not want to be cheated out of the victory they thought they had been about to win. The terms offered to the German government representatives were the same as if the Allies had won a total military victory. Germany had to withdraw from all occupied territory and had to hand over 25,000 machine guns, 1,700 aeroplanes and all their U-boats and warships. There was no option but to accept these terms. Germany could not carry on the war. The Armistice came into effect at 11 a.m. on 11 November 1918. The fighting was over.


Operations Sfl 17
TO
2 RT
Hostilities will cease at 1100 today
aaa defensive precautions will be maintained
aaa There will be no intercourse of any
description with the enemy until the
receipt of instructions from GHQ
aaa Acknowledge
Adv GHQ 0650

The telegram ordering the November ceasefire

As well as the major actions on the Western Front, the British Army was involved in what were often described as 'sideshows' in other parts of the world.

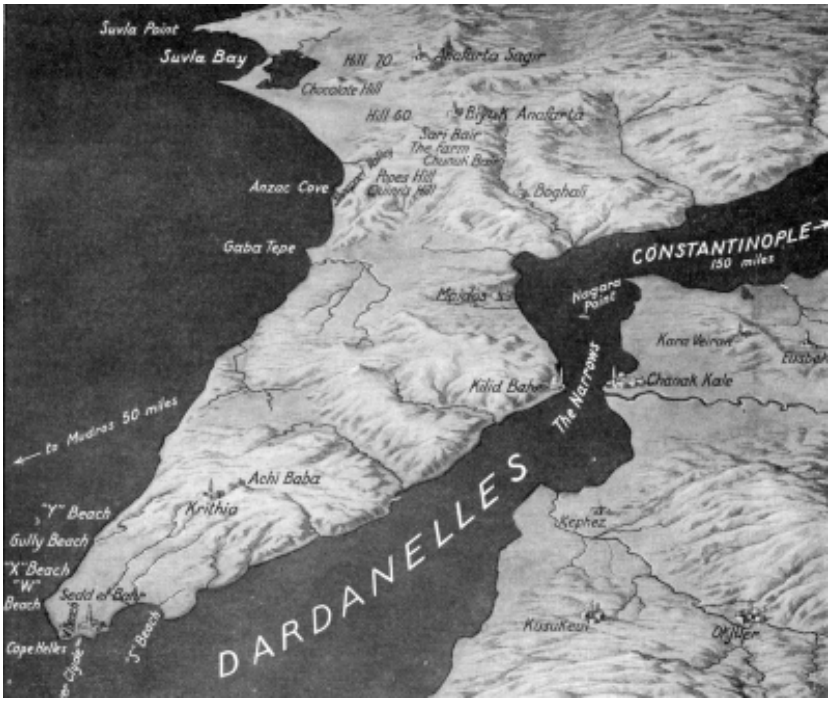
In the Spring of 1915 Britain's **Mediterranean Expeditionary Force,** including large contingents from Australia and New Zealand, was beginning the Gallipoli campaign against Turkey as a way of defeating Germany and her allies away from the Western Front. A second landing occurred on August 6 but eventually it became clear that the campaign had to be abandoned and all British, Australian and New Zealand forces were evacuated from the peninsula by January 1916. The Gallipoli campaign has been called "a futile sideshow" and "an adventure of staggering stupidity".

Salonika, Gallipoli, Egypt and Mesopotamia

The **Egypt Expeditionary Force** fought in both Egypt and Palestine to help the Arab tribes of the Middle East to throw off the rule of Turkey. They were promised freedom from Turkish rule. While the Arabs, organised by the legendary Lawrence of Arabia, harassed the Turks along the line of the Hedjaz railway, a British force invaded Palestine, capturing Jerusalem just before Christmas 1917. By then the Palestine campaign was second only to the Western Front in terms of the number of British soldiers serving there. In 1918 the British forces extended their control into Syria and Jordan. In October the EEF reached Damascus. Most Arab lands once ruled over by Turkey had been freed. But the historian Peter Hart concluded that "Palestine proved to be a waste of resources".

In October 1915 the **British Salonika Force** and a French force landed at Salonika in Greece to help Serbia against a Bulgarian invasion. But Serbia had already been defeated and Greece remained neutral. Yet the Allied force stayed where it was and dug in until the summer of 1916. The Bulgarian force tried to invade Greece then but failed. British attacks on the Bulgarian forces in 1917 were quite successful. In September 1918 British forces launched another offensive. Bulgaria surrendered on September 30. There were 25,000 soldiers of the British Salonika Force who were killed or wounded, a high casualty rate for a 'sideshow'. What was worse was that most of the troops who served there were infected with malaria.

While the German Government regarded Salonika as its biggest prisoner-of-war camp, Brigadier-General John Charteris said Salonika was "useless, worse than useless".



The Gallipoli Campaign

The British **Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force**, together with the Indian Expeditionary Force, began their campaign late in 1914. Mesopotamia belonged to the Turkish Empire and became the target for a British invasion in order to protect the security of Britain's vita oil supplies in the Persian Gulf. The invading forces reached Kut-al-Amara a year later. After failing to capture Baghdad, they were than trapped in Kut by Turkish forces. **Peter Davie** (page 38) was killed in an attempt to lift the siege of Kut. Eventually, in April 1916, the British in Kut surrendered. Over 4,000 of the 12,000 men taken prisoner died in captivity.

After reinforcements were received the campaign then was aimed at recapturing Kut and this was achieved in December. The next stage was to reach the capital city of Baghdad. It was captured three months later. Further advances took the British force in Mesopotamia to the borders of Turkey. Conditions in Mesopotamia were incredibly bad. In the desert areas, extreme temperatures were common. Conditions were also incredibly unhealthy causing appalling levels of sickness and disease.

The verdict of one historian was that "Mesopotamia was a tragedy from start to finish fought in circumstances of exceptional difficulty."

The King's Own Scottish Borderers lead the attack at Helles, Gallipoli in the summer of 1915

Larbert's War Memorial

Larbert War Memorial was unveiled on Sunday 24 September 1922.

It is designed in the form of a cenotaph (empty tomb)

It contains 286 names. This total includes one name probably added in the 1990s

No details of Private James Quin's war service have been located and it may be that he did not die during the war.

The memorial was originally intended to be built at the Point in Stenhousemuir, where Main Street and King Street meet outside the Plough Hotel.

Prior to the addition of the names from the Second World War, the central panel contained the wording: Our Glorious Dead.

Thomas Forrester was the first to be killed on active service – on 5 August 1914. The war was less than 16 hours old.

The first soldier to be killed in action was John Laverie.

The first officer killed was Lieutenant Alexander N Sherriff.

There are 15 officers named on the memorial.

Alex Baird died on 10 July 1919, two weeks after the peace treaty had been signed with Germany, seven months after the armistice ended the fighting and ten months after he suffered the wounds that caused his death.

The last soldier to be killed during the war was Archibald Lennox who died on 4 November 1918, seven days before the armistice was signed and the fighting ended.

The commonest surname on the memorial is REID.

There are 3 William Reids on the memorial and a fourth was another casualty in the sense that Petty Officer William Reid of the Royal Naval Division was taken prisoner in 1918.

The longest-serving soldier to die in the war was CSM William Dick, D.C.M. of the 12th Battalion Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders. He served in the army from 1899 to 1918.

The oldest soldier to die during the war was Frank Hodge at the age of 47. He died of cardiac failure.

The oldest soldier to die in action was Corporal Thomas Robb. He was 45 years old.

The average age at death for the men of the memorial was 26.1 years.

The average age at death was considerably higher for the 56 men who were married; it was 32.0 years

The youngest to enlist was Alex Baird when he was 16 years and 8 months old.

The youngest to die was James Robertson who perished in the Quintinshill Rail Disaster at the age of 17 years and 4 months

The youngest to be killed in action was Sam Gray. He was 17½ years old.

James Penman was killed on his 20th birthday.

The worst days in the war for Larbert's soldiers were:

25 April 1915 – 6 deaths

25 September 1915 – 7 deaths

13 November 1916 – 7 deaths

23 April 1917 – 6 deaths

The worst week in the war: 23-28 April 1916 – 15 deaths

201 of the men on the memorial served in 12 Scottish regiments

96 soldiers on the memorial belonged to the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders – that's 34% of the names.

2 soldiers on the memorial won the Military Cross; 6 soldiers won the Military Medal

The Great War Medals

The men on Larbert War Memorial qualified for service medals and these were sent out to their next of kin, a process that took most of the 1920s.

A British soldier who served on the Western Front between 4 August and 22 November 1914 was awarded the 1914 Star. This medal went to those who belonged to the original British Expeditionary Force. A clasp was given to those who were "under the close fire of the enemy".

The 1914-15 Star went to servicemen in any theatre of war up to the end of 1915.

Men in the Merchant Navy who served in a war zone received the Mercantile Marine Medal 1914-18.

Everyone who served in the forces, including the Merchant Navy, during the war got the British War Medal.

The Victory Medal 1914-19 was awarded to everyone who had served in "a theatre of war" and had received one of the other medals.

Further details can be found in Peter Ducker's 2009 book British Military Medals

1914 Star

1914-15 Star

Mercantile Marine Medal 1914-18

British War Medal

Victory Medal 1914-19

Awards for Gallantry

The M.C.

The D.C.M

The M.M.

Ten of the soldiers named on the Larbert War Memorial were awarded decorations for gallantry. Six received the Military Medal (M.M.), three the Military Cross (M.C).and one the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM).

The Military Cross was awarded from December 1914 to commissioned officers of the rank of Captain or below for "Acts of exemplary gallantry during active operations against the enemy." The Larbert M.C.s are Captain A. Hunter, Lt. Sydney Hague, and R.S.M. Robert Monteith.

The Distinguished Conduct Medal instituted in 1854 was awarded for acts of gallantry by "other ranks." Colour Sergeant Major (CSM) William Dick was awarded the DCM in 1917. From March 1916 the Military Medal was awarded for similar feats of gallantry and the Larbert M.M.s are Pte. Thomas Cowan, Pte. Malcolm Laird, L.S. James Mitchell, Pte. Ebeneezer Rennie, Pte. Peter Watson and L.Cpl. Robert Watson.

Western Front: Memorials to the Missing

Of the 286 men whose names are commemorated on Larbert War Memorial, 101 have no known grave; that is 35 % of the total. By contrast, the proportion of Britain's First World War dead who are 'missing' is estimated to be as great as a half. It's estimated that of these about half have an unidentified gravestone; they are 'Known Unto God'. The figures in brackets are the numbers of men whose name appears on the Larbert War Memorial The three main memorials to the missing on the Western Front are:

Menin Gate Memorial

Belgium

This Memorial to the missing of the Ypres Salient has the names of over 54,000 soldiers from Australia, Canada, India, South Africa and the United Kingdom. The British dead are those who died prior to 16 August 1917. (19)

Tyne Cot Memorial

Belgium

This Memorial to the missing of the Ypres Salient is situated 5 miles north-east of Ieper. It commemorates those men from the United Kingdom and from New Zealand who died in the Ypres Salient from 16 August 1917 to the end of the war and who have no known grave. There are 35,000 names.

Thiepval Memorial

France

This Memorial to the missing of the Somme records the names of 65,000 British soldiers who were killed in action between July and November 1916 during the Battle of the Somme. (16)

The other Western Front memorials to British war dead containing Larbert War Memorial names are:

Arras Memorial, France This memorial commemorates almost 35,000 British, South African and New Zealand soldiers who died in the area between the spring of 1916 and the summer of 1918, and who have no known grave. (17)

Le Touret Memorial, France This memorial, which is located near the town of Bethune, records the names of over 13, 000 soldiers who fought in the area in 1914 and up to 25 September 1915 and who have no known grave. (4)

Loos Memorial, France This memorial records the names of 20 000 soldiers who died in this area and who have no known grave. (12)

Pozieres Memorial, France This memorial, situated in the village of Pozieres four miles north-east of Albert, commemorates over 14,000 casualties of the United Kingdom who have no known grave and who died on the Somme from 21 March to 7 August 1918. (3)

Vis-en-Artois Memorial, France Vis-en-Artois is a village about 8 miles south-east of the town of Arras. The Memorial has the names of over 9,000 British and South African soldiers who lost their lives between 8 August and 11 November 1918, in the Advance to Victory in Picardy and Artois, between the Somme and Loos, and who have no known grave. (5)

Cambrai Memorial Louverval, France The memorial commemorates more than 7,000 servicemen of the United Kingdom and South Africa who died in the Battle of Cambrai in November and December 1917 (4)

Ploegsteert Memorial The Ploegsteert Memorial, which is located in Berks Cemetery Extension about 8 miles south of Ieper, commemorates more than 11,000 servicemen who died in this sector during the First World War and have no known grave. Those commemorated by this memorial did not die in major offensives; most were killed in the daily events of trench warfare which was the common experience in this part of the line, or in small scale operations, which were to support the major attacks taking place elsewhere. (3)

The Men of Larbert War Memorial

Each of the biographies of the men of Larbert War Memorial begins with his full name, where known; then his basic details: his rank, his regiment and battalion, the date of his death, his age and lastly his family, all of these as at the date of his death. Variations in these details are also given.

In the main part of the biography there are some details of his personal life such as his occupation before the outbreak of war or important or interesting events in his life before 1914. It is possible through these details to get an idea of what life was like then in Larbert and district. His enlistment is recorded and the main points of his military service before his death are outlined, with particular emphasis on the main battles of the war, instances of being wounded or suffering from illness. In some cases the soldier's disciplinary record is mentioned. Where possible, the circumstances of his death are described and its context in the war explained within the particular battle or campaign. This is a distinctive feature of these biographies. The level of detail about each of these men is dictated by the sources of information. The survival of the soldier's Service Record is the key to this.

Below the main part of the biography are given the details of the cemetery or memorial where the soldier is commemorated, with the location within the cemetery or memorial identified. These details are taken from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website. The location of these cemeteries or memorials is briefly described. For some men the epitaph inscribed on their gravestone and provided by their next of kin is given like this: THY WILL BE DONE. Where quotations are used in the main part of the biographies, these are from battalion war diaries. The references for other quotations are given in order below the biography. Often there is supplementary information relating to the soldier's service or death provided at the end of the biography.

The main sources used to compile the biographies were: The Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Debt of Sacrifice provided the basic details; in particular, I have used the date of death of a serviceman as given by the CWGC unless there was compelling evidence for a different date. The local newspapers, the *Falkirk Herald* and the *Falkirk Mail*, provided details from the families; many, if not most, servicemen had an obituary about them published in the newspapers. The Service Records for the servicemen gave detailed information for them but in the case of soldiers these records survive for only about one-third of those who served in the war. Soldiers' Service Records were stored in a building in London which was hit by incendiary bombs during the Blitz of 1940. In the case of the Larbert War Memorial, out of the 227 soldiers named there, there are service records for 79 of them - 35%.The majority of the records were destroyed completely or severely damaged by fire and water. (See pages 264-266 for further information about the Service Records of the men on the memorial.) Battalion war diaries and regimental or battalion histories give information about where a battalion was at any particular time during the war. They rarely identify where an ordinary soldier was when he died. (It was different for an officer.) I have assumed that when a soldier, sailor or airman was killed or fatally wounded, that he was with his unit as stated in the records when this happened. Other sources used in compiling a biography are footnoted.

A World War: men who went out to battle

The First Battle of Ypres October – November 1914

Pte William Smith served through the battle and was killed in action 11 November 1914

The Second Battle of Ypres – April-May 1915

Pte James Dea was killed on April 25 during the battle when the Germans used poison gas for the first time in the war and the 7th Argylls were used to seal the hole in the front line

The Battle of Loos – September 1915

L Sgt Andrew Finlay was killed on September 25, the first day of the Battle of Loos, the first major attack by the British Army on the Western Front

The Battle of the Somme – July-November 1916

Pte Thomas Tough was killed on July 1, the first day of the Battle of the Somme, the worst day in British military history

The Battle of the Somme: Bazentin – July 1916

Pte Hugh Hamilton was killed on July 14, the first day of a significant and more successful attack on a German position at the Somme

The Battle of the Somme: Ancre – November 1916

Pte Alex Robertson was killed in action on November 13 at the start of the final phase of the Battle of the Somme

The Battle of Arras – April 1917

Pte Hugh Martin was killed on April 9, the first day of the Battle of Arras, the bloodiest battle of the war

The Battle of Arras: Chemical Works – April 1917

Lt Robert G Hunter was killed on April 23, the first day of a phase of the Battle of Arras which brought the worst week of the war for casualties from Larbert

The Battle of Passchendaele – July-November 1917

Pte Andrew McKendrick was killed on July 31, the first day of the most important battle of 1917

The Battle of Cambrai – November 1917

Pte Thomas Whittet was killed on November 23 during the Battle of Cambrai in which tanks were used, on its opening day, November 20, effectively for the first time

The German Spring Offensive: Operation Michael – March 1918

AB Hector McPhail was killed on March 28 at the end of the first week of the offensive when British forces were in headlong retreat

The German Spring Offensive: Operation Georgette – April 1918

Pte James Gardner was killed on April 9, the opening day of the second phase of the German Spring Offensive

---

Gallipoli 1915

Pte Arthur Reid served from the start of the campaign and through its horrendous early stages until his death on August 3, 1915

Mesopotamia 1915-1918

Pte Peter Davie served briefly in this sideshow of a campaign. He was killed in action on January 7, 1916

Salonika 1915-1918

Pte Francis Lorn was killed on May 18, 1917 during the campaign aimed against Bulgaria and fought in Greece. He died of wounds on 18 May 1917, ten days after he had been wounded in the Battle of Doiran, the only major battle of the campaign.

Palestine 1917-1918

Pte John Dick was killed in action on August 8, 1917 in a campaign of immense long-term consequences

At Sea

AB Adrian Douglas was drowned when his ship HMS *Raglan* was attacked and suk in the Agean Sea by two Turkish warships.

Illness

Pte Thomas Cowan M.M. won his medal in August 1918 only a few weeks before he fell victim to the influenza epidemic of 1918-1919. His funeral in Stenhousemuir took place the day after the Armistice was signed.

Private John ADAM

Scottish Rifles (Cameronians)
9th Battalion
Service No: 22556
Date of Death: 22 July 1916
Age at Death: 26
Family: Third son of David and Christina Adam, Ivy Cottage, 54 Burnhead Road, Larbert

John Adam worked for Dobbie, Forbes & Company in Larbert as a stocktaker, before joining up in November 1915. Just over six months later he was fighting in the biggest battle on the Western Front up to that point – the Battle of the Somme, which began exactly three weeks before his death.

His battalion fought at Montauban, Longueval and then at Delville Wood during these three weeks. In that time the strength of the battalion had been reduced from 659 other ranks plus 20 officers to a total of about 325 when it came out of the front line.

On 20 July the battalion moved back to Happy Valley. This was so called ironically because it was subjected to a constant and intense bombardment during daylight hours.

The 22nd July was spent at Happy Valley refitting and bathing, according to the battalion diary. The *Falkirk Herald* reported that John was killed by the explosion of an enemy shell. This occurred the day before his battalion was moved away from the Somme to the Vimy sector.

Thiepval Memorial, France
Pier and Face 4 D.

Private Andrew AITKEN

Gordon Highlanders 1st Battalion
Service No: S/44778
Date of Death: 1 October 1918
Age at Death: 18
Family: Second son of John and Mary Aitken, 13 McKay Place, Stenhousemuir

Two weeks after being informed of Andrew's death, his father received a letter from the War Office with heartbreaking information. It said that as Andrew was under age - he was 18 years and 8 months old - he was being sent home meantime! Obviously his death had occurred before any action was taken on the decision described in the letter. What effect this letter had on his parents is almost impossible to imagine.

Andrew Aitken was killed when his battalion successfully attacked west of the village of Rumilly-en-Cambresis which is three miles south of Cambrai. Rumilly was captured from the Germans on the day after his death.

The battalion report on the attack said that it began when "the barrage opened at 6 a.m. Throughout the operation it was extremely ragged & many casualties were casused [sic] to our own men." The infantry attacks went on all day. At 6 p.m. the village was heavily shelled for 30 minutes and at 6.40 p.m. the Gordon Highlanders began to advance on the village. "Made over a narrow No Man's Land in the failing light, the attack surprised the Germans and was entirely successful, over 400 prisoners being taken with slight casualties."

Andrew Aitken's Headstone

The Commanding Officer of the 1st Battalion Gordon Highlanders commented in his report positively about the youthfulness of his battalion saying that

> The Bn was extremely weak when the operation was undertaken & almost entirely devoid of senior NCOs. Few officers had any experience. In these circumstances the young soldiers (boys of 18 ½ years) of which it was largely composed acquitted themselves in a very satisfactory manner.

Three weeks later, after the battalion had successfully attacked another village near Cambrai, he had significantly changed his opinion:

> It is strongly recommended that boys of 18½ should not be sent to fighting battalions. Although perhaps 10% of these boys may do quite well, the remainder are quite useless. They do not possess the necessary stamina & a battalion, however weak, is better off without them.

Rumilly-en-Cambresis Communal Cemetery Extension
I. A.3.

THY WILL BE DONE

Military Operations France and Belgium, 1918, Volume V, 1947, page 152

About 250,000 under-age soldiers served in the British Army during the First World War.

Private Daniel George Scott AITKEN

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
7th Battalion B Company
Service No: 1839
Date of Death: 8 May 1915
Age at Death: 20
Family: Eldest son of James and Christina Aitken, 38 Stewartfield Place, Main Street, Larbert

Private Daniel Aitken

Daniel Aitken had been a member of the Territorial Battalion of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders for nearly 18 months when war broke out. He left his job as a moulder with Dobbie, Forbes & Company to join the army in September 1914. Like many others from the local area, he left for the Western Front on 15 December 1914. After a period of winter quiet, in April the weather was "splendid," Dan Aitken wrote home, and, if it wasn't for all the sandbag-filling they had to do, everything would be "OK". Another soldier in the battalion explained in his letter home: "The enemy opposite do not molest our local heroes, and often shout across various remarks, oftener complimentary than not". If the soldiers' comments made the war seem like some kind of sporting contest, then in the last week of April and first week in May the 7th Battalion of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders was involved in the serious fighting during the Second Battle of Ypres. Captain Alex Scott of the battalion claimed that in that first fortnight,

> We had seen nearly all there is to see in war. We had advanced across open ground against the German trenches, ... we had gone through two gas attacks... we had been shelled, persistently and with uncanny accuracy, throughout the whole fourteen days.... Our diet had ben bully-beef and biscuits, with tea in the evening or just before sunrise... We had learned to snatch a few minutes' sleep when and where we could. Some of us had washed... but for the most part we were a grimy and war-worn crowd.
>
> But we were in good spirits that morning". [May 8th 1915, the first day of the Battle of Frezenberg Ridge].

The men were expecting to be relieved but after breakfast the German guns began a bombardment. Captain Scott wrote that "before noon we had paid costly tribute to the skill of the German gunners". Summing up the rest of the day, he wrote: "We had twice been badly shelled; we had covered over 15 miles; our casualties had been heavy - and we had never fired a shot. What a day!"

Dan's family received the information that his death occurred when he "was advancing to take up a position when a shell burst almost on top of him and he was instantaneously killed." A soldier at the front wrote to tell his mother that Dan was "a splendid soldier."

At 3 p.m. the 7th Battalion was sent forward to La Brique and took up position in a reserve trench 1,000 yards from the front line. Their move was spotted by German artillery which shelled the men as they moved into position. The battalion suffered 60 casualties, including Daniel Aitken.

In the death notice in the Falkirk Herald, the family commented:

> In all the glory of his youth, he died that we might live.

Menin Gate Memorial, Ieper, Belgium Panel 42 and 44.

Stewartfield Place in Main Street, Larbert was a block of 54 homes situated opposite Larbert Village School. The building belonged to the firm Dobbie, Forbes & Company and the homes were let to their employees.

Stewartfield Place, Main Street, Larbert

Private John ALLAN

Gordon Highlanders 1st Battalion
Service No: S/42267
Date of Death: 30 August 1918
Age at Death: 18
Family: Youngest son of the late Archibald and Rebecca Allan; brother of Rebecca Allan, 22 Grange Street, Stenhousemuir

Private John Allan

John Allan was a soldier for 9 months. He was called up and enlisted in Stirling on 11 December 1917. He did his training, initially at Tillicoultry, Clackmannanshire, and then at Thetford in Norfolk. He left Thetford for the Western Front on 1 June 1918. He had overstayed his final leave the previous day by being absent from reveille until 9.40 am. This cost him 12 days' pay!

He joined his battalion at the front on June 9. A few days later, his battalion attacked the German position at Hinges, three miles north-west of Bethune.

From August 20-30 Private Allan's battalion was involved in attacks on the German trenches in the Ayette area, about nine miles south of the town of Arras. The battalion war diary mentions heavy casualties on August 21 near Courcelles. On 29 August the battalion, now near Ecoust, sent out patrols "to keep in touch with the enemy" but "one platoon of the left coy advanced too far and was practically wiped out by machine gun fire from the flank." The following day "Bn advanced with the 2nd Suffolks who took Ecoust on our left, but because of a heavy attack our left coy was left in the air and suffered heavy casualties."
Private Allan was wounded on one of these attacks and died of his wounds at the 45th Casualty Clearing Station, which was situated at Bailleuval, a village about eight miles south-west of Arras.

Bac-du-Sud British Cemetery, Bailleuval, France III. D. 8.

Private John ANDERSON

Gordon Highlanders 1st Battalion
Service Number: S/10214
Date of Death: 2 March 1916
Age at Death: 27
Family: Youngest son of Alex and Elizabeth Anderson, 4 Lorne Terrace, Larbert; brother of William Anderson (q.v.)

Private John Anderson

John Anderson had been employed by Jones & Campbell of Larbert as a furnaceman before he joined the army.

On 2 March 1916, Private Anderson's battalion attacked at Reninghelst, six miles south-west of Ypres, at 4.30 am. According to the battalion war diary, there was: "some initial success on the right, left section failed, 3 platoon practically annihilated ('A' Company). Very heavy casualties suffered, totalling 245 killed and wounded."

Private Anderson was one of these casualties. The family were told that "after a charge on the German trenches, which were captured, [he] was shot through the head by a sniper."

He died two months after his older brother William (q.v.).

Menin Gate Memorial Ieper, Belgium. Panel 38.

Corporal William ANDERSON

Royal Army Service Corps
Service No.: S4/070189
Date of Death: 1 January 1916 (CWGC: *31 December 1915*)
Age at Death: 35
Family: Husband of Jessie Eadie Anderson, North Main Street, Stenhousemuir; father of 4 young children; son of Alex and Elizabeth Anderson, 4 Lorne Terrace, Larbert; brother of John (q.v.)

Private William Anderson

Before joining the army shortly after the outbreak of the war, William Anderson was a baker with the Chapelhall Co-operative Society in Airdrie. When he went

to the Western Front in April, 1915, his skills as a baker were used by the army at Le Havre. This was the No 1 Base for the British Army on the Western Front during the war.

Official records give the date of his death as 31 December 1915 but the *Falkirk Herald* death notice gives it as 1 January 1916.

His death was the result of an accident, which caused him to suffer a fractured skull. Lt H C Bradshaw of the 26th Field Bakery wrote to Jessie Anderson that:

> The accident happened just as your husband had commenced to unload some fire wood from a motor lorry, when he was seen to slip and fall over backwards to the ground. He was rendered unconscious at once, and was therefore saved from pain. A major from the RAMC attended at once, and personally superintended his removal to hospital. The accident happened about 3 o'clock in the afternoon and your husband passed away about 2 o'clock the following morning.

His widow was also told that William was one of the most popular men in the bakery.

When William was taken to hospital, one of the nurses on duty was "a Larbert lady", Miss Beatrice Reid. *(See entry for George Reid.)* After his death, she found in his belongings a letter addressed to the Rev John Fairley. She sent it on. The letter was to express his thanks for the Christmas gift that Larbert Parish Church had sent.

Cimitiere St Marie, Havre
Div 19. O .3.

Private William ARMIT

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
7th Battalion
Service No: 275365
Date of Death: 9 April 1917
Age at Death: 20
Family: Youngest son of Andrew and the late Mrs Ann Armit, McVey's Buildings, Stenhousemuir

William Armit, who was the youngest son of the family, lived with his widowed father, Andrew, in McVey's Buildings, (King Street) Stenhousemuir. William was an apprentice loam moulder with Carron Company when he joined the Territorial Force four months before war was declared. He was mobilised on 5 August 1914. He was 17 years old.

He served on the Western Front from August 1916. He was a Lewis gunner.

William was killed on the first day of the Battle of Arras. He was shot through the head by a German sniper. His battalion, like the others belonging to the 51st Division, had "attracted most of the enemy's firepower."

At the beginning of April, in preparation for the battle, the 7th Battalion had moved to Roclincourt and on April 9 had taken part in the general attack on Vimy Ridge. It helped to push forward the front line to "within striking distance of Bailleul." The Official History commented that the first day of the Battle of Arras was "one of the great days of the war. It witnessed the most formidable and ... most successful British offensive hitherto launched."

The battalion historian described how "the fighting went on till the night of the 11th, [the battalion was relieved then 'in a blizzard of exceptional severity']. Trench after trench [was] taken by bombing, by sudden rushes, by stealth in the dark or by straightforward assault in co-operation with the Artillery".

Private William Armit

William Armit was among the 38 men of the battalion killed between April 9 and 11, when the battalion was relieved.

Roclincourt Valley Cemetery, France (III. B .10.) Roclincourt is a village about 3 miles from Arras. It was very close to the British lines in April 1917.

Cheerful Sacrifice, Jonathan Nicholls, 2005 edition, page 96

Military Operations France and Belgium, 1917, Volume I, Cyril Falls, 1940, page 201

The 7th Battalion of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders was commonly blamed for the failure of the 51st Division's attack on 9 April. The battalion, as one of the three battalions of 154 Brigade, was expected to execute a right turn as they neared their objective known as the Brown Line. However, the turn was not carried out properly; by mid-morning most of the officers were casualties. The battalion veered straight across the front of 152 Brigade and then compounded their error by believing that they had reached their objective. In fact, they were in the "insignificant" Tommy Trench, several hundred yards west of their objective. "Here the Argylls spent the night digging in and clearing the trench, resisting all attempts to tell them that they were in the wrong place".

In his diary on April 10, Private Arthur Wrench of the Seaforth Highlanders wrote after accompanying three officers on a tour of the front:

It was the 7th Argylls held up at this place yesterday and in trying to get around the position went off their objective, thereby leaving a gap in the line just over the ridge. This was the cause of the advance not sweeping right down all the way to Gavrelle which was according to plan.

Lieutenant John B Gregory of the 7th Argll and Sutherland Highlanders revealed in his memoir that "a disturbing report" that two companies of the battalion who were "reported in their final objective" had "lost direction" and had not reached their final objective. When the Adjutant went to investigate in the early morning, he was "nearly captured" by the Germans who still held their trenches at the top of the hill. This was the final objective. A mistake had been made. But "some heavy artillery and a tank cleared them [the Germans] out."

(Cheerful Sacrifice, Jonathan Nicholls, 2005 edition, page 96.)

Able Seaman Alex BAIRD

Royal Naval Division Drake Battalion
Service No. Clyde Z/4043
Date of Death: 10 July 1919
Age at Death: 20
Family: Son of Alexander and Agnes Baird, 27, Stepps Road, Stenhousemuir

On 3 September 1918, Alex Baird was hit in the left shoulder and the bullet penetrated his spine, leaving him paralysed. He was invalided back to Glasgow and in March 1919 he was discharged as a result of his invalidity – "Paraplegia middle of Trunk, result of wound". Four months later, he died of his wounds in the 3rd Scottish General Hospital, which was one part of Stobhill Hospital in Glasgow.

When Alex enlisted in 1915, he gave a false date of birth which added two years on to his real age. He joined the Drake Battalion in

August 1915 but he had an adenoids operation the following month. He rejoined Drake Battalion in January 1916 but six months later, when he was serving on the Western Front, he was found to be under-age. He was sent home.

In October 1917 he was conscripted and in the following month he joined Drake Battalion again.

In March 1918 his battalion was very much involved in trying to hold back the advance of the German Spring Offensive, which caused the whole division heavy casualties.

At the start of September 1918 Canadian and British forces, including Alex Baird's Drake Battalion, attacked the Drocourt-Queant Line. This was a northwards extension of the Hindenburg Line starting about 11 miles west of Cambrai. It had 'a front system and a support system, each with two lines of trenches provided with concrete shelters and machine-gun posts, and very heavily wired. The front line was mainly on the crest, the support system on a reverse slope.' It was perhaps the strongest defensive system that the British Army had tackled up to this point in the war.

The attack began at 5 a.m. on September 2. By nightfall it was clear that the German line had been broken and many German soldiers were taken prisoner.

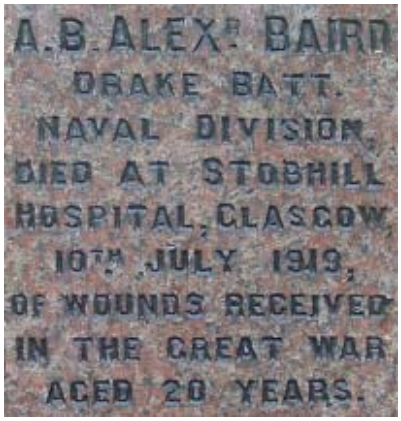
During the night the Germans withdrew and British forces made a cautious advance. Drake battalion moved forward towards the village of Moeuvres, six miles west of Cambrai. German troops occupying a wooded area known as Tadpole Copse halted their advance. Machine gun nests were the problem but these were captured as a result of individual initiatives, especially that of the Commanding Officer of Drake battalion. By the end of the day Tadpole Copse was in the hands of the battalion.

The 63rd (Royal Naval) Division as a whole on 2-3 September "had found even greater success than had been planned, or expected. Equally remarkable was the fact that the cost to the Division had been fewer than a thousand casualties."

At some time during the fighting Alex Baird received the wound which paralysed him and caused his death in July 1919. By then, the war was over and the peace had been signed.

Larbert Cemetery. 3. 278.

Khaki Jack The Royal Naval Division in the First World War, E C Coleman, 2014, page 229



Private James BAIRD

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders 14th Battalion
Service No: S/10499
Date of Death: 27 March 1918
Age at Death: 24
Family: Son of Robert and Catherine T Baird, nee Clark, Viewfield Cottage, Tryst Road, Stenhousemuir

According to the family gravestone in the cemetery in Stenhousemuir, James Baird was posted missing on 21 March 1918, which was the first day of the German Offensive of 1918. Official records give 27 March 1918 as the date of his death.

His battalion was at Vaulx-Vraucourt, four miles north-east of Bapaume, when the German offensive began but the Germans did not attack their front until midday on the 22nd. The line was held until the late afternoon when a withdrawal took place. The situation was described in the battalion war diary as "quiet" for the 23rd and 24th. Due to attacks to the right of the battalion, another withdrawal was required in the evening of the 24th. On the 25th the battalion held the line in front of Behagnies but German attacks meant a retreat to Gomiecourt at 4 p.m. and in the evening to Douchy. Then on the 26th the Battalion's position was in front of Adinfer Wood, about six miles south of Arras.
At 12.30 a.m. on the 27th the battalion was relieved. By then it had suffered over 300 casualties.

James was born in Larbert. At the time of the 1911 census he was employed as a foundry clerk. He enlisted in Stirling.

Arras Memorial, France Bay 9.

Driver Joseph BALFOUR

Royal Field Artillery 29th Division Ammunition Column
Service No: 6803
Date of Death: 23 October 1915
Age at Death: 25
Family: Son of Mrs Helen B Douglas, Crownest Loan, Stenhousemuir; brother of Mrs John Moffat, 6 Goshen, Stenhousemuir

Driver Joseph Balfour

Joseph Balfour was drowned in the Aegean Sea when the transport ship *Marquette* was sunk by the German submarine U-35. The *Marquette* was sailing from Alexandria in Egypt to Salonika, escorted by a French destroyer which left the *Marquette* three hours before it was attacked. At 9.15a.m. it was torpedoed without warning and sank within thirteen minutes. 741 people were on the ship. On board was what was called the No.1 New Zealand Stationary Hospital which included 36 nurses of the NZ Army Nursing Service and 94 staff from the NZ Medical Corps. 167 lives were lost as a result of the sinking. 10 of the victims were NZ nurses – at this time nurses were female!

Joseph had been a fitter at Sunnyside Foundry, Camelon before the war, and lived with his sister. He had enlisted on 3 September 1914.

Built in Glasgow and launched in 1897, the *Marquette* was requisitioned in 1914 as a transport ship, and then painted grey.

The U-35 which sank the *Marquette* was to become the most successful German submarine of the First World War sinking a total of 224 ships.

Mikra Memorial, Greece.

This memorial, which is situated 5 miles south of the city of Salonika (now Thessaloniki), commemorates almost 500 nurses, officers and men of British and Commonwealth forces who lost their lives when troop transports and hospital ships were sunk in the Mediterranean and who have no known grave.

Private Alex BINNIE

Royal Army Medical Corps 27th Field Ambulance
Service No: 32178
Date of Death: 13 July 1916
Age at Death: 35
Family: Husband of Elizabeth Binnie nee Malcolm, 11 East Carron (CWGC: 1 Post Office Buildings, Carron); father of 3 children; son of George and Mary Binnie, Stenhousemuir

Before he joined up on 5 September 1914, Alex Binnie was employed by Carron Company as a slater. He went to the Western Front in 1915. The 27th Field Ambulance, which was attached to the 9th (Scottish) Division, went to France in May 1915. It was heavily involved in treating soldiers wounded during the Battle of Loos and then during the Battle of the Somme.

A week after the opening day of the Somme, planning began for a major offensive in the southern sector of the battlefield. The attack was to be made between Longueval and Bazentin-le-Petit and the artillery bombardment on the German lines began on July 11, with the infantry advance to begin three days later.

On July 12, Alex was wounded and he died the following day. His

Private Alex Binnie

commanding officer had visited the stretcher bearers "in nest in MARICOURT DUG-OUTS (West Peronne). They are shelled daily." He went on to note the casualties which "occurred after my visit". The second of the casualties was:

No 32178 Pte BINNEY [sic]
A G.S.W. arm & chest
(evacuated)

The chaplain wrote to his wife to say that Alex had been buried in a nearby cemetery and went on, revealing his confidence in victory for Britain and in Britain's aims in the war: "Your husband died in seeking to help others, and that sacrifice will not be in vain; it must one day produce the fruits of liberty and righteousness."

La Neuville British Cemetery, Corbie, France I.B.28

NOT GONE FROM MEMORY
NOR FROM LOVE

La Neuville, which is about 15 miles east of Amiens, was the base in 1916 for No 21 Casualty Clearing Station.

Private James BINNIE

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
7th Battalion
Service No: 275534 (formerly 2359)
Date of Death: 15 November 1916
Age at Death: 21
Family: Son of Mrs Isabella Binnie and the late William, Burnside Castle, Stenhousemuir

James Binnie was killed at the end of the Battle of the Somme. He was posted missing on the third day of the Battle of the Ancre. He was to be officially reported killed on that date.

The Battle of the Ancre began on November 13 with an attack by the 51st (Highland) Division on Beaumont Hamel, which is six miles north of the town of Albert. This was the final phase of the Battle of the Somme which had begun on 1 July 1916. It was also a formidable task. The battalion historian referred to "the supposed impregnable fortress of Beaumont Hamel, with its almost ridiculous depth of wire entanglements, its fabulously deep cellars and caves and its picked garrison of the best of the enemy's troops". It was also "literally an uphill fight".

On November 13, the 7th Battalion of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders was in support as the 51st (Highland) Division, with the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division on the right and the 2nd Division on the left, stormed and took possession of Beaumont Hamel. At 7.30 a.m. the next day three companies of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders advanced to occupy the next objective, Munich Trench, which was achieved "with slight opposition". However, at 1.30 p.m. they withdrew from this trench "on account of the shelling of our own guns". At 6 p.m. a company of German prisoners was sent up to dig New Munich Trench. This task was also carried out by companies from two Scottish battalions.

On the morning of November 15, Munich Trench was attacked again. The battalion war diary's report on the attack began: "Our artillery barrage opened short." The 51st Division report stated that the attack "started according to time table and the waves successfully crossed MUNICH TRENCH, when they ran into the barrage and suffered severe losses, sufficient to totally disorganise the attack. Only a few individuals reached FRANFURT TRENCH," the attack's third objective. The survivors returned to New Munich Trench, "still the most advanced part of the British line".

The 7th Argylls' casualties on November 15 were heavy – 2 officers, missing believed killed, and 3 wounded; 22 other ranks killed, 97 wounded and 19 missing. James Binnie was one of the latter.

He had been a Territorial and served in the army from 5 August 1914. He went to the Western Front on 15 December. On 29 April 1915, when the battalion was fighting near Wieltje, he was seriously wounded in the left thigh. He returned to England two days later for treatment. Five months later, he was able to rejoin his battalion and served mainly in the Ypres sector over the next twelve months.

New Munich Trench British Cemetery, Beaumont Hamel, France F.21

New Munich Trench was dug by British troops on 14 Nov 1916 and turned into a cemetery early in 1917.

Private John Alexander BINNIE

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
11th Battalion
Service No: 1368
Date of Death: 13 March 1918
Age at Death: 21
Family: Son of John and the late Lilias Binnie, Larbert; brother of Agnes Binnie, 65, Gairbraid Street, Glasgow

Alexander Binnie was an 18-year-old waiter living in Glasgow when he enlisted in the army in Stenhousemuir about two months before the First World War was declared. A week after war was declared he joined the 3rd Battalion of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders. This was a training unit. Alexander trained at Woolwich in London and from May 1915 in Edinburgh. On 26 July 1915, he went to the Western Front, where he joined the 2nd Battalion. After serving at the front for just over a year, he was seriously wounded in the neck. He returned to Scotland for treatment in the 4th Scottish General Hospital, which was one part of Stobhill Hospital, Glasgow. He was a patient there for 7 months. When he recovered from his wounds, he was posted back to the training unit. By this time, it was based in Kinsale in County Cork in the south-west of Ireland. In May 1917 he was in hospital in Belfast and then was transferred to the Military Hospital at Portobello, Dublin for specialist treatment. Alexander was treated for a month before he was discharged. At the start of November Alexander appears to have deserted. However on 26th November he rejoined the battalion. His "desertion" was treated as 22 days absense. He forfeited his pay for those days and was sentenced to 14 days detention, which he served from 30th January to 12th February at Kinsale.

The records don't say where he was during his "absence" but he had to spend 7 weeks from 10 December in the Portobello Hospital in Dublin for further treatment. He then served his period of detention for his "absence" in November.

On his release from detention, Alexander went to the Western Front and was posted to the 11th battalion. He had belonged to the battalion for less than 3 weeks when he was killed in action near Monchy.

Alexander had 3 sisters. In May 1920 his middle sister sent a rather tetchy letter to the Infantry Record Office in Perth when the Memorial Scroll for her brother was sent to her father (who had died five months before). She told them:

> My brother… left his effects to me his sister [Agnes]. You might remember this for future reference, as there is none of my family have any right to get anything still due to me.

Monchy British Cemetery, Monchy-Le-Preux, France. II.C.19.

MEMORY KEEPS OUR
LOVED ONE NEAR US

Monchy-le-Preux is a village in the department of the Pas-de-Calais on the north side of the main road from Arras to Cambrai.

Highlandersadvance to the Front

Private Joseph BLAIR

Machine Gun Corps (Formerly Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders 5786)
Service Number: 60329
Date of Death: 25 September 1917
Age at Death: 20
Family: Son of Joseph and Jessie Blair, 12 Company's Row, Stenhousemuir

Private Joseph Blair

Joseph Blair was "a magnificent soldier". He was a baker with Mrs Eadie & Sons of Stenhousemuir prior to joining the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders in September 1915. A few weeks later, he was transferred to the Machine Gun Corps. He arrived at the Western Front in November 1916.

Shortly after his death, the *Falkirk Herald* quoted at length from a letter written to the family by Lieutenant George Harrison:

> Your son was in my section and nobody appreciated more than I did his never-failing loyalty and devotion to duty. He was a magnificent soldier and one of the bravest of men. He was extremely popular with his fellow-soldiers and they will miss him many a day. He was killed on 25 September while doing his duty in the line, and was buried with one or two of his comrades in the battlefield. Your son made the supreme sacrifice in the course of one of the most brilliant engagements in the history of the war, and he had a small share in what proved to be a glorious victory. I was by his side when he fell and I do hope it is some consolation for you to know that your son has done the finest thing a Scotsman could do. He gave his life for his country and his friends."

It appears from Lieutenant Harrison's letter that Joseph was taking part in the Battle of Passchendaele when he was killed in action. However, this battle is perceived neither as "one of the most brilliant engagements in the history of the war" nor as "a glorious victory."

Tyne Cot Memorial, Ieper, Belgium. Panel 154 to 159 and 163A.

Joseph's grave obviously did not survive the remainder of the fighting in the Passchendaele area.

In the opinion of an unnamed officer belonging to the 33rd Division, referring to the Battle of Passchendaele, "No troops were more sorely tried than were the machine gunners in this most exhausting of all battles on the Western Front."

This was partly because they had to bring up hundreds of thousands of rounds of ammunition to their front-line positions.

This officer vividly described the events of 25 September 1917. This was another assault on Polygon Wood, 4 miles east of Ypres, to follow up a successful attack five days earlier:

> *British batteries poured an incessant stream of shells overhead… The German artillery in titanic support of strong counter-attacks… hailed a most violent bombardment upon our support lines and communications…*
>
> *At 3.30 a.m., just before dawn, the extraordinary happened. With outstanding gallantry, the Germans attacked… just as we were about to leap to the assault. Almost simultaneously both barrages lifted…*
>
> *I witnessed an astonishing sight. Dense masses of German troops were pouring down the hillside against our brigades waiting to assault. Suddenly the batteries [of 207 Machine Gun Company] opened fire. The range was point-blank….*
>
> *Low flying aeroplanes detected the machine guns and the enemy inflicted very severe casualties among them.*

The whole of the British front line was thrown back and the plans for their attack were abandoned. But the German counter-attack weakened and in the late afternoon, with fresh troops the British assault was carried out. The Division reached all the objectives which had been planned for its assault, a "notable feat of arms.

Machine Guns, Lieut-Colonel G S Hutchinson, 1938, pages 206-213.

Lance Corporal Abner BORTHWICK

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders 11th Battalion
Service No: S/3815
Date of Death: 14 May 1916
Age at Death: 28 (CWGC: *26*)
Family: Husband of Janet Burt, Stirling Road, Larbert

Abner Borthwick was a 26 year old married man with two children and another one on the way (to be born on 22 December 1914) when he enlisted in Stenhousemuir on 7 September. He had been an iron grinder with Dobbie, Forbes & Company. By 11 September he was in Aldershot and a soldier in the 11th battalion. He went to the Western Front on 9 July 1915.

There was during his war service a couple of instances of drunkenness recorded against his name; for example, on 12 January 1916 he was fined 5 shillings (25p) for being drunk. His battalion played an important part in the Battle of Loos in September 1915. (See entry for John Harley.)

The 11th Battalion of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders was one

Lance Corporal Abner Borthwick

of four Scottish battalions holding the Kink Salient opposite the Hohenzollern Redoubt in May 1916. This salient had "the worst reputation of any place in the [Loos] sector". On 11 May from 4 p.m. the 13th Royal Scots found themselves the focus for a German attack aimed at re-occupying the salient. (See entries for Robert Reid or Thomas Penman.)

At 11.30 p.m. that night it was discovered that the Germans had burst through the British front line on a front of over 400 yards and beyond the Support Line in some places. The 11th Argylls took part in the counter-attack that was organised immediately. One hundred yards were recovered but that was all. No further attempt was made because it would soon be daylight. Later that day it was decided not to try to re-take the trenches that had been lost.

On 14 May "earthworks" spotted by RFC planes were shelled in the afternoon by British heavy artillery which provoked, according to the battalion war diary, retaliation "on our sore spots and successfully flattened Vigo Street", a trench which led to Hill 62.

It was presumably during this shelling that Abner Borthwick was killed.

Vermelles British Cemetery, France. IV. E. 25.

Vermelles is a village about 6 miles north-west of the town of Lens in northern France.

Military Operations France and Belgium, 1916, Volume I, James E Edmonds, 1932, page 205

Private George Fleming BROCK

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
11th Battalion
Service No: 202656 (Formerly 4790)
Date of Death: 28 March 1918
Age at Death: 19
Family: Son of Andrew and Abigail Brock, Glenfuir Lodge, Camelon

On 17 June 1916, the day before his 18th birthday, George Brock enlisted in the army. He was living in Dryburgh Terrace, Denny and working in an architect's office in Stirling as an Architect and Surveyor Apprentice. He was placed on the Army Reserve. He was mobilised in February 1917 and, after 5 months' training, went to the Western Front joining the 11th Battalion of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders.

A week after the start of the German Offensive of 1918, he was reported missing. It was to be over a year later that he was presumed to have been killed in action on 28 March 1918.

On that date the 11th Battalion's front line position was near Tilloy, two miles south-east of Arras. A very detailed account of the day's events is given in the diary of Lieutenant Robert Lindsay Mackay, who was a Battalion Signalling Officer:

> March 28th. Thursday. Wakened up after two hours sleep at 3 a.m. by deuce of bombardment. The very earth seemed to tremble… Gas shells in hundreds came over, and the back areas got a big share. In the darkness we could do nothing… All our lines, both forwards and back, became broken. Bombardment of our lines kept up by the Boches for three hours.
>
> About 6 a.m. the bombardment became more intense… The Boche at this time did not come into contact with our bn as we were in reserve. All our casualties were from artillery fire, and a few from M.G.s [machine guns].
>
> There was a lot of confusion all morning as the Boche bombardment was perfect. He burst everything and we never knew where his shots will land next… Our 'D' Coy on the left, had a bad time, about 40 casualties. We had four officer casualties… Of the men, there were 80 casualties, including about a dozen killed.

Presumably George Brock was one of the men killed.

Arras Memorial, France Bay 9.

By the time Larbert War Memorial was constructed, George Brock's parents were living in Larbert.

Corporal George BROUGH
(CWGC: Lance Corporal)

Royal Highlanders 'Black Watch' 6th Battalion
Service Number: 1921
Date of Death: 28 July 1916
Age at Death: 26
Family: Son of John and Rachel Brough, East Croft Place, Larbert

George Brough, who was born in Deanston, was working for Pullar's at Ashfield two miles north of Dunblane when war broke out.

Ashfield Mill was constructed from 1865 by J & J Pullar & Company, which wished to add to its textile works at Bridge of Allan. At Ashfield the mill could use the water power available there from the Water of Allan for bleaching, printing and dyeing cloth. Alongside the mill the company built a planned village with housing for the workers. The mill and village were not sold by Pullar's until after 1945 and the mill continued in use until 1976.

George enlisted in Dunblane in August 1914 and went to the Western Front in April 1915.

In July 1916 his battalion was moved from the Arras sector to the Somme. It moved into the front line at Bazentin-le-Petit on July 26. This was in preparation for an attack on High Wood which began on July 30.

But George was killed in action two days before this attack was begun. There were heavy enemy bombardments on both July 27 and 28. The battalion war diary states that on 27 July there were 3 killed and 10 wounded while on the 28th there were 12 wounded.

George's connection with Larbert came about as his father lived in East Croft Place.

Thiepval Memorial, France
Pier and Face 10 A.

Able Seaman Allan BROWN

Royal Naval Division Drake Battalion
Service No: Clyde Z/4566
Date of Death: 4 February 1917
Age at Death: 35 (RND: 33 Date of Birth given as 5/3/1883)
Family: Brother of Annie Brown, 15, Tryst Road, Stenhousemuir (he had 4 brothers and 4 sisters)

Able Seaman Allan Brown

Allan Brown was a moulder with Dobbie, Forbes & Company, Larbert before he joined the Royal Naval Division on 22 May 1915. He arrived in Gallipoli in October 1915, with about two months of the campaign to go before the Allied troops were evacuated.

In May 1916 Drake Battalion was transferred to the Western Front. It played an important part in the final phase of the Battle of the Somme. This was the Battle of the Ancre, 13-18 November, 1916. (See entry for Harry Preston.)

On February 3, 1917, two battalions of the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division were ordered to attack the ridge which commanded the village of Grandcourt, which was about seven miles north-east of Albert. The attack, which was to begin at 11 p.m., was timed to last eight minutes. It led to 50 hours of continuous fighting.

The initial attack went well except for a machine gun in a fortified emplacement which became "the pivot of a very vigorous defence." Before the attack it was thought to be a machine gun in a shell hole. In fact it was a dug-out with a garrison of 32.

Allan Brown's battalion was sent in to help on February 4. As the men made their way forward, they got caught in an intensive bombardment and then in a counter-attack.

Later in the day, about 8 p.m., one company of Drake battalion attempted another attack on the German strong point but it was soon called off.

At 9.30 p.m. a "tremendous barrage" began to cover a German counter-attack which was beaten off. Drake battalion casualties on this occasion and during the day were heavy, totalling over 200 and including 33 other ranks killed.

At some point during the day, Allan Brown was killed in action.

Thiepval Memorial, France
Pier and Face 1 A.

The Royal Naval Division, Douglas Jerrold, 1923, page 213

A detailed account of this attack can be found in:

Khaki Jack, The Royal Naval Division in the First World War, E. C. Coleman, (2014) pages 140-142.

Private Frank BROWN

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders 1st/8th Battalion (attached Wireless)
Service No: 275498
Date of Death: 22 August 1918
Age at Death: 26
Family: Son of Sarah Brown, nee Dale, Binnie Place, North Main Street, Stenhousemuir and of the late William Brown

Private Frank Brown

Before the war Frank Brown was employed in the plating shop of Carron Iron Works. He enlisted in September 1914 in the local regiment's 7th Battalion. He went to France three months later.

In May 1915, Frank was wounded and gassed in the German gas attack at Ypres. When he recovered, he returned to his old battalion which was then fighting in the Battle of the Somme. He was wounded again in October 1916. After recuperation, he was once again in the front lines in April 1917, this time with the 11th Battalion. In March 1918, he had a home leave.

In June 1918 Frank joined the 1st/8th Battalion. On August 21, the battalion was in support at Beaurains. The battalion war diary states that it was a "very hot day and evening." There was "Great aerial activity. Full moon. Enemy bombing raids".

Frank suffered a serious head wound and was taken to the 59th Casualty Clearing Station. He was unconscious and he died shortly afterwards. The Army record says: "Wounded 21 – 8 – 18. Dead on admission (Shock from Wound) 22 – 8 – 18"

His chaplain, the Rev W S Kilpatrick, wrote home:

> It is so little that a stranger can say to help, but I pray God may comfort you with His presence and give you strength to bear your heavy burden of sorrow.
>
> Your son has given his life for his country and his people and he rests with others who, like himself, were faithful unto death. Jesus has said that love has no greater sacrifice than that. We trust that though his life has ended here, he now enjoys a blessed share in the life beyond with his Saviour and Lord.

Aubigny Communal Cemetery Extension, France. IV. D. 29.

A BEAUTIFUL MEMORY
LEFT BEHIND

This cemetery was used for those who died at the 42nd Casualty Clearing Station. Aubigny-en-Artois is a village nearly 10 miles north-west of Arras.

Private Robert BROWN

Royal Scots 11th Battalion
Service No: 14207
Date of Death: 22 October 1916
Age at Death: 30
Family: Son of Robert and Mary McKinlay Brown, Mitchell's Land, Stenhousemuir; brother of Maggie & Jeanie

Robert Brown enlisted in September 1914, leaving his job as a clerk in the moulding shop office of Carron Company. His battalion arrived on the Western Front in May 1915.

The 11th Battalion took part in its first major attack on an enemy position at the start of the Battle of Loos on 25 September 1915. Over the three days the battalion was in the attack, it suffered heavy casualties. The battalion then did duty in the first half of 1916 in the Ypres salient, mainly near Ploegsteert Wood.

The battalion played an important part in different phases of the Battle of the Somme.

On 21 October 1916 the battalion took over trenches near the Butte de Warlencourt, a prehistoric burial mound which gave the German Army a dominating position overlooking the British lines. The trenches the Royal Scots occupied were called the Pimple, the Tail and the Nose. These had just been captured as a result of the efforts of South African regiments in appallingly muddy conditions. It was, wrote their historian, "the most dismal of all the chapters of the Somme". When the 11th Royal Scots moved into position, the battalion war diary noted: "The number of GERMAN dead lying about was very noticeable. There must have been 300 dead bodies about the NOSE."

The task of the 11th battalion until it was relieved on 24 October was to consolidate the position they held. The soldiers called this "shaping the mud pie" which gives some idea of the conditions at this time. At 3.30 p.m. on October 22, the Germans bombarded the Royal Scots' support line for two hours, repeated the barrage between 7 and 9 p.m. and shelled their trenches throughout the night. According to the battalion war diary, 14 soldiers of the Royal Scots were killed on the 22nd; the Commonwealth War Graves Commission records the deaths of 25 members of the battalion on that date. Robert Brown was one of these casualties.

Thiepval Memorial, France
Pier and Face 6 D and 7 D.

The History of the South African Forces in France, John Buchan, 1920, page 101

Gunner Daniel BUCHANAN

Royal Field Artillery 35th Brigade
Service No: 52025
Date of Death: 7 September 1916 (FH: 8; CGWC: 9 September)
Age at Death: 28
Family: Son of Margaret Buchanan, Forrest Buildings, Main Street, Larbert and of the late Alexander Buchanan.

Gunner Daniel Buchanan

Daniel Buchanan was a fitter with Dobbie, Forbes & Company, Larbert before joining the army in 1908. On 6 October 1914 Daniel went off to the Western Front.

From 20 August 1916, 35th Brigade was operating in the area of Longueval in the 4th phase of the Battle of the Somme. The British forces were trying to attack Delville Wood. The batteries of 35th Brigade shelled, amongst other targets, Beer Trench, Pint Trench, Ale Alley and Lager Lane.

From 10 p.m. on 31 August until 4 a.m. on 1 September, German artillery fired very heavily on the batteries of 35th Brigade with gas shells. It is likely that Daniel was wounded and gassed during this shelling, though there was further shelling during the day and overnight.

Daniel was taken back to England where he was treated at the Duchess of Connaught's Canadian Red Cross Hospital in Taplow, Maidenhead, Buckinghamshire. However, a few days later, he died of "Septic Wounds & Gas Poisoning". This was the second of two grievous blows for his mother – his father had died only two months previously.

Daniel's funeral was held in Larbert. There was a short service in Larbert [Old] Parish Church, conducted by the Rev John Fairley. The funeral cortege, with the coffin covered by a Union Jack, and with a military escort, then travelled to the cemetery in Stenhousemuir.

Larbert Cemetery, Stenhousemuir. Section 2 Lair 482

The Duchess of Connaught Canadian Red Cross Hospital

Shortly after Daniel Buchanan's death, The Times newspaper on 3 November 1916 described the Duchess of Connaught Hospital as "one of the two best hospitals in England", so no doubt Daniel was well treated in the short time he was there. In 1914 Waldorf Astor invited the Canadian Red Cross to establish and equip a hospital in the grounds of the Cliveden estate, which he owned. The hospital began with the estate's huge covered tennis court being converted into wards with accommodation for over 100 patients. Huts were also built so that it could take over 500 servicemen.

It was named the Duchess of Connaught Hospital as her husband, Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught and Strathearn, served as Governor-General of Canada from 1911-1916. Prince Arthur's mother was Queen Victoria.

The Duchess was the fourth daughter of Prince Friedrich Karl of Prussia. Prince Arthur, while remaining devoted to his wife, maintained a liaison with the sister of Winston Churchill's mother!

Private Alexander Ferrier BUIST

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
7th Battalion B Company
Service No: 1355
Date of Death: 24 May 1915
Age at Death: 22
Family: Husband of Jessie Ferguson, Dock Street, Carronshore; youngest son of Thomas and Maggie Buist, Carron House

Private Alexander Buist

Alex Buist had served his apprenticeship in the engineering shop of Carron Company but was working as an engineer with G & J Weir of Cathcart, Glasgow when war broke out.

Alex had been in the Territorials for almost four years prior to the war and joined up straight away after the outbreak of war. He went to France on 15 December 1914. He was killed in action during the German offensive beginning on 24 May 1915, known as the Battle of Bellewaarde Ridge.

On the previous day, his battalion was ordered to take over the front-line trenches at Wieltje. At 2.45 a.m. the next morning, the German artillery began a fierce bombardment. "Simultaneously, a yellowish-greenish vapour issued at intervals of 30 yards from the German trenches." This chlorine gas attack stretched over almost five miles of the front and was to last

for four-and-a-half hours. The cloud of gas rose to a height of 40 feet above the ground.

Lieutenant A D Morrison, an eyewitness, wrote: "It bleached the sandbags, it withered the grass, it corroded the buttons on the men's tunics, and jammed the mechanism of their rifles."

The men had been given respirators during the previous week. These were pads of cotton waste in bags of mosquito netting. They were to be dampened in a soda solution and then tied over their mouths and nostrils. Lieutenant Morrison said that they "inspired little confidence."

The battalion war diary recorded that about 200 men had to leave the trenches suffering from the effects of gas. Many were slow to put on their respirators because the German trenches were close to theirs and because the German infantry attacked swiftly after the gas. The battalion's trenches were heavily shelled for the whole of the day. The German infantry made some gains on either side of the centre front which held its ground. "But no sensational results were achieved", according to the Official History. This was the end of the German attempt to capture Ypres in 1915.

By then the British Army was in a bad way. Its artillery was nearly out of shells but above all, every unit in the Ypres area needed a large draft to get back to its proper fighting strength. One historian concludes: "It is fortunate that the enemy did not know how bad things were."

When the 7th Battalion of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders was relieved from the front line trenches on the night of 24th May, its casualties for that day were 6 men killed, 20 wounded and 19 gassed.

In a letter to Alex Buist's wife, Colour-Sergeant Harley wrote that Alex "was severely wounded with shell fire and died in the dressing station in the village of St Jean. George Ferguson (his brother-in-law) is down the line suffering from the effects of gas. As yet I don't know whether he was away before your husband was brought down or not."

White House Cemetery, St Jean-Les-Ypres, Belgium III.C.8

St Jean is a village just outside Ieper.

Military Operations France and Belgium, 1915, Volume II J E Edmonds, 1928, page 342

Magnificent But Not War, John Dixon, 2014, page 285

George Ferguson was severely gassed in the attack on 24th May and had to be transferred to Britain to recover. By June he was fit enough to return home to Carronshore. He was "Mentioned in Despatches" for his conspicuous bravery on 24th April. He showed "coolness and courage in removing wounded and dressing their injuries under the continuous heavy fire of the enemy". All he said was that he "only did his duty". The Falkirk Herald commented that he was of "a reticent disposition"!

The gravestones of Pte Alex Buist (right) and Pte John McDonald (page 116) in White House Cemetery, Belgium

Lieutenant (LWM: Captain) **James Alexander Stewart BURGES**

Royal Army Medical Corps
49th Field Ambulance
Date of Death: 24 April 1917
Age at Death: 45
Family: Husband of Mabel Annie Radcliffe Burges, Meadowfield, Carronshore (later of Belmont House, West Bay, Dunoon (his wife was related to the Quarriers of Bridge of Weir); son of James Burges, Ballindalloch, Banffshire

Lieut James Burges

According to census records, James Burges was born in the colony of British Guiana (now the independent nation of Guyana on the north-east coast of South America) in the part called Demerara (yes, the area was renowned for its sugar cane production and gave its name to demerara sugar). In its obituary for James, the *Falkirk Herald* said that he was born in Bermuda and that he was brought up in Bridge of Weir.

In 1901 he was employed as a druggist at Kilmalcolm Orphanage, which belonged to the Sailor's Orphans Society of Scotland. Between 1905 and 1910 he attended Glasgow University and was awarded the degree of MBChB. Having previously worked in Glasgow Maternity Hospital (which was usually known as Rottenrow), he began general practice in Carronshore about 1912. Two years later, he married Mabel Annie Radcliffe at the Orphan Homes of Scotland.

James joined the army in 1916, and went to the Western Front on 28 June, shortly after the birth of a daughter. In October he reported for duty with the 48th Field Ambulance at Coupigny, which was three miles south of Bethune. On November 13 he and 31 other ranks were in place at Acheux Wood, three miles east of Beamont-Hamel, ready for the start of the final phase of the Battle of the Somme. When they returned to the 49th Field Ambulance eight days later, they were "all very tired but in good spirits."

The 49th Field Ambulance was present during the first 10 days of the Battle of Arras, often based at Duisan. It occupied the Oil Factory, St Nicholas, Arras from April 20 in preparation for a major attack on April 23. But, before the action began, Lieutenant Burges was wounded, presumably by German artillery fire. Another officer was sent to replace him at 2.30 a.m., two hours before the offensive was due to begin. Lieutenat Burges died of his wounds at the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station at Aubigny. According to the 49th Field Ambulance war diary his death occurred on April 24. (All other official records give the date of death as April 23.)

The *Falkirk Herald* printed a fulsome tribute by the minister of Carron U F Church, the Rev A F Anderson:

> It is some years ago since he came into our midst and during these four years he has endeared himself to the heart of the people to such an extent that Carronshore and Airth feel that they have lost not only their doctor but also their best friend. His healing power has been spent ungrudgingly upon the inhabitants of this district, for late and early he might have been seen hurrying to the home of sickness and none sought his services in vain. On his taking up the practice here he associated himself with our congregation, and was regularly found in the place of worship, while he was ever willing to assist in every way that lay within his power. His whole interest was in the moral, spiritual and physical welfare of the district, and he worked nobly for that end, and was greatly grieved by the prevalence of evil that so often destroyed his hopes. All classes of the community grew to love our doctor whose presence brought sunshine into many a darkened home, and several thought that his was the only hand that could bring healing, within its truck.
>
> He had long desired to do his part for the wounded soldiers, and when arrangements were made for his departure to France about eight months ago, he hailed the opportunity of service. He has had a busy time in the war zone and has been a tower of strength to many wounded men and a ray of light to many a closing eye. Not till he had gone from our midst did we realize how valuable he had been to us. He has been called to higher service, where the ministering powers are not lost, where the kindly spirit will be fully valued, and he has left behind him a memory that will not readily fade, the memory of a Christian life spent in Christian service. Our sympathies and prayers are extended to his wife so early made a widow, and to his little daughter, who will never see her father with a mortal eye; his mother who has now lost her second son as the price of war . . . May a Healing hand that is still greater than his that has gone, dry their lingering tears, and may God be gracious to the district which has suffered such a loss.

Aubigny Communal Cemetery Extension, France IV. C. 4

IN THY PRESENCE IS
FULNESS OF JOY

This cemetery was used for those who died at the 42nd Casualty Clearing Station.

Aubigny-en-Artois is a village nearly 10 miles north-west of Arras.

History of the First World War, B H Liddell Hart (1973 edition, page 327

Private James CAMPBELL

Royal Scots 2nd Battalion
Service No: 34925
Date of Death: 3 May 1917
Age at Death: 22
Family: Husband of Annie Morris, 61 St German Street, Farnworth, Bolton; eldest son of William and Jeanie Campbell, Cullen Terrace, Carron Road, Falkirk

The 2nd Battalion took part in the first day of the Battle of Arras, 9 April 1917. It went into the attack about a mile east of Tilloy. The battalion had to dig in about 600 yards short of its objective on Chapel Hill as it came under heavy machine-gun fire. Though there was limited success in this particular instance, nearly every important objective set for the first day was achieved. The historian of the Royal Scots concluded that the first day of the battle was "one of the greatest British triumphs" of the war.

Private James Campbell

On the night of April 9-10 there was "a blinding blizzard of sleet and snow". It was followed by a 2nd Battalion attack which was "completely successful".

On May 3 the battalion took part in an attack on German positions at Monchy-le-Preux, five miles south-east of Arras. This was a disaster for the battalion as German rifle and machine gun fire stopped the advance across No Man's Land. "Practically the entire battalion remained the whole day in the open, lying up against the German wire." Under a scorching sun the deadly sniping of the Germans kept them there until it got dark. The conclusion of the regimental historian was that "such gains as were achieved on the 3rd May were wholly out of proportion to the heavy losses sustained."

James Campbell was reported missing on May 3. He was presumed killed in action on that date over a year later.

Arras Memorial, France Bay 1 and 2.

The Royal Scots 1914-1919, John Ewing, 1925, page 403, 405, 431

Private John Andrew CARMICHAEL

Royal Scots 13th Battalion
Service No: 40045
Date of Death: 15 September 1916
Age at Death: 21
Family: Son of Andrew and Helen Carmichael, Fern Cottage, Bainsford

John Carmichael was born in Stenhousemuir. He enlisted in Edinburgh. His battalion went into the front line on the Somme in August 1916. It attacked Martinpuich at 6.20 a.m. on September 15. The Germans were taken by surprise and the heavy British bombardment caused them many casualties and made their resistance "most feeble". However, some soldiers got too close to the barrage "in their impetuosity" and that caused "many casualties", according to the battalion war diary. The casualties recorded for the day were 9 officers wounded; 23 other ranks killed, 143 wounded and 95 missing. Nevertheless Martinpuich was captured with "amazing ease".

John Carmichael was killed in action during this attack. His death occurred on a very notable date when tanks were used for the first time by the British Army. The officer responsible for the battalion war diary said that "'tanks' were seen at 6 a.m. advancing on the right and left".

Thiepval Memorial, France Pier and Face 6 D and 7 D.

The Royal Scots 1914-1919, John Ewing, 1925, page 316-317

Private Andrew Kidd CHESNEY

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
7th Battalion B Company
Service No: 2344
Date of Death: 29 March 1915
Age at Death: 21
Family: Youngest son of Andrew and Elizabeth Chesney, 2 Munro Street, Stenhousemuir

Andrew Chesney was an apprentice engineer in the 'E' Department of Carron Company where he was a "diligent worker". In September 1914 he enlisted and went to the Western Front on 15 December.

During his three months of service at the front, Andrew was "a favourite with all who knew him – [he had] a bright, genial disposition."

Private Andrew Chesney (centre)

He was shot through the cheek by a German sniper and killed. A letter home said: "He had just come off duty and was shaking his blanket preparatory to lying down,

when unconsciously he raised his head above the half-finished dug-out, thus giving the sniper the opportunity he was waiting for."

Major H Hesketh-Prichard, who did much to improve the standard of marksmanship in the British Army during the war, stated in his 1920 study of "Sniping in France" that "in early 1915 we lost eighteen men in a single battalion in a single day to enemy snipers". Another post-war calculation was that in 1915 an average of 5 British soldiers a day on the Western Front were killed by snipers.

Strand Military Cemetery, Comines-Warneton, Hainault, Belgium VIII. I.7.

CHRIST SHALL CLASP THE
BROKEN CHAIN CLOSER
WHEN WE MEET AGAIN

This cemetery is about 8 miles south of Ieper, close to the village of Ploegsteert.

Staff Sergeant (Armourer) John CLARK

Canadian Ordnance Corps
Service No: 10973
Date of Death: 7 August 1918
Age at Death: 35
Family: Husband of Margaret Shaw, The Smithie, Advie, Morayshire.

Canadian Army records explain that Staff Sergeant Clark was riding a motor cycle with a staff officer in the side car.. They had been visiting the forward Brigade Headquarters, and when returning to the Amiens – Villers Bretonneux Road, an enemy shell burst nearby, instantly killing Staff Sergeant Clark and severely wounding the officer.

On the day after John Clark's death, two Australian divisions advanced from the eastern outskirts of the village of Villers-Bretonneux to begin the Battle of Amiens and what in time proved to be the final offensive against the German army on the Western Front.

John Clark had joined the Canadian Army on 22 September 1914 at Valcartier, 15 miles north of Quebec. This was the main training base for the first contingent of the Canadian Expeditionary Force.

John was 31 years old, 5 feet 8 inches tall and weighed 10 stones. He had a fresh complexion, blue eyes and auburn hair. He had a scar on his left wrist and one on his upper lip.

He arrived in England in October 1914 and for the next few months was based at Tidworth in Wiltshire.

On 28 December 1914 he married Maggie Ann Shaw whose address was given as Edinburgh. There is no information to explain how this marriage came about – was it a whirlwind romance or did they know one another from before he emigrated? In September 1915, as a soldier of the 20th Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, he travelled to the Western Front where he served for the remainder of his war service.

Adelaide Cemetery, Villers-Bretonneux, Belgium II. C. 5.

This cemetery is 10 miles east of Amiens.

Private John COCKBURN

Royal Highlanders "Black Watch" 9th Battalion
Service No: S/9509
Date of Death: 7 September 1916
Age at Death: 26
Family: Son of Alexander and Kate Dunn Cockburn, Dundarroch Street, Larbert.

John Cockburn was born in Grahamston, Falkirk, and served his apprenticeship as a patternmaker at the Gowanbank Foundry, Falkirk, which belonged to M. Cockburn & Company. Prior to his enlistment, he was working

Private John Cockburn

for John Wright & Company of Birmingham.

John enlisted in the army in June 1915 in Halifax and went to the front on 1 October 1915.

It was during the Battle of the Somme that he was killed in action. His battalion moved into the front line between High Wood and Bazentin-le-Petit in preparation for an attack on High Wood which began the day after John Cockburn was killed. The German position at High Wood allowed them to overlook the British trenches. As the battalion war diary said: "The sector is a very difficult one to hold as long as High Wood is in enemy's hands. Our front area can only be got at by night"

The diary described September 7 as "a quiet night with intermittent shelling… The battalion was occupied with deepening and revetting the trenches which were in a very bad state no work having been done on them. Bethell Sap was fire-stepped and enlarged and Sapheads were marked out to form jumping-off trenches."

Lieutenant Angus M Mearns, who described John Cockburn as "a courageous and gallant soldier", wrote to his parents that John "was doing servant for our Captain Robertson and on the day of the 7th he was going round our trenches with him, when a shell hit the trench, killing him instantaneously

and also wounding Captain Robertson (who has since died) and another."

The battalion war diary noted: "Captain J B Robertson was killed by a shell which burst in the trench killing one man and wounding 3 others." It is rare that the death of an ordinary soldier can be identified from a war diary.

Bazentin-Le-Petit Communal Cemetery Extension, France J. 4.

Bazentin is a village about 8 miles from Albert.

Private Alex COOK

Highland Light Infantry 9th Battalion
Service No: 355784
Date of Death: 7 October 1918
Age at Death: 37
Family: Husband of Mary Cook, 5 Cooper's Land, Carronshore Road, Carron; father of 5 children, the eldest being 6 years old

Alex Cook, who was born in Paisley, was a miner before joining the army, enlisting in Musselburgh.

It is likely that Private Cook was wounded when his battalion, on 29 September 1918, at 5.45 a.m., attacked the German Army's position at Villers Guislain, which is about nine miles south-west of Cambrai. The battalion attacked along the bottom of a valley called Targelle Ravine. There was fierce fighting made more difficult because fog covered the area for most of the morning. But, as the battalion historian said,

> The fog was both a blessing and a curse; a blessing because it screened our men, for the time being, from the murderous fire, a curse because it destroyed the cohesion of the advance yet enabled the Highlanders to reach an isolated position far beyond the troops on their flanks.

Their position was precarious. If the fog lifted, they would most likely be wiped out.

The fog began to lift and the shelling, machine gun and trench mortar fire increased. By 11 a.m. the battalion's casualties for the attack numbered over 350. At that time all advance posts were withdrawn to the old front line. The attack therefore did not achieve its objectives but on the following day the Germans withdrew so that the 9th Battalion occupied the area they had been intended to capture.

The valley was strewn with our dead. The Highlanders as they marched down the valley naturally thought bitterly of the heavy price that had been paid the previous day in their vain endeavour to cross the same ground. Their defeat, however, had really been a victory. [Their] efforts… had helped the Fourth Army to break the Hindenburg Line both by drawing fire and reinforcements from the crucial point further south.

Private Cook died of his wounds in the 47th General Hospital, in Le Treport, France. Le Treport, a small port 15 miles north-east of Dieppe, was an important hospital centre for Allied forces.

Mount Huon Military Cemetery, Le Treport, France VIII. J. 2B

Private James COOK

Royal Scots 1st Battalion
Service Number: 3306
Date of Death: 21 February 1915
Age at Death: 19
Family: Son of James and Janet Cook, Gairdoch Street, Carron Road, Falkirk

James Cook, who was "a real favourite among all who knew him", enlisted in the 7th Battalion of the Royal Scots at the start of the war but then discovered that the battalion was unlikely to be sent to the front for a long time. He applied for a transfer, and was transferred to the 3rd battalion. It took a further transfer to the 1st battalion to get to the Western Front quickly. He went to the front in the middle of December 1914.It was reported that he served in the trenches in the area of Dickebusch, just to the south-west of Ypres. According to the battalion historian, this had been "normally a pleasant rural district, but now one of the dreariest spots in Flanders." During the two months he spent in this area, he "conducted himself in the bravest possible manner." (*Falkirk Herald*, 6 March 1915)

At the time of his death James was in the trenches near St Eloi, which was about a mile south of Ypres. An official record states that he died at Voormezeele.

Wounded soldiers at the Military Hospital in Le Treport

Soon after James's death, his father received a letter from Lieutenant M Young, which reported the circumstances of James's death. It is a detailed example of the kind of letter sent home by officers after one of their men had died, and was printed in full in the *Falkirk Herald*.

Belgium 23rd February 1915

Dear Mr Cook – I deeply regret having to write and inform you of the death of your son. He was shot through the head while in the trenches on the morning of the 21st, just after dawn. This is just the very worst time of the day to get wounded, as it is quite impossible to get real medical aid until we can carry the wounded back to the dressing station after dark. Our first aid men did what they could for him with bandages etc, but he never regained consciousness, and died quite peacefully about 9 a.m. We buried him behind the trenches, and erected a cross over his grave. His effects have been handed to the proper authorities, and will duly be forwarded to you. I would like to express my admiration of your son as a brave and well-conducted youngster. He did his duty well, often under very trying conditions, and better than many an older soldier. He was always cheerful, pleasant and obliging. Please accept my sympathy and that of my colleagues.

By the time the war ended, James Cook's grave must have been destroyed in the later fighting as his name is now recorded on the Menin Gate Memorial.

Menin Gate Memorial, Ieper Panel 11.

2nd Lieutenant Norman Collins was an officer with the 6th Battalion Seaforth Highlanders. He was 19 years old. On 13 November 1916 his battalion took part in the Battle of the Ancre, the final phase of the Battle of the Somme. It was to capture the village of Beaumont Hamel. Though successful, it suffered 45% casualties. In his latter years – he died in 1998 aged 100 – Norman Collins recorded his feelings about writing letters home to the mothers of soldiers who had died in action:

The association between officers and men as a rule was very short. Neither lived very long, but during that period it became the most intense feeling. Your affection for the men under you — there's no doubt about that. We used to write to their mothers when they were killed…

It took us all our time to write these letters. They always gave these jobs to young 2nd Lieutenants, and the letters I'm afraid had little variation amongst them because when you had to write these letters, sometimes there were about sixty to pen, and you didn't even know who you were talking about. We always tried to write a nice letter to the mother or father because we felt for them, we understood what they were feeling. 'Dear Mr and Mrs So and So, I'm sorry to have to tell you that, as you no doubt have already heard by telegram, your dear son was killed on such and such a date. He was a fine chap and I was very fond of him and he was a good soldier and you, I'm sure, are very proud of him' and so on and so forth. As much as you could do, you made her feel that her son was a hero and that's about all. There was quite a bit of hype, there's no disguising it. There must have been hypocrisy in it, but it was kindly hypocrisy, you were doing it to comfort the mother. By the time you got to the stage of writing fifty or sixty letters, you couldn't remember who they were — too many. But at the time when they were killed you certainly felt for them very much, very much.

Last Man Standing The Memoirs of a Seaforth Highlander during the Great War, Norman Collins, Edited by Richard van Emden, 2002, page 114

Private James COWAN

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
10th Battalion
Service Number: S/25420
Date of Death: 30 September 1918
Age at Death: 26
Family: Eldest son of Catherine Inglis Cowan and the late William Cowan, 191 West Carron

Private James Cowan

James Cowan enlisted in April 1918 and went to the Western Front at the beginning of September. Four weeks later, he was killed in action during the final offensive against the German positions on the Western Front. A letter from an army chaplain told his mother that "he was found on the battlefield after days and nights of heavy fighting". This was hardly a piece of information to bring comfort to his mother.

On the evening of September 29, the Argylls' 10th Battalion arrived at the Fonsomme system of trenches on the Hindenburg Line. This was just east of the village of Joncourt, near St Quentin.

The battalion war diary recorded the events of September 30th:

a night of continuous heavy rain and considerable shelling, spent in the most decided salient ever occupied by the C.O. [Major N McLaren] during nearly 3 years service in France.

6 a.m.

A Coy who were occupying the very head of the salient were attacked in force by the enemy assisted by a very heavy machine gun barrage, surrounded, many killed and the whole of the Coy HQ were apparently taken prisoner.

The line had to fall back as the position was found untenable while JONCOURT was still in the Enemy's occupation.

There was heavy shelling & gas throughout the day & about 5 pm after being shelled allmost [sic] continuously since 1 pm HQ moved into cellars at MAGNY-LE-FOSSE.

The battalion continued fighting near Joncourt until it was relieved during the night of 2nd-3rd October. By then its casualties since September 29 were 15 officers and 335 other ranks – "a dreadfully heavy toll to pay for the last battle of the War."

The mother, brothers and sisters of James said in the death notice in the *Falkirk Herald* that he was:

One of the best, whom God did lend,
A dutiful son and a faithful friend

Joncourt British Cemetery, FranceB. 7.

This small cemetery is about 6 miles north of St Quentin in northern France. 55 men who belonged to the 10th battalion of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders are buried here and most were killed on 30 September 1918.

The 10th Battalion Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders, 1914-1919, Herbert G Sotheby, 1931, page 108

Private Thomas COWAN M.M.

Royal Scots 4th Battalion
Service Number: 47903
Date of Death: 26 October 1918
Age at Death: 27
Family: Husband of Catherine Richardson Cowan, 25 Grange Street, Stenhousemuir; father of "wee" son Jackie; son of Isabella Forsyth Cowan and the late John Cowan

Thomas Cowan was born in Letham, worked as a miner at Letham Pit and lived at 38 Letham Cottages prior to joining the 3rd Battalion HLI in April 1917. He had been on the Army Reserve list for over a year.

In December that year he arrived in Egypt to serve with the British forces in Palestine. In February 1918 he applied for a transfer to the 1st/4th Royal Scots so that he could serve with his younger brother. This transfer was allowed. Thomas was said to be of "good character, 1st Class Shot, 1st Class Signaller".

In April his battalion was sent to the Western Front in the wake of the heavy losses as a result of the German Spring Offensive. A month later, he was taken ill with influenza and was in hospital for four days.

The first operations that the battalion was involved in on the Western Front in 1918 took place between August 23 and 27. There was considerable difficulty getting to the assembly line "owing to the great congestion of military traffic". Zero hour on the 23rd was 4.55 a.m. The battalion followed a creeping barrage and "gained their objectives without great opposition". A second attack wave with three tanks advanced the battalion line 400 yards.

During the night one battalion company was sent forward to fill a gap of 1200 yards between the two neighbouring brigades. The battalion war diary reported: "This area was severely shelled with gas shells and being low-lying there was heavy gas concentration necessitating the Coy to wearing their masks for the greater part of the night."

The next objective of the battalion was to move into part of the Hindenburg Line north of the River Cojeul. This was accomplished in an attack which was carried out between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. on August 27, despite the troops on both flanks not making anything like the same progress as the Royal Scots had. The battalion captured the village of Fontaine-les-Croisilles, which "in former years… would have been a tough nut to crack, but it fell into the hands of the 4th Royal Scots with astonishing ease; many Germans threw down their weapons with a readiness that was almost indecent and gladly surrendered in order to get out of a war from which they longer expected profit or victory".

Four German officers and 340 men were taken prisoner as well as 25 machine guns and "an immense quantity of ammunition".

These two attacks caused the battalion five casualties among its officers and 240 in the other ranks. It is most likely that Thomas earned his Military Medal during one of these attacks.

In October he suffered a recurrence of the influenza which developed into pneumonia. He was therefore transferred to the County of Middlesex War Hospital in Napsbury just outside St Albans. He died there the very next day. His funeral to Larbert Cemetery in Stenhousemuir took place on November 12, the day after the Armistice was signed.

Larbert Cemetery, Stenhousemuir Section 2 Grave 282

The Royal Scots 1914-1919, John Ewing, 1925, pages 673-4

Thomas Cowan almost certainly suffered from the "Spanish Flu" of 1918-19. This was an influenza pandemic – it affected perhaps up to half of the world's population, and killed about 50 million people, many more than the total number killed in the world war. In May Spain was the first European country to be severely affected by this outbreak - hence the name. But the main countries fighting the war were also suffering and were keeping it secret! The virus probably emerged first in the USA.

Thomas Cowan, having suffered from influenza in May, died during the second and more virulent phase of the pandemic in the autumn of 1918. It is not known how many British soldiers died from the flu, but half of the American Army's deaths in 1918 were due to the disease.

Conditions in the trenches helped the spread of the disease. But what made the flu so deadly was that it affected healthy young adults much more than any other group of people; about half who died were young adults aged between 20 and 35. Its symptoms were sudden and severe. Within hours of feeling unwell, the victim would experience extreme fatigue, fever, and headache, and, in fatal cases, the disease would progress rapidly to multi-organ failure and death. In the UK the outbreak caused 230,000 deaths.

Corporal Francis CROMBIE

Gordon Highlanders Attached London Scottish 2nd/14th Battalion
Service Number: S/22862
Date of Death: 14 October 1918
Age at Death: 24
Family: Second son of William and Florence Crombie, Schoolhouse, Stenhousemuir

Corporal Francis Crombie

Prior to the war, Frank Crombie was a clerk with Carron Company. He was a member of the recruiting staff at Clydebank for a short time before he enlisted with the RAMC. He served with the RAMC in Egypt until, in July 1918, he volunteered for ordinary combatant duties on the Western Front. He was drafted to the Gordon Highlanders, and then to the London Scottish. Because the relationship between the Gordons and the London Scottish was so close, soldiers like Frank were allowed to keep wearing their kilts. Frank had been on the Western Front for only two months when he was killed.

In a letter to his mother, the Rev J Mitchell, an army chaplain, said that her son had been killed in the big battle which began on 14th October.

> He went over the top with his men and advanced towards the position they were to take. You will understand how difficult it is in a big battle to get full details as to what happened to each man, but, so far as I know, he was killed by a machine gun bullet, and died instantly.

The chaplain also said that he had been buried near Wytschaete Road: "There he lies in a soldier's grave, and we miss his presence and comradeship, but we are proud to have known him."

The attack by the London Scottish was intended to advance over 1¼ miles to the Menin-Wervicq road which was reached within two hours, despite the spirited resistance of the German machine-gunners. The regimental historian concluded: "The advance of 14 October was one of the most successful operations of the latter stages of the war. The Germans fell back everywhere".

Derry House Cemetery No 2, Belgium I. F. 2

GOD'S WILL BE DONE

This cemetery (named after a farm known to the soldiers as Derry House) is 5 miles south of Ieper.

The London Scottish in the Great War, Mark Lloyd, 2001, page 247

Wytschaete Road:

Private Andrew Brown CUNNINGHAM

King's Own Scottish Borderers 6th Battalion
Service Number: 9505
Date of Death: 21 April 1916
Age at Death: 27
Family: Son of William and Margaret Cunningham, 85 West Carron

Andrew Cunningham was born in Slamannan and living there when he enlisted in Glasgow.

He was killed in action on the Western Front in the Ypres sector. During April 1916 his battalion alternated with the 11th Battalion HLI in holding the front line near Le Bizet. The entry in the battalion war diary for April 21 reads:

> Quiet day in the trenches, but the enemy 8-inch battery tried to knock down the church tower at Le Bizet. They fired 100 rounds with no effect on tower although houses locally badly hit.

There is no mention in the diary of any casualty.

Tancrez Farm Cemetery, Comines-Warneton, Hainault, Belgium I. F. 5.

This cemetery is just over 10 miles due south of Ieper. The farm house was a first aid post during the war.

Private Robert CUNNINGHAM

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders 7th Battalion
Service Number: 276116 (formerly 3675)
Date of Death: 21 April 1917
Age at Death: 20
Family: Youngest son of Euphemia Cunningham, 3 Tryst Road, Stenhousemuir and of the late Robert Cunningham

Robert Cunningham was a clerk in the warehouse office of Mungal Foundry. He joined his regiment in January 1915 and was at the front from August 1st.

On 9 April 1917, which was the first day of the Battle of Arras, Robert suffered shrapnel wounds in the chest and was admitted to No 1 Canadian Hospital, Etaples, where he died almost two weeks later.

At the beginning of April, in preparation for the battle, the 7th Battalion had moved to Roclincourt. On April 9 it had taken part in the general attack on Vimy Ridge. It helped to push forward the front line to "within striking distance of Bailleul".

The battalion historian described how "the fighting went on till the night of the 11th, [the battalion was relieved then 'in a blizzard of exceptional severity']. Trench after trench [was] taken by bombing, by sudden rushes, by stealth in the dark or by straightforward assault in co-operation with the Artillery".

Private Robert Cunningham

Robert Cunningham was among the 139 men in the battalion who were wounded between April 9 and 11, when the battalion was relieved.

Etaples Military Cemetery, France XIX. E. 17.6

Etaples was an important base for the British Army and a hospital centre whose hospitals could treat up to 22,000 servicemen suffering from wounds or illness.

Etaples Military Cemetery

Private Ross DALGETTY

Royal Scots 12th Battalion
Service Number: 49920
Date of Death: 19 April 1918
Age at Death: 19
Family: Second son of Thomas and Margaret Swanston Dalgetty, nee Thomson, Roslyn, Burnhead Road, Larbert

Ross Dalgetty was a clerk with James Jones & Sons, Larbert when he joined the army in February 1917. Initially, he was with the HLI. When he went to the Western Front in 1918 he was posted to the Royal Scots, joining his battalion on March 9. Within a fortnight Ross was taking part in a very fierce period of fighting.

The 12th Battalion of the Royal Scots were serving at Dessart Wood, about eight miles north-east of Peronne, on 21 March 1918, the first day of the German Spring Offensive. The next day they withdrew to Nurlu. Then the night of 22-23 March was

> such as in olden times might have believed that the powers of darkness stalked abroad, and there were few who could wholly shake off a superstitious thrill, as in ghost-like fashion the troops groped their way past smoking dumps and burning villages. The inky blackness of the night was ripped by flashes of brilliant flame as innumerable rockets and flares soared skywards, the leaping lights against the dark curtain of the night forming a baroque spectacle as fantastic as the visions of a lunatic. By the flickering glow of burning houses the Royal Scots caught glimpses of men in business similar to their own. None knew for certain where the Germans were, and all felt a vast sensation of relief when at last they reached their allotted position.

There followed a protracted rear-guard action in which the "indomitable pluck" of both the 11th and 12th Royal Scots saved the

Private Ross Dalgetty

27th Brigade to which they belonged, from being "utterly overwhelmed" On 24 March the 12th Royal Scots "repelled every hostile thrust with apparently effortless ease".

The Royal Scots were relieved on 27 March and transferred north to the Ypres sector. In the fighting between 21 and 27 March, the 12th battalion suffered just over 400 casualties.

On 11 April, as part of the second stage of the German Spring Offensive, the Germans attacked the 12th Royal Scots holding the line near White Chateau, about four miles south-east of Ypres. The Germans were sent "bolting for shelter in terror-stricken panic"

Though the German infantry did not attempt any attacks for some days, there was systematic shelling of the 12th Royal Scots' section of the line between 12 and 15 April.

Ross was then serving in what his officer called "a bad part of the line" when he and 12 others were "instantly killed by a shell". In the announcement in the *Falkirk Herald*, his family gave April 12th as the date of his death; official records state his date of death as exactly a week later, April 19th. This is confirmed by the records of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission which show that 13 soldiers of the 12th Battalion Royal Scots died on April 19 and all are named on the Tyne Cot Memorial. The battalion war diary has no entry for April 19.

Tyne Cot Memorial, Ieper, Belgium Panel 11 to 14 and 162.

The Royal Scots 1914-1919, John Ewing, 1925, pages 573-575, 630

Royal Scots preparing to advance

Able Seaman John DAVIE

Royal Naval Division Howe Battalion
Service Number: Clyde Z/6232
Date of Death: 20 July 1917
Age at Death: 21
Family: Second son of Maggie Davie, Goshen, Stenhousemuir and of the late John Davie

Able Seaman John Davie

On Larbert War Memorial, John Davie's rank is given as Private, but as a member of the RND, he would have the rank of Able Seaman.

John was a vanman (ie a horse-drawn van) with Larbert Steam Laundry, Crownest Loan, Stenhousemuir. He enlisted in August 1915 and joined the Howe Battalion in December 1916 but through illness and influenza his service on the Western Front was limited.

The *Falkirk Herald* reported that John was seriously wounded by shellfire on 19 July 1917. His battalion was manning the front line in the Gavrelle sector. The Germans shelled the front line for an hour between 8.15.a.m. and 9.15 a.m. At 10.55 a.m. there was an "intense barrage" for 5 minutes and then 15 minutes of "intermittent shelling" John died from his wounds the following day in the 19th Casualty Clearing Station at Agnez-les-Duisans.

On July 20, beginning at 12.45 a.m., 6 officers and 180 men of Howe Battalion mounted a "very successful" raid on Gavrelle Trench. The raid lasted twenty minutes. 20 German soldiers were killed and eleven were taken prisoner. Howe battalion lost seven men killed, "sustained mostly before and after the operation."

Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun, France V. A. 11.

The cemetery is 6 miles west of Arras.

The Royal Naval Division, Douglas Jerrold, 1923, page 246.

Private Peter DAVIE

Royal Highlanders "Black Watch" 2nd Battalion
Service Number: 9451
Date of Death: 7 January 1916
Age at Death: 30
Family: Husband of Jeanie Scobbie, Blackmill, Carron; son of George and Jane Davie

Peter Davie was a gasfitter before he joined the army. He was a reservist before the war and was called up immediately. He left for the front lines on 13 August 1914. In November he was invalided home but returned to the Western Front five months later.

Private Peter Davie

Private Davie's battalion was transferred to Mesopotamia at the end of 1915. The British base at Kut-al-Amara was besieged by Turkish forces from 7 December 1915. So his battalion on its arrival in Mesopotamia on 5 January 1916 was immediately ordered to break the siege. A total of 19,000 British troops advanced up the River Tigris towards Kut but when they were 20 miles short of Kut, they were confronted by a Turkish force which was at least 3,000 soldiers bigger.

The Battle of Sheikh Sa'ad in which Peter Davie was killed, was fought to overcome the Turks. The British force attacked at midday on January 7. The 2nd Black Watch were sent forward at 1.30 p.m. against the well-defended Turkish position. Colonel Arthur Wauchope, the Commanding Officer of the Black Watch, complained that "No time was given for the issue of orders, no frontage or direction was given, no signal communications arranged and to all enquiries the one answer was 'Advance where the bullets are thickest'." Also, his orders were "to make a frontal attack on a plain as bare and flat as a billiard table without any artillery support."

According to the historian, Peter Hart,

> The Turkish trenches were well-sited; the rifle and machine gun fire was heavy, accurate and well-controlled (as equal to any rifle fire they had come under on the Western Front) and their artillery fire was particularly accurate. Moreover, the sun was right in the eyes of the attacking force and with the mirage, added greatly to the difficulties, and especially to those of the supporting artillery, which were unable to locate at all accurately, the position of the Turkish trenches.

Consequently, as a Black Watch soldier wrote, "The regiment came under heavy shell-fire as soon as

they advanced, followed by intense rifle-fire which bowled over the men like rabbits." The British force lost 4,000 casualties in three days and made no significant gain. In this battle, and in two others in the same month, the troops "went through hell".

In the three weeks of the January campaign to relieve Kut, the 2nd battalion Black Watch went from 29 officers and 890 men in the battalion to 2 officers and 130 men.

At the end of April the British surrendered at Kut-al-Amara.

Amara War Cemetery, Iraq XXX. H. 8.

Amara was a town which became a hospital centre for the British soldiers fighting in Mesopotamia.

The Great War, Peter Hart, (2013) page 281

The Tragedy of Mesopotamia, Sir George Buchanan, (1928) pages 64 -65

Private James Tod Kedslie DEA

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
7th Battalion
Service Number: 2314
Date of Death: 25 April 1915
Age at Death: 27
Family: Son of Mrs Charlotte Dea, Redthorne, Juniper Green, Midlothian and of the late William Dea

James Dea, who lodged at 5 Rae Street, Stenhousemuir, enlisted in the local regiment shortly after the outbreak of the war. He went to the front with his battalion on 15 December 1914.

He was killed in the Battle of St Julien (25 April-4 May).

This battle, which was the first major piece of fighting the battalion was involved in, was the second phase of the Second Battle of Ypres (22 April-25 May 1915). On April 22, the German 4th Army had attacked two French Divisions at 5 p.m. between Steenstraat and Langemarck, a few miles north of Ypres. They used chlorine gas successfully for the first time, releasing into a north-east breeze more than 160 tons of gas in less than ten minutes. 6, 000 French soldiers were killed in ten minutes and a huge 4-5-mile gap opened up in the front line as the survivors withdrew towards Boesinghe. A Canadian Division fought to stem the German advance but over the next two days the Allied forces had to retreat. The village of St Julien, on 22 April safely behind the front line, was now on the front line.

The 7th Battalion of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders were sent to Ypres the day after the start of the German attack. The Battle of St Julien began early in the morning of April 24 when the Germans launched another chlorine gas attack, followed by repeated infantry assaults on British and Canadian forces holding the line at St Julien. With limited protection against the poison gas and outnumbered by about 10 to 1, they were forced to give ground to the Germans, who took St Julien by 3 p.m. on the 24th.

On 25 April, in the view of the Official Historian, the five battalions of the 10th Brigade, including the 7th Argylls,

> were called upon to attempt the impossible. Without adequate artillery preparation and support, on ground unknown and unreconnoitred, they were sent to turn an enemy well-provided with machine guns out of a position which had ready-made cover in houses and a wood, and splendid artillery observation from higher ground behind it.

The 7th Battalion arrived at the village of St Jean, just south-west of St Julien, to take their part in desperate British counter-attacks. The battalion was in place at 1.30 a.m. For the next hour-and-a-half there

Private James Dea

was torrential rain. At 4.30 a.m. the battalion, along with the 2nd Battalion of the Seaforth Highlanders, began an attack across open fields to the German front-line trenches 1800 yards away. "From the very beginning, men fell fast, the German machine guns causing awful havoc," wrote T Hogg in 1916. He explained that there was no artillery to help the battalion because "shells were scarce and so the lives of these brave Stirlingshire men had to be sacrificed".

The battalion war diary explained that they first came under fire when they were near a point that was called Shell Trap Farm.

> A good few casualties occurred here… 'A' Company moved to the SE corner of Cheddar Villa followed by 'B' Company to reach where they had to cross ground swept by rifle and machine gun fire. Then, in response to a request for reinforcements, 'A' Company went forward in small parties. The ground was very open and swept by a heavy fire, few of them succeeded in reaching the firing line. 'B' Company was moved under cover to the east and pushed up to the triangle of trees about 500 yards SE of Oblong Farm. 'C' and 'D' Companies were also directed on this point… The principal casualties occurred here as it was not only under close fire but was also heavily shelled by field and heavy guns.

When the attack was within 50 yards of the German trenches, the order to retire was given. The men retreated under heavy shelling and dug in about 500 yards from the German front line. The attack had lasted an hour.

Jamie Burns, who had been the professional at Falkirk Tryst Golf Club, took part in the attack and told his family in a letter home:

> I was expecting every minute to be my last, but on we went advancing for over twenty minutes under a rain of bullets. The men were dropping all around… I got about forty yards off the German trenches when we got the word to retire. I had five hundred yards to run back, but I got safely back into the trench. It was daylight when all this happened, so you will have an idea what it was like, hundreds of men sniping at us, also machine guns.

The battalion war diary recorded that 6 officers and 100 other ranks were killed, but 150 men were posted missing and this was to double the number of other ranks who were killed in this attack. The total number of casualties in the battalion was over 500.

The next day, the 26th April 1915, was "a truly disastrous day" for the British Army at St Julien. There were 4,000 casualties on a mile-wide front. "Men were lost in totally fruitless and ill-prepared attacks against an enemy that was reasonably well-prepared and was superior in numbers and artillery." The 7th Argylls were not involved in these attacks. The battalion was to be in support on the 26th but did not leave the trenches they held.

James Dea was a pupil at George Heriot's School, Edinburgh from 1899 to 1903. He attended Edinburgh University from 1905 to 1909 when he was awarded an M.A. degree. When war broke out, he was a teacher at Larbert Central School. The Chairman of the School Board said that he was "a very efficient and courteous teacher, who had made a great sacrifice, and given his life for King and country." He went on to say that he was "a most obliging and courteous gentleman and a very painstaking teacher." It is interesting to note that even although the war had only lasted about nine months the chairman was saying that "the district had been hard-hit by the war, for many brave men had laid down their lives in the great fight for liberty."

Menin Gate Memorial, Ieper, Belgium Panel 42 and 44.

Military Operations France and Belgium Volume II J E Edmonds, 1928, page 240

Magnificent But Not War, John Dixon, 2014, page 139

437 soldiers in the battalion were casualties on this single day.

The moment of the German breakthrough using gas was vividly described by a Canadian soldier:

> It was a beautiful day. I was lying in a field writing a letter to my mother, the sun was shining and I remember a lark singing high up in the sky. Then, suddenly, the bombardment started and we got orders to stand to. We went up the line… But as soon as we reached the outskirts of the village of St Julien the bullets opened up, and when I looked around I counted just thirty two men left on their feet out of the whole company of 227. The rest of us managed to jump into ditches, and that saved us from being annihilated. Then we saw coming towards us the French Zouaves. They were in blue coats and red pants and caps and it was a revelation to us, we hadn't seen anything but khaki and drab uniforms. They were rushing toward us, half staggering, and we wondered what was the matter. We were a little perturbed at first, then when they got to us we tried to rally them but they wouldn't stay. They were running away from the Germans. 'Then we got orders to shoot them down, which we did. We just turned around and shot them as they were running away.
>
> Then, as we looked further away we saw this green cloud come slowly across the terrain. It was the first gas that anybody had seen or heard of, and one of our boys, evidently a chemist, passed the word along that this was chlorine. And he said, 'If you urinate on your handkerchiefs it will save your lungs, anyway.' So most of us did that, and we tied these handkerchiefs, plus pieces of putty or anything else we could find, around our faces, and it did save us from being gassed.
>
> There were masses of Germans behind this gas cloud.

Lance Corporal Andrew DICK

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
11th Battalion A Company
Service Number: S/11420
Date of Death: 22 August 1917
Age at Death: 23
Family: Fifth son of Alexander & Margaret Dick, 26 Munro Street, Stenhousemuir; brother of John (qv)

Andrew Dick was reported missing on 22 August 1917 soon after the start of a phase of the Battle of

Lance Corporal Andrew Dick

Passchendaele known as the Battle of Langemarck.

His battalion and others were ordered to capture concrete pill-boxes in the ruins of four farms near Zonnebeke. These pill-boxes had already been attacked on 16 August – unsuccessfully. They were invisible to the 11th Battalion's soldiers. Each night the German soldiers re-covered the pill-boxes with mud. This meant that the attackers didn't see them till they were close to them. This also meant that the attack failed shortly after zero hour, 4.45 a.m. The attack was accompanied by a creeping barrage and 32 machine guns. The German barrage in reply began less than 30 seconds later and within another 30 seconds there was very heavy machine-gun fire. This caused so many casualties that what happened to the 11th Battalion and the other attacking battalion is not known.

Eleven months later it was officially concluded that Andrew Dick had died on August 22 or afterwards.

Tyne Cot Memorial, Ieper, Belgium Panel 141 to 143 and 162.

Private John DICK

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders 7th Battalion A Company; attached 5th Battalion
Service Number: 275533
Date of Death: 8 August 1917
Age at Death: 25
Family: Son of Alexander and Margaret Dick, 26 Munro Street, Stenhousemuir; brother of Andrew (qv)

John Dick joined the local battalion on 7 September 1914 and went to the Western Front in December. On 25 May 1915 he was caught in a German gas attack and required hospital treatment. In the following month he was back in hospital with enteric fever. In the middle of

Private John Dick

August he had to be transferred to hospital in England for more treatment. He returned to the Western Front in April 1916 but at the end of July he was back in Britain for treatment for impetigo and boils.

When he was ready to return to active service, John was posted to the 1st/5th Battalion of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders to serve in Palestine. He sailed from Devonport in the south of England to the Egyptian port of Alexandria, a journey which took 15 days in January 1917. He joined up with his new battalion a month later at a town called El Arish. It was on the coast of the Sinai Peninsula.

John Dick was reported missing on 8 August and soon afterwards presumed killed in action. When the "great summer heat" was on there were no important military operations in this area. But in the area of Wadi Ghaza both sides tried to ambush small groups of the other side. It was, presumably, in one of these ambushes that John Dick was killed.

Jerusalem Memorial, Israel Panel 46.

This memorial commemorates the 3,300 Commonwealth servicemen who died during the First World War in operations in Egypt or Palestine and who have no known grave.

Company Sergeant Major William DICK D.C.M.

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders 12th Battalion
Service Number: 6975
Date of Death: 19 September 1918
Age at Death: 39
Family: Husband of Elizabeth Thomson, 10 Union Street, Bainsford; eldest son of William and Isabella Dick, 39 Maclaren Terrace, Carron

Sergeant Major William Dick

William Dick was a soldier of outstanding quality. When the First World War broke out, he already had 15 years' service in the regular army. His Commanding Officer, in September 1914, described his military character as "Exemplary" and wrote that he was "A very sober & reliable man, a good clerk [he was Pay Sergeant then], intelligent."

When the war began, William was in India. He had fought in the Boer War and gained two medals. He served in Malta for three years and then two years in India. In October 1914 he was sent back to Britain to help train the new recruits who were to belong to Kitchener's Army.

In November 1916 he was sent to Salonika to join the 12th Battalion. He was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for his conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty on 18 February 1917. His citation read:

When all the officers of the assaulting and support companies had become casualties, he rallied and reorganised the men in his vicinity, and, though in charge of a small party, without support on either flank, he held up the counter-attack until ordered to withdraw. He displayed exceptional resource and the ultimate coolness.

CSM Dick was killed during the attacks in September 1918 on Pip Ridge and the Grande-Couranne in the north of Greece. This was a very strong position held by the enemy, the Bulgarian Army. The problems in attacking it "could scarcely be exaggerated", the Official Historian commented. The battalions taking part had all been weakened by the attack on the same position the previous day.

The 12th Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders were to make their way to their assembly point through Doljeli Ravine, but their path was completely blocked by a large number of Zouaves, [French colonial troops] lying on it. The Argylls had "literally to walk over their bodies" to get to their assembly point, which was reached at 4.45 a.m.

These Zouaves were to play a crucial part in the attack on Pip Ridge as they failed through a series of mix-ups to reach their assembly point. The result of this for the 12th Argylls was explained by the Official Historian in unmistakeable terms: "seeing that its left flank was uncovered by the defection of the Zouaves they had never the remotest chance of success."

At 5.23 a.m. the leading waves went forward. The Bulgarians' artillery, trench mortars and "innumerable machine guns" inflicted severe casualties on the British battalions. Losses of over 70% of their numbers were recorded in one or two battalions. The ranks of the 12th Argylls were "severely depleted", and owing to the casualties, the battalion was forced to withdraw. But three further attempts were made and each one failed.

The battalion was awarded the French Croix de Guerre in recognition of their efforts. This was a very rare distinction.

Captain J K Mathieson wrote to William Dick's family saying that:

The battalion took part in a great assault on the enemy positions, which we succeeded in taking [this was not true] but not without a heavy toll. Of the 17 officers and 500 men who took part, only 160 men returned unwounded, amongst the missing being the commanding officer, Lt-Col Falconer Stewart.

Your husband was one of the most popular and respected men in the battalion and his loss is felt by all who knew him… He died like the gallant soldier he was, fighting and cheering, directing and encouraging those around him. In him the country has lost a gallant soldier and a strong man who made his personality felt wherever he went.

In his death notice, his family said:

A loved one now
lies sleeping far away,
He died that we might live.

When, in 1920, the regiment was looking for soldiers to recommend for the Medal for Long Service and Good Conduct, it was "certified that there is no record of [this] soldier having incurred any regimental entry during his service". His unblemished service lasted for 19 years and 37 days – the longest serving soldier named on Larbert War Memorial.

Doiran Military Cemetery, Greece III. C. II

This cemetery is situated in the north of Greece near the frontier with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Military Operations Macedonia, Volume II, Cyril Falls 1935, pages 162, 179, 181.

Lance Corporal William DICKMAN

Gordon Highlanders 2nd Battalion
C Company
Service Number: S/2681
Date of Death: 10 November 1915
Age at Death: 19
Family: Son of Robert and Margaret Dickman, Newbyth, Prestonkirk, East Lothian

William Dickman's connection with Larbert was that his father was employed on the estate at Larbert House during the war.

William was born at Duns, Berwickshire, in 1895. Before the war, he was a footman with the Earl of Home at his residence near Coldstream.

He enlisted on 2 September 1914 and went to the Western Front five months later. He was severely wounded in the side, leg and arm on September 25, which was the first day of the Battle of Loos.

The battalion had assembled at 10 p.m. the night before. At 6.30 a.m. the battalion "advanced to the assault in quick time," the war diary reported. The men wore smoke helmets. "They advanced enveloped in our gas, as it appeared impossible to switch off."

The German front line trench, over 500 yards from the British line, was reached in 10 minutes but the casualties were heavy. The German trench and the support trench were captured. A German machine gun caused many more casualties. At 9 a.m. an attack on the village of Hulluch, 12 miles to the north-east of Loos, was brought to a standstill and the battalion dug in.

That night at 10p.m. the Germans counter-attacked but this was driven off eventually by 4 a.m. on September 26.

On the first day of the battle of Loos, the whole battalion, including C Company, suffered severe casualties – 506. Unusually, every casualty is named in a list of

casualties dated October 5. 16 of C Company's soldiers were killed in action; the wounded in the company numbered 82 and the missing numbered 43.

When he was wounded at some point during the day, William was taken to the Casualty Clearing Station where he was seen by the Rev T C McAulay, the minister of Larbert West Church, who happened to be visiting. The Rev McAulay wrote on William's behalf to his father to tell him of William's injuries.

William had to be transferred to Shorncliffe Military Hospital, near Folkestone. His parents were with him when he died. They had been sent for by Lady Markham, whose husband owned the house used for the hospital.

Shorncliffe Military Cemetery, Kent N. 324

NOTHING IN MY HAND
I BRING
SIMPLY TO THE CROSS
I CLING

Private Robert Douglas DOBBIE

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders 11th Battalion
Service Number: S/6719
Date of Death: 17 February 1916
Age at Death: 21
Family: Third son of Hannah Dobbie, Douglasdale, 31 Steps Road, Stenhousemuir & of the late William Dobbie

Douglas Dobbie was born and brought up in Stenhousemuir. When he enlisted in the local regiment on 25 November 1914, he gave his occupation as Boiler Maker. He spent ten months in training and went to the Western Front on 6 October 1915. In January 1916, after being at the front for three months, he was given a week's leave to return home as his father had died.

Within a month of returning from leave, he was killed in action near Loos. The battalion war diary for the day that Douglas Dobbie died reads: "Quiet but for intermittent shelling, one man killed by rifle grenade." [A rifle grenade was one which used a rifle-based launcher to give a longer range.]

In his death notice, his family said that he was "beloved by all who knew him."

Loos Memorial, France
Panel 125 to 127.

Sergeant Robert Stewart DOBBIE

Royal Air Force 49th Squadron & Inns of Court Officer Training Corps
Service Number: 11375
Date of Death: 23 July 1918
Age at Death: 25
Family: Third son of George & Helen Dobbie, Hopedale, Larbert

Robert Dobbie was educated at Falkirk High School and then at Stewart's College in Edinburgh. His father was the manager of Dobbie, Forbes and Son, having succeeded his brother, Robert's uncle, also called Robert, on his death in 1908.

Robert was a bank clerk with the Clydesdale Bank in Glasgow when he enlisted. He joined the Inns of Court Officer Training Corps with a view to serving in the Royal Flying Corps. It seems that Robert joined the Royal Flying Corps in 1918, having been passed in November 1917 by a Medical Boards Examination as "Fit as Obs[erver]. Pilot later" In January 1918 he was based in the Cadet section of Norton Barracks. In February he agreed to become a Non-Commissioned Officer in the RFC – he had not reached the "required standard in examination".

His service abroad began on 23 April. (The RAF was created out of the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service on 1 April 1918.)

Robert served as an observer in the 49th Squadron for five months. On July 14 the squadron moved its base to Rozay-en-Brie, which was 30 miles south-east of Paris. The next day, which was the start of the fifth phase of the German Offensive of 1918, codenamed Operation Friedensturm (Peacestorm), Robert went on a training flight. He and his pilot were "learning country". The pilot, Lieutenant Clinton Conover, was a Canadian who had just joined the squadron a month earlier. Their plane, a DH9, was hit by anti-artillery fire and Robert received a head wound. Lieutenant Conover, who was unhurt, had to make a forced landing near Montmort-Lucy. Robert was taken to hospital but died of his wound eight days later. It was reckoned to be "terrible luck" to be shot on a training flight.

St Martin D'Ablois (Ablois St Martin) Communal Cemetery, Epenay, France (in the north or far left-hand corner).

Originally, Robert Dobbie had this his own memorial stone rather than a CWGC gravestone. This was relatively unusual. It probably meant that his family had organised the erection of the memorial before the Imperial War Graves Commission, as it was originally known, had got round to it. Since 2012 there is a standard CWGC gravestone.

Second Lieutenant David Crawford Baxter DONLEY

East Lancashire Regiment 2nd Battalion
Service Number: 10391
Date of Death: 30 September 1917
Age at Death: 28
Family: Husband of Hannah Watson Donley, 15 Gordon Terrace, Carron Road, Falkirk; father of Hannah Watson Donley; second son of James Donley, 12 Union Street, Stirling and of the late Helen Donley

Lieutenant David Donley

David Donley was described in 1916 by a *Falkirk Herald* reporter as being "of a roaming and pushing disposition", which does not seem very complimentary. The reporter also commented that David had seen "some life during the last few years". He had been a railway porter before he enlisted in the 2nd Battalion of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders in 1907 and served in the army for 3 years, including the year 1909 in South Africa. He left the army in January 1910 and was placed in the Army Reserve. He worked for the Falkirk Tramway Company and also as a labourer for Carron Company.

In April 1910 he married Hannah Watson of Bainsford. Their daughter, also called Hannah, was born in December that year.

In July 1913 he emigrated without his wife and daughter to Canada; his destination was given as Quebec. According to the *Falkirk Herald* in reporting his death, he went to Winnipeg and had been there for nearly four years when the First World War broke out.

A month after the war broke out, on 5 September, he sailed for Britain. According to his father, he "arrived at his home in Stirling on September 17th in order to pay a short visit to his father and mother." He rejoined his old regiment, the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders and left the next day for Devonport. He was said to have "a bright and cheery disposition". He was also said to be "A good NCO, sober, steady, trustworthy". It was said that he volunteered 9 times for France, but "his services were more valuable in teaching new recruits for Kitchener's Army the outs and ins of warfare."

However, he left for the front on 27 December 1914. He went through a number of promotions before being commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in April 1917.

His battalion took part in the first day of the Third Battle of Ypres. It was in trenches near Zouave Wood. The attack began later in the day but their objective was gained despite significant resistance. When it was relieved the following night it "had done all that it had been asked to do." Casualties numbered 234.

On 3 September 1917, the battalion went into the sector of the line to the north of the village of Ploegsteert - "The enemy [was] apparently disposed to be quiet in this sector." A week in the front line was followed by two weeks out of the line before returning to the front near Red Lodge.

The battalion war diary for September 30 states:

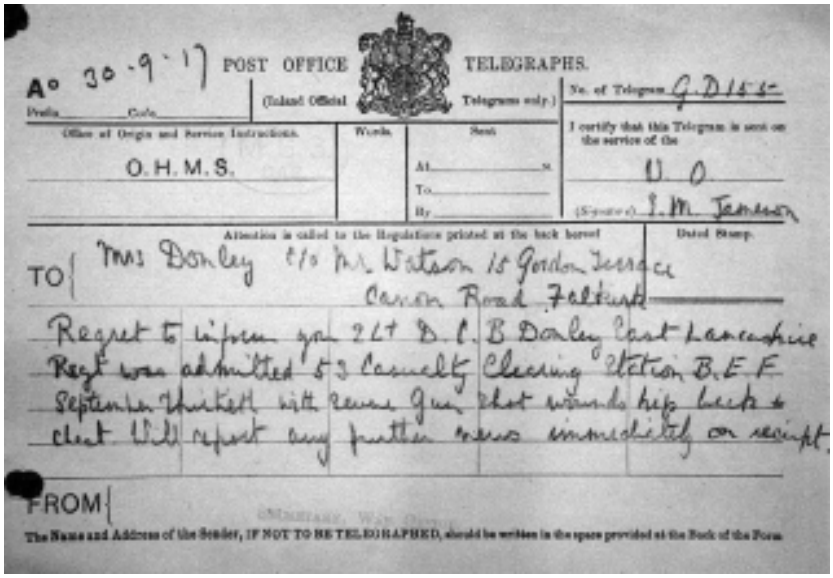
> Working party of A & B Coys returning to camp early this morning were caught by some enemy shells and the following casualties were suffered:
>
> Lieut D.C.B. Donley wounded
> 1 ORK [other rank] killed
> 3 ORKs wounded

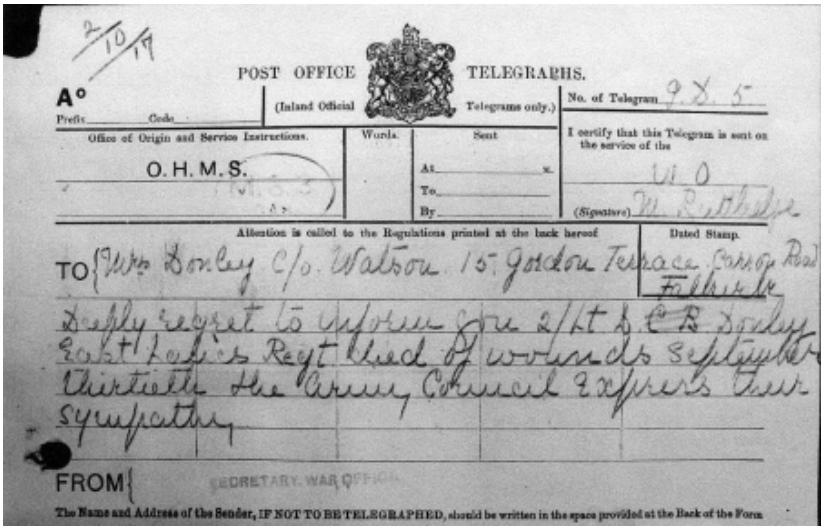
A telegram was sent on the same day to his wife telling her that he was severely wounded.

Then another told her that he had died on the 30

His wife did not communicate this news to his parents. David's father wrote on 4 October to the War Office inquiring about his son. The reply written to him on October 23 told him of his son's death three weeks previously and that they had sent the news of his death immediately to his wife as next-of-kin.

His death notice in the *Falkirk Herald* clearly stated what he was fighting for:


A° 30-9-17 POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHS.
(Inland Official Telegrams only.)
No. of Telegram G.D 155
Office of Origin and Service Instructions. Words. Sent
I certify that this Telegram is sent on the service of the
O.H.M.S. At ... M. To ... By ...
U O
(Signed) J. M. Jameson
Attention is called to the Regulations printed at the back hereof. Date Stamp.
TO Mrs Donley c/o Mr. Watson 15 Gordon Terrace Carron Road Falkirk
Regret to inform you 2Lt D. C. B Donley East Lancashire Regt was admitted to 3 Casualty Clearing Station B.E.F. September thirtieth with severe Gun shot wounds hip back & chest Will report any further news immediately on receipt
FROM
The Name and Address of the Sender, IF NOT TO BE TELEGRAPHED, should be written in the space provided at the Back of the Form.



POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHS.

A° (Inland Official) Telegrams only.) No. of Telegram 9 X 5

Prefix Code

Office of Origin and Service Instructions. | Words. | Sent | I certify that this Telegram is sent on the service of the

O.H.M.S. | At M. | To | By | (Signature) M Ritchie

Attention is called to the Regulations printed at the back hereof. | Dated Stamp.

TO { Mrs Donley C/o. Watson 15 Gordon Terrace Carron Road Falkirk

Deeply regret to inform you 2/Lt J C B Donley 6th Lab is Reg't killed in action 27th September Thirtieth Army Council express their sympathy

FROM { SECRETARY WAR OFFICE

The Name and Address of the Sender, IF NOT TO BE TELEGRAPHED, should be written in the space provided at the Back of the Form.

He fought and fell in freedom's cause,
He fought to crush the oppressor's laws.
For right and might his life he gave.

Thus her "beloved husband" was honoured by his "sorrowing" widow.

On October 5 she wrote to the War Office asking for the winding-up of his estate and the return of "any thing belonging to my husband. I will only be to [sic] pleased to receive. And oblidge [sic]". She was very unlikely to be pleased to receive some of her husband's personal belongings!

David Donley's estate amounted to £16 12 6d. This was not an insignificant sum but not particularly great. There was also a large number of personal belongings.

His estate was claimed by his father, James, who was Superintendent of the Prudential Assurance Company at Stirling and previously at Larbert. He wrote to the War Office saying that his son, while on leave, had shown him his pay book which contained his will. "This will left his Effects to me," his father wrote. But the War Office refused to accept the two wills David had made in favour of his parents. It seems that these wills were made when he was married to Hannah. The main reason for the War Office's decision was presumably that his wife was his next of kin and had a superior claim. James Donley made his claim, rather belatedly, in August 1919; his son's belongings had been returned to his widow in February 1918.

Hannah Donley, his widow, remarried just over a year after his death, in January 1919 and went to live for a time in West Hartlepool. The fact that his parents claimed his estate does seem to suggest that at the least they disapproved of their son's marriage or regarded the marriage as over.

In a report in the *Falkirk Mail*, which was focussing on the exploits of his sister Effie as a nurse in Serbia, it said that in September 1914 when David returned from Canada he went to "his home in Stirling" to visit his parents. The same report describes in the same way his visit to his parents when he was on leave at the turn of the year 1915-1916. There is no mention at all of his wife in the newspaper report.

But there is a startling revelation about Lieutenant Donley's personal life in his file in the National Archives in London. There was another claim made for his estate, according to a letter preserved in his file. This letter, signed (Nurse) Margaret Connell, reveals that she (and presumably her daughter) had gone within a few days of David Donley's death to Cox's Bank in London which was handling the winding-up of his estate. The letter says that they found out "there is no wife and no woman was mentioned." The most likely explanation of this is that the wills they saw were the wills in favour of his parents which the War Office was refusing to accept as "valid".

Margaret Connell continued in her letter: "So the wife must have meant my daughter, his betrothed wife they were to have been married that week as he was wounded he was coming home on the Tuesday they were betrothed at St Patrick's Plumstead. He always signed his letters to her 'your lover and husband Dave.' He was a man of honour and thought a betrothal as binding as a marriage."

And the postscript asked: "Is it possible to return her private letters to him?" (The correspondence which was found amongst his belongings was returned to his widow. Did it contain these "private letters"?)

It therefore seems that, despite being already married, "Dave" as a "man of honour" had promised to marry Margaret Connell's daughter. She was called Dorothy and was, in 1917, 19 years old. Her mother and father were both born in Ireland but she was born in Plumstead in London. It is likely that Dave and Dorothy met while he was doing his officer training which he completed in February 1917. It may be that he did this training at Woolwich Barracks. Woolwich was close to Plumstead and Dorothy's parents both worked at Woolwich Baths. The Connells were a Catholic family and a rosary was found amongst David Donley's belongings after his death but he declared his religion as Presbyterian when he first joined the army. Unfortunately the surviving correspondence does not reveal the outcome of the dispute over David's will but Hannah, his wife, would get everything!

Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension Nord France III. E. 133. *Bailleul was an important railhead, air depot and hospital centre.*

Private James DONOGHUE

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
10th Battalion
Service Number: S/9527
Date of Death: 3 May 1917
Age at Death: 22
Family: Only son of James Donoghue, Main Street, Carronshore and the late Marion Kemp Donoghue

Private James Donoghue

James Donoghue was a miner at Carronhall Colliery before he enlisted in the army in June 1915. He went to the Western Front four months later. His battalion fought at the start of the Battle of Loos. In July 1916 it fought at Montauban in the early stages of the Battle of the Somme.

He was killed in action during a phase of the Battle of Arras known as the Third Battle of the Scarpe, 3 -4 May 1917. The battalions taking part were led to believe that this was going to be an unusually important battle. They were told that the battle was to be the biggest in which British armies had yet taken part.

The battalion objectives were said to be Greenland Hill and Chemical Works and ultimately the Drocourt – Queant Line. It was in fact another attempt to capture Roeux and the Chemical Works. (See entries for Private William Fleming, killed 11 April 1917; Private James H Laing, killed 23 April 1917.)

Two companies of the battalion were in close support of the two leading battalions, the 5th Cameron Highlanders and the 8th Black Watch. The two other battalion companies were held in reserve.

Zero hour on May 3 was 3.45 a.m. The battalion historian wrote:

> It was pitch dark. When the men went forward they could see nothing and there was no landmark to help them. Everyone got mixed up and within half an hour the remnants were back in our own lines.

The two companies in close support advanced 600 yards and then were surrounded. Their casualties were very heavy.

The plan had been for a three-pronged attack on a 16-mile front. It was denounced as "a recipe for disaster" in the Official History of the War, and 3 May 1917 was "the blackest of the war."

James Donoghue was one of 6 Argylls killed that day out of a total of almost 60 casualties. A death notice inserted by his "loving chum" Private J Brown, also of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders, included the lines:

I cannot clasp your hand
dear James,
Your face I cannot see
I was not there to say 'Good-bye'
But I will remember thee.

Arras Memorial, France Bay 9.

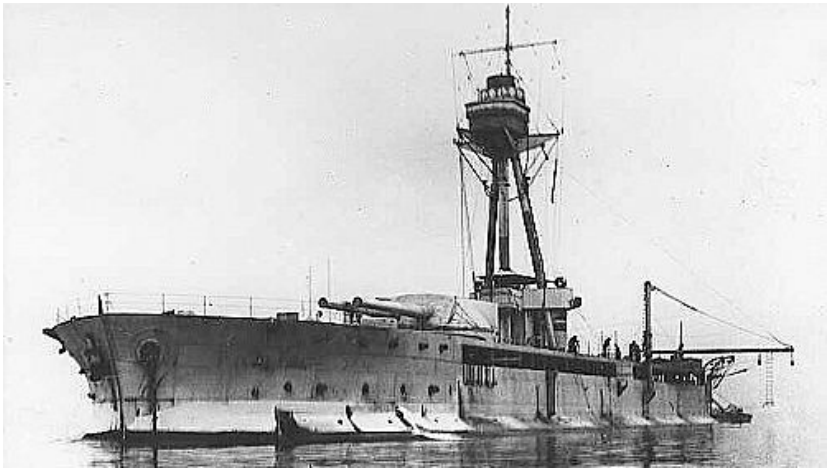
Able Seaman Adrian Graham DOUGLAS

Royal Navy (LWM: *Royal Naval Division*)
Service Number: J/11070
Date of Death: 20 January 1918
Age at Death: 22
Family: Son of William J M Douglas, 128 Ledard Road, Langside, Glasgow and the late Jane McLay Douglas; brother of Private Thomas Douglas (q.v.)

Adrian Douglas was born in Cromarty, Ross-shire on 5 May 1895. Before the First World War, his father had been the librarian of Larbert Public Library, which was opened in 1904.

In 1911 Adrian Douglas joined the navy and went to the training establishment HMS *Ganges* at Shotley in Suffolk for training. Two years later he signed on for 12 years.

When the First World War broke out he was serving aboard the armoured cruiser HMS *Hampshire*, He was promoted to the rank of Able Seaman while on the *Hampshire*. (A year after he left the crew of the *Hampshire*, she was sunk off Orkney when she hit a mine laid by a German submarine. She was taking Lord Kitchener, the Secretary of State for War on a diplomatic mission to Russia. All on board except for 12 crew members were drowned.)



HMS *Raglan*

Able Seaman Adrian Douglas

In July 1917 AB Douglas joined the crew of HMS *Raglan*, which was a type of ship called a monitor. A monitor was a warship equipped with guns for shore bombardment. The *Raglan* and another monitor were sunk when they were at anchor in Kusu Bay, Imbros, (an island in the Aegean Sea belonging to Turkey). They were sunk by the *Goeben* and the *Breslau*. These warships had been sold by Germany to Turkey. At the time of the sinking they were known as the *Yavuz Sultan Selim*, which was a battlecruiser, and the *Midilli*, a light cruiser. The *Midilli* was sunk and the *Yavuz Sultan Selim* was badly damaged when they ran into a minefield following the sinking of HMS *Raglan*.

The *Falkirk Mail* reported that AB Douglas was buried with naval honours.

Portsmouth Naval Memorial, UK 29

This memorial is for about 10,000 sailors of the First World War who lost their lives at sea.

Private Thomas Macgregor DOUGLAS

Gordon Highlanders 1st Battalion
Service Number: S/20508
Date of Death: 7 September 1918
Age at Death: 19
Family: 4th son of William J M Douglas, 128 Ledard Road, Langside, Glasgow and the late Jane McLay Douglas; brother of AB Adrian Douglas (q.v.)

Private Thomas Douglas

Thomas Douglas, who was born in Banff, had been a clerk in the shipping department of Dobbie Forbes & Company, Larbert. But, immediately prior to joining up, he was a student at the Allan-Fraser Art College, Hospitalfield, Arbroath.

From 20-30 August 1918, the 1st Battalion Gordon Highlanders was involved in attacks on the German trenches in the Ayette area, about 9 miles south of the town of Arras. This was near the start of the Allies' final offensive against the German position on the Western Front.

The battalion war diary mentions heavy casualties on August 21 near Courcelles. On 29 August the battalion, now near Ecoust, sent out patrols "to keep in touch with the enemy" but "one platoon of the left coy advanced too far and was practically wiped out by machine gun fire from the flank." The following day "Bn advanced with the 2nd Suffolks who took Ecoust on our left, but because of a heavy attack our left coy was left in the air and suffered heavy casualties." Thereafter the battalion was not involved in any significant fighting for some time.

It can be presumed, therefore, that Private Douglas was wounded in one of the attacks mentioned in the war diary and died some days later from his wounds at the 45th Casualty Clearing Station, which had been set up in the neighbourhood of Bailleuval.

Bac-du-Sud British Cemetery, Bailleuval V. A. 24.

This cemetery is about 8 miles south-west of the town of Arras.

Hospitalfield House is still an arts centre. It has been said to be Scotland's first school of fine art and Britain's first art college.

Private John Campbell DUFF

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
1st/7th Battalion
Service Number: 275716
Date of Death: 12 October 1918
Age at Death: 23
Family: Only son of Michael and Elizabeth Duff, 28 Mungal Mill, Carron Road, Falkirk

Private John Duff

John Duff was a moulder in Mungal Foundry before enlisting in the army in September 1914. He remained in Britain until the end of July 1916 when he went to the Western Front. By then he was amassing a few disciplinary offences. These included being "improperly dressed" on one occasion; this was on West Nile Street, [Glasgow] about 3.15 pm on 8 July 1916. This was after he was guilty in June of "Irregular Conduct" whatever that might have been.

John arrived in France on 1 August 1916. The dominating features of his service history over the next two years or so were ill-health and indiscipline. Two days after landing in France he was admitted to hospital, and he was not discharged until two months later. He joined his battalion then and served at the front for three months before he went into hospital in 31 January 1917 with a "PUO", pyrexia (fever) of unknown origin. Three weeks later, he was transferred back to Britain for treatment. He did not return to France for over a year.

At first he went to the Red Cross Hospital at Torquay where he was diagnosed as suffering from nephritis. By August he was a patient at the Brighton Grove Hospital at Newcastle-on-Tyne. He had two lengthy spells in the hospital between August 1917 and January 1918. When he wasn't in hospital during 1917, he was falling foul of the army's disciplinary system. He was confined to barracks for 7 days for "failing to salute an officer on Grainger Street in Newcastle about 3.10 pm."

In March 1918 John headed back to the Western Front and got to his battalion in April. But he had six weeks in hospital, again said to be PUO, from mid-May until the end of June. Eventually, in August, he joined up with his battalion.

The attack in which John was killed began in the morning of October 12. He was taking part in the final advance on the German Army when he was killed as the battalion attacked Lieu St Amand.

An officer in the 6/7th Gordon Highlanders said that the village lay in "a peaceful landscape… its tall church-spire rising gracefully from the tiled roofs that glowed red in the bright autumn sunshine." There were beside the "trim farms and neat copses … no signs of the ravages of war". But "at ten the distant howitzers boomed; the nearer field-guns spat venomously. The peaceful landscape vanished; farm and village became a ruin of falling masonry."

At 1 p.m. the 7th Battalion of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders passed through the first wave battalions and attacked the village. It was well-fortified with machine guns hidden on the roofs of the houses. The battalion got within 200 yards of the village before it was halted and forced to dig in in the open. "Enemy machine guns and artillery were very active causing many casualties in our ranks", the battalion war diary recorded. John Duff was killed by a shell. 8 men were killed on the day of this attack and 80 were wounded. The two Brigades of the 51st Division who made this attack suffered nearly a thousand casualties and consequently all troops were withdrawn at night.

Private Duff's name was not on the original panels of Larbert War Memorial.

Iwuy Communal Cemetery A. 12.

HE DIED THAT WE MIGHT LIVE
THEY MISS HIM MOST
WHO LOVED HIM BEST

This cemetery is about 12 miles north-east of Cambrai.

The Sixth Gordons in France and Flanders, Captain D MacKenzie, 1922, page 180

Iwuy Communal Cemetery

Private James DUNCAN

Canadian Nova Scotia Highlanders 85th Battalion
Service Number: 222209
Date of Death: 25 September 1918
Age at Death: 33
Family: Husband of Jean Dawson; son of Janet Duncan, Simpson's Land, Stenhousemuir and of the late Andrew Duncan, Crownest Loan, Stenhousemuir; brother of Private John Duncan (q.v.)

James Duncan joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force in October 1915 at Halifax, Nova Scotia. At that time he was unmarried and employed as a motorman. He was a tall man, 5 feet 11 inches in height and 10 stones 8 pounds in weight.

In October 1916 John's battalion sailed to England. Four months later, it arrived in France. Its first major battle was at Vimy Ridge from 9 to 14 April. It was also involved in the Battle of Passchendaele at the end of October 1917. Perhaps he was wounded at this time because he was in Aberdeen in December – he got married there on the 10th!

His battalion spent much of 1918 in the Arras sector. His battalion was involved in attacks on the German front lines starting from two days after his death. This was part of the final series of offensives against the German Army in the autumn of 1918.

His death occurred in an unusual and unexpected way. While waiting with his battalion at Arras Station for a train at 11.30 p.m., he was killed by the explosion of a bomb dropped from an enemy aeroplane. Nine others in the battalion were killed and 60 were wounded.

Faubourg D'Amiens Cemetery, Arras, France VII. F. 49.

This cemetery is in the western part of the town of Arras in the Boulevard du General de Gaulle.

Private James DUNCAN

Seaforth Highlanders 8th Battalion B Company Formerly 3535 Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
Service Number: S/40894
Date of Death: 23 April 1917
Age at Death: 19
Family: Son of Joseph & Margaret Duncan, 219 West Carron

James Duncan was a moulder in Mungal Foundry until he enlisted in the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders on 1 December 1914. He was drafted to France in August 1916.

By April 1917 Private Duncan was serving with the Seaforth Highlanders. On 21 April his battalion moved from Arras into the front line to be ready for the attack on 23 April, which was the next phase of the Battle of Arras. The task for the battalion was to capture the village of Guemappe. The attack began at 4.45 am.

The battalion war diary recorded that "At 5-5 a.m. the O.C. 'B' Coy (right Coy) reported his advance was held up about 300 yards W. of GUEMAPPE by heavy Machine Gun fire and the Coy on his left ('D' Coy) was also unable to make any progress. Both companies had suffered heavy casualties and only one officer was left. Later it was ascertained that 'C' Coy on the left of the line was also checked and had lost all its officers."

Private James Duncan

In these first few minutes, the battalion lost 300 casualties.

However, at 7.30 am another attack, mainly by other battalions, broke the German resistance and the village of Guemappe was taken. Fighting continued until nightfall, and over the next few days until the battalion was relieved on 28 April.

At some point on 23 April, probably in the first attack, Private Duncan was wounded. He died of his wounds later that day. He was one of 100 men from the battalion killed on 23 April 1917.

Faubourg D'Amiens Cemetery, Arras, France V. B. 33.

TO MEMORY DEAR

This cemetery is in the western part of the town of Arras in the Boulevard du General de Gaulle.

Faubourg D'Amiens Cemetery

Private John DUNCAN

Royal Scots 12th Battalion
Service Number: 38284
Date of Death: 7 May 1917
Age at Death: 33
Family: Husband of Mary Laing Duncan, 164 West Carron; son of Janet Duncan, Simpson's Land, Stenhousemuir and of the late Andrew Duncan, Crownest Loan, Stenhousemuir; brother of Private James Duncan (q.v.)

John Duncan worked for Dobbie, Forbes & Company before he joined the army. He got married on Christmas Day 1916.

The 12th Battalion took part in three important attacks as part of the Battle of Arras before John's death. It took part in the first day of the battle south of the River Scarpe. This was a successful attack. Nearly every important objective was taken. The regimental historian concluded that the first day of the battle was "one of the greatest British triumphs" of the war.

Then on the afternoon of April 12 the battalion, along with the 11th Royal Scots, was ordered to attack the Chemical Works north of Roeux. They had to move to their assembly positions in full view of the Germans and without artillery support. At 5 p.m. the attack began. The Germans met their approach with shrapnel and high explosive shells and machine gun fire. "The advance was a sacrifice rather than an attack," the regimental historian commented. "The battalions persevered until each had been reduced to less than 100 men."

On May 3, the battalion was held in reserve while the German Army position south-east of Gavrelle was attacked. Only the 6th Battalion KOSB made progress. By 5.30 a.m. all the attacking forces were back in their own lines except for three companies of the KOSB who found themselves cut off.

At 8 p.m. 150 men of the 12th Royal Scots charged a section of the German front line so that the men of the 6th KOSB, who had been cut off, could get back to their own lines. The Royal Scots reached as far as the enemy parapet before being driven back by machine gun fire with heavy losses. This "self-sacrificing effort" resulted in the death of 3 officers. There were 121 casualties among other ranks.

The conclusion of the regimental historian was that "such gains as were achieved on the 3rd May were wholly out of proportion to the heavy losses sustained."

On 4 May, the Royal Scots' and the KOSB's wounded came back to their own lines. The battalion war diary makes the point of noting "The enemy did not fire on them."

On 7th May, the battalion's front line was bombarded "and we lost about 15 men", including John Duncan. That evening the battalion was relieved.
Part of his death notice, inserted by his widow, read:

Had I but seen his parting look,
Or watched his dying bed
My heart, I think, would not have felt
The bitter tears I've shed.

Arras Memorial, France Bay 1 and 2.

The Royal Scots 1914-1919, John Ewing, 1925, pages 403, 409, 429, 431

Private Edward EASTON

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
7th Battalion
Service Number: 276360
Date of Death: 3 September 1917
Age at Death: 20
Family: Son of Alexander and Elizabeth Easton, nee Penman, 26 Longdyke

Edward Easton was an employee of Carron Company who enlisted in Alloa for army service on 30 May 1915. On 27 September that year,

Private Edward Easton

he left from Southampton for the Western Front.

Whilst fighting in the Battle of the Somme on 23 July 1916, he was wounded in the back and face but returned to his battalion three days later. In April 1917 what is described as an "Old Bullet Wound neck" required almost a week of medical treatment.

Five months later, Edward was serving in the northern sector of the Ypres Salient when he was killed during the battle of Passchendaele. A chaplain wrote that "A shell hit a corner of [their] camp where he was on duty with his comrades. He died almost instantaneously." The battalion war diary confirms that, while in training at Murat Camp, "2 enemy shells burst near Camp killing 3 ORs and wounding 4."

Bard Cottage Cemetery, Belgium IV. E. 30.

This cemetery is in the village of Boesinghe (now Boezing). The village directly faced the German line across the Yser canal. Bard Cottage was set back from the line.

Edward's brother, Andrew, of the 10th Battalion Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders, was reported to have died of wounds on 27 September 1915 and then in November he was reported to be a prisoner of war in Germany – in a camp in Cologne.

Private Robert EDGAR

Canadian Expeditionary Force 131st Battalion Attached 7th Battalion
Service Number: 790238
Date of Death: 15 August 1917
Age at Death: 34
Family: Eldest son of Mrs Mary Jane Edgar, Denecroft, Broomage Avenue, Larbert and of the late Walter Edgar

Robert Edgar had emigrated to Canada and settled in the city of New Westminster in British Columbia. He had been there for seven years when he enlisted in the Canadian Army in December 1915. When he enlisted he gave his occupation as pattern maker - accountant. He returned to Britain as a sergeant with the Canadian forces. He was a sergeant instructor at Sleaford in Lincolnshire for some time before he decided to revert to the ranks so that he would get to the front line more quickly.

In May 1915 Private Edgar joined No 2 company of the 7th Canadian Infantry Battalion which was serving in the Loos sector. After three months of routine trench warfare, he took part in a major attack near Hill 70, east of Loos. "The capture of the summit," wrote the Official Historian, "was the constant preoccupation of those responsible for the sector ever since the Battle of Loos." By 1917 the

Robert Edgar's gravestone

Germans defended the position with a thinly-held forward zone with machine gun nests, often located in shell holes in between the old trench lines.

The Canadians' assault of August 15 had been "frequently rehearsed" and the artillery bombardment started four weeks earlier. At 4.25 a.m. the barrage began and drums of burning oil creating dense smoke, were fired from projectors. Behind this protective screen the Canadian infantry battalions went forward and overwhelmed the German defenders with the "swiftness and strength of the onslaught". They advanced 600 yards in 20 minutes. The first objective was taken with" light casualties". By 6 20 a.m. the 7th battalion had taken its second objective. A pause of 20 minutes was required by the artillery timetable.

When it was time to go again, the Germans were ready for them, meeting them with intense machine gun and rifle fire. The battalion war diary reported:

> Our troops forced to advance from shell hole to shell hole. In this manner our men were able to advance to front of CHALK QUARRY. Posts were established 70 yards in front of Green objective [the third objective].

These posts were manned by No 2 company, which by this time, about 9 a.m, numbered about 50 men and one officer. They found themselves outflanked and enfiladed, and were withdrawn, "wisely in my opinion", said the battalion's commanding officer. In stages, the battalion retreated to what had been the original German front line.

Robert Edgar died of the wounds he suffered at some point during the fighting on 15 August 1917. Out of the 7th battalion's 22 officers and 639 other ranks who fought in this action, 6 officers were killed and 7 were wounded. Amongst the other ranks, 7 were killed, 10 died of wounds, 283 were wounded and 42 were posted missing. The casualty rate was therefore 65%.

St Patrick's Cemetery, Loos, France II. H. 9.

This cemetery is just north of the town of Lens

Military Operations France and Belgium 1917 Volume II, James E Edmonds, 1948, pages 220, 221, 223, 226

Private Alexander ESSLEMONT

Gordon Highlanders 1st/6th Battalion Formerly 278602 Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders 7th Battalion
Service Number: 288042
Date of Death: 10 July 1917
Age at Death: 22
Family: Son of Mrs Mary Esslemont, 1 Low Town, Larbert and of the late James Esslemont

Private Alex Esslemont

Alex Esslemont was a gratefitter with Dobbie, Forbes & Company, Larbert. He was also an active member of the Boys Brigade Company attached to Larbert (Old) Parish Church.

In September 1916 he joined his local regiment, the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders. Shortly

after he arrived on the front line, he was transferred to the Gordon Highlanders.

Private Esslemont had been at the front for only a month before he was killed in action. The chaplain wrote home:

> Your son Alexander and a comrade were sitting at the entrance to a dug-out, having tea together, when he was struck by a piece of shell and killed instantaneously. His comrade was also killed.

Vlamertinghe New Military Cemetery, Belgium I. F. 7.

The cemetery is in the village of Vlamertinge, about 3 miles from the centre of Ieper. For much of the First World War, Vlamertinghe (now Vlamertinge) was just outside the normal range of German shell fire and the village was used both by artillery units and field ambulances.

Sapper David EWING

Royal Engineers 289th Army Troops Company
Service Number: 401958
Date of Death: 3 January 1918
Age at Death: 31
Family: Husband of Mrs Elizabeth Ewing, Brodie Street, Carron Road, Falkirk

David Ewing, who married Elizabeth Brown in November 1915, originally joined the 7th Battalion Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders, but was transferred to the Royal Engineers.

On 17 December 1917 David began work with his RE company on the front line between Pilkem and Kempton Park in the Ypres sector. The work was needed after the advances made during the Battle of Passchendaele. This included the draining and repair of all German pill boxes, cutting doorways through the back walls and building up the walls in front on the German side. They also created a line of trenches. The hours of work were from 7 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. They did not work on Christmas Day but they did on New Year's Day, 1918, despite a severe frost.

Then on January 3, there was "Enemy shelling all day. At 3.15 p.m. when one section had returned to camp, the camp was shelled." 5 men were killed, 4 died of wounds, 3 were severely wounded and 6 slightly wounded. Those who died were named alphabetically by surname. The first was 401958 Spr EWING D.

Duhallow Advanced Dressing Station Cemetery, Belgium II. E. 19

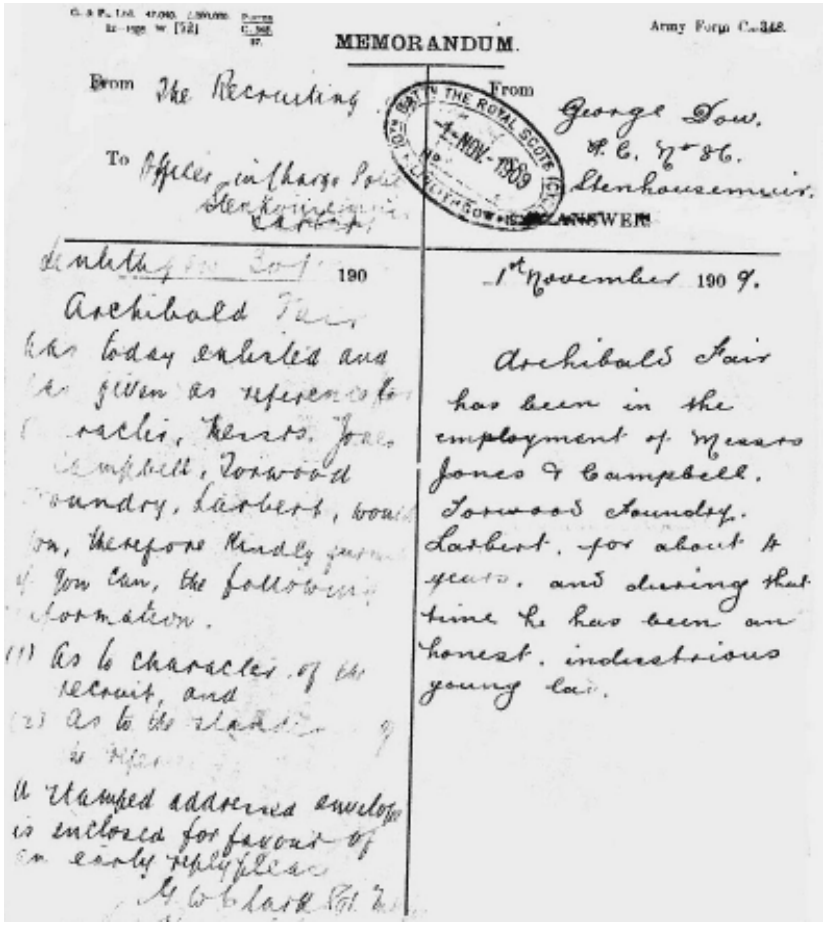
Duhallow Advanced Dressing Station, believed to have been named after a southern Irish hunt, was a medical post one mile north of Ypres (now Ieper).

Duhallow Advanced Dressing Station Cemetery

Private Archibald FAIR

Royal Scots 1st Battalion
Service Number: 10580
Date of Death: 14 April 1918
Age at Death: 26
Family: Youngest son of Archibald and Bella Fair, nee Tweedie, 1 Church Street, Stenhousemuir

Private Archibald Fair



MEMORANDUM.

Army Form C.348.

From The Recruiting

From George Dow. P.C. No 86. Stenhousemuir.

To Officer in charge Police Station Kirkintilloch

ANSWER

Kirkintilloch 1st November 1909

Archibald Fair has today enlisted and has given as reference to Charles, Henry, James Campbell, Torwood Foundry, Larbert, and I am, therefore, kindly requested if you can, the following information.

(1) As to character of the recruit, and

(2) As to the [illegible]

A stamped addressed envelope is enclosed for favour of an early reply.

Archibald Fair has been in the employment of Messrs Jones & Campbell, Torwood Foundry, Larbert, for about 4 years, and during that time he has been an honest, industrious young lad.

Police Constable George Dow's character reference for Archibald Fair

Archibald Fair's life story is an intriguing and ultimately unhappy one.

He "commenced work as a boy" at Jones & Campbell's Torwood Foundry in Larbert in 1905. After working there for 4 years, he left his job as a moulder on 29 October 1909. The next day he attested for the Royal Scots Special Reserve.

In Archibald Fair's character reference from Jones & Campbell. the writer "can't say" why he left his job. He was sober and honest "as far as I know".

Constable George Dow based at Stenhousemuir is a bit more complimentary: Archibald is "an honest, industrious young lad."

He was 5 feet 3¼ inches tall and weighed 8 stones. (On the form he admitted that he had previously been rejected as unfit for military service because he was "slightly under-weight".) He had hazel eyes, dark brown hair and a sallow complexion.

After a year in the Special Reserve he joined the regular army being posted to the 2nd Battalion Royal Scots in March 1910. Eighteen months later, he went to India as a soldier in the 1st battalion. He returned to Scotland in June 1913.

He was then posted to the 3rd Battalion Royal Scots. His officer's assessment two months later recorded that his Military Character was Very Good. He was described as being "sober, painstaking and obliging". The 3rd Battalion Royal Scots was a training unit. Archibald served with this unit until he went to the Western Front in January 1916. The following month he was posted to the 12th Battalion.

He served on the Western Front until May 1917. He was wounded in the chest on May 4 and a week later returned to Britain where he was treated for his wound at the No 2 Western General Hospital in Manchester. In September, presumably at the end of his treatment, he rejoined the 3rd battalion, which, by the end of 1917, was based at Mullingar in Ireland, a town about 50 miles west of Dublin.

It is not clear why he returned to the training unit. Perhaps it was the result of his wounds; four months' treatment suggests that he had been severely wounded. Perhaps there was some other explanation.

On 15 April 1918 Archibald Fair "died at Mullingar from Gun Shot Wound in the head, Self-Inflicted whilst mentally depressed." There is no indication in the surviving records why he was suffering from depression. The *Falkirk Herald* obituary merely stated that he had "died of wounds".

Ballyglass Cemetery, Republic of Ireland B. 6.

This cemetery is one mile north of Mullingar, the county town of County Westmeath. It is just over 50 miles to the west of Dublin.

Private James FERGUSON

Gordon Highlanders 1st Battalion
Service Number: S/24111
Date of Death: 23 October 1918
Age at Death: 19
Family: Third son of James and Elizabeth Ferguson, Eastcroft Street, Larbert

Jim Ferguson was a brass-finisher with W & J Forrester & Company, plumber and brassfounder, Main Street, Stenhousemuir. He joined the army in May 1917 but it was to be October 1918 before he served in the front lines.

The 1st Battalion of the Gordon Highlanders was involved in only two attacks in October 1918, both made near the town of Cambrai. On 8 October the battalion mounted an attack at La Targette, which was captured "without difficulty" according to the Commanding Officer.

On 23 October the battalion attacked and took Romeries. There was "a ferocious and costly fight [which] ended with the death or surrender of every defender" there.

The *Falkirk Mail* reported that Private Ferguson was seriously wounded by the bursting of a shell. He was taken to the village of Awoingt where No 59 Casualty Clearing Station was then located. He died of his wounds there.

Awoingt British Cemetery, France I. E. 2.

This cemetery is just outside the town of Cambrai. The village had been captured from the Germans at the start of October 1918.

The Gordon Highlanders in the First World War 1914-1919, Cyril Falls, 1958, page 250

Able Seaman James FERGUSON

Royal Naval Division Drake Battalion
Service Number: Clyde Z/4639
Date of Death: 14 September 1916
Age at Death: 30
Family: Son of David Ferguson and sister of Jane Ferguson, Goshen, Stenhousemuir

James Ferguson was an irondresser employed by R & A Main, Camelon before he enlisted on 25 May 1915. He joined Drake Battalion on 21 October.

Able Seaman James Ferguson

He was killed in action during the Battle of the Somme. The battalion war diary says that their part of the front line was "somewhat heavily bombarded between 9.50 and 10.35 pm" on September 14 with shrapnel and high explosive. This was seen as a retaliation for their raid on part of Vimy. AB Ferguson was one of 11 casualties caused by the bombardment.

The Rev G E Troup wrote to the family to say that AB Ferguson "was in a trench near the firing line… and was killed instantaneously by the bursting of a shell." He went on: "His funeral took place in a little cemetery near here, some of his friends being present." Among these, he named Allan Brown (q.v.) and Robert Hill (q.v.) who were killed in action in 1916 and 1917 respectively.

The *Falkirk Herald* reported that AB James Ferguson was the first man from Stenhousemuir in the RND to be killed in action.

Bois-De-Noulette British Cemetery, Aix-Noulette, France II. A. 2.

Aix-Noulette is a large village 5 miles from Bethune on the main road to Arras

Private William Moffat FERGUSON

Royal Scots 11th Battalion
Service Number: 13355
Date of Death: 27 September 1915
Age at Death: 24
Family: Third son of Ellen Moffat Ferguson, North Broomage, Larbert and of the late Alex Ferguson

Private William Ferguson

Willie Ferguson worked for Dobbie, Forbes and Company for a long time, but, when war broke out, he was a steel dresser in a foundry in Armadale. He enlisted in Bathgate in September 1914.

Private Ferguson went to the Western Front in May 1915. His battalion took part in the Battle of Loos, which began two days before he was killed in action.

The 11th Royal Scots were held in reserve when the battle began but were to proceed through the leading battalions to support the 12th Battalion Royal Scots and maintain the attack. But the advance to the front line was "a nightmare". They began to move forward from their assembly position at 5.30 a.m. Four hours later, they began to move out of their own trenches. They were delayed by the hundreds of wounded men making their way back to the dressing stations and blocking their way.

When they went into No-Man's-Land, they were met with a deluge of bullets but pressed on "unwaveringly". They advanced towards the village of Haisnes. Two companies reached the outskirts of Haisnes. (But they had been advancing in the wrong direction!) The German artillery kept up a continuous fire and these companies were driven back. They took cover out in the open near Pekin Trench. The two other battalion companies advanced on the village of Douvrin. They were able to occupy a portion of Pekin Trench until dark and then withdrew.

For the next two days the 11th Royal Scots tried to hold on to what they had. There were several enemy counter-attacks but they were repelled. On September 26 the battalion was ordered to occupy Quarry Trench (previously part of the German front line). On September 27, the day of Willie Ferguson's death, the front held by the Royal Scots was "fairly quiet" during the morning, though the battalions alongside them were fighting off German attacks.

At 3 p.m. the battalion's trenches were heavily shelled with shrapnel. Again the Germans then made "a most determined attack" which struck at the battalion on the left of the 11th Royal Scots. The main part taken by the Royal Scots in this fighting on the 27th and 28th was as bombers, repelling the efforts of German bombers to break through the British front line.

Between September 25 and 28 the 11th Royal Scots suffered significant losses: 33 killed, 175 missing and 172 wounded.

The limited information sent to his mother said that Willie Ferguson had been "shot in three places, the last one proving fatal". The *Falkirk Herald* death notice, inserted by his mother, said that he had:

> Died in the pride of his youth and his glory.

Loos Memorial, France Panel 10-13

The Royal Scots 1914 -1919, Major John Ewing, 1925, page 188

Lance Sergeant Andrew Alexander FINLAY

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
10th Battalion
Service Number: S/1515
Date of Death: 25 September 1915
Age at Death: 26
Family: Son of the late Alexander and Isabella Finlay; brother of James Finlay c/o Mar Villa, Tryst Road, Stenhousemuir

Andrew Finlay was an engine driver with Jones & Campbell, Larbert before he enlisted in September 1914.

In May 1915 Andrew went to France and six months later, he was reported missing.

This was on the first day of the Battle of Loos (25 September – 18 October 1915). It is a notable battle because the British Army used poison gas for the first time. This was to offset the lack of shells for an effective artillery bombardment. The battalion war diary of the 10th Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders only mentions the use of gas when it noted that the saps in front of the firing line could not be used for the deployment of the battalion at

Sergeant Andrew Finlay

the start of the advance – the saps were "full of Gas plant and gas".

The battle was the first "Big Push" and therefore the biggest land battle Britain had ever fought up to that time. 75,000 British soldiers were to take part in an offensive intended to break through the Germans' front line. Most of these British soldiers belonged to the battalions raised at the start of the war and were part of what was called the "New Army". The battle was fought before the artillery on both sides churned the landscape into mud. The Loos battlefield was "as flat as a pancake" but dominated by the equipment of the coal mines and industrial sites of this part of France.

The 10th Battalion of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders took up position at Annequin late in the evening of 24 September 1915 in the northern sector of the battle front. The battalions in the southern sector of the battlefield did well on the first day of the battle. For example, the 15th (Scottish) Division broke through two German defensive lines and captured both the village of Loos and Hill 70. This was "the most spectacular advance of the day".

In the northern sector the progress of the divisions met significant difficulties after zero hour, 6.30 a.m. The 10th Battalion

war diary notes that "about 5.45 a.m. a furious bombardment of the German lines began." Then there were considerable delays. At one stage progress was slow because of "wounded soldiers and German prisoners endeavouring to get to the rear". The battalion did not begin its advance until 9.15 a.m. "The advance continued without interruption, skirting the face of HOHENZOLLEREN REDOUBT [a massive German earthwork] across BIG WILLIE and German main line trenches." This advance was made while being heavily shelled and then the men came under fire from a machine gun on the Fosse No 8, a huge slag heap fortified by the Germans. This machine gun "caused many casualties". "The advance continued up and over the hill which was devoid of any cover from fire until FOSSE ALLEY was reached about 12 noon." The battalion then halted while the commanding officer decided where he should go next. At 1.30 p.m. 'A' Company was sent to support the British soldiers holding PEKIN TRENCH but it was "decimated by shell fire"

About 4 p.m. the battalion found itself "alone with its flanks exposed" due to the withdrawals of other battalions. Though efforts were made to hold on to this position, the battalion was forced by German counter-attacks to retreat and by 2 a.m. "the firing line from which the attack was launched that morning was reoccupied".

The battalion went forward the next evening and followed part of the route taken on 25 September. On the afternoon of September 27, the battalion was forced to retreat again and went back to the trenches they were in on the evening of September 24.

Andrew was killed during the first day of the battle but it was over a year later that he was presumed killed in action on that date.

In his own diary for 28 September 1915, Captain Neil Weir of the 10th Battalion of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders wrote:

> What a show. Few instructions, little ammunition or bombs, next to no support from the artillery. No system of looking after the wounded. And practically no food.
> No wonder we lost the ground we had won and lost so many casualties.

Loos Memorial, France Panel 125 to 127.

Loos 1915, Nick Lloyd, 2006, page 119

It is unlikely that Andrew Finlay, in trying to get through the mass of wounded soldiers and German prisoners, had the same experience as Private Thomas Williamson of the Royal Scots Fusiliers. As he crossed No Man's Land half an hour after the advance which began the Battle of Loos on 25 September 1915 he saw

> a magnificent spectacle. Coming across the open towards us were hundreds of our Tommie's, who were all more or less seriously injured. Men wounded in the face, head and arms were assisting those who were wounded in the legs or feet. It was an inspiring sight, comradeship at its very best, all striving to help each other. As they passed us on their way to the first field dressing station, I saw the grim determination on each face. I saw more than that; blood streaming from their wounds, their clothes rent and torn. Others were deathly pale, portraying the awful ordeal they had been through, but in their eyes shone the light of a battle. As they passed us, those scarred and battered human beings gave us a shout of encouragement "Up you go Jock, and give them Hell."

Forgotten Scottish Voices from the Great War, Derek Young 2005, page 136

CASUALTIES recorded in the Battalion War Diary

Date	Killed	Wounded	Missing	Total
25 September	15	122	60	197
26 September	—	38	0	38
27 September	30	181	56	267

The Hohenzollern Redoubt

Private Robert FLEMING

Scottish Rifles (Cameronians) 1st Battalion
Service Number: 7856
Date of Death: 20 July 1916
Age at Death: 23
Family: Brother of Mrs Euphemia Neil, McLachlan Street, Stenhousemuir

Private Robert Fleming

Robert Fleming was a moulder with Dobbie, Forbes & Company, Larbert. He joined the Cameronians soon after the declaration of war in 1914.

Private Robert Fleming had been at the front for 17 months before his battalion took part in the Battle of the Somme. They took over the front line at High Wood on July 16.

On 20 July, at 3.25 am, the Cameronians and other units attacked High Wood. They went into the wood, after a 40-minute bombardment. Two companies of the Cameronians met with little success but one company and part of another got into the wood easily. German machine guns caused significant losses. At 11 a.m. the Germans shelled the wood heavily bringing the attack to a standstill. At 2.45 p.m. the Royal Welch Fusiliers arrived as reinforcements and the Germans withdrew from the north-west corner of the wood, which was occupied by the Cameronians until they were relieved about midnight.

This summary of the day's events based on the battalion war diary does not explain how the battalion suffered a huge number of casualties – 382.

Private Fleming was reported missing; the total number of missing in the ranks was 157. Subsequently, Robert Fleming was presumed killed in action, on 20 July 1916.

Thiepval Memorial, France.
Pier and Face 4 D.

Captain Alexander Stewart gives a very full and vivid account of the Cameronians' attack on High Wood in A Very Unimportant Officer Life and Death on the Somme and Passchendaele, pages 92 – 107.

In his diary for 20 July 1916 he wrote:

> *Attack on [High] Wood begins at 3.25 a.m. Attack is held up on left by rifle and machine gun fire. At 3.45 a.m. I drop into a shell-hole and dig in. At 6 p.m. leave shell-hole for wood, attend to wounded, 9 p.m. heavily-shelled.*

Writing in 1928, Captain Stewart said that this gave

> *a very poor idea of what took place. This attack was made with wonderful precision, and was a splendid example of parade ground drill under heavy shell and machine gun fire, and in pitch darkness, coupled with a long march over very broken ground… The wood would receive such a bombardment that nothing could live in it… the barrage would lift at 3.25 a.m… the whole Battalion must then charge, clear the wood and take up a position on the other edge. All very straightforward and simple.*

The battalion moved off at 1.30 a.m. to get into position for the assault on the German trenches. It was pitch dark and the Germans began shelling the Cameronians as soon as they started off. They were marching at 1½ miles per hour.

When they got near High Wood, "the edge seemed to be one mass of bursting shells that nothing could live in." But when the barrage started to lift and go forward, the front platoons got no order and did not move… We had missed our chance, and every few seconds more and more rifles started firing at us from the edge of the wood… The dawn began to break and we could see the Boche lining the edge of the woods just a few yards in front of us, and blazing away as fast as they could; they were under cover and we when standing up were fully exposed… I realised it was hopeless to try and advance against that fire in daylight."

Captain Stewart spent most of the day in a small shell-hole. After an attack by soldiers from "some English regiment", he was able to reach the Wood. He discovered that on the right of the attack, the British forces had no difficulty in reaching the Wood and had "strolled on" to the other side of the Wood. "I made my way back to our side of the wood with the idea of getting some of our wounded removed. Near the edge I came across the C.O. and one or more officers having a quiet cup of tea and reading the mail!"

At 2 a.m. on July 21, amidst intense shelling, the Cameronians were relieved.

In his memoir Goodbye To All That, Robert Graves of the Royal Welch Fusiliers said that an officer whom he met in hospital told him about the attack on High Wood on 20 July. The officer had said:

> *I believe what happened was that the Public Schools Battalion 20th RF came away at dark; and so did most of the Scotsmen (1st Cameronians & 5/6th Scottish Rifles). Your chaps (2nd RWF to which Robert Graves had belonged before he was severely wounded) were left there more or less alone… Afterwards the chaplain – RC of course Father McCabe, brought the Scotsmen back. Being Glasgow Catholics, they would follow a priest where they wouldn't follow an officer. Late that night a brigade of the Seventh Division relieved the survivors.*

There was a furore about this passage. The two Scottish battalions were virtually all Protestants, not "Glasgow Catholics". The priest was Father McShane, not McCabe. He denied that the two Scottish battalions had "legged it" en masse. The medical officer of the 2nd RWF wrote

to Robert Graves to tell him that the two Scottish battalions "stood fast" at High Wood, although the "Public Schools Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers disappeared".

What Robert Graves said about the Public Schools Battalion was also challenged so that in later editions he added to the text saying: "This was not altogether accurate. I know now that some men of the Public Schools Battalion, without officers or NCOs, maintained their positions in the left centre of the wood, where they stayed until relieved… twenty-two hours later."

Private Thomas FLEMING

Royal Scots 17th Battalion
Service Number: 34801
Date of Death: 23 August 1917
Age at Death: 31
Family: Husband of Mary Reid Taylor Fleming, 565 Brown Terrace, Carron Road, Falkirk (previously, Munro Street, Stenhousemuir); eldest son of the late Thomas and Mary Fleming, Hayford Place, Stenhousemuir; brother of William Fleming (q.v.)

In August 1916 Thomas Fleming, who had been a grinder with Dobbie, Forbes & Company, joined the army. As his *Falkirk Herald* death notice said:

Duty called him, he was there
To do his bit and take his share.

He joined the 17th Battalion Royal Scots which had been raised in Edinburgh by Lord Rosebery as a Bantam Battalion – recruits were below the normal regulation height of 5 feet 3 inches.

The regimental historian wrote that the Thomas's battalion "was practically immune from battle in 1917". Yet, Thomas was wounded on 12 April 1917 and this led to his being home on leave subsequently. He was there when the death of his brother, Private William Fleming, was officially reported.

On 17 July Thomas married Mary Taylor at 50, Wellington Street, Glasgow "by declaration in presence of witnesses". Eleven days later, he returned to France on 28 July. His battalion was in the trenches at Villers Guislain, a village 10 miles south-west of Cambrai. This was a quiet sector in the summer of 1917 but, within a month of his return to the front line, he had been killed in action.

Private Thomas Fleming

On 21 August one company was sent to the Guillemont subsector, about seven miles east of Albert, and returned to the battalion two days later. During this period two soldiers were killed and one died of wounds. Thomas Fleming was, presumably, one of these soldiers.

Villers Faucon Communal Cemetery, France E. 29.

Villers-Faucon is a village about 8 miles north-east of Peronne in the Somme area of France

The Royal Scots 1914-1919, John Ewing, 1925, page 548

The periscope was a vital tool in trench warfare

Private William FLEMING

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders 7th Battalion. Attached Seaforth Highlanders 2nd Battalion
Service Number: S/40596 Formerly 3141
Date of Death: 11 April 1917
Age at Death: 25
Family: Son of the late Thomas and Mary Fleming, Stenhousemuir; brother of Thomas Fleming (q.v.)

Willie Fleming was an iron dresser with Dobbie, Forbes & Company, Larbert. He joined the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders in October 1914 and later transferred to the Seaforth Highlanders.

Private Fleming served on the Western Front from June 1916. He was reported missing in action two days after the start of the Battle of Arras in 1917.

The 2nd Battalion of the Seaforth Highlanders, and one other battalion, were ordered to attack at 12 noon on April 11 the Chemical Works at Roeux (soon renamed by the soldiers in the Battle of Arras as the 'Comical Works'). They did not know that the Chemical Works was strongly defended with 30 machine guns in and around the site. They were easily seen by the Germans, as they had to advance over a bare plain devoid of cover. The barrage which was supposed to assist them was "useless".

Private William Fleming

The Seaforths were met with a storm of artillery, machine gun and rifle fire. Afterwards, "a long line of Highlanders could be seen lying where the machine guns had caught them."

In the battalion war diary, Major N C Orr summed up the attack:

> A single wave of 400 men who had to advance an average distance of 1600 yards with a battalion front of 1100 yards could not obtain their objective in face of such machine-gun and rifle fire. The total losses sustained by the battalion were 12 officers and 363 other ranks out of a total of 12 officers and 420 other ranks who took part in the attack. I leave these losses to speak for the gallantry of all ranks.

When Willie Fleming's death was officially reported in June, his brother, Thomas, was at home on sick leave. Thomas was killed in action in August 1917.

Willie's "sweetheart Maggie" inserted a death notice in the *Falkirk Herald*, which said:

> Your bitter task is o'er.
> I never thought when last we parted
> I'd never see your face again.

Brown's Copse Cemetery, Roeux, France I. A. 8.

Roeux is a village 5 miles east of Arras.

Cheerful Sacrifice, Jonathan Nicholls, 2005 edition, page 149.

Military Operations France and Belgium, 1917, Volume I, Cyril Falls, 1940, page 201, 271

The two battalions who carried out the attack on the Chemical Works on the morning of April 11 were ordered to attack again at 3.30 p.m. that day. But there were no Seaforth Highlanders left to carry out the orders. This incident prompted this comment from Jonathan Nicholls:

> *This was just one example of the apparent bull-headedness that unfortunately gave so much ammunition to post-war critics, politicians and the usual 'never-again' brigade. But it is all too easy to make judgements with the benefit of hindsight, and posterity must accept that the generals of both sides made the best decisions according to the facts available to them .(Cheerful Sacrifice,* page 154):

Brown's Copse Cemetery

Private Thomas FOOTE

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
11th Battalion
Service Number: 1274
Date of Death: 22 July 1917
Age at Death: 22
Family: Son of Thomas and Janet Foote, Church St, Stenhousemuir

Thomas was an apprentice irongrinder employed by Dobbie, Forbes & Company, Larbert when he enlisted in 1910, joining the Special Reserve. But it seems that he purchased his discharge. In October 1913, he applied to enlist in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. A confidential report was obtained from his employer, Clement Gibb of Larbert Steam Laundry. He said that Thomas was "a good and sober worker" so far as he knew.

Thomas joined the 2nd Battalion and was based at Fort George, just outside Inverness. Four months after enlisting, in February 1914, he was absent without leave. His Commanding Officer wrote to "Chief Constable Larbert":

> I am of the opinion that Pte Foote is obtaining leave under false pretences, he has already had an extension of leave in order to be present at his grandmother's funeral.

PC George Johnston, based at Larbert, reported to the Superintendent of Police in Falkirk that Private Foote's statement was "without foundation… His grandmother is still alive." PC Johnston had caught up with him on Burnhead Road, wearing "mufti", another breach of military discipline. Thomas Foote's punishment consisted of 10 days Confined to Barracks and the loss of 5 days' pay. The surviving records don't indicate any reason for his absence.

He went to the Western Front in August 1914. At the start of

Private Thomas Foote

1916 Thomas was back in Britain, almost certainly because he had been wounded and had returned for treatment. Once again, on January 15 he went absent. No indication of why he absented himself was ever given.

A month later, in an attempt to avoid detection, he enlisted at Stenhousemuir in the 3rd/7th Battalion of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders. He was at Ripon in Yorkshire, where this battalion was based, when he was arrested on February 26.

His trial took place in March 1917 at Dreghorn Camp, Colinton. He might have been accused of desertion – he had been declared a deserter from the 2nd Battalion. Instead, he was accused of "Fraudulent Enlistment" and also of "Losing by Neglect one waist belt, value 2/1½ d (11p)". This time he was sentenced to detention which he served for a month in Barlinnie. There he was "exercised in Squad Drill, Musketry, Somaphore [sic] and Physical Training".

Thomas was released from detention on 13 April 1916. A month later, he went with his battalion to France. On 16 July he suffered a head wound and he returned to England for treatment. For two months he was a patient at East Leeds War Hospital.

On his recovery he must have gone back to serve more of his sentence as he was released from Perth Detention Barracks on 11 November. He returned to the Western Front in February 1917. In April he was wounded again but he was treated near the front lines. Around this time he transferred to the 11th Battalion. But he wasn't with the 11th Battalion when he was fatally wounded. The 11th Battalion was in a rest camp at Vlamertinghe.

On 19 July 1917, just before the start of the Battle of Passchendaele, Private Foote was wounded, and he died of these wounds at No 17 Casualty Clearing Station. This was situated near the village of Lijssenthoek almost eight miles west of Ypres. The village was close to the main communication line between the British Army's bases in the rear and the Ypres battlefields. Several Casualty Clearing Stations were established at Lijssenthoek.

Thomas Foote's obituary in the *Falkirk Herald* said that

> he went to France as part of the original Expeditionary Force. He fought in many of the fiercest battles on the Western Front and had been wounded on 3 previous occasions.
> At one battalion parade, Private Foote was complimented on 'his fine appearance in the ranks of the battalion' by an un-named general, who also commented that Private Foote was the only member of that battalion parading who was a member of the original one.

Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Belgium XVI. E. 6.

TOO DEARLY LOVED
TO BE FORGOTTEN

Private Thomas Bruce FORRESTER

King's Own Scottish Borderers 1st Battalion
Service Number: 9591
Date of Death: 5 August 1914
Age at Death: 25
Family: Son of Janet Forrester, 95 West Carron and of the late William Forrester

Thomas Forrester has the distinction of being the first Scottish serviceman to be killed on active service in the First World War. His death occurred just over 12 hours after Britain had declared war on Germany. It happened when, as a Reservist, he was on his way to join up with his battalion. The *Falkirk Herald* reported:

> Joining the 1.53 pm train from Larbert… Forrester intended travelling to Berwick-on-Tweed to join the KOSB. It appears that at a spot about 200 yards east of the Broxburn Arches [Chesterlaw Bank] he was looking out of the carriage window when the door suddenly flew open and he disappeared. The train was soon brought to a standstill, but Forrester, when found, was dead, having sustained shocking injuries to the head.

Thomas worked as a moulder.

Larbert Cemetery, Muirhead Road, Stenhousemuir. Section 3 Lair 145.

TIME ROLLS ON BUT
CHERISHED MEMORIES
LAST

Private William FORSYTH

Canadian Infantry (Quebec Regiment) 13th Battalion
Service Number: 415113
Date of Death: 7 September 1916
Age at Death: 38
Family: Son of the late David and Margaret Forsyth; brother of David Forsyth, Longdyke

William Forsyth was a miner in Carronhall Colliery, Carronshore, when he emigrated to Canada at the age of 23. In March 1915 he enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force. His enlistment took place in the city of Sydney on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia. He gave his occupation as that of a miner. At that time, one of the world's largest steel plants was located in Sydney, which was surrounded by numerous coal mines supplying the steel plant.

Private Forsyth arrived at the Western Front early in 1916. He was wounded during the Battle of the Somme when his battalion was ordered to support the 13th Australian Infantry Brigade in attacking Mouquet Farm, a German stronghold just north of Pozieres, on 3 September. (The Australians had already made five attempts to capture this stronghold.) The Canadian battalion advanced and dug in. Its war diary records that:

> During Sunday night [September 3rd], the men were heavily shelled, but showed great courage and endurance.
> 4th September. The heavy shelling continued the whole of the day on the Front and Support Lines. The Battalion also suffered a heavy Counter-attack.
> 5th September. Heavy shelling continued again on both sides during the whole of the day. Our artillery… fired about about two shells to every German one."

It was on this day that Private Forsyth was wounded. (A total of 82 men from the battalion were wounded that day.) He died of these wounds at the 2nd Canadian Field Ambulance then based at Albert.

Battalion casualties, by the time it was relieved on the 7th, numbered well over 250.

Albert Communal Cemetery Extension, France I. N. 35.

The Broxburn Viaduct

Gunner James Brown GALBRAITH

Royal Field Artillery 71st Brigade 'A' Battery
Service Number: 104692
Date of Death: 3 September 1918
Age at Death: 27
Family: Second son of William and Janet Galbraith, 85 McCallum Terrace, Carron Road, Falkirk

Gunner James Galbraith

James Galbraith was a moulder at Mungal Foundry. He enlisted in Glasgow and joined up in October 1915. He went to the Western Front in March 1916. He had two brothers who were also in the forces

His RFA Brigade was part of the 15th Division, and would be involved in phases of each of the main battles of 1916-1918 (Somme, Arras, Passschendaele, and the Somme in 1918).

At the start of August 1918, the 71st Brigade was deployed at Chazelle Valley near Soissons but then moved back to the Loos area from the middle of the month. From the 18th the brigade was constantly in action near Arras. For example, on August 28th the brigade "fired in support of attack on the Drocourt-Queant line, attack held up by wire in front of OLIVE Trench, continued firing all day."

On September 1, the Brigade moved to Vis-en-Artois to support the 2nd Canadian Brigade who took part in a major Canadian attack the next day. The 71st Brigade moved forward towards Boiry Notre Dame. The next day the German artillery fire was "fairly quiet". It isn't clear when James Galbraith was wounded but given that he died of his wounds at No 7 Casualty Clearing Station (which was then based at the village of Ligny-St Flochel in France) it is likely that he was wounded on the day he died or shortly before that.

Ligny-St Flochel British Cemetery, Averdoingt France III. F. 8.

Ligny-St Flochel is a village 15 miles from Arras.

Private Thomas Fenwick GALBRAITH

Royal Army Service Corps Attached 195th Siege Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery
Service Number: M2/265249
Date of Death: 25 February 1919
Age at Death: 34
Family: Third son of John and Janet Galbraith, 211 West Carron

Private Thomas Galbraith was a victim of the flu epidemic of 1918-1919. He died three months after the armistice was signed and a month after the Peace Conference began at Paris. He died at No 29 Casualty Clearing Station, which was based then at the city of Cologne in Germany. Private Galbraith had therefore belonged to the Allied Army of occupation.

In his death notice in the *Falkirk Herald*, the family said:

His life he gave for one and all.

Cologne Southern Cemetery, Germany XII. B. 15.

Private Andrew GARDINER

Machine Gun Corps (Infantry)
Service Number: 183495
Date of Death: 22 November 1918
Age at Death: 19
Family: Son of James and Allison Gardiner, Lorne Place, Larbert

Private Andrew Gardiner

Andrew Gardiner was an employee of James Jones & Sons, Larbert. He enlisted in October 1918.

It was whilst he was in training that he contracted influenza, which developed into pneumonia, and he died suddenly at Cannock Chase Military Hospital, Rugely, Staffordshire

Larbert Cemetery, Muirhead Road, Stenhousemuir. Section 3 Lair 264.

FONDLY REMEMBERED

Cannock Chase Military Hospital

It was built in 1916 to serve the two training camps which were constructed on Lord Lichfield's estate at Cannock Chase

Private James GARDNER
(CWGC: Gardiner)

Highland Light Infantry 10th/11th Battalion
Service Number: 37609
Date of Death: 9 April 1918
Age at Death: 28
Family: Husband of Mrs Jessie Gardner, Grange Street, Stenhousemuir; father of James; son of James and Allison Gardiner, 4 Lorne Place, Larbert, previously of Bensfield, Kinnaird; brother of Mrs Liddell, Binnie's Land, Stenhousemuir, brother of John and Henrietta Cowan, Longdyke; brother of George and Jemima Whyte, USA

Private James Gardner

Jim Gardner was a type of miner called a brusher, and worked in the William Pit of Carronhall Colliery in Carronshore. A brusher made and extended underground roads by taking down rock and coal, using explosives and putting up roof supports.

On 25 April 1917, he joined the army, and, in due course, he became a Lewis gunner. He had been at the front for about nine months when his battalion had to face the first stage of the German Spring Offensive in March 1918, in which the battalion suffered huge losses. From the second day of the offensive, "the enemy was pressing heavily in large numbers" and tried to work round the right flank of the battalion. It was forced into staged withdrawals from Vraucourt to Warluzel by the time it was relieved on March 27. By then, the total casualties were 16 officers and 343 other ranks. The battalion then moved to the Fleurbaix sector.

On April 9 the battalion was sent to help the weak Portuguese Brigades which were attacked by four German Divisions south of Armentieres. This was the start of what became known as the Battle of the Lys. The German attack created a great pocket of land 10 miles wide and over 5 miles deep.

The battalion had been in reserve when the attack began at 4.20 a.m. Four hours later, it was ordered to occupy a defensive line from Cockshy House Post to Laventie E Post. The men of six platoons of the battalion were never heard of after they moved off. The Germans attacked in "thick waves" and their advance was "rapid". A rearguard action had to be fought and eventually a defensive line was established after dusk on April 9.

The battalion losses on this day meant that it had to be taken out of front line duties and sent back to England for rebuilding.

At some point during the first day of the Battle of the Lys, James was shot by a German sniper. According to the information given by the battalion chaplain to his wife, he was wounded by the sniper's bullet and then whilst "making his way to the medical post, he was hit again, death being instantaneous."

His wife said in the *Falkirk Herald* death notice:

In grief we must bend to
God's holy will.

Ploegsteert Memorial Panel 9.

The name was usually spelt Gardiner

Defending the line at Lys April 1918

Private Thomas GARDNER

Royal Highlanders 'Black Watch' 7th Battalion LWM: Scottish Horse
Service Number: 292760
Date of Death: 31 July 1917
Age at Death: 28
Family: Husband of Mrs Marion J Gardner, nee Johnston, Eastcroft Place, Larbert; second son of Mrs Rebecca Gardner, Muirhall Road, Larbert and of the late Thomas Gardner; son-in-law of John and Jean Johnston, nee McLeish

After 13 years working for Larbert Co-operative Society, Thomas Gardner had worked for two years with Bonnybridge Co-operative Society as a baker when he joined the Scottish Horse in May 1916. After training, he arrived in France in January 1917.

PrivateThomas Gardner

Private Gardner was then transferred to the Black Watch. After six weeks with his new regiment, he suffered an attack of pleurisy and was invalided home. When he recovered, he went back to his regiment and, three months later, was killed in action. He was taking part in the first attacks in the St Julien area on the first day of the Battle of Passchendaele. His commanding officer, Lieutenant W A Speid wrote home:

> He fell in the advance on 31 July. He was hit by a piece of shell and died almost at once.

Nowadays, the inclusion of the phrase "almost at once" would be suspected of being far from the truth of what happened!

No Man's Cot Cemetery, Belgium A. 40.

This delightfully-named cemetery is just to the north-east of Ieper.

The mud of Passchendaele July 1917

Private Alex GENTLES

Royal Highlanders "Black Watch"
13th Battalion 'B' Company
Formerly 4617 Scottish Horse
Service Number: 315327
Date of Death: 14 October 1917
Age at Death: 22
Family: Younger son of Mrs Isabella Gentles, Melville Street, Falkirk & of the late John Gentles; brother of Mary

Prior to enlistment, Alex Gentles was a grocer with Stenhousemuir Co-operative Society. He joined the army in 1915 and, in February 1916, he was drafted to Egypt with the Scottish Horse. In October the 13th (Scottish Horse Yeomanry) Battalion of the Black Watch was formed, and then sent to Salonika.

Private Alex Gentles

In 1917 there was little activity on the Salonika front. It was decided that a "winter line" should be created. This action was to take place on 14 October 1917. The capture of the villages of Osman Kamila and Homondos was considered a necessity. A surprise attack was therefore to take place on the night of 13 October. The plan for this attack was ambitious and complicated.

The 13th Battalion of the Black Watch formed the left column of a two-column attack. It began to move forward at 3.05 a.m. Its role was to get in behind the village of Homondos. As it did so, it began to snow heavily after an evening and night of heavy rain. It was difficult to see more than 10 yards. The soldiers in the Black Watch column were guided in the right-angled turn they had to make by their scouts who held up their helmets on the points of their bayonets.

At 6 a.m. the whole attacking force advanced into the village and the Bulgarians were taken by surprise. It was, the official Historian concluded, "a perfect example of night operations".

Five soldiers belonging to the Black Watch, including Alex Gentles, were killed in the attack.

Struma Military Cemetery, Greece II.B.4.

ONLY THOSE WHO HAVE
LOVED AND LOST
CAN UNDERSTAND
WAR'S BITTER COST

This cemetery is 40 miles north-east of Thessaloniki.

Military Operations Macedonia, Volume II, Cyril Falls 1935, page 26.

Able Seaman Alexander GIBB

Royal Naval Division Howe Battalion
Service Number: Clyde Z/4975
Date of Death: 24 April 1917
Age at Death: 18
Family: Son of John and Tina Gibb, Gardner's Buildings, Stenhousemuir

Alexander Gibb was an apprentice range-fitter with Carron Company before he joined the Royal Naval Division on his 18th birthday. He was sent out to Gallipoli for the last weeks of that campaign.

AB Gibb was then transferred to the Western Front. He was wounded by a shell on 13 November 1916 in the Battle of the Somme. (See entries for Robert Hodge or Daniel Kemp.) He was invalided home five days later. In March 1917 he was able to rejoin the Howe Battalion.

Able Seaman Alexander Gibb

From April 14 the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division took over the trenches facing the village of Gavrelle, which was six miles north-east of Arras. Then, on April 23, the German position was attacked.

At 4.45 am the Drake and Nelson Battalions went over the top under the cover of a creeping barrage. The first German lines were taken in ten minutes but the advance came almost to a standstill at the street which ran north-south through the middle of the village. House to house fighting was required before the village was captured. As the Official History noted, this was "an exceptionally hard-fought battle".

The final objective of the attack was a line 300 to 600 yards beyond the village and denoted by a large windmill built on high ground to the north-east of the village. The attack could not get near the Windmill and it was all the battalions could do to hold on to what they had gained.

The next day the German Army launched a serious and determined counter-attack after a massive 3-

hour bombardment which started at noon. At 3 p.m. the Germans attacked. Often they got into the RND trenches but they were always driven out and their attacks repelled. By 5.40 p.m. the German attack was over and all 63rd (Royal Naval) Division positions were held. The battalion war diary stated:

> Enemy furiously bombarded GAVRELLE from 10.0 a.m. to 3 p.m. during which time he massed for an attack and about 3.30 p.m. assaulted the line in force. At no point did he gain any success and suffered severely. We held our line throughout the night. Just before dawn we were relieved.

AB Gibb was killed during this second day of what is known as the Second Battle of the Scarpe, which was part of the Battle of Arras in 1917. The RND historian concluded that the battle, though of

> no great strategic purpose, proved once more the superiority, man for man, of the English private to the German, and still more the superiority of the English regimental officer to the German professional soldier.

Alexander Gibb was buried at an isolated grave about 5 miles north-east of Arras, but this grave was lost in subsequent fighting, and he is now commemorated on the Arras Memorial.

Arras Memorial, France Bay 1.

The Royal Naval Division, Douglas Jerrold, 1923, page 236

The 63rd (Royal Naval Division) attack on Gavrelle is described in great detail on pages 147-151 of Khaki Jack, The Royal Naval Division in the First World War, E C Coleman, 2014

Lance Corporal John Earsman GIBSON

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
1st/8th Battalion
Service Number: S/8534
Date of Death: 9 October 1918
Age at Death: 21
Family: Youngest son of Archibald Gibson, Castlehill, Larbert and the late Margaret Gibson; brother of Gunner William Earsman Gibson (q.v.)

John Gibson was a baker with Larbert Co-operative Society before he joined up.

Lance Corporal Gibson was seriously wounded near Bethune during the final offensive against the German positions on the Western Front a month before the fighting ended. It is likely that this happened during the attacks made by the 8th Argylls on October 2 and 3.

On October 2 the German regiment opposite the 8th Battalion withdrew to the Vendin – Douvrin Line which "he was going to hold to the last." In the early hours of a "very dark night" patrols were sent out and one reached the eastern end of Humbug Alley near its junction with Hand Cuff Trench. Despite increased shelling, the British patrols pushed on "boldly" and reached their objective by dawn. When the remaining companies of the 8th Battalion came up to join them, "the discomfiture of the enemy was complete." By 6.30 a.m. the battalion was beginning to consolidate its hold on the Vendin Line. This process continued during the day. An attack between 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. was made to straighten the line held by the Argylls.

The advance made on October 2nd and 3rd was significant. On a 1500-yard frontage, 4,000 yards were gained at a cost of 5 killed and 16 wounded.

John Gibson died of his wounds at the 15th Casualty Clearing Station, which was situated then at Rouitz, a village 5 miles south-west of Bethune.

Houchin British Cemetery, France III. B. 15.

This cemetery is 3 miles south of Bethune.

Gunner William Earsman GIBSON

Royal Field Artillery 86th Brigade
'A' Company
Service Number: 737
Date of Death: 10 April 1917
Age at Death: 24
Family: Son of Archibald Gibson Castlehill, Larbert and the late Margaret Gibson; brother of Lance Corporal John Earsman Gibson (q.v.)

Gunner William Gibson, who had worked in the Despatch Department of Dorrator Foundry, Camelon, enlisted in the RFA in September 1914. He then spent over two years serving on the Western Front. As part of the 19th (Western) Division, the 86th Brigade RFA was particularly involved in the Battle of the Somme in 1916.

William was killed by an enemy shell at the start of the Battle of Arras of 1917.

His comrade, Bombardier W H Curry sent home a detailed account of his death:

> Gunner Gibson was killed at his gun about 8 o'clock on the night of the 10th, the same shell killing one of his comrades and wounding another. Death was instantaneous and he never spoke after he was hit; so it may be a little consolation to you to know that he did not suffer. I know that no words of sympathy

I can write are able to make things better for you, but on behalf of the boys in 'A' subsection I would offer you our heartfelt sympathy. From the way he spoke to us about his sisters I know you have lost an affectionate and loving brother and at the same time we realise we have lost a good soldier, an honest worker and a true comrade. He did his duty to the last, and when he was called to face danger, he obeyed at the cost of his life. We are laying him to rest by the side of his captain and his comrade.

Anzin-St Aubin British Cemetery, France I. B. 15.This cemetery is on the north-western outskirts of Arras.

Chief Steward Fulton GILLESPIE

Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve Mercantile Marine
Service Number:
Date of Death: 12 March 1918
Age at Death: 24
Family: Husband of Elizabeth Gillespie, nee Reid, 39 Garturk Street, Crosshill, Glasgow; son of John and Sarah Gillespie, Stewartfield Place, Larbert

For a period of nine years, Fulton Gillespie worked for the coastal shipping firm, W J Sloan & Company based in Glasgow. It ran regular services between Glasgow, Belfast, Dublin, Bristol, Cardiff and Swansea. However, Fulton Gillespie was on board the *Tweed* which was making its way from Newhaven to Cherbourg with a cargo of coal and oil when it was torpedoed without warning by a German submarine, UB-59. The ship was sunk about 10 miles from St Catherine's Point, the most southerly point of the Isle of Wight. Of the *Tweed's* crew of 20, 7 were drowned or killed.

Chief Steward Fulton Gillespie

Tower Hill Memorial, London Bay 1

The Memorial commemorates men of the Merchant Navy and Fishing Fleets who died in both Wars and who have no known grave. It commemorates the death of 12, 000 members of the Mercantile Marine in the First World War.

Tower Hill Memorial

Private David Stewart GLANVILLE

Royal Highlanders "Black Watch" 2nd Battalion
Service Number: S/10746
Date of Death: 31 October 1918
Age at Death: 29
Family: Youngest son of William and Agnes Glanville, Denny Road, Larbert

David Glanville was one of the 550,000 victims of disease amongst the British troops who fought in Palestine. He died of malaria. (There were just over 50,000 battle casualties in this theatre of war.)

David Glanville joined up in 1916 and was drafted to France in April the following year. However, before April was out, he was sent from Marseilles to Alexandria in Egypt on board SS *Cameronia* but she was torpedoed crossing the Mediterranean Sea.

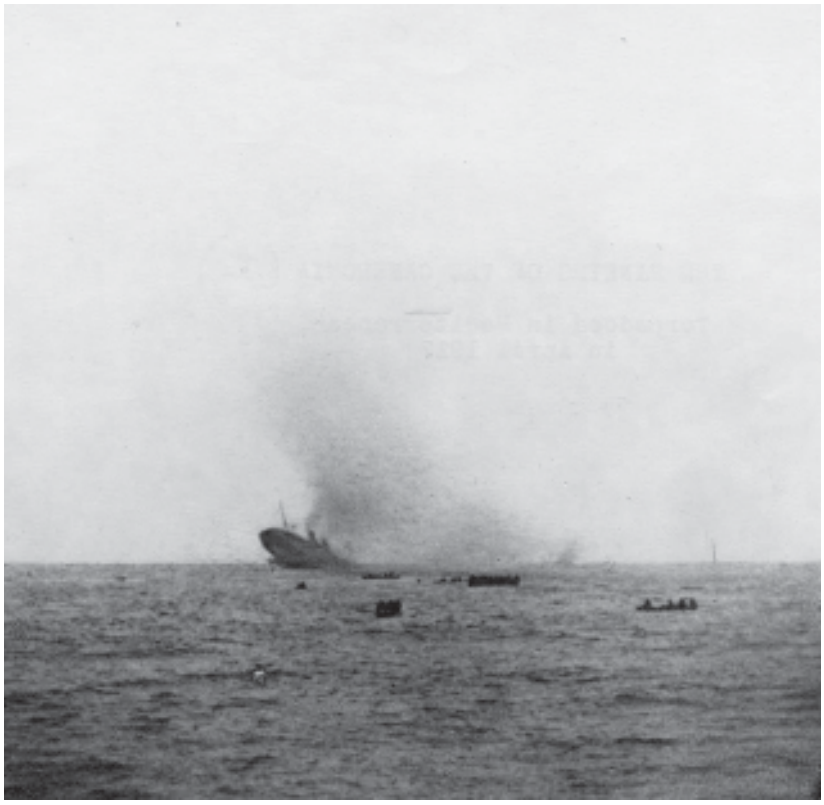
This photograph on the next page shows the *Cameronia* sinking after being torpedoed 150 miles east of Malta at 5.20 p.m on 15 April 1917. The ship was launched in 1911 for transatlantic service. It became a troopship in 1917. She was carrying over 2,600 soldiers when torpedoed. Over 200 were drowned.

David survived. He went from Egypt to Baghdad in Persia (modern Iran) and from there to Kut and from there into Palestine.

At the end of September 1918 David's battalion spent four days at Haifa, then in Palestine, bivouacked by the sea and in the shadow of Mount Carmel. It then marched northwards reaching Beirut on October 10. The Regiment's historian wrote that:

"It was during this march that signs were first noticed of a serious type of malaria which was responsible for many casualties in the Battalion later."

The battalion war diary noted that in the month of October four officers and 253 other ranks were



The sinking of the SS Cameronia

evacuated to Field Ambulances; though not all would have suffered from malaria, it can be assumed that a large number of these cases would be suffering from the disease.

The battalion camped three miles south-east of Beirut and spent 12 days there. The situation there was nightmarish! The men in the battalion had to clean up

> the streets of Beirut and many other far from pleasant duties. The state of the city was terrible. It was no uncommon sight to see the dead bodies of little children starved to death lying uncared for and unnoticed in the streets; and the condition of the adult population was most miserable.

It is quite possible that David Glanville did not take part in this due to his illness. His death from malaria occurred a day after the armistice with Turkey was signed. By then his battalion was in Tripoli, having left Beirut on October 24. (He was reported to have died of malaria "Beerut Military Hospital in Egypt"; however, he is buried in Lebanon.)

When General Allenby sent his congratulations to his forces on the "total destruction of the Turkish Armies opposed to us", he concluded his message saying:

"Such a complete victory has seldom been known in all the history of war."

Whilst he was undoubtedly referring simply to the military situation at the end of the war in Palestine, events in Palestine ever since seem to contradict the comment that Britain had achieved "a complete victory" then.

Beirut War Cemetery, Lebanon 48.

WE HAVE REST THROUGH HIS SORROW AND LIFE

After Beirut was captured from the Turks in October 1918, army hospitals were established there.

A History of the Black Watch in the Great War, 1914-1918, A G Wauchope, 1925, Volume I page 289

Private John GLEGG

Canadian Infantry Central Ontario Regiment 3rd Battalion
Service Number: 44086
Date of Death: 8 October 1916
Age at Death: 27
Family: Son of Michael and Margaret Glegg, nee McKay, Church Street, Stenhousemuir

Private John Glegg

John Glegg gave his occupation as a stove fitter when he joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force at Toronto in April 1915. His regiment arrived on the Western Front in 1916.

The village of Courcelette, which was eight miles north-east of the town of Albert, was captured after fierce fighting in September 1916 in which Canadian troops were heavily involved. It was then destroyed by a German artillery bombardment. (See entry for George Barr McDougall.)

On October 7th, the 3rd Battalion "Toronto Regiment" left its billets in Albert and moved up to Death Valley and in the evening took up their battle positions.

At 4.50 a.m. on October 8 Canadian forces attacked in "cold rain". They captured the front-line trench of the Le Sars line, known as Regina Trench. The 3rd Battalion captured its first objective in ten minutes "after some resistance" and their second objective a few minutes later. The

next two hours, while the battalion consolidated its position, were "fairly quiet". But then heavy enemy shelling began and by 11 a.m. almost all the battalion officers were killed or wounded.

When a large German force counter-attacked, the battalion made "a heroic stand" but were forced to withdraw to their first objective. "The enemy far outnumbered our men, and being fresh troops and well-supplied with bombs and S.A.A., were able to press on." Throughout this German attack, the 3rd battalion was short of ammunition and their supplies were completely exhausted by 3 p.m. The battalion war diary ended its account of the day's action:

> A retirement was inevitable. The men were fighting with their fists. The remnants of the battalion were forced back to their jumping off trench …
>
> Of the 14 officers and 481 O.R. who went into the assault only 1 officers and about 85 O.R. were left.
>
> The Canadian attack of 8 October 1916 was described by one historian as a "fiasco".

According to the Circumstances of Death Register, Private Glegg was posted wounded and missing after the attack at Courcelette.

In June 1917 his parents in Stenhousemuir were informed that it was presumed for official purposes that John had died on or since 8 October 1916. His service records include a note saying "also notify Miss Lizzie Fleming 1033 Dufferin Street, Toronto".

Vimy Memorial, France.

This memorial commemorates 11,000 Canadian servicemen who died on the Western Front and have no known grave.

History of the East Lancashire Regiment in the Great War 1914-1918, Nicholson, Sir C Lothian & MacMullen, H T, 1936, page 164.

Canadian troops at Vimy Ridge

Sapper Walter Isaac GODSON

Royal Engineers 206th Field Company

Service Number: 81079

Date of Death: 25 or 26 August 1916

Age at Death: 35

Family: Husband of Jean McLuckie Godson, 21 Maclaren Terrace, Carron, and father of 3 children; youngest son of William and Elizabeth Godson, Burnbank, Burnhead Road, Larbert

Sapper Walter Godson

According to military records, Isaac Godson was born at Netheravon in Yorkshire, but the census returns consistently state that he was born in Edinburgh. He was employed as a gratefitter by Carron Company. For some years, he belonged to the Volunteer Corps, which was a predecessor of the Territorial Army. As a member of the Volunteers, he was an enthusiastic shot and won various prizes at his company's competitions.

Early in 1915, he joined the army. After training his company set off for the Western Front on board SS *King Edward*, with the same captain and crew whose usual peacetime routes took the ship to Rothesay, the Kyles of Bute and Inveraray.

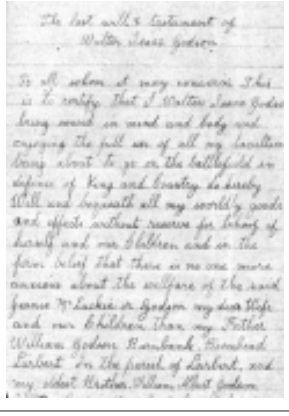
His company was involved in the Battle of the Somme at Bouzincourt and Ovillers during the first fortnight of the battle. After a period out of the front line, the 206th Company were at work in the trenches at Le Preol, just east of the town of Bethune.

His death on August 26 is recorded by name in the battalion war diary. A very detailed account of his death was written by his commanding officer to his wife. When this letter was published in the *Falkirk Herald*, it was headed "Died Trying to Help Another":

> I am writing to you to break the sad news of the death of your husband. He was shot while working, death being absolutely instantaneous, at about l a.m. last night. I am the officer in charge of his section, and was in charge of the party at the time. We blew up two mines last night and I had to take up a party, which included your husband, to dig a trench forward to the men who rushed forward to occupy one side of the crater after the explosion. Before the explosion took place we waited in a safe trench until the bombardment, which always follows the explosion of a mine, was over. During the bombardment I was sitting next to your husband, and we were talking about leave.
>
> Your husband was saying that everyone was yearning to get home to see their families once more, if only for a week, and that he himself would have given anything just to be able to see you all again, as he had been away from you for so long. He met his death trying to help another man, whom he saw to be suffering from nerves. Your husband had worked very hard and dug his part of the new trench down to a safe depth, when he saw the man next to him was rather frightened, so he voluntarily changed places and exposed himself to help another man he had never seen before. This is by no means the first time he had done the same sort of thing. He was an absolutely fearless soldier, and always on the look-out to help others in any possible way. He was the most splendid type of man. I never heard him grumble or say anything in the least way against anyone.
>
> His duties, no matter what they were, he always carried out thoroughly. It is the loss of such men as these the nation feels so heavily. The funeral took place this afternoon in Cambrin Churchyard. There was a very large gathering of all his friends to pay him his last rites, and I think they all realised that your husband had left a big gap which can never be filled. Please will you accept my deepest sympathy in your bereavement, and convey it to your family. I am in possession of some of his personal belongings, which I shall forward to you when I obtain the rest. We are having a small cross made as a tribute from his comrades. I will arrange to have the grave photographed and the photograph sent to you.

Cambrin Churchyard Extension, France Q. 28.

Cambrin is a village 15 miles north of Arras and 5 miles east of Bethune. For most of the war, it was only half a mile from the front line trenches.



The last will and testament of Walter Isaac Godson

To all whom it may concern. This is to certify that I, Walter Isaac Godson being sound in mind and body and enjoying the full use of all my faculties being about to go on the battlefield in defence of King and Country do hereby Will and bequeath all my worldly goods and effects without reserve for behoof of herself and our Children and in the firm belief that there is no one more anxious about the welfare of the said Jeanie McLuckie or Godson my dear wife and our Children than my Father William Godson Burnbank, Burnhead Larbert.

Extract from the 'soldier's will' of Walter Godson.

Private William Dickson GOOD

Scottish Rifles (Cameronians) 9th Battalion
Service Number: 22534
Date of Death: 18 August 1916
Age at Death: 28
Family: Son of the late William and Margaret McDonald Good; brother of Thomas Good, The Cross, Larbert

Private William Good

William Good was an employee of Dobbie, Forbes & Company, Larbert. He joined up in November 1915.

His battalion took part in three major attacks in the first month of the Battle of the Somme, at Montauban, Longueval and Delville Wood. In that time the strength of the battalion had been reduced from 659 other ranks plus 20 officers to a total of about 325 when it came out of the front line.

It was then moved to the Vimy sector. The battalion spent over a fortnight refitting and training before taking over front line duties on August 13 at Gouy-Servins, a village ten miles south of Bethune.

The battalion war diary's entry for August 18 reads: "Enemy active with mortars, rifle grenades and snipers. We had 5 killed."

William Good was one of those killed.

Cabaret-Rouge British Cemetery, Souchez, France
IV. C. 5.

Souchez is a village 2 miles north of Arras on the road to Bethune. At the start of the war, close to the site of the cemetery stood a small, red-bricked, red-tiled café called Cabaret Rouge. It was destroyed by shellfire in March 1915 but it gave its name to this sector and to the cemetery.

Private James GORRIE

Seaforth Highlanders 1st/4th Battalion 3rd Company
Service Number: 235134
Date of Death: 3 September 1917
Age at Death: 41
Family: Eldest son of David and Marion Gorrie, Mayfield, Victoria Road, Larbert

Private Gorrie had been at the front for only 8 weeks when he was severely wounded; his wounds included a fractured leg.

He was taken to No 13 General Hospital, Boulogne, where it was found necessary to amputate his right leg. Subsequently, he died of his wounds. Since his battalion was in the front line trenches for only a couple of days at the start of August and was in training for the rest of the month, it seems certain that he was wounded when he was at the front south of Langemarck between August 1st-4th.

His battalion was in reserve at Yser Canal Bank on the first day of the Battle of Passchendaele. As the battalion history says, it was "a very comfortable place to be". The canal banks were 30 to 40 feet high. The soldiers were in "elephant shelters". These were arched lengths of corrugated iron, with layers of sandbags, stones, earth and even concrete over them.

During the night and all day the next day, August 1, it rained heavily, turning No Man's Land into an impassable morass. The men said: "if it hadn't been for the rain, we'd have chased 'Jerry' out of Belgium."

That day, the 4th Seaforths took over a position two miles in advance of the original front line. But they came under "a heavy barrage. Several casualties", the battalion war diary noted. The 4th Battalion Seaforth Highlanders continued to hold the line until they were relieved on August 4. In this brief tour, 87 soldiers were wounded, and 26 were killed.

In civilian life James Gorrie was a moulder with Dobbie, Forbes & Company, Larbert. He joined up in September 1916.

Boulogne Eastern Cemetery, France VIII. I. 25.

This cemetery contains nearly 6,000 graves, an indication that Boulogne was one of the main hospital areas serving the Western Front. One of the unusual features of this cemetery is that the gravestones are laid flat, due to the sandy soil in the area.

Private Alick GRAHAM

Seaforth Highlanders 1st/5th Battalion
Service Number: 260214
Date of Death: 24 September 1917
Age at Death: 35
Family: Fourth son of William and Agnes Graham, Elder Place, Tryst Road, Stenhousemuir

Private Alick Graham

Before the war, Alick Graham was employed at the Larbert Sawmill of James Jones and Sons Ltd. He was also an outstanding cricketer. He was a member of Stenhousemuir Cricket Club for over twenty years. For many of these years, he was regarded as "one of the most brilliant bats in Scotland", as well as forming with two of his brothers, "the most famous cricketing triumvirate in Scotland". He was "quiet and unostentatious in manner, a favourite of all. Once set going he hit freely all round the wicket and fifty came off his bat in as many minutes." He was also a fine change bowler who "secured many wickets when opposing batsmen seemed thoroughly set." The *Falkirk Herald* obituary concluded: "Like many another fine Scottish cricketer, he has ended the 'noble game' by playing his 'last over' in France."

Private Graham had been serving on the Western Front for only two months when he was killed in the front line in Belgium near the town of Langemarck during the Battle of Passchendaele.

On September 20 the 51st Division, to which his battalion belonged, had advanced a mile forwards. This was the first part of the Battle of Menin Road Ridge. The 5th Seaforths took over Pheasant Trench. Originally a German fortified position, Pheasant Trench was strengthened with concrete blockhouses. Pheasant Farm, a fortified farm, was behind it.

On September 22 and 23 Private Graham's battalion had to withstand determined German counter-attacks. On the 23rd, there was "Heavy enemy shelling from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. but only few casualties." The battalion was relieved on September 24, the day on which Alick Graham was killed in action.

Cement House Cemetery, Langemarck, Belgium III. B. 8.

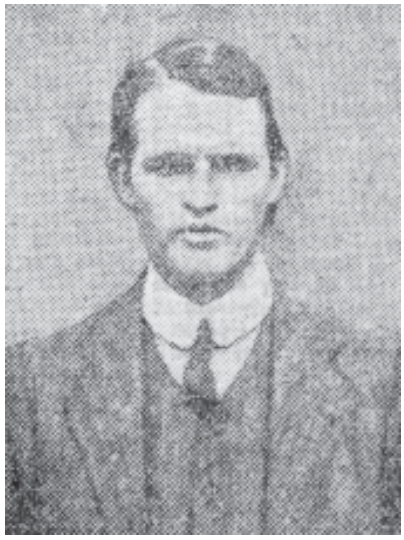
Lance Corporal George Bowie GRAHAM

Gordon Highlanders 2nd Battalion
Service Number: S/8522
Date of Death: 16 May 1915
Age at Death: 25
Family: Only son of Charles and Isabella Graham, Waddell Street, Carronshore

George Graham was a clerk in the foundry office at Carron Company. He was a member of the choir at Camelon United Free Church, and a member of Falkirk Choral Union.

He enlisted on 7 January 1915 and went to France on 10 March. On May 16, Lance Corporal Graham's battalion went into the attack in the Battle of Festubert (15 -25 May 1915).

In a letter home, another lance-corporal reported that when "advancing against the Germans, he was struck in the head with a bullet.



Lance Corporal George Graham

He died bravely." This was on the second day of infantry attacks in the Battle of Festubert, which was intended to support a major French offensive further south in Artois. George Graham's battalion was to support the 2nd Battalion Scots Guards which "went forward with magnificent dash". The 2nd Gordons were sent in to protect the left wing of the Scots Guards, but without success and with very heavy casualties especially since the battalion hadn't really taken a leading part in the attack.

George Graham was one of the 53 Gordon Highlanders killed in the attack on Festubert.

Le Touret Memorial, France Panel 39 to 41.

The Gordon Highlanders in the First World War 1914-1919, Cyril Falls, 1958, page 42

Private James GRAHAM

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
7th Battalion A Company
Service Number: 2348
Date of Death: 19 May 1915
Age at Death: 19
Family: 4th son of Michael & Janet Graham, 16 Rae St, Stenhousemuir

Private James Graham

James Graham was a patternmaker with Carron Company before the war. He played for the amateur football team, Stenhousemuir Hawthorns FC.

He enlisted in September 1914 and left for the Western Front in December under the command of Captain Jones.

Private Graham was wounded in action on April 25 during the Battle of St Julien. He suffered severe wounds to his left arm and was taken to hospital in Le Treport. He died there from his wounds.

The Battle of St Julien, which was the first major piece of fighting the battalion was involved in, was the second phase of the Second Battle of Ypres (22 April – 25 May, 1915). It is described in detail under the entry for Private James Dea on page 73.

The battalion war diary recorded that 6 officers and 100 other ranks were killed, but 150 men were posted missing and this was to double the number of other ranks who were killed in this attack. The total number of casualties in the battalion was over 500, including James Graham.

By the time his death was reported at the end of May, his oldest brother, Hugh, who had emigrated to Australia in 1911, had been wounded in the fighting at the start of the Gallipoli campaign.

Le Treport Military Cemetery, France Plot 2 Row E Grave 3

Le Treport was an important hospital centre almost 20 miles north-east of Dieppe.

Private Francis GRANT

Gordon Highlanders 1st Battalion
Service Number: S/3593
Date of Death: 23 (CWGC: 22) April 1915
Age at Death: 23
Family: Son of Francis Morrison and Annie, nee McKenzie, Grant, Main Street, Larbert; brother of John Grant (q.v.)

Lieutenant Thom wrote to the parents of Private Francis Grant. They had received news of his death on the day which would have been his 24th birthday. Lieutenant Thom's letter describes his character, his death at the hands of a German sniper and, in remarkable detail, his burial:

> It is a very unpleasant duty which I have to perform in writing to convey the sad intelligence of the death of your son, No 3593 Private Francis M. Grant, one of the finest soldiers I had in my platoon. He was killed instantaneously by a rifle bullet wound through the brain about half past two in the morning of the 23rd inst., while in the execution of his duties under my command in a detached portion of the trenches.

The battalion war diary says that their sector south-west of Ypres was "quiet until 22nd April, first

Private Francis Grant

reports of gas being used. Month ended as before, few casualties". Private Grant was obviously one of these casualties.

Lieutenant Thom's letter continued:

> Your son was a man far and away above the usual run of soldiers, whose character, example, and deportment made him the friend of and an object lesson to all of us of whatever rank who had the good fortune to know him. In him I have lost one of the best and most willing soldiers of my platoon - a man who could be trusted to carry out any duty exactly as the instructions were given him, and whom I could depend upon to use his own initiative when circumstances so demanded. Had he lived he would shortly have been promoted. As a plain soldier and a ranker I regret to admit myself a man of little literary ability and quite unable to express my heartfelt and sincere sympathy for you in your bereavement. For you, Mrs Grant, I can especially feel in your loss. My own dear mother, an old white haired lady in a country village up in Aberdeenshire, has both her sons out here, and I only have to mentally picture her in your position today to have a slight idea of how you will be feeling, on reading this letter.
> The nearest churchyard was about three miles away, and to have carried your son there for

interment would have needlessly endangered the lives of four of his comrades crossing an open space of fire swept ground, so we had to bury him a few yards behind the trench just before dawn, in the grey of the morning. With your son's body lying on an improvised stretcher, and with his comrades around, crouching with their heads bared in respect, my servant shielded a candle with his hands while I read the burial service and a few verses of the last chapter of Revelation, and the whole platoon repeated the Lord's Prayer aloud. Thus was your son, a gallant soldier, committed to a soldier's grave in Belgium. In the evening his comrades erected a railing round his grave, and I have ordered a cross to be sent out from headquarters to be erected on the grave before we go back again to billets in four days' time. I shall post your son's effects as we go out of the trenches. Corporal Rennie, a chum of your son, will also write soon. You have at least some consolation in your sorrow in knowing your son died a glorious death, doing his duty bravely in one of the most righteous causes. May you find comfort in your sorrow.

Private Grant's grave was subsequently lost.

Frank Grant was employed by Dobbie, Forbes & Company. He enlisted in the 3rd Battalion of the Gordon Highlanders in September 1914, was transferred to the 1st Battalion and set off for the Western Front in January 1915. Shortly after his death, his brother, Robert, was reported to have been wounded in the thigh. He was recovering at Stobhill Hospital, Glasgow. Robert belonged to the 7th Battalion Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders.

Menin Gate Memorial, Ieper, Belgium Panel 38.

In 1915, five British soldiers a day on the Western Front were killed by snipers.

Lance Corporal John GRANT

Lancashire Fusiliers 10th Battalion
Formerly 3310 Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
Service Number: 40700
Date of Death: 25 August 1918
Age at Death: 23
Family: Son of Francis Morrison and Annie, nee McKenzie, Grant, Main Street, Larbert; brother of Francis Grant (q.v.)

John Grant was a moulder with Dobbie, Forbes & Company, Larbert.

In November 1914 he joined the Highland Cyclist Corps. He was invalided home through wounds and other causes on three occasions.

Lance Corporal John Grant was serving with the Lancashire Fusiliers in August 1918, when the Allied armies were beginning their final offensive against the German Army on the Western Front.

In the early hours of 24th August, John's battalion moved into the front line. The Germans had begun

Lance Corporal John Grant

to withdraw so the men were able to cross the River Ancre. They continued to advance during the day, reaching about a mile south-west of the village of Courcelette.

At 4 a.m. the following morning, the battalion advanced towards Martinpuich. The advance took place under heavy shelling. Martinpuich was strongly defended by machine guns but the Germans were eventually driven out. It was impossible, however, to remain in the village because of the intense shelling. The battalion continued to push forward during the afternoon. At 4.15 p.m. there was a large German counter-attack. It took a considerable time to halt this attack. In one battalion company only three men were not wounded.

At 1am the 9th Battalion the Duke of Wellington's Regiment took over the attack.

Battalion casualties numbered 224. John Grant was one of 50 other ranks killed.

The Certificate sent to John Grant's family on behalf of "the people of Larbert Parish".

His three surviving brothers were all on active service at the time of his death.

Adanac Military Cemetery, Miraumont, France VII. C. 5.

TO MEMORY EVER DEAR

Miraumont, a village about 7 miles from Albert, and the neighbouring village of Pys, were occupied by the Germans for most of the war. On 24-25 February 1917, the Germans abandoned the villages when they withdrew to the Hindenburg Line, and then occupied them again from 25 March 1918 in the course of the German Spring Offensive. On 24 August 1918 the villages were captured after an attack by the 42nd (East Lancashire) Division. John Grant died the following day. The cemetery, whose name is 'Canada' reversed, was formed after the Armistice.

At the start of August 1918, John Grant's battalion was forcing the Germans out of Aveluy Wood despite the mines and booby traps left behind.

A note in English was found in an empty bivouac. It read:

DEAR OLD TOMMY

We congratulate you on your great success by taking the Aveluy Wald and making many thousands of Hun prisoners. We wish you will have a very good time here. Perhaps we take you a little bit better place somewhere else, and therefore, goodbye and au revoir

Yours truly

GERMAN MARINES

History of the Lancashire Fusiliers, 1914-1918, Major-General J C Latter, 1949, Volume I, page 365

Private Samuel GRAY

Royal Scots 13th Battalion D Company
Service Number: 18285
Date of Death: 28 September 1915
Age at Death: 17
Family: Son of Mary Fraser (formerly Gray), Morrison's Buildings, Main Street, Stenhousemuir and of the late Robert Gray

Private Samuel Gray

Sam Gray was born in Glasgow on 12 March 1898. When he enlisted on 7 January 1915, he gave his age as 19 years and 9 months, but he was actually two months short of his 17th birthday. It was quite common for young men to add years on to their age to make sure that they were allowed to join the army.

On July 9, Private Gray set off from Folkestone for the Western Front. At the start of August the battalion went into the trenches at a place called Quality Street.

The 13th battalion fought with great determination during the first two days of the Battle of Loos.

When the main attack began on September 25 at 6.30 a.m. the 13th Battalion Royal Scots was held in reserve. They suffered from a heavy shrapnel bombardment as they moved forward behind the initial assault which was remarkably successful. But they did not receive any orders to help the attacking battalions until 11.30 a.m. One officer said that this meant that "the chance of a great victory was thrown away." The battalion historian stated that "The Royal Scots were convinced to a man that the outcome of the battle would have been entirely different, if they had been allowed to press on shortly after 7 a.m."

From 1 p.m. the battalion was used to help defend Loos, so that other battalions could be used at Hill 70. During the night the German artillery shelled Loos at intervals.

At 7 a.m. on the following day five battalions of the 15th Division, including the 13th Royal Scots, were ordered to attack the German position at Hill 70 at 9 am. The leading battalions had captured this Redoubt the day before but had had to abandon it because the XIth Corps had not arrived.

At 8 a.m a German bombardment began with devastating effect. It was said that "the Germans had the range of our line to an inch." When the British guns opened fire at 8.30 a.m. (which was meant to be the preliminary bombardment to support the infantry attack starting at 9 am) they "did more harm to our men than to the Germans".

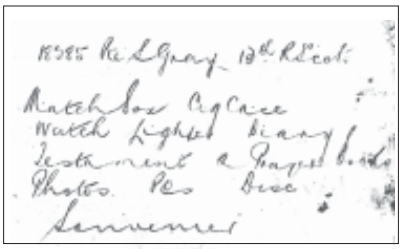
When the battalions went forward at 9a.m., they got inside the perimeter trench of the redoubt and in hand-to-hand fighting, killed or drove out most of the garrison which numbered about 200. However, when they tried to make further progress, they were subjected to heavy cross fire and artillery fire. They then took up position on the reverse slope at the crest of Hill 70.

The order to withdraw from an operation judged to be "forlorn and hopeless" did not arrive until 4 p.m. The 13th Royal Scots fell back to the village of Loos.

The *Falkirk Herald* reported that Sam Gray was wounded in two places and that he "lingered for two

days." On 27 September he was admitted to the 6th (London) Field Ambulance unit with wounds in the buttock and abdomen. He died the next day. He was 17 years and 6 months old.

Before he joined up, he was a moulder with Camelon Iron Company.



Sam's personal effects were returned to his mother in August 1916.

Noeux – Les – Mines Communal Cemetery, France I. C. 37.

Noeux- Les-Mines is a town about 4 miles south of Bethune on the main road to Arras.

The Royal Scots 1914-1919, page 195

Lance Corporal Clement Percy HAGUE

Royal Scots12th Battalion
Service Number: 14743
Date of Death: 25 September 1915
Age at Death: 20
Family: Younger son of George and Mary Jane Ball Hague, 2 Roebuck Park, Stenhousemuir; brother of Lily and of Sydney (q.v.)

Clement Hague was born in Rotherham; the family came north when George Hague was appointed a departmental manager with Carron Company. Clement was working for Carron Company when he enlisted in the army shortly after the outbreak of war. He went to the Western Front on 11 May 1915.

Lance Corporal Hague was killed on, or just after, the first day of the Battle of Loos. It is a notable battle because the British Army used poison gas for the first time. This

Lance Corporal Clement Hague

was to offset the lack of shells for an effective artillery bombardment. The battle was the first "Big Push" and therefore the biggest land battle Britain had ever fought up to that time. 75,000 British soldiers were to take part in an offensive intended to break through the Germans' front line. Most of these British soldiers belonged to the battalions raised at the start of the war and were part of what was called the "New Army". The battle was fought before the artillery on both sides churned the landscape into mud. The Loos battlefield was "as flat as a pancake" but dominated by the equipment of the coal mines and industrial sites of this part of France.

At 6.20 a.m. the 12th Royal Scots moved forward into the front line trenches vacated by the battalions leading the assault. Because the trenches were crowded and other regiments had lost their way, the Royal Scots didn't advance from the British front line trenches until 8 a.m. They joined the 8th Gordon Highlanders, a leading battalion in the attack, in Pekin Trench and then advanced 300 yards further before being stopped. They were unsupported and were being fired on from both flanks and from in front. "The Battn lay in the open till 4 p.m. and suffered fairly heavy casualties."

From about 6 p.m. with the Germans trying to work round the flanks of the British position, and enemy fire still causing casualties, the battalion was withdrawn in stages from Pekin Trench, until they reached the original front line trenches.

On the following two days, the battalion was reorganising its position. On 27 September, which the family gravestone gives as the date of Clement's death, their position was hit by very heavy shellfire for an hour, starting at 5 a.m.

Clement Hague was one of the 157soldiers of the battalion who were reported missing between September 25 and 28.

Loos Memorial, France Panel 10-13.

Captain (CWGC: Lieutenant) Sydney George HAGUE M. C.

Bedford Regiment 2nd Battalion
Date of Death: 21 September 1918
Age at Death: 31
Family: Elder son of George and Mary Jane Ball Hague, 2 Roebuck Park, Stenhousemuir; brother of Lily and Clement (q.v.)

Born at Masborough, Rotherham, Sydney Hague was educated at Carron School and then at Falkirk High School. Between April 1909 and April 1910 he was a member of Liverpool Scottish (Territorials).

At the outbreak of the war, he was living in Newcastle where he was Carron Company's foundry agent. In May 1915 he applied for a commission in the infantry and was accepted the following month. After officer training and UK service, he joined the battalion on the Western Front in 1 May 1917. Promotion to Lieutenant (at a pay of 11/6d (57 ½p) per day) followed on 1 July 1917.

The Battalion had a limited part to play in the battles of 1917.

Captain Sydney Hague

However, it was at one of the points of attack at the start of the German Spring Offensive of March 1918.

Sydney Hague was awarded the Military Cross "for excellent work in the battle zone near Savy [a village four miles west of St Quentin] on March 21st and 22nd." The German bombardment began at 4.45 a.m. The battalion war diary recorded:

> 'A' and 'C' Companies in Front… Enemy broke through the Forward Zone and came in touch with 'A' Company during the morning. A few Germans got into the right of 'A' Coy's position. 'B' Company went to reinforce 'A' Company at Dusk but could not run out the enemy.

'A' and 'C' Companies were then shelled heavily the following day. At 2 p.m. a German attack captured 'C' Company's position. By then there were only "remnants" of 'A' and 'B' Companies. It was noted that "they fought very well" but after being surrounded "only a few got back." The order to retire was received at 5 o'clock.

The citation for Sydney Hague's Military Cross gives a detailed account of his role on 21-22 March 1918:

> This officer was in charge of one of the forward companies, and although his position was being continuously attacked by the enemy, he set a fine example to all by his coolness and energy. He also kept battalion HQ well informed of the situation and sent in excellent reports. He organised several small counter-attacks, and ejected the enemy from small portions of his position. He greatly helped the company on his right by directing the fire of a heavy trench mortar on to a quarry, into which the enemy had penetrated. He held on to his position until late in the afternoon of the 22nd, and ultimately withdrew when he was practically surrounded by large numbers of the enemy and he had lost nearly all his men.

The quarry referred to in the citation was Brown Quarry beside Manchester Hill. The 2nd Battalion Bedford Regiment was in support of the 16th Battalion Manchester Regiment. (The two battalions had played a football match on March 16 at training camp; the score was 1-1.) The 16th Manchesters defended the redoubt known as Manchester Hill almost to the last man, as they had been instructed by the Divisional commander; only 2 officers and 15 other ranks survived out of 8 officers and 160 men. Their commanding officer Lieutenant-Colonel Wilfrith Elstob, who told his men before the German attack: "Here we fight and here we die", won a posthumous Victoria Cross for his leadership, devotion to duty and self-sacrifice in this action.

Over the next week there were a number of retreats in the face of the German attacks until the 2nd Bedfords were withdrawn from the battle. By then their casualties numbered 15 officers and 554 other ranks.

Lieutenant Hague was among those who lost their entire kit during the March 1918 retreat and during a trip home in July 1918, he was forced to buy a full replacement uniform, totalling over £20 as shown below:

Falkirk Sept 1919
Captain S. Hague
To A. Anderson & Son
Ladies and Gentlemens Outfitters
Complete
1918 Nov 5 To Fleece Vest 1 1
Post 1
1919 Feb 24 1 pair Metal Khaki @ 25/- 1 9
May 12 Breeches 3 17 6
June 15 6 Khaki Collars @ 1/ea 6
1 " Tie 8 6
Tunic 6 15 6
Slacks 2 5
3 Shirts @ 14/- ea 2 2
2 Doz Collars @ 1/- ea 6
Wolseley Valise 3 10
1 Suit Cellular
Underwear @ 6/3 15
Post 11
£20 11 6
A. Anderson & Son

Lieutenant Hague was among those who lost their entire kit during the March 1918 retreat and during a trip home in July 1918, he was forced to buy a full replacement uniform, totalling over £20 as shown below:

As the battalion was rebuilt, Sydney was promoted to Acting Captain, commanding a company between 5 April and 15 July 1918. His rate of pay was then13/6d (67 ½ p) per day. He fought with his battalion in repelling the next phase of German attacks in April 1918 during a phase of the Battle of the Lys known as the First Battle of Kemmel.

During a localised British attack on 7 August 1918 that saw the 2nd Bedfords support the two other battalions in their brigade, Lieutenant Hague was slightly wounded during German shelling but remained at his station. He also came through the Battle of Albert and the Second Battle of Bapaume in August, as well as the Battle of Epehy in September.

On 18 September Lieutenant Hague's battalion took part in attacks on German positions near Ronssoy, which is ten miles north of St Quentin. This was part of the final offensive against the Hindenburg Line. Over the four

days, 18-22 September, the battalion suffered 250 casualties. Lieutenant Hague was wounded on 21 September, and died of his wounds the same day at No.55 Casualty Clearing Station in Doingt.

The claim for compensation for the cost of replacing Sydney Hague's uniform lost at the time of the German Spring Offensive provided a "painful correspondence" for his father, who was Works Manager for Carron Company at the time. According to Sydney's diary, which was found on his body, he had claimed for compensation on 6 April 1918. His father wrote on 6 November to the War Office to enquire about compensation. He was eventually told in September 1919 that no trace could be found of Sydney's claim, and he was asked for evidence of Sydney's purchase of a replacement uniform such as receipted bills. To his father, this was "an impossible condition". He went on:

> What more do you really want? The country has had both boys [Sydney and his brother, Clement] & both have fallen in France & yet an agonising correspondence is kept up for over 12 months to get the affairs of the last one settled up.

His anger is clearly evident when he writes:

> The position you take up is an insult to the living & a reflection on the dead & seems very much like trying to weary one out of their rights.

He forwarded "a definite claim" for £19-0-5 (£19.2p) plus £6 for 2 pairs of boots, which had been paid for in cash. A War Office letter dated 11 March 1920 informed George Hague that compensation of £20 was to be paid.

Doingt Communal Cemetery Extension I. D. 23.

Doingt is a village just to the east of the town of Peronne.

Private William HAIRE

Royal Scots Fusiliers 1st Battalion
Service Number: 16071
Date of Death: 25 September 1915
Age at Death: 28
Family: Husband of Janet Kirkbride Haire, Larbert

William Haire was a coal miner who lived in Red Row, Plean when, in September 1913, he married Janet Kirkbride. Their son Robert was born in February 1915. William arrived on the Western Front five months later. He was killed on the first day of the Battle of Loos.

His battalion took part in a subsidiary attack known as the Second Attack on Bellewaarde. His battalion led the attack on the German positions north of Sanctuary Wood; afterwards the men were told that it was "a position which was admittedly one of the strongest in the whole line."

The attack began just after 4.20 a.m. The German front line trench was captured in the first rush. By 7 a.m. the first objective had been reached, despite heavy losses. No further progress was made. They held on "through an inferno of machine gun, bomb and shell fire" (General Allenby, addressing the battalion, on 27 September 1915) until the afternoon when they were forced to withdraw, because the troops on both sides of them fell back, leaving their flanks unprotected. The battalion was relieved during the evening of 25 September.

The battalion's losses – over 300 – included 162 missing. William Haire was one of these men.

Menin Gate Memorial, Ieper, Belgium Panel 19 and 33.

Able Seaman Edward HAMILL

Royal Naval Division Nelson Battalion
Service Number: Clyde Z/4268
Date of Death: 23 April 1917
Age at Death: 36
Family: Son of Edward Hamill, Drumacovern, Co. Monaghan, Ireland

Edward Hamill was a labourer who lodged with Mr and Mrs James Nicol at 146 West Carron. He enlisted on 6 May 1915 and joined Nelson battalion in October.

In February 1916 AB Hamill was transferred to Base Depot Mudros. He was there for six months until he returned to Britain. In December he joined Nelson battalion on the Western Front. He was a transport driver.

From 14 April 1917 the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division took over the trenches facing the village of Gavrelle, which was six miles north-east of Arras. On 23 April the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division took part on the attack on the village of Gavrelle, a phase of the Battle of Arras known as the Second Battle of the Scarpe.

At 4.45 am the Drake and Nelson Battalions went over the top under the cover of a creeping barrage. According to the Nelson battalion war diary, "good progress was made early". The first German lines were taken in ten minutes but the advance came almost to a standstill at the street which ran north-south through the middle of the village. House to house fighting was required before the village was captured. As the Official History noted, this was "an exceptionally hard-fought battle".

The final objective of the day's attack was a line 300 to 600 yards beyond the village and denoted by a large windmill built on high

ground to the north-east of the village. The attack could not get near the Windmill and it was all the battalions could do to hold on to what they had gained.

AB Hamill was reported missing in action on the day, and later, reported killed.

Orchard Dump Cemetery, Arleux-en-Gohelle, France III. B. 3.

This village is near Arras.

Military Operations France and Belgium 1917, Volume I, Cyril Falls, 1940, page 400

The 63rd (Royal Naval Division) attack on Gavrelle is described in great detail on pages 147 -151 of *Khaki Jack, The Royal Naval Diviion in the First World War*, E C Coleman, 2014

Private Hugh Richardson HAMILTON

Seaforth Highlanders 7th Battalion
Service Number: 3/7786
Date of Death: 14 July 1916
Age at Death: 41
Family: Husband of Mary Colvin Hamilton, 16 Hayford Place, Tryst Road, Stenhousemuir

Hugh Hamilton was a soldier during the Boer War and then lived for several years in Stenhousemuir while he was employed by Jones & Campbell, Larbert. In 1912 he moved to Birmingham where he worked as a moulder for J Wright & Company.

On 28 August 1914 he enlisted at Birmingham. He did not go to the Western Front until early September 1915.

Private Hamilton was wounded and reported missing on one of the key dates of the Battle of the Somme, 14 July 1916. His battalion took part in the major attack on the German Army's heavily-fortified position at the

Private Hugh Hamilton

village of Longueval, Waterlot Farm and the adjacent Delville Wood.

Unlike the first day of the battle, there was only a 5-minute preliminary bombardment. According to a German officer, "in a matter of seconds the whole landscape to front and rear as well as our own positions were enveloped in smoke, dust and fumes. It was a furious and mighty fire."

In the opinion of Lieutenant-Colonel W D Croft:

> On the 14th July, 1916, the British Army performed one of the finest feats which have ever been done in war, to wit, a night march to a position of deployment within five hundred yards of a vigilant enemy, then a crawl forward on hands and knees, to be followed at zero by the assault of a strongly-wired and embedded position which had suffered no previous bombardment to shake the moral [sic] of the defenders.

Zero hour was 3.25 a.m. The attack began in darkness. The Seaforths were led into the attack by the Black Watch. The southern part of Longueval was seized in about 20 minutes, with "only slight casualties", according to the battalion war diary. A German machine gun post at the south-east corner of the village held up the attack. When this strong point fell, "our bombers commenced to work down to Waterlot Farm which they could not take as it was being fired on both by our heavy artillery and that of the enemy, however, the trench was blocked near the farm". The battalion's position was then consolidated. Its losses were significant– 250 of its soldiers were killed or wounded.

Field Marshall Haig in command of the British armies on the Western Front, felt that overall the attack on Longueval on 14 July was "indeed a great success. The best day we have had this war." By nightfall, 4 miles of German second-line trenches had been taken and the villages of Bazentin-le-Grand and Bazentin-le-Petit and most of Longueval. The verdict of the most recent hisotians of the British Army in the First World War is that "a very solid success had been achieved."

The attack on Longueval continued in order to take the uncaptured parts of the village and also Delville Wood but another six weeks of fighting were needed to achieve these aims.

It was almost a year later that Private Hamilton was officially presumed killed on the first day of the attack on Longueval. (But he was buried in a named grave.)

In the *Falkirk Herald* death notice, his sorrowing widow and family wrote:

> But the hardest part is yet to come. When the warriors all return And we miss amidst the cheering crowd. The face of our dear husband and father.

Quarry Cemetery, Montauban, France III. F. 9.

Montauban is a village 6 miles east of Albert.

Mud and Bodies, Neil Weir, 2013, page 66

Three Years with the 9th (Scottish) Division, 1919, Lieutenant-Colonel W D Croft, page 54

The British Army and the First World War, Ian Beckett, Timothy Bowman and Mark Connelly, 2017

Mud and Bodies, Neil Weir, 2013, page 66:

> July 14th
> We reached the crossroads at Longueval at the same time as the Black Watch on our right…
>
> The Black Watch and some of the Seaforths hauled some fifty-odd Boche prisoners out of a deep dug-out and setting them out on the square were about to shoot them wholesale. This was done in the excitement of the moment and luckily we were able to stop it. Assuredly they would have shot them. The Boche doubled down towards our back lines – willingly!

A vivid account of the attack on July 14 is in Blood on the Thistle, The Tragic Story of the Cranston family and their remarkable sacrifice in the Great War, Stuart Pearson and Bob Mitchell, 2015, pages 182-188

Private John Chisholm HAMILTON

Seaforth Highlanders 9th Battalion
Service Number: S/5765
Date of Death: 24 March 1918
Age at Death: 29
Family: Husband of Mrs Mary Hamilton, Davie's Land, Stenhousemuir

John Hamilton was born in Larbert but he enlisted in Birmingham. He became a soldier in a Pioneer battalion. These soldiers dug trenches, erected barbed wire entanglements and moved supplies and munitions. In the winter of 1917-18, there was much work to do as the British Army badly needed to upgrade its fortifications and communications on the Western Front in advance of a German offensive expected early in 1918.

Private John Hamilton's battalion belonged to the Fifth Army which bore the brunt of the first attacks of the German Spring Offensive of 1918. On March 21 his battalion was in reserve and was standing by all day. The following day the retreat began, going from Sorel, which was ten miles south-east of the town of Bapaume, to Hennois Wood and from there to Combles the next day.

On March 24, the day that John Hamilton was killed in action, the battalion withdrew through St Pierre Vaast Wood. The men were subjected to heavy machine gun fire as they emerged from the wood. They had to fight a rearguard action back to Hardicourt.

John was one of four other ranks killed that day; 45 others were posted missing. The retreat of the Seaforths continued until March 27. The number of casualties suffered during the six days of retreat included 22 killed, but also 91 missing and 174 wounded.

The Fifth Army had been forced into disorganised retreat. By March 24, midway through the retreat, the Fifth Army was exhausted and disintegrating as it tried and failed to defend the town of Bapaume.

Pozieres Memorial, France Panel 72 and 73.

Private William HAMILTON

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
2nd Battalion
Service Number: 3/6759
Date of Death: 25 September 1915
Age at Death: 20
Family: Son of Thomas and Margaret Hamilton, Glasgow

William Hamilton, who had been a casual labourer, enlisted in the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders Special Reserve. This was in Glasgow on 6 June 1913, over a year before war broke out. He gave his age then as almost 19. (He was actually born on 6 October 1894 in Glasgow.)

Private William Hamilton was mobilised on 8 August 1914 and went to the front on 11 November.

He was killed on the first day of the Battle of Loos. The 25th September was "a day of tragedy, unmitigated by any gleam of success" for the battalions in the 2nd Division. The problems started with the state of No Man's Land. It was pitted with many mine craters; the deepest were named 'Vesuvius' and 'Etna'. The soldiers were to find it difficult to get through the narrow gaps between the craters. William's battalion dug a jumping-off trench 50-60 yards behind their front line and then suffered many casualties before they reached the actual British front line.

When they were about to advance near Cambrin at 6.30 a.m., the gas blew back towards them and they had to use their gas helmets which was another handicap. Making their way through heavy machine gun and rifle fire, the battalion was stopped in front of the original German front line – the Germans had moved their front line 100 yards back to get a better field of fire. Its protective barbed wire entanglement was intact. The battalion's casualties quickly mounted and numbered 15 officers and 315 other ranks.

At 9 a.m. the battalion was ordered to get back to their original front line as best they could.

Cambrin Churchyard Extension, France G. 4.

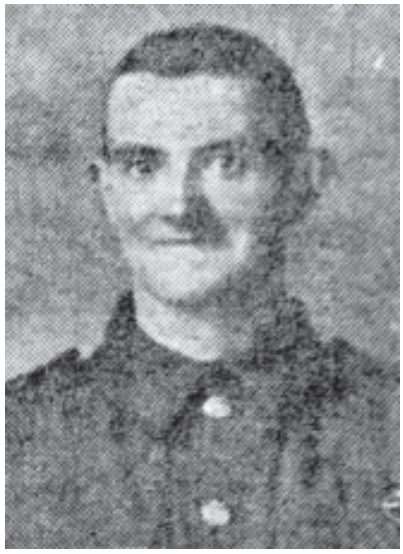
Cambrin is a village 15 miles north of Arras and 5 miles east of Bethune. For most of the war, it was only half a mile from the front line trenches.

Frank Richards belonged to the 2nd Battalion Royal Welch Fusiliers, which was in the same brigade and division as the 2nd Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders. He wrote in his memoir 'Old Soldiers Never Die' quoting one of his comrades who said: "If this attack does come off on this particular part of the line, it's going to be the biggest balls-up ever known, and unless "J.C." [Jesus Christ] is very kind to us, the majority of the Brigade will be skinned alive."

Cambrin Churchyard Extension

Private Thomas HANNAH

Royal Highlanders 'Black Watch'
8th Battalion B Company
Service Number: S/9941
Date of Death: 8 May 1916
Age at Death: 32 (CWGC: 29)
Family: Husband of Mary Hannah, 19 West Carron, later 226 Wallace Street, Grahamston; father of 2 children; son of William and Maggie Hannah, Bonnybridge



Private Thomas Hannah

This was one of the saddest of stories from the lives of the servicemen named on Larbert War Memorial!

There was no hiding of the tragedy in the *Falkirk Herald*. The headline read:

Private Hannah, Bonnybridge,
Accidentally Shot

Thomas Hannah was a native of Bonnybridge and for quite a while was employed by the Caledonian Railway Company as a brakesman at Greenhill. But before he enlisted in May 1915 he was employed by Carron Company.

Private Hannah went to the Western Front in the middle of December. 150 men reinforced the battalion by January 1916. It then spent four months in the southern sector of Ploegsteert Wood. The regimental historian said that there

was "a great deal of machine gun fire at night [and] frequent casualties." It was also a period where "nothing of great importance occurred."

But, on May 8, while Thomas Hannah was in the firing line, he was shot when the rifle of a fellow-soldier was accidentally discharged! He died shortly afterwards.

The Rev Oswald B Milligan, who was the chaplain to the 8th Battalion Black Watch, wrote to Private Hannah's sister in Bonnybridge:

> I did not see your brother before he died but I know they got him to the dressing station as quickly as possible, and that the doctor there did all that anyone could to save him. I … conducted the funeral service and buried your brother in the military cemetery behind the position we now hold. It is a beautiful spot in the middle of a wood, and you need have no fear that the place will not be properly looked after. It is very, very sad for his wife and children, but I am sure they will be brave, and bear their trouble with stout hearts.

Rifle House Cemetery, France I.F. 4.

This cemetery is located in the wood at Ploegsteert, and is 8 miles south of Ieper town centre.

Private John Smith HARLEY

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
11th Battalion
Service Number: S/7208
Date of Death: 27 September 1915
Age at Death: 30 (CWGC: 29)
Family: Son of Alex and Margaret Harley, Burnhead Road, Larbert

Private John Harley

John Harley joined the army on 25 December 1914 – Christmas Day. His medical examination took place that day. He was 5 feet 4 inches tall and of good physical development. He was posted to the 11th battalion on 11 January and went to the Western Front six months later. He had been a baker with Stenhousemuir Bakery Society prior to joining the army. He had been well-liked by everyone, being of a genial disposition, it was said. He was a staunch member of the Universalist Church and was its organist from 1905 when instrumental music was introduced to its services.

On the first day of the Battle of Loos, John's battalion's role had been to support the assaulting troops. By midday it had reached the village of Loos. 'A' and 'D' companies reached Hill 70 about 1.30 p.m. to join up with the leading battalions. The Germans shelled Loos and Hill 70 for the rest of the day and made several unsuccessful counter-attacks.

John's battalion had also an important part to play on the second day of the Battle of Loos. 'A' and 'C' companies were in the centre of a three-battalion assault on Hill 70 Redoubt. The bombardment began at 8 a.m. and the three battalions went forward at 9 a.m. They got inside the perimeter trench of the redoubt and in hand-to-hand fighting, killed or drove out most of the garrison which numbered about 200. However, when they tried to make further progress, they were subjected to heavy cross fire and artillery fire. They took up position on the reverse slope at the crest of Hill 70. About 3.30 p.m. the battalions withdrew, unnecessarily it is said, from Hill 70 and even beyond the village of Loos.

The 11th Battalion went into the first days of the battle with a strength of 20 officers and 992 other ranks. Casualties by the time they were relieved on 27 September numbered 114. John Harley was one of 59 soldiers in the battalion reported missing.

His "chums", so his father learned, said that "when the roll was called after the big fight Private Harley did not answer to his name and nothing has been heard of him." He was later presumed killed in action.

Loos Memorial, France Panel 125 to 127.

Universalist Church, Stenhousemuir

Corporal Alex Muir HASTINGS

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
10th Battalion
Service Number: S/5363
Date of Death: 19 December 1915
Age at Death: 38
Family: Husband of Marion Hastings, nee Inglis,196 West Carron; father of one child, John

Alex Hastings had been a soldier in the Gordon Highlanders and had served in the Boer War. When the First World War began, he was a moulder with Carron Company but he rejoined the army on 8 September 1914. However, he did not go the Western Front until 4 October 1915.

Whilst in training, he suffered from scabies and had to be treated in Sutton Veny Hospital in Wiltshire. This hospital was situated close to Salisbury Plain where many First World War soldiers did their training.

Corporal Hastings had been at the front for just over two months when he was killed in action. From 2 a.m. on December 19, German artillery shelled the positions held by Alex's battalion around Zillebeke and Sanctuary Wood.

The battalion war diary recorded:

> At 5.30 a.m. a violent bombardment was opened up by the enemy ... About 6 a.m. the enemy started to shell SANCTUARY WOOD… About 6.30 a.m. some heavy artillery of ours opened fire but they were very short and did considerable damage to us including… B4 trench in one place, killing 3 men and wounding about 5 others.

It is unlikely that Alex Hastings was one of these men killed by what nowadays would be called "friendly fire". There were 5 soldiers of the 10th Battalion killed on December 19 and three of them are buried side by side in Sanctuary Wood

Corporal Alex Hastings

Cemetery. It is likely that they are the victims in B4 trench.

Alex is buried in a separate row. He may have been killed during one of the morning bombardments but it may have been during the four other episodes of shelling noted in the battalion diary for that day.

His widow, who had been receiving a weekly allowance of 17/6d (87½ p), was later granted a pension of 15/6d (77½ p) per week.

Sanctuary Wood Cemetery, Belgium II. G. 35.

This cemetery is located 3 miles east of Ieper town centre.

Lance Corporal John HASTINGS

Machine Gun Corps 45th Company
Formerly Cameron Highlanders
17984
Service Number: 72198
Date of Death: 27 April 1917
Age at Death: 34
Family: Husband of Christine Laird, 1 Cooper's Land, Carron; third son of Martin and Barbara Hastings, 12 Cooper's Land, Carron

Before the war, John Hastings was a moulder at Abbot's Foundry, Bankside, Falkirk. He joined the Cameron Highlanders in April 1915 and went to the Western Front a year later. At the end of 1915 he was transferred to the Machine Gun Corps. In 1916 MGC 45th Company took part in several phases of the Battle of the Somme.

Lance Corporal Hastings was killed during the Battle of Arras of 1917. His company had fought in the first British phase of the battle and again in the second major phase when the village of Guemappe was captured. At this stage the British advance could go no further and heavy losses were incurred. The attack was called off and it was after this that John Hastings was killed before the next phase of the battle.

It said in his *Falkirk Herald* death notice:

> He marched away so bravely
> His head so proudly held
> His footsteps never faltered
> His courage never failed.
> When on the field of battle
> He calmly took his place
> He fought and died for Britain
> And the honour of his race.

Lance Corporal John Hastings

Faubourg D'Amiens Cemetery, Arras, France V. C. 20.

THE EVENING STARS SHINE
O'ER THE GRAVE
OF ONE I LOVED BUT
COULD NOT SAVE

This cemetery is in the western part of the town of Arras in the Boulevard du General de Gaulle.

Private Francis James HEAVER

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders 1st/8th Battalion
Service Number: 302973
Date of Death: 21 April 1917
Age at Death: 27
Family: Eldest son of James and the late Mary Heaver, 202 West Carron

Before his war service, Francis Heaver had belonged to Falkirk Volunteers. He was employed as a grinder. He enlisted in December 1915, was placed in the Army Reserve and then mobilised in September and posted to the Western Front three months later.

Private Heaver died ten days after he was wounded at the start of the Battle of Arras. On April 9, his battalion attacked east of Roclincourt, which is 2½ miles north of Arras. Its first objective called the New Black Line was taken but from then on the German machine guns stopped the advance. This was about halfway to the next objective, the Blue Line.

Since the barrage was too far ahead of the Argylls and since he had few men left, the officer in charge decided they could not advance any further and went back to the New Black Line. This was stated to be "a grave error of judgment" by the battalion's Commanding Officer in his report on the operations on April 9.

The next attempt to attack was "seriously disorganised" by a huge explosion set off by the Germans; probably a store of minenwefers. As a result, the advance was slow.

The Commanding Officer concluded:

> The delay in the attack was undoubtedly caused by not having sufficient officers with experience… The troops did well to get on as far as they did.

Francis died of the wounds he received in action. He may have been one of the 168 men of the 8th Battalion wounded on April 9. The battalion was out of the front line from April 10, returning to the trenches at Fampoux on April 20. On that day and the following day their position was "heavily shelled". Seven soldiers were wounded on each of these days. It seems more likely that it was at this time that Francis suffered the wounds that caused his death.

An *In Memoriam* notice commemorating the first anniversary of his death read:

> When justice stands triumphant
> When comes the peace we crave
> There still shall be remembered
> The unreturning brave.

St Nicolas British Cemetery, France I. D. 20.

This village adjoins Arras. From March 1916 until the end of the war it was occupied by British forces and for much of that time was within range of German artillery fire.

Private Robert J HEGGISON

Gordon Highlanders 1st Battalion
Service Number: S/7019
Date of Death: 29 July 1915
Age at Death: 26
Family: Eldest son of Richard and Jane Young, nee Sinclair, Heggison, Burnhead Road, Larbert

When Robert enlisted in November 1914, he was working as a warehouseman in one of the local foundries. He went to the Western Front on 5 March 1915.

Private Heggison had been on the Western Front for only a few months and all of that time was spent on the Ypres salient. His battalion was manning the trenches at Verbrandenmolen, which was about three miles south-east of the centre of Ypres when his death occurred at a time of "relative quiet", according to the battalion war diary.

Chester Farm Cemetery, Belgium I. E. 1.

BORN AT TORWOOD
STIRLINGSHIRE, SCOTLAND

This cemetery is 3 miles south of Ieper town centre.

Gunner Peter Rankine HENDERSON

Royal Field Artillery 12th Brigade
Service Number: 75363
Date of Death: 27 October 1916
Age at Death: 22
Family: Son of William and Mary Henderson, 105 West Carron

Peter Henderson enlisted in Linlithgow and set off for the Western Front on 11 September 1914.

The 12th Brigade RFA belonged to the 6th Division which in 1915 and into 1916 took part in the fighting in the Ypres Salient, particularly near Hooge. In 1916 the Division moved down to the Somme area and fought in the main attacks of September and October.

It seems likely that Peter Henderson took part in the phase of the Battle of the Somme known as the Battle of Le Transloy. This began at 3.15 p.m. on October 1 after a 7-hour bombardment. German resistance was fierce. Heavy rain became a major problem delaying the renewal of the attack. The 6th Division was involved in assaults on the German lines on 12, 13 and 18 October which the Divisional history said were "unsuccessful", "partially successful" and "partially successful". It suffered 7,000 casualties. Gains were minimal.

At some point during these attacks Peter Henderson was wounded and taken to one of the Casualty Clearing Stations at the village of Meaulte where he died of his wounds. In one of the Army records for Peter Henderson it is recorded that he died of wounds on October 22.

Grove Town Cemetery, Meaulte, Belgium II. B. 3.

R.I.P

Meaulte is a village just south of Albert.

A Short History of the 6th Division, Thomas Owen Marden, 1919, page 89

Battalion Sergeant Major Alexander HILL

CWGC: Sergeant; FH: Acting Sergeant Major

Royal Garrison Artillery 116 Heavy Battery
Service Number: 26525
Date of Death: 25 February 1915
Age at Death: 37
Family: Husband of Frances Hill, 9 Church Lane, Christchurch, Hampshire; brother of James Hill (q.v.)

Alex Hill was a regular soldier whose parents lived in Stenhousemuir. He had 18 years' military service before his death.

Just before his death Sergeant Alex Hill had spent 5 days' leave with his wife and family in Christchurch.

He was killed in action "instantaneously at a spot 3 miles south of Ypres." However, the Medal Rolls Index card for Alex Hill states: "Killed. Acc."; that is to say, accidentally killed. In another official record, it briefly records "Gun Explosion".

His youngest brother, John, had also been a regular soldier, having served for 6 years in the Cameron Highlanders. When the news of his

Sergeant Major Alexander Hill

brother's death came though, John was at home in Stenhousemuir recovering from frostbite for which he'd required hospital treatment.

White House Cemetery, St Jean-Les-Ypres Belgium III. J. 15.

HIS DUTY DONE
FROM HIS WIFE

St Jean is a village just outside Ieper.

Gunner James HILL

Royal Field Artillery 35th Brigade 12th Battery
Service Number: 25598
Date of Death: 10 September 1916
Age at Death: 35
Family: Son of the late John and Margaret Hill; brother of Alex Hill (q.v.)

James Hill began his working life as a moulder at Mungal Foundry. But in the mid-1890s he became a regular soldier and served throughout the Boer War. By the time war broke out in 1914, he was in the reserve. However, he rejoined his regiment.

His unit belonged to the 7th Division, which, at the start of the Battle of the Somme on July 1, was able to capture the village of Montauban. Mametz was captured on the first afternoon. It was an exceptionally strong defensive position. The preliminary artillery bombardment was successful in obliterating the German artillery.

Up to July 20, the Brigade was deeply involved in the various phases of the Battle of the Somme; Mametz Wood, Bazentin-Le-Grand, Martinpuich and High Wood. The Brigade was withdrawn for rest from July 21 for four weeks.

From 20 August 1916, 35th Brigade was operating in the area of Longueval in the 4th phase of the Battle of the Somme. The British forces were trying to attack Delville Wood. Between September 3 and 9, the 35th Brigade supported attacks on the small ruined villages of Guillemont, captured on the 3rd, and Guinchy, captured on the 9th. 'The bombardment, destruction and bloodshed are all beyond imagination,' an Irish officer wrote on September 8 – he was killed in action the next day.

On 10 September 35th Brigade's batteries shelled all day and night Laager Lane and Ale Alley. In the afternoon, the brigade war diary reported:

> Ale Alley, Hop Alley and Beer Trench were bombarded. Ale Alley reported full of Germans & was heavily engaged for a short time in the evening. S.O.S. signal received & barrage opened on Laager Lane and Ale Alley… fire slackened off at 8.25 p.m.

Gunner Hill was killed shortly after this. The circumstances were described in a letter home:

> Gunner Hill and three others were told off to accompany their officer to a certain point. On reaching this place the officer found that he only required one man, a signaller, and ordered three, including Gunner Hill, to turn back. About half an hour later the officer on his way back, came upon his three men - Gunner Hill killed, one mortally wounded, and one slightly wounded, caused by the bursting of an enemy shell.

The youngest brother, John, had also been a regular soldier, having served for 6 years in the Cameron Highlanders and then before Gunner James Hill's death he had been transferred to the Black Watch. He had been in hospital twice, firstly suffering from frost bite, and then from gas poisoning. By the time news of James's death had reached home, John was working as a craneman in Falkirk Iron Works.

Thiepval Memorial, France Pier and Face 1 A and 8 A.

Able Seaman Robert HILL

Royal Naval Division Drake Battalion 'C' Company
Service Number: Clyde Z/4727
Date of Death: 13 November 1916 (CWGC: 14)
Age at Death: 32
Family: Youngest son of the late James and Elizabeth Hill; brother of Mrs William Hunter, 17 Tryst Road, Stenhousemuir

Bob Hill was a gratefitter with Dobbie, Forbes & Company, Larbert. He was a well-known junior footballer, winning five junior international caps as a left back. He played for St Ninians and then signed for Stenhousemuir Football Club. He was also a member of Burnhead Bowling Club. He enlisted in the RND in May 1915 and belonged to Drake battalion for the rest of his war service. He saw some action in the final weeks of the Gallipoli Campaign. He was then transferred to the Western Front.

Leading Seaman Hill's death occurred during the final phase of the Battle of the Somme, which is known as the Battle of the Ancre. At zero hour, 5.45 a.m., on 13 November, when the battalions of the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division moved forward, the Drake Battalion

Able Seaman Robert Hill

met with heavy machine gun fire. Nearly 400 officers and men of Drake Battalion became casualties in the first half hour of the attack.

Peter Craig, who had fought alongside Bob Hill, sent a letter home to Bob's brother, saying:

> We started to advance but poor Bob didn't go ten yards before he went under. I think he was knocked right out. Just as we began to advance side by side, he said, 'Peter, we are in for a hot time of it.' He never spoke again. We (the battalion) advanced two and a half miles, but the worst bit of the lot was the first fifty yards.

The first day of this battle cost the battalion more than half of its strength in the advance towards their first objective which was called Station Road.

LS Hill was initially posted wounded and missing, then later reported as having died from his wounds. This, presumably, explains the different dates given for his death.

Someone in the family calculated at the start of 1917 that out of 28 relatives who had joined Britain's armed forces, 7 had died – a severe casualty rate.

Ancre British Cemetery, Beaumont-Hamel, France Special Memorial 4

THEIR GLORY SHALL NOT BE BLOTTED OUT

The British dead on the battlefield caused a Daily Mirror journalist called W Beach Thomas to comment: "Even as he lies on the field he looks more quietly faithful, more simply steadfast than others."

Lance Corporal Rowland HILL

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders 10th Battalion
Service Number: S/1535
Date of Death: 26 September 1915
Age at Death: 39
Family: Son of the late George and Mary Hill; brother of George Hill, Fraser's Buildings, Stenhousemuir

Rowland Hill had been a regular soldier who had served in the Boer War, although 10 of his 12 years' military service had been in India. (His father had had 21 years' service in the army.) After he left the army, he had been a moulder with Jones & Campbell, Larbert.

He re-enlisted on 12 August 1914 and before the end of the month he was in Aldershot. (See below his letter to his brother, George from Talavera Barracks, South Camp, Aldershot dated 30 August 1914.)

Rowland went to the Western Front in May 1915. He was wounded in the opening attacks of the Battle of Loos, and subsequently died of his wounds.

The Battle of Loos (25 September – 18 October 1915) is a notable battle because the British Army used poison gas for the first time. This was to offset the lack of shells for an effective artillery bombardment. The battalion war diary of the 10th Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders only mentions the use of gas when it noted that the saps in front of the firing line could not be used for the

Lance Corporal Rowland Hill

deployment of the battalion at the start of the advance – the saps were "full of Gas plant and gas".

The battle was the first "Big Push" and therefore the biggest battle Britain had ever fought up to that time. 75,000 British soldiers were to take part in an offensive intended to break through the Germans' front line. Most of these British soldiers belonged to the battalions raised at the start of the war and were part of what was called the "New Army". The battle was fought before the artillery on both sides churned the landscape into mud. The Loos battlefield was "as flat as a pancake" but dominated by the equipment of the coal mines and industrial sites of this part of France.

The 10th Battalion of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders took up position at Annequin late in the evening of 24 September 1915 in the northern sector of the battle front. The battalions in the southern sector of the battlefield did well on the first day of the battle. For example, the 15th (Scottish) Division broke through two German defensive lines and captured both the village of Loos and Hill 70. This was "the most spectacular advance of the day".

In the northern sector the progress of the divisions met significant difficulties after zero hour, 6.30 a.m. The 10th Battalion war diary notes that "about 5.45 a.m. a furious bombardment of the German lines began." Then there were considerable delays. At one stage progress was slow because of "wounded soldiers and German prisoners endeavouring to get to the rear". The battalion did not begin its advance until 9.15 a.m. "The advance continued without interruption, skirting the face of HOHENZOLLEREN REDOUBT [a massive German earthwork] across BIG WILLIE and German main line trenches." This advance was made while being heavily shelled and then the men came under fire from a machine gun on the Fosse No 8, a huge slag heap fortified by the Germans. This machine gun caused many casualties. "The advance continued up and over the hill which was devoid of any cover from fire until FOSSE ALLEY was reached about 12 noon." The battalion then halted while the commanding officer decided where he should go next. At 1.30 p.m. 'A' Company was sent to support the British soldiers holding PEKIN TRENCH but it was "decimated by shell fire".

About 4 p.m. the battalion found itself "alone with its flanks exposed" due to the withdrawals of other battalions. Though efforts were made to hold on to this position, the battalion was forced by German counter-attacks to retreat and by 2 a.m. "the firing line from which the attack was launched that morning was reoccupied".

The battalion went forward the next evening and followed part of the route taken on 25 September. On the afternoon of September 27, the battalion was forced to retreat again and went back to the trenches they were in on the evening of September 24.

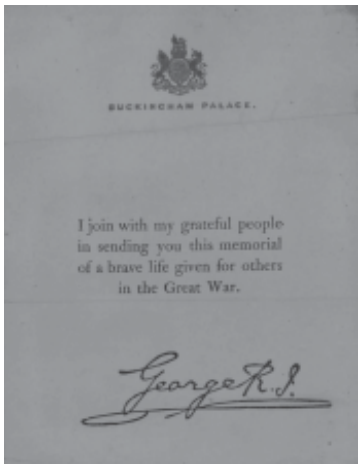
In his diary for 28 September 1915, Captain Neil Weir of the 10th Battalion of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders wrote:

> What a show. Few instructions, little ammunition or bombs, next to no support from the artillery. No system of looking after the wounded. And practically no food. No wonder we lost the ground we had won and lost so many casualties.

Lillers Communal Cemetery, France IV. A. 22.

AGAIN HE HEARD HIS
COUNTRY'S CALL
AND GAVE HIS LIFE

Lillers is a small town about 12 miles from Bethune and was used as a hospital centre for most of the war.



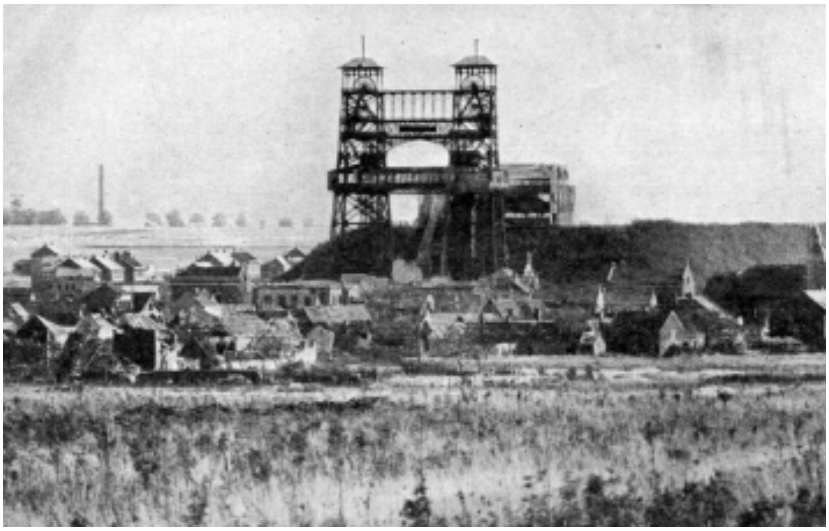
The Death Penny sent to Rowland Hill's family with the accompanying letter.

Aldershot 30 Aug 1914

Dear George just a few lines to let you know that we are still in Aldershot but maybe shifted out any minute as things are looking that way at present. I am sitting in the orderly room writing this waiting for Kitchener coming he is in here to day [sic] and he wants specialaly [sic] to see this new battalion I am employed as Orderly to the Commanding Officer and I am never finished perhaps it will be about 3 in the morning before I am done but them that is on the square drilling it is even worse as they are never done. a full day's drilling even this day Sunday there are thousands been drilling since 5.30 this morning. We have got a lot of slightly wounded men home and it has been something terrible out there you don't get the half of the casualties in the papers but I won't enter into at all that I have heard and that is from Officers just newly arrived but you can rest assured that there is a day of reconing [sic] for Mr German. I may let you know that if anything happens that I have made you my next of kin so you can claim every thing that belongs to me. We have to make our wills out and carry round our neck. So you will know what to do if it comes to the worst. I would like to tell you the losses of the 93rd but I think it is best not but they have lost very heavy. I have never received my money yet but we are almost sure to get it in about three days. I am getting the National Reserve £10 so we have had to write to the Secretary twice about it but it is all right now so I will send it on as soon as I get it they are only giving us a shilling a day just now so we will have a good balance to come some day you have no idea what this place is like there is about 80 thousand here at present and all just lately joined. All the Scotch Regiments are here together. You see so much as 12 flying machines at a time and it is something great to see them. You will need to tell them all I was asking kindly for them and thank them for the presents I got at Larbert. It was a gods send the Tobacco itself as we got no pay for a week after we arrived. I think this is about all at present so I will now conclude by giving my best love to all so I remain

Your aff [sic] Brother Rowland

PS Kitchener is here and going round the Battallion [sic] we will likely know in an hour or so if we shift so I will drop a PC."



The 'tower' at Loos

Corporal Frank HODGE

Gordon Highlanders Ist Battalion
Service Number: S/11816
Date of Death: 22 August 1917
Age at Death: 47
Family: Husband of the late Margaret Keltie, 155 Gordon Street, Camelon.

When he enlisted in May 1915, Frank Hodge was a 42-year-old widower with 3 children aged 17, 15 and 11. His youngest child went into an Orphans' Home in West Bridge Street, Falkirk, run by the Soldiers' & Sailors' Family Association.

Frank was working as a moulder at Carron Iron Works and lived in Camelon at 155, Gordon Street. He had been a widower for 11 years. In that time he had had about a dozen housekeepers. At the time soon after war broke out, he had been without a housekeeper and the house had been "allowed to go a little to wreck". This was stated when he was brought to court regarding the state of his house. He was fined 10 shillings (50p) or 7 days' imprisonment. The newspaper report did not say which option he took.

At his enlistment, he was posted to the 3rd Battalion Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders which was a depot and training unit based in Edinburgh. At the time of his enlistment, the doctor who had assessed his fitness to serve noted that Frank Hodge had a "slight defect not sufficient to cause rejection", namely bad teeth. On 14 August his medical record notes that he had "14 extractions... with complete upper and lower dentures". The cost was £6.

On 15 April 1916 he was transferred to the 3rd Battalion Gordon Highlanders. He arrived in Aberdeen the following day. He arrived in Southampton from Aberdeen ten days later, and then crossed to Rouen.

A month later, he became a servant at GHQ 1st Echelon. Perhaps he didn't like this duty for his service records give details of a number of punishments for unspecified indiscipline. For example, on 23 July 1916, he was "deprived of 5 days' Pay"; on 10 August 1916 he was awarded 21 days Field Punishment No 1. Then, on 15 September a Medical Board classified him as "P.B.", which stood for "Permanent Base". Men so classified were fit to remain as soldiers but were restricted to regimental duties at the Base. In Frank's case, he was sent to Rouxmesnil, a base depot for ammunition, for guard duties, and, two months later, appointed an unpaid Lance Corporal.

Four months later, serious health problems struck him. He was admitted to hospital in Dieppe. He had pains in his chest and his face and legs were swollen. He had also suffered for some time from rheumatic pains in his left hip and knee. He was diagnosed with V. D. H. (Valvular Disease of the Heart). He was transferred to England on 20 July 1917, and admitted to the 2nd Western General Hospital in Manchester.

On 8 August the doctors decided that Frank Hodge's cardiac condition made him unfit for active service and even for home service. He was due to be medically discharged on 29 August on a weekly pension of 27/6d (£1.37 ½). He was assessed as having a "fair" military character and had "rendered fair military service." It was noted that he intended to return to his home, Old House, Camelon, and live there. He intended to return to iron moulding, though it is hard to understand quite how that would be possible given his medical condition. But a week before his discharge, Frank Hodge died from cardiac failure.

Camelon Cemetery, Falkirk 11. 419.

His son, Alexander, who died in 1985 aged 87, and his daughter-in-law, Agnes, who died in 1980 aged 81, are both interred in the same grave as Frank Hodge.

Private Robert S HODGE

Highland Light Infantry 12th Battalion
Service Number: 18539
Date of Death: 13 August 1916
Age at Death: 21
Family: Son of Jeanie Hodge, Wheatsheaf Buildings, Larbert and of the late Laurence Hodge; brother-in-law of Matthew McNicol (q.v.) and of John Wood (q.v.)

Robert Hodge enlisted in Dumbarton in September 1914. Prior to enlistment, he was an irondresser with Dobbie, Forbes & Company, Larbert.

Private Hodge went to the Western Front in the middle of July 1915. In September the battalion took part in the Battle of Loos.

At the end of July 1916, the 12th Battalion HLI arrived in the Somme

Private Robert Hodge

area. On August 12, as part of the Battle of the Somme, it attacked a German position known as the Switch Line. This ran through the northern edge of High Wood.

Machine gun fire on the right of the attack checked their advance. The battalion suffered 250 casualties and were relieved at night and moved to Fricourt.

It would seem that Robert Hodge's death occurred during this attack.

Millencourt Communal Cemetery Extension, France A. 36.

Millencourt is a village near the town of Albert.

Able Seaman Robert Taylor HODGE

Royal Naval Division Nelson Battalion
Service Number: Clyde Z/4053
Date of Death: 13 November 1916
Age at Death: 19
Family: Third son of John Hodge, 135 West Carron, and of the late Elizabeth Hodge

Robert Hodge was a labourer who enlisted in the RND in April 1915. He joined the Nelson Battalion in September but, at the start of December, he suffered from

jaundice, which struck down many men serving in the Gallipoli Campaign.

AB Hodge rejoined his battalion towards the end of January 1916, after the fighting on Gallipoli was over. In May his battalion was transferred to the Western Front.

His death occurred on the day after his 19th birthday. His battalion took part in the attack on Beaucourt during the final phase of the Battle of the Somme. This is known as the Battle of the Ancre, 13-18 November 1916.

At 6 a.m. in dense fog Nelson Battalion went in on the left of the advance in support of Hood and Hawke battalions, ignoring orders to wait until the first objective had been taken. The battalions "advanced close up to their barrage and suffered considerably from our own artillery fire." However, the first two waves of Nelson Battalion made good progress. Their advance to a line known as Station Road required "hand-to-hand fighting with bomb and bayonet".

The 3rd and 4th waves suffered heavy casualties as AB Joseph Murray of Hood Battalion explained:

> The Drakes and Nelsons got all mixed up and, on our left, they were all banging and crashing about and there was terrible fire coming from this redoubt. It was a square of trenches lined with men manning machine guns – probably a hundred men in it – and it wasn't even touched by the [British] artillery. How they missed that, Lord only knows! We had terrible casualties.

The machine gun fire from the "cunningly concealed" German redoubt located between their first and second lines was devastating. The leading waves of the Battalion's attack suffered heavy casualties whilst the 3rd and 4th waves fell almost to a man.

The survivors of the Drake battalion joined up with Hood battalion and others to move on behind the barrage. By 6.20 a.m. this mixed force had gained the second objective. They got to the third objective in front of Beaucourt. By then, "the Battalion ceased to exist as an identity," according to the battalion war diary. It also recorded that "A considerable number of our men took part in the further advance on and capture of BEAUCOURT".

The village was captured the next day. By the time the battalion was relieved on 15 November, casualties then numbered over 400 including 10 officers and 74 other ranks killed and 120 men posted missing.

Thiepval Memorial, France
Pier and Face 1 A.

Lance Corporal Walter HOTSON

London Regiment 2nd/23rd Battalion
Service Number: 5446
Date of Death: 10 August 1916
Age at Death: 24
Family: Son of Mrs Christine Simpson, Braefoot, Low Town, Larbert and of the late Walter Hotson; stepson of Alexander Simpson, Braefoot, Larbert

Walter Hotson was a sawmiller with James Jones & Sons, Larbert. He was living in Perth when he enlisted. He joined the Royal Army Medical Corps in January 1915, and transferred to the London Regiment in June 1916.

The 2nd/23rd Battalion moved into the front-line trenches near Arras on 5 August 1916. Over the eight days when the battalion was in the front line, there were repeated exchanges of artillery fire between the two sides.

The battalion war diary for 10 August reads:

"3 men killed & 6 wounded…. At about 6 pm our TMs [Trench Mortars] opened fire on enemy's front line doing considerable damage to parapet… retaliation received from TMs & aerial torpedoes, again at 10.30 pm, our TMs opened fire on enemy. The enemy continued firing TMs and aerial torpedoes during night, causing a certain number of casualties."

The *Falkirk Herald* reported that Private Hotson was killed by the explosion of an enemy shell.

Louez Military Cemetery, Duisans, France I. F. 7.

IN LOVING
REMEMBRANCE OF MY
DEARLY BELOVED ONLY
SON

Louez-les-Duisans is a small community on the north-west edge of the town of Arras.

Captain Archibald Smith HUNTER M.C.

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
7th Battalion
Date of Death: 29 August 1918
Age at Death: 38
Family: Husband of Betsy McKenzie, Ardlair, 10 Spylaw Road, Edinburgh; son of Robert Hunter, Kirkmailing, Larbert and of the late Annie Smith Hunter; brother of Robert Hunter (q.v.)

Captain Hunter was dangerously wounded on July 24. Following an attack which began near Sarcy on July 20, the 7th Battalion advanced a little into Coutron Wood (in French Bois de Courton). On July 23 the battalion was ordered to move towards Epilly through Coutron Wood. The attack was supported by an artillery barrage which, unfortunately, fell on four battalions including the Argylls.

On July 24th, the Argylls moved their line "a little into COUTRON WOOD". There was accurate German shelling on the wood. There were 21 casualties; three officers, including Archibald Hunter, were wounded. After he was wounded, presumably during the shelling, he was taken to No 8 General Hospital in Rouen. There were hopes that he would recover but he died of his wounds.

He had been awarded the Military Cross for outstanding service on the Western Front in March 1918 when the German Army had launched its Spring Offensive. Throughout six days of fighting, he had led his men in holding on to a ridge despite heavy shelling and machine gun fire. But the Germans overcame the forces on both sides of Captain Hunter's position. According to the citation, he then fought a "fine rearguard action" till they had to withdraw.

Captain Hunter had arrived on the Western Front only two months before the German Spring Offensive of March 1918. He had

Captain Archibald S. Hunter

spent most of the war years in Britain. When the war began, he had volunteered his services as an officer and had joined the Argylls. For a considerable time during the war he had been the adjutant of a huge battalion based at Ripon in Yorkshire.

As a young man he had been a member of the Volunteer Force, which was the predecessor of the Territorial Force. He had held the rank of captain of the Denny Company for two or three years. When the Territorial Force began, Stirlingshire and Clackmannanshire were to form one battalion. This meant that there was a surplus of officers and Captain Hunter stood down.

In civilian life Archibald Hunter and his father were responsible for the management of Port Downie Iron Works, Falkirk.

His elder brother, Lieutenant John Hunter had died of enteric fever during the Boer War, and his younger brother, Lieutenant Robert Hunter was killed in action in April 1917.

St Sever Cemetery, Rouen, France
Officers C. 1. 5.

SON OF ROBERT HUNTER
J.P. KIRKMAILING
LARBERT SCOTLAND
PRO PATRIA

Officers were buried in a different plot to the other ranks.

Lieutenant Robert Gibson HUNTER

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
7th Battalion 'A' Company
Date of Death: 23 April 1917
Age at Death: 24
Family: Son of Robert and Harriette Mary Hunter, Kirkmailing, Larbert; brother of Archibald Hunter (q.v.)

Two young officers of the local battalion were killed on the same day in the Battle of Arras and both came from Larbert.

Robert Hunter had attended Edinburgh Academy and then gained a degree of Master of Arts at Edinburgh University. He was then studying for a law degree whilst he was a law apprentice with the firm Miller, Thomson & Company, Edinburgh. He had been a member of Edinburgh University Officer Training Corps with the rank of Sergeant-Major.

In March 1915 he received a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant, and went to the Western Front at the end of July 1915. In the autumn of 1916 he was promoted to the rank of 1st Lieutenant.

Lieutenant Hunter was killed during the Second Battle of the Scarpe (the third phase of the Battle of Arras) at a place called Roeux. The Commanding Officer of his Battalion told his parents that he was:

> killed while gallantly leading his company in the attack. He was doing splendidly, and proving himself a most capable officer while his cheery disposition always encouraged the men.

On April 23, the Battalion's and Division's objectives had included the village of Roeux and its "ill-famed" Chemical Works. At 4.45 a.m. the Battalion set off in three waves at the same time as the barrage on the German lines. The battalion war diary stated that "Our barrage was not very defined and

Lieutenant Robert G. Hunter

the first wave unfortunately pushed into it and had considerable casualties." But Lieutenant John B Gregory in his memoir was blunter: "We had practically no artillery support and a machine-gun barrage from the ridge behind did more harm than good".

The serious failings of the artillery were to continue. Areas strongly held by German soldiers were "passed over without doing much harm and the whole attack was delayed for at least 1 ½ hours while our losses, particularly in officers, were very heavy". It is reckoned that all the battalion's officers were casualties within the first hour of the attack.

At 6.30 a.m. the Germans "began to trickle away". Helped by a single tank, the battalion entered the village of Roeux and Roeux Wood. The men were troubled by snipers and machine guns. A German counter-attack at 10.30 a.m. forced the battalion out of the northern end of the village but a new trench line was dug and held rather precariously until they were relieved that evening. By nightfall the village of Roeux was again held by the Germans.

The casualties, according to the battalion war diary, numbered 6 officers killed, including Lieutenant Robert Hunter. 9 other officers were wounded and one was posted missing. There were over 300 casualties amongst the other ranks.

It is therefore no surprise that this battle has been described as "one of the blackest days in the story of the Battalion."

Level Crossing Cemetery, Fampoux, France I. A. 10.

GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN THAN THIS

Fampoux is a village 5 miles east of the town of Arras.

Private William HUNTER

King's Own Scottish Borderers 6th Battalion
Service Number: 24489
Date of Death: 28 May 1917
Age at Death: 29
Family: Husband of Mary Wright, Dawson's Buildings, The Point, Stenhousemuir; son of Mrs Bethia Hunter, 21 Muir Street, Bainsford and of the late James Hunter

Private William Hunter

William Hunter worked in the boiler shop at Carron Company. He joined up in May 1916 and went to the Western Front in January the following year.

On 3 May the 6th Battalion KOSB took part in a phase of the Battle of Arras known as the Third Battle of the Scarpe. The attack began at 3.45 a.m. The particular task of the battalion was to advance half-right keeping a road on its left until it arrived at a German trench called Wobble! It was then to form a defensive flank along the road which faced north towards Gavrelle.

It was soon apparent that this attack had failed. The battalions on each side of the 6th KOSB failed to make progress, so the KOSB was left "in the air". The men tried to return to their original lines but the battalion war diary noted that "the intervening ground was swept by machine gun fire. Casualties were naturally heavy. 15 officers (including the C.O.) and over 400 other ranks. Of the 13 officers who went over the top only two returned and they were wounded."

Private Hunter was wounded at some point during this attack. He was taken prisoner by the Germans. At the start of June his wife was told that he had been officially reported missing, and at the end of the month received the news that he was a prisoner of war. But on 28 May at 11.45 p.m. he had died in a prison hospital at Ingolstadt in Germany. According to German records, the cause of death was heart failure. He was buried in the "Prisoners' Division" of the cemetery. The information about his death was sent to his family on August 10.

Niederzwehren Cemetery, Kassel, Hessen, Germany II. C. 6.

After the war, the men buried in the cemetery Ingolstadt in Bavaria were re-interred in the cemetery in Kassel.

Just before she received the news of her husband's death, his wife Mary was in an accident on 4 August. She was a tram conductress on the Circular route. and suffered back and leg injuries while manoevering the trolley pole from the top deck . A fortnight later her husband's death was reported in the Herald and she was said to be "progressing favourably".

Gunner David HUSKIE

Royal Field Artillery 69th Brigade
B Battery
Service Number: 109073
Date of Death: 3 October 1918
Age at Death: 27
Family: Husband of the late Catherine Hotchkies; youngest son of the late James and Catherine Huskie, Carronshore; brother of James Huskie (q.v.) & of George Huskie

Gunner David Huskie

Prior to his enlistment in November 1915, David Huskie was an electric coal-cutting machineman. He was drafted to India in 1917 and from there to Mesopotamia. His Battery, part of 4th Brigade, belonged to the 7th (Meerut) Division, which had been fighting in that country since May 1916.

In 1917 Baghdad was captured and the Turkish forces driven back, a process continued in 1918 without a decisive victory being gained – the serious fighting in Mesopotamia had actually ended in November 1917.

David Huskie died in Mesopotamia the day before his 28th birthday. He was a victim of the appalling conditions that the British soldiers fought in. Apart from the extremes of temperature that had to be coped with, the flies, mosquitoes and other vermin caused high levels of illness and death, exacerbated by the unsatisfactory medical arrangements provided for British forces.

Tehran War Cemetery, Iran IV. A. 7.

In Peter Hart's view, "the operations [in Mesopotamia] had achieved their original declared objectives in the first few days of the campaign in November 1914; everything else had been vainglorious nonsense. Mesopotamia was a tragedy from start to finish fought in circumstances of exceptional difficulty."

The Great War, 1914- 1918, Peter Hart, 2013, page 294

Lance Corporal James HUSKIE

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
7th Battalion B Company
Service Number: 2334
Date of Death: 25 April 1915 (CWGC: 26 April)
Age at Death: 32
Family: Third son of the late James and Catherine Huskie, Flesher's Close, Carronshore; brother of David (q.v.)

Lance Corporal James Huskie

James Huskie was a pattern-filer at Mungal Foundry. He had belonged for four years to the Carronshore Company of the Volunteer Force (the predecessor to the Territorial Force). On 8 September 1914, he enlisted with the Territorial Battalion of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders. The Battalion went to the Western Front in the middle of December 1914.

Exactly a week before his death, James was promoted to the rank of Lance Corporal. He was killed in the Battle of St Julien (25 April -4 May).

This battle, which was the first major piece of fighting the battalion was involved in, was the second phase of the Second Battle of Ypres (22 April-5 May, 1915). It is described in detail under the entry for Private James Dea on page 39.

The battalion war diary recorded that 6 officers and 100 other ranks were killed, but 150 men were posted missing and this was to double the number of other ranks who were killed in this attack. The total number of casualties in the battalion was over 500.

On the next day, the battalion was to be in support but did not leave the trenches they held. This was just as well for the 26th April 1915 was "a truly disastrous day". There were 4,000 casualties on a mile-wide front. "Men were lost in totally fruitless and ill-prepared attacks against an enemy that was reasonably well-prepared and was superior in numbers and artillery."

A letter, which clearly indicates that James Huskie's death occurred on 25 April, (the first day of the battle), was sent to his brother by Private Robert Lindsay, dated April 28:

> It is with great grief that I write to let you know that James fell on Sunday in a charge, but he fell a fearless death. I am very sorry to be the first to convey the news to you but I thought it best... and my heart goes out in sympathy to you in this trying time. We buried him

last night with some of his comrades, and he had a pleasing smile on his face. I shall never forget this as long as I have breath in me. I don't know how I escaped, but thank God I am alive today. I was looking for 'it' every minute, but the Lord knows best when to call us home.

Lance Corporal Huskie's grave was lost in the subsequent fighting as his death is commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial.

Menin Gate Memorial, Ieper, Belgium Panel 42 and 44.

Military Operations France and Belgium, 1915 Volume II J E Edmonds, 1928, page 240

Magnificent But Not War The Battle for Ypres 1915, John Dixon, 2003, page 139

Private Cornelius Ferguson HUTTON

King's Own Scottish Borderers 2nd Battalion
Service Number: 13868
Date of Death: 30 July 1916
Age at Death: 23
Family: Son of Alex and Isabella Hutton, Church St, Carronshore

Cornelius Hutton had been a miner with Carron Company but in the summer of 1914 was resident at Portland in Dorset where he enlisted on 25 August 1914. He went to France in February 1915.

Private Hutton was reported wounded and missing from 30 July 1916. This was at the end of the first month of the Battle of the Somme. His battalion had moved from the Arras sector to the Somme in the middle of July. It was then involved in a series of attacks on German positions before occupying front line trenches at Delville Wood on the 29th.

Private Cornelius Hutton

On the 30th there were many casualties caused by heavy shell fire and sniping all day. Then the battalion was ordered to attack the German Army's position at the north-west of Delville Wood. At 6.12 p.m. the KOSB 2nd Battalion advanced against a heavy German bombardment, but, apart from one company, were soon forced back.

At some point during the day which cost the battalion over 250 casualties Cornelius Hutton lost his life.

It was to be 11 months later, before his family was informed that he was officially presumed to have died on 30 July 1916.

Thiepval Memorial, France Pier and Face 4 A and 4 D.

Two of the brothers of Cornelius, Alexander and Thomas, were both prisoners of war. Thomas was taken prisoner in September 1914 while Alexander was a prisoner from March 1918. Their father was killed in an accident at Carron Works. He was descending in a cage inside a hot blast stove to continue repairing its dome. The bottom of the cage tilted and he fell thirty feet to the ground and was killed instantly.

Company Sergeant Major Thomas INGLIS

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders 7th Battalion
Service Number: 7420
Date of Death: 1 September 1916
Age at Death: 36
Family: Husband of Olive Sands, 102 Buccleuch Street, Edinburgh; eldest son of Thomas and Jane Inglis, 7 St Crispin's Place, Stenhousemuir

Thomas Inglis had worked as a moulder originally, but he was a career soldier. He joined the army in 1898 and had then enlisted in the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders in February 1900. He had served in the Boer War and in Malta from 1909 to 1912. He had repeatedly extended his period of service; on the last occasion, in 1911, he agreed to complete 21 years in the army. During these years, he rose through the ranks.

Sergeant Major Thomas Inglis

In 1908 he married Olive Sands from Chatham in Kent and they had 4 children, 2 girls and 2 boys. During these pre-war years he was well-known in army circles as an athlete and footballer.

On 16 August during the Battle of the Somme, the battalion war diary records the arrival of a draft of 100 soldiers, including CSM

Inglis. He was at the front for barely a fortnight. On the day of his death, his battalion was holding Swansea Trench which was west of High Wood. The *Falkirk Herald* reported that "in a charge on the enemy trenches he was caught by machine gun fire and killed instantaneously." However, in the fortnight Thomas was at the front, the battalion war diary doesn't mention any charge on the German trenches. It does mention that on August 19 German shelling in the morning wounded 18 soldiers in the battalion. It is likely that Thomas Inglis was one of the victims of the shelling. The official records show that he died of multiple wounds at No 38 Casualty Clearing Station, which was at Heilly at this time. This is a rare example of how it can be shown that what families were told about the death of their loved ones - in this case, instantaneous death – was 'modified' for the sake of the families.

In March 1917 Thomas's widow was awarded a weekly pension of 24 shillings (£1.20) for herself and the 4 children.

Heilly Station Cemetery, Mericourt-L'Abbe, France IV. B. 12.

Mericourt L'Abbe is a village 5 miles south-west of the town of Albert. This cemetery was located close to three Casualty Clearing Stations.

Corporal Thomas INGLIS

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
1st/7th Battalion
Service Number: 275331
Date of Death: 17 April 1917
Age at Death: 22
Family: Son of John and Agnes Inglis, 27 Grange Street, Stenhousemuir

Tom Inglis was a moulder with Carron Company (like his father). He was called up on the mobilisation of the Territorial Force when war was declared. Like many others from the local area, he left for France and the Western Front on 15 December 1914.

Corporal Inglis spent 2½ years at the Western Front. On 24 May 1915 he was gassed during the fighting and had to be admitted to hospital for treatment. He rejoined his battalion two weeks later. On 30 June 1916 he was wounded in the left buttock but was to go back to his battalion a fortnight later.

His officer was to tell his mother that he was one of the bravest and best soldiers he knew. The only blemish in the official records on this assessment is that on 2 October 1915 he was awarded 2 days' Field Punishment No 2 for being "Unshaven while mounting guard." Given the hardships of trench life, it was a severe punishment for that offence.

Corporal Thomas Inglis

It was just three days before his death that Tom was promoted to the rank of Corporal. He was killed after the initial phase of the Battle of Arras when two companies moved forward to occupy a position known as Sunken Road between the River Scarpe and the railway. 4 soldiers in the battalion were killed, including Thomas Inglis, and 18 wounded in this small-scale operation. According to a comrade's letter home, Corporal Inglis was shot in the neck as he was going over the parapet.

His mother's verse in his death notice in the *Falkirk Herald* reads:

Friends may forget him,
his mother will never.
He will dwell on my heart
till life's journey's done.
Lord, teach me to live,
that when my days are ended,
I'll be met at the gate
by my dear hero son.

Point-du-Jour Military Cemetery, Athies, France I. H. 1.

The village of Athies-les-Arras was captured from the Germans on 9 April 1917. Point-du-Jour was a house in the village which had become a German redoubt. The cemetery was created nearby.

Gas Casualties

Private Thomas Sorbie JARDINE

Royal Scots 11th Battalion
Service Number: 20890
Date of Death: 22 October 1916
Age at Death: 28
Family: Son of John and Grace Jardine, Blackmill, Carron

Private Thomas Jardine

Thomas Jardine was a moulder with Carron Company. He enlisted in March 1915, and went to the Western Front three months later at the end of June.

The 11th Battalion took part in its first major attack on an enemy position at the start of the Battle of Loos on 25 September 1915. Over the three days the battalion was in the attack, it suffered heavy casualties. The battalion then did duty in the first half of 1916 in the Ypres salient, mainly near Ploegsteert Wood.

The battalion also played an important part in different phases of the Battle of the Somme.

On 21 October 1916 the battalion took over trenches near the Butte de Warlencourt, a prehistoric burial mound which gave the German Army a dominating position overlooking the British lines where the trenches they occupied were called the Pimple, the Tail and the Nose. These had just been taken as a result of the efforts of South African regiments in appallingly muddy conditions. It was, wrote their historian, "the most dismal of all the chapters of the Somme".

When the 11th Royal Scots moved into position, the battalion war diary noted: "The number of GERMAN dead lying about was very noticeable. There must have been 300 dead bodies about the NOSE."

The task of the 11th battalion until it was relieved on 24 October was to consolidate the position they held. The soldiers called this "shaping the mud pie" which gives some idea of the conditions at this time. At 3.30 p.m. on October 22, the Germans bombarded the Royal Scots' support line for two hours, repeated the barrage between 7 and 9 p.m. and shelled their trenches throughout the night. According to the battalion war diary, 14 soldiers of the Royal Scots were killed on the 22nd; the Commonwealth War Graves Commission records the deaths of 25 members of the battalion on that date. Thomas Jardine was one of these casualties.

Thiepval Memorial, France. Pier and Face 6 D and 7 D.

Private William JARVIE

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
1st/7th Battalion
Service Number: 2326
Date of Death: 2 August 1916
Age at Death: 25
Family: Son of Walter and Marion Jarvie, 28 Rae Street, Stenhousemuir

William Jarvie was a pattern maker at Carron Iron Works before he enlisted, like so many local men, on 7 September 1914. His battalion went to the front in December 1914. He became a qualified machine gunner.

Private William Jarvie

From August 1915 to the following March, William's service was disrupted by spells of ill-health which were associated with conditions in the trenches. He required treatment for scabies, then impetigo and, for almost three months, myalgia (muscle pain), probably the result of chronic fatigue or a viral infection.

At the start of the Battle of the Somme, he suffered a facial wound but rejoined his battalion on 9 July 1916. For the next month it served in the Somme sector.

On August 1, it took over trenches at Mametz Wood. It was heavily shelled after its arrival. It remained at this location until August 6 when it was relieved. There was only one soldier in the battalion killed during these six days – William Jarvie who was killed by a shell.

Dantzig Alley British Cemetery, Mametz, France V. Q. 1.

The village of Mametz, 5 miles east of the town of Albert, was captured on 1 July 1916, the first day of the battle of the Somme, after very hard fighting at Dantzig Alley, a German trench.

Private Donald JENKINS

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
11th Battalion
Service Number: 12030
Date of Death: 16 October 1917
Age at Death: 26
Family: Fifth son of John and Agnes Jenkins, Station Terrace, Larbert

Private Donald Jenkins

Private Jenkins, known as Daniel, was a stretcher bearer on the Western Front. He had enlisted in May 1915 – previously, he had been a moulder at Jones & Campbell Foundry, Larbert. He went to the Western Front in August 1915.

He was severely wounded during the latter stages of the Battle of Passchendaele. He suffered gunshot wounds in his right thigh and at No 4 Casualty Clearing Station it was judged necessary to amputate his leg. He died the same night. By 1917 three of his brothers had also served in the war; two had been wounded and then discharged from the army.

Dozinghem Military Cemetery, Poperinge, Belgium IX. G. 19.

No 4 CCS was near Poperinge at a place named by the soldiers as Dozinghem. Other Casualty Clearing Stations were set up nearby before the start of the Battle of Passchendaele, at Mendinghem and Bandaghem

Private David JOHNMAN

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
7th Battalion
Service Number: 2345
Date of Death: 27 April 1915
Age at Death: 22
Family: Son of David Thomson and Elizabeth Ramage Johnman, 12 Union Street, Stenhousemuir; brother of Mrs Agnes Miller

David Johnman was a moulder with Jones & Campbell, Larbert. He enlisted on 7 September 1914 and went to the Western Front three months later.

Private Johnman was wounded in the abdomen during the Battle of St Julien. He was taken to hospital in Boulogne where he died of his wounds within half an hour of being admitted. According to the *Falkirk Herald* report, the sister in the hospital to which David was taken wrote to his sister to tell her of her brother's death.

If he was wounded on the day that he died, the fourth day of the Battle of St Julien, this was the result of the German artillery bombarding all of that day the part of the front line being manned by David's battalion.

It may be that he was wounded on April 25, when his battalion was most involved in the Battle of St Julien. This battle which was the first major piece of fighting the battalion was involved in, was the second phase of the Second Battle of Ypres (22 April – 25 May, 1915). It is described in detail under the entry for Private James Dea on page 39.

The battalion war diary recorded that 6 officers and 100 other ranks were killed, but 150 men were posted missing and this was to double the number of other ranks who were killed in this attack. The total number of casualties in the battalion was over 500.

Private David Johnman

On the next day, the battalion was to be in support but did not leave the trenches they held. This was just as well for the 26th April 1915 was "a truly disastrous day". There were 4,000 casualties on a mile-wide front. "Men were lost in totally fruitless and ill-prepared attacks against an enemy that was reasonably well-prepared and was superior in numbers and artillery."

Boulogne Eastern Cemetery, France VIII. A. 31.

TO MEMORY EVER DEAR

This cemetery contains nearly 6,000 graves, an indication that Boulogne was one of the main hospital areas serving the Western Front. One of the unusual features of this cemetery is that the gravestones are laid flat, due to the sandy soil in the area.

Magnificent But Not War, John Dixon, 2009, page 139

Private Andrew Reid Adam JOHNSTON

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
10th Battalion
Service Number: 275869
Date of Death: 12 October 1917
Age at Death: 20
Family: Youngest son of John and Mary Johnston, Livingstone Terrace, Larbert

Andrew Johnston was a moulder with Dobbie, Forbes & Company, Larbert. He joined up in 1914.

Private Johnston had been at the front from April 1916, except for a few months when he had been invalided home having suffered from enteric fever.

He was killed towards the latter stages of the Third Battle of Ypres in a phase known as the First Battle of Passchendaele. The whole battle was infamous for the state of the ground over which it was fought. The rain in the autumn of 1917 and the shelling of both sides churned the ground into what seemed like "a vast lake". The Germans did not always fight from trenches in this battle. The 10th Argylls' war diary said that they had "organised shell holes and retired into the Pill boxes when the bombardment started."

The battalion arrived in position at 3 a.m. for the attack of 12 October – Passchendaele Ridge Battle as it was named in the war diary. Zero hour was 5.25 a.m. A creeping barrage was used by the artillery but the leading companies found it very difficult to cross the wet ground and lost direction almost immediately. Also, they "did not get close enough up behind the barrage when it lifted."

Two companies were held up by a pill box in front of a position called Burns Houses. It was only 100 yards from their starting point. "This pill-box," wrote Lieutenant-Colonel W D Croft,

Private Andrew Johnston

"was the first of a group which was swarming with very lively Huns who literally mowed our fellows down…. I doubt if there was ever a more expensive pill-box to our troops." Its capture was "the end of our officers that day." An important point noted in the 10th battalion diary was that: "The Enemy showed a white flag but still continued to fire so the occupants were all killed, some 40 in front and another 20 attempting to escape from the rear. The enemy had 4 machine guns in this pill box."

Andrew Johnston's death may have occurred at this point in the attack. According to Private George Summers in a letter home:

> Andrew and I passed each other just after the advance started, and that was the last I saw of him. He was smiling and quite cheery then. We were held up for a short time by machine gunners and snipers, and Andrew was hit by a sniper or machine gun bullet.

The line of attack which followed took the men along the bed of a river. It was a quagmire. "Some of the men remaining embedded in the mud were shot down while others wounded fell into the shell holes and were drowned." But, because the British guns did not knock out the Germans' strong points, the battalion war diary concluded: "We suffered most of our casualties from machine gun fire."

The advance came to a halt about 100 yards from the starting line.

The battalion was relieved the following day. 56 members of the battalion had been killed out of a total of 240 casualties.

In the view of the Divisional historian, the action on 12 October 1917 was a "battle which should not have been fought". While recognising that the infantry made "serious errors" by not keeping to the intended line of advance, he concluded that "rain and mud" were the chief factors in the failure on 12 October; "no man could progress at more than a snail's pace, and sheer exhaustion was a factor more potent than the enemy in bringing the advance to a standstill."

Tyne Cot Memorial, Ieper. Belgium Panel 141 to 143 and 162.

The History of the Ninth (Scottish) Division, John Ewing, 1921, page 243

Nick Lloyd in Passchendaele A New History, published in 2017, states that "The attack on 12 October should never have gone ahead." (Page 236).

Three Years with the 9th (Scottish Division, Lieutenant-Colonel W D Croft, 1919, pages160-161.

Private George Cummings JOHNSTON

Royal Scots Fusiliers 1st Battalion
Service Number: 40037
Date of Death: 22 August 1918 [Family: gravestone: 28 August]
Age at Death: 27
Family: Youngest son of Henry and Margaret Johnston, North Broomage Cottages, Larbert

In April 1909, George Johnston signed on for 4 years' service in the 6th Battalion Black Watch Territorial Force. At that time he was a forester on the Dunira Estate in Comrie, Perthshire. His father was the factor to Sir John Graham of Larbert House.

When war broke out in 1914, he was working as a forester on the Cumbernauld House estate. He enlisted in Kilmarnock and joined the Royal Scots Fusiliers.

Private Johnston had been on the Western Front for two years when he was killed during a major attack on the German Army which began in thick fog at 4.55 am on 21 August 1918 a few miles south of Arras. The immediate objective was the capture of the Arras – Bapaume railway line east of Courcelette.

The 1st Royal Scots Fusiliers moved forward at 5.15 a.m. following the attack led by the battalions of the 99th Infantry Brigade. Their advance was slow because visibility was down to ten yards. There was strong opposition as the battalion moved through the village of Courcelles, 15 miles south of Arras. The eastern edge of the village was reached by 7 a.m. Casualties were "severe". The "stiffest fighting" took place when the RSF, led by two tanks, advanced up the steep slope between the village and the railway cutting. It was strongly held by the Germans. It was captured with a series of short rushes covered by Lewis gun fire, and a bayonet charge. This "took all heart out of the enemy". The day's fighting ended at 8.45 a.m.

At 4 a.m., on the 22nd, the day of George's death, the Germans mounted a very heavy barrage on the British front line. The British artillery replied but on the 1st RSF front "the shooting was very short, Heavies dropping into the Cutting and causing heavy casualties." The shelling on both sides lasted an hour.

Some of the battalion's soldiers withdrew behind the railway. Unfortunately, this allowed the Germans to push forward and set up a position from which two trench mortars and a machine gun which could enfilade "all our front", were "fired continuously all day". 30 men were killed and 40 were wounded. The battalion was relieved in the evening.

During the two days of this attack, there were nearly 350 casualties, including 38 other ranks killed. The majority of the casualties occurred on August 22nd.

Eloust-St Mein British Cemetery, Cony, France A. 18.

HE DIED THAT WE MIGHT LIVE IN THE NOBLEST OF CAUSES

This cemetery is 10 miles south-east of the town of Arras.

Lewis Gunners in action

Private Charles JOHNSTONE

Royal Scots Fusiliers 6th/7th Battalion B Company
Service Number: 244996
Date of Death: 20 July 1917
Age at Death: 30
Family: Husband of Christina Fenton Johnstone, 87, Lady's Mill, Carronshore; fifth son of Alexander and Agnes Miller Johnstone, Canglour Cottage, St Ninians

Charles Johnstone worked for many years for Barr's, the aerated water manufacturers. He was a lorryman. He attested on 8 December 1915 and was placed on the Army Reserve. He was a widower with 4 young children, the eldest aged nearly 8, and the youngest 21 months. On 14 January 1916, he married Christina Fenton, a farm servant fron Old Quarrol.

On 14 June, Charles was mobilised and posted to the 9th Battalion Royal Scots Fusiliers. He joined the 6th/7th Battalion in October 1916.

Private Johnstone's death occurred in the lead-up to the battle of Passschendaele. His battalion were positioned near Potije just east of Ypres. His platoon commander wrote to his widow:

"I always found him a splendid fellow, and I miss him very much. The night before he was killed he took part in a raid and he was of great help to me, behaving like the gallant soldier he was."

According to the battalion war diary, orders were received on July 20 to attack the German front line with gas. The gas attack began at 2 a.m. (on the 21st) which provoked "Heavy retaliation of Front, Support & Reserve lines by the enemy." By 6 a.m. that morning the battalion had been relieved.

Miller Johnstone, the brother of Charles, belonged to a Canadian battalion. He had already been killed in the war. Two other brothers were also in the Canadian Army.

The death notice for Charles in the *Falkirk Herald* included a short verse on hehalf of his "four small children":

Sleep on, dear daddy, and take your rest
We miss you most who loved you best.

Christina was awarded a pension of 38/9 (£1.94) per week for herself and the four children to be paid from 11 February 1918.

In July 1919 she inserted a notice in the *Falkirk Herald* "in loving memory of my dear husband":

Oh, why was he taken so
young and so fair,
When the earth held so many it
better could spare?
I loved him in life, he is dear
to me still,
But in grief I must bend to
God's holy will.

Menin Gate Memorial, Ieper, Belgium Panel 19 and 33.

Menin Gate Memorial

Private John Meiklejohn JOINER

Australian Imperial Force 17th Battalion
Service Number: 2532
Date of Death: 26 July 1916
Age at Death: 25
Family: Son of Helen Johnstone Joiner, Dobbie's Buildings, Muirhall Road, Larbert and of the late James Joiner

Before John Joiner emigrated to Australia, he had been the head salesman in the grocery department of Kilsyth Co-operative Society.

In Sydney he carried on a grocer's business until he enlisted in the army in 1915 at Warwick Farm, a suburb of Sydney. He was posted to the 17th Battalion on 8 August 1915.

John Joiner left Melbourne in October. He joined his battalion in the Canal Zone in Egypt in February 1916. The following month, he arrived in Marseilles headed for the Western Front.

The 17th battalion's first major piece of action there came in the first month of the Battle of the Somme. It was involved in the fighting at Pozieres, a small ruined village in the valley of the River Somme. It was surrounded by deep entrenchments. In the centre of the village was a formidable fortification, a German-built concrete dugout with a six-foot high tower above ground. It was known to Allied soldiers as "Gibraltar".

The attack began at 1.30 a.m. on July 23. Pozieres was captured by 6.30 a.m. It was the only gain made in the attack that day but it was considered a "wonderful success". But as one Australian soldier wrote "We were young and had much to learn. The next sixty hours taught [us] quite a lot about attacks". The German Army was determined to recapture the village, which was regarded as vital to their defensive line. There was almost continuous artillery fire and repeated counter-

Private John Joiner

attacks for a period of sixty hours. The same Australian soldier recalled " The shelling never stopped. Hour after hour. I have been in many bombardments but always hold the opinion that the bombardment of Pozieres was the worst I was ever called upon to suffer". The German bombardment was at its worst on July 26, the day of John Joiner's death. But that night "the German gunfire, after three days of terrorizing the Australians, finally subsided." Pozieres was held but the fighting there cost over 5,000 Australian casualties in the space of five days. Ted Rule, who belonged to the 14th Battalion of the Australian Imperial Force, saw the survivors of Pozieres as they were being relieved:

> They looked like men who had been in hell. Almost without exception, each man looked drawn and haggard, and so dazed they appeared to be walking in a dream. In all my experience I've never seen men more shaken that these.

When the attacks using Australian troops continued on the same part of the German front, the "bitter conviction" began to grow amongst the Australian soldiers that they were being "uselessly sacrificed".

Villers-Bretonneux Memorial

Villers-Bretonneux is a village 10 miles east of Amiens. The Villers-Bretonneux Memorial is the Australian national memorial erected to commemorate all Australian soldiers who fought in France and Belgium during the First World War, to their dead, and especially to those of the dead whose graves are not known. There are 10,770 Australian servicemen actually named on the memorial.

Somme Into the Breach, Hugo Sebag-Montefiore, 2016, pages 331, 336, 343, 344.

History of the First World War, B H Liddell Hart 1973 edition, page 327.

Villers-Bretonneux Memorial

Major James Forbes JONES

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
7th Battalion
Date of Death: 29 March 1917
Age at Death: 38
Family: Second son of James and Margaret Jones, nee Forbes, Torwoodhall, Larbert

Jim Forbes Jones was born (he was one of 9 brothers and sisters) and educated at Larbert. He attended the High School, Edinburgh and then entered the family business. When the First World War began, he was managing director of Jones & Campbell Limited, Larbert. He had been a member of the Volunteer Force and then the Territorial Force for over 20 years. He left Larbert with his battalion three days after war was declared. Because of his role in an important business, he was "indignant that he had been called up". This was not "Business as Usual", a saying common at the start of the war. However, he returned on leave every six months to attend board meetings. His experience of war was to make him appreciate the "other ranks". He was clear that "after the war was over, we could not do enough for the brave men who had stood in the trenches knee deep in mud and were under fire."

Major Jones went to France in December 1914. He took part in attack on the German Army at St Julien, near Ypres, on 25 April 1915. This attack was intended to relieve the Canadian forces who fought to seal the break in the front line created when the German army used chlorine gas for the first time. The Battalion suffered 400 casualties in the attack.

Major Jones was one of these casualties. He lay wounded from 5.30 a.m. till 8 p.m. He was shot through the lungs and severely wounded but the *Falkirk Mail* said

Major James Forbes Jones

that this was "reported not to be dangerous". He made a good recovery and after four months rejoined his regiment. In January 1916, he was mentioned in despatches. He led his battalion through the Battle of the Somme and in particular during the 51st Division's attack on Beaumont Hamel in November. In the early months of 1917 the battalion was preparing for its role in the Battle of Arras.

But in March he fell ill with appendicitis and died at the 1st Red Cross Hospital at Le Touquet in France. The historian of James Jones and Sons wrote: "He might have survived had he chosen to travel home for his operation. He refused."

A note in the family's business records says: "The cheerfulness and bravery shown by him in his last hours when his brothers Tom and Peter were present with him had been quite remarkable and afforded no little consolation to the family"

A memorial service was held in Larbert Parish Church on Sunday April 8th. In the tributes paid to Major Jones, he was described as "a most efficient officer and between him and his men there was a strong bond of mutual affection".

His estate was valued at £13,600 which he left to his three brothers.

Etaples Military Cemetery, France XVII. C. 2.

Etaples is a town over 15 miles south of Boulogne. It was an immense army base with many hospitals.

Timber and much more… A Family History of James Jones and Sons, Nigel Watson, 2005, pages 25, 26, 28

A ward of 1st Red Cross Hospital, Le Touquet; the hospital was housed in what was the casino in this fashionable seaside resort.

Private Alexander Reynolds KEMP

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
1st/7th Battalion
Service Number: 276692
Date of Death: 30 July 1918
Age at Death: 21
Family: Fifth son of Janet Kemp, 40 Bothy Row, Carronshore; brother of Daniel Kemp (q.v.)

Private Alexander Kemp

Alexander and his half-brothers were brought up by their mother, Janet in the small village of Longdyke – Janet's husband was a miner who died in Kinnaird in 1894. In the 1911 census occupation was given as 'coal miner hewer'.

At the age of 19 in December 1915, he enlisted in the army. He then described himself on the attestation form as a labourer. He joined his battalion on 21 January 1916. Thirteen months later, he went to the Western Front. During his training, he was repeatedly disciplined, usually for offences like being "dirty on parade", "unshaven" or being absent. Between July 1916 and January 1917, he amassed a total of 45 days Confined to Barracks.

In March 1917, he returned to England having been diagnosed with impetigo. He was admitted to Wharncliffe War Hospital in Sheffield. Afrer a month's treatment, he was released from hospital and went on a week's furlough.

Alex Kemp returned to the front line on 11 June 1917. Six months later, he was in further trouble. Not only was he "dirty on parade", again, he was found guilty of being in a verminous condition and sentenced to 10 days Confined to Camp. Then on 14 June 1918 he absented himself from parade and got 7 days of Field Punishment No 1.

He was killed when the Germans attacked the Montagne de Bligny at 8 p.m. on July 30. His battalion had just moved into the front line at nearby Chambrecy in the Champagne region.

The battalion war diary for July 30 reported:

> Enemy shelling indiscriminately all day. Shelling increased towards evening in intensity. SOS sent up by front line companies about 8 p.m. on A Coy's front. Attack completely driven off. Barrage (ours) very good.

Forteen men were killed that day, including Alex Kemp. In Private Kemp's death notice, it said:

> He died that we might live.

Courmas British Cemetery, France.

Courmas is a village about 7 miles south-west of Reims.

Able Seaman Daniel KEMP

Royal Naval Division Nelson Battalion
Service Number: Clyde Z/4793
Date of Death: 13 November 1916
Age at Death: 29
Family: Second son of Janet Kemp, 40 Bothy Row, Carronshore & of the late James Kemp; brother of Alexander Reynolds Kemp (q.v.)

Able Seaman Daniel Kemp

Daniel Kemp was a coal miner employed by Carron Company. He enlisted in the Royal Naval Division on 31 May 1915 and joined the Nelson battalion on 21 October the same year. Just two days later, he was invalided out as sick. He rejoined the battalion on 8 December but nine days later, he was suffering from diarrhoea. He was out of action until 9 January 1916, but he then continued in service until his death.

The 63rd (Royal Naval) Division took part in the final phase of the Battle of the Somme, known as the Battle of the Ancre, 13 – 18 November 1916.

Nelson Battalion went in on the left of the advance in support of Hawke battalion, ignoring orders to wait until the first objective had been taken. The battalions

"advanced close up to the barrage and suffered considerably from our own artillery fire". However, the first two waves of Nelson Battalion made good progress. Their advance to a line known as Station Road required "hand-to-hand fighting with bomb and bayonet".

The 3rd and 4th waves suffered heavy casualties as AB Joseph Murray of Hood Battalion explained:

> The Drakes and Nelsons got all mixed up and, on our left, they were all banging and crashing about and there was terrible fire coming from this redoubt. It was a square of trenches lined with men manning machine guns – probably a hundred men in it – and it wasn't even touched by the [British] artillery. How they missed that, Lord only knows! We had terrible casualties.

The machine gun fire from the "cunningly concealed" German redoubt located between their first and second lines was devastating. The leading waves of the Battalion's attack suffered heavy casualties whilst the 3rd and 4th waves fell almost to a man. It seems that Daniel Kemp lost his life during this advance.

According to the battalion war diary, the 3rd and 4th waves "lost cohesion and direction and except for small detached parties, ceased to exist as a fighting force". When the battalion was relieved on 15 November, casualties numbered over 400 including 10 officers and 74 other ranks killed and 120 men posted missing.

Ancre British Cemetery, Beaumont-Hamel, France V. B. 14.

This cemetery is about a mile south of the village of Beaumont-Hamel.

Air Mechanic 2nd class William KEMP

Royal Air Force 33rd Squadron
Service Number: 252878
Date of Death: 17 February 1919
Age at Death: 19
Family: Son of William and the late Isabella Kemp, nee Roughead; grandson of Mrs Isabella Roughead, Church Street, Stenhousemuir

The 1911 census shows that Willie, whose mother died when he was not quite two years old, was living with his grandparents at 136 Church Street whilst his father lived with his father in the same street at number 143.

Prior to his war service, Willie was an electrical engineer. He enlisted in the Royal Naval Air Service in March 1918 and, a fortnight later, became a member of the Royal Air Force. It came into existence on 1 April 1918.

He was assessed as being of Satisfactory Proficiency as an Air Mechanic and of Good Character at the end of 1918.

He was a victim of the influenza epidemic of 1918-19. He died of influenza and pneumonia at the 4th Northern General Hospital in Lincoln. This hospital was housed in what in 1914 was Lincoln Grammar School.

Larbert Churchyard New Part. 350.

Lance Corporal William KERR (LWM: Pte)

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders 10th Battalion. Later Machine Gun Corps 18443
Service Number: S/8088
Date of Death: 8 March 1918
Age at Death: 19
Family: Youngest son of William and Elizabeth Kerr, North Broomage, Larbert

Lance Corporal William Kerr

William Kerr was an apprentice moulder before he enlisted in his local regiment in February 1915. He gave his age as 19 years and 1 month. He was born on 25 October 1898; his true age on enlistment was 16 years and 3 months. So he added on 3 years, presumably to ensure that he was accepted into the army.

In October he went to the Western Front. He joined the 10th Battalion on 21 October. Two months later, he was transferred to the Machine Gun Corps. On 5 July 1916, just after the start of the Battle of the Somme, William was wounded and suffered from shell shock. The surviving records do not show how he was treated but he was back on active service no later than November 1916. At the end of the year he was allowed one week's leave.

On 3 May 1917, he was wounded in the left shoulder, and was out of action for a week. In the two months that followed his return to front line duty, he committed three disciplinary offences, including being "drunk while on the line of march". How he managed this is not recorded but the punishment was quite severe: 14 days Field Punishment No 1.

But then, on 24 August, he was wounded in the abdomen and thigh and he had to spend some time in hospital in Rouen. After he recovered, he was transferred back to the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders.

At the start of March 1918, his battalion moved from Woesten, a village just outside Ypres, to Houthulst Forest. On March 8, at 3.55 a.m., the Germans began a heavy trench mortar barrage. A group of German infantry began an attack on the left wing of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. A sentry shouted 'The Boche are coming over'. "The foremost man of this party appeared to be holding something in his hand and Lt Wallace and several men received a douche of liquid on the face and clothes".

Lieutenant Wallace withdrew his men about 20 yards behind the pill box they were defending. They inflicted heavy casualties on the German infantry. The German sniping and the trench mortar bombardment, which was "very severe", continued. But the Germans could not make any headway "owing to our rifle fire". The "intense fighting" lasted until dawn by which time the Argylls had suffered 56 casualties.

The whole front held by the battalion was bombarded and German infantry attacks were made on posts held by the battalion at Owlswood. After one post was taken and then recaptured, the battalion war diary commented on the fate of some of its soldiers: "A few wounded prisoners were seen being taken away but by the shouts they heard it was probable they were being killed."

When about 200 German soldiers were concentrating for an attack, they were dispersed when an aeroplane dropped a light. "Within a few minutes our guns opened with accuracy on the whole party of enemy who were lined up for the attack. Enemy were then seen retiring" the war diary noted.

At some point during this day, William Kerr was killed in action.

Canada Farm Cemetery, Ieper, Belgium III. H. 40.

The cemetery, which is 5 miles north-west of Ieper, took its name from a farmhouse used as a dressing station during the 1917 Allied offensive on this front.

Private David LAING

Gordon Highlanders 2nd Battalion B Company
Service Number: S/8631
Date of Death: 16 May 1915
Age at Death: 19
Family: Son of William and Agnes Laing, Hay's Buildings, Carronshore

David Laing was a moulder employed by Carron Company. He was a well-known member of Bothkennar Church choir, and an enthusiastic member of the Carronshore Gymnasium class.

He enlisted in January 1915 in the 11th Battalion of the Gordon Highlanders, and then was transferred to the 3rd, and then to the 2nd Battalion. He set off for the Western Front on 23 March; his training had lasted approximately 10 weeks.

The *Falkirk Herald* report said that Private Laing "died whilst gallantly assisting in capturing

Private David Laing

German trenches." This was on the second day of infantry attacks in the Battle of Festubert, which was intended to support a major French offensive further south in Artois. David Laing's battalion was to support the 2nd Battalion Scots Guards which "went forward with magnificent dash". The 2nd Gordons were sent in to protect the left wing of the Scots Guards, but without success and with very heavy casualties, especially since the battalion hadn't really taken a leading part in the attack.

David Laing was one of the 53 Gordon Highlanders killed in the attack on Festubert.

Le Touret Memorial, France Panel 39 to 41.

The Gordon Highlanders in the First World War 1914 -1919, Cyril Falls, 1958, page 42

Private James Higgins LAING

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
7th Battalion
Service Number: 278805
Date of Death: 23 April 1917
Age at Death: 19
Family: Youngest son of John and Jeanie McGill Laing, 18 Carronhall, Carronshore

James Laing was an engineer in 'E' Department of Carron Company. He was a well-known footballer, playing regularly for East Stirlingshire at left-back, although Falkirk Football Club held his League signature.

He attested on 8 December 1915 and was placed on the army reserve. He was called up in September 1916 and posted to the 5th Reserve Battalion which was based in Paisley. He went to France in January 1917 and joined the 1st/7th Battalion. In February 1917, he suffered from frostbite, a reminder of the hardships of trench warfare. He required hospital treatment and didn't rejoin his battalion until ten days before his death.

Private Laing was killed during the Second Battle of the Scarpe (the third phase of the Battle of Arras). On April 23, the Battalion's and Division's objectives included the village of Roeux and its "ill-famed" Chemical Works. At 4.45 a.m. the Battalion set off in 3 waves at the same time as the barrage on the German lines. The battalion war

Private James Laing

diary stated that "Our barrage was not very defined and the first wave unfortunately pushed into it and had considerable casualties." But Lieutenant John B Gregory in his memoir was blunter: "We had practically no artillery support and a machine-gun barrage from the ridge behind did more harm than good".

The serious failings of the artillery were to continue. Areas strongly held by German soldiers were "passed over without doing much harm and the whole attack was delayed at least one and a half hours while our losses, particularly in officers, were very heavy." It is reckoned that all the battalion's officers were casualties within the first hour of the attack.

At 6.30 a.m. the Germans "began to trickle away". Helped by a single tank, "whose exploits were hardly surpassed during the whole course of the battle", the battalion entered the village of Roeux and Roeux Wood. The men were much troubled in both locations by snipers and machine guns. A German counter-attack at 10.30 a.m. forced the battalion out of the northern end of the village but a new trench line was dug and held rather precariously until they were relieved that evening. By nightfall the village of Roeux was again held by the Germans.

The casualties, according to the battalion war diary, numbered 6 officers killed and 9 other officers wounded and one posted missing. The casualties amongst the other ranks included 48 killed, 220 wounded and 39 were missing.

It is therefore no surprise that this battle has been described as "one of the blackest days in the story of the Battalion."

James's brother, Andrew, was injured in the same offensive. Two other brothers were serving on the Western Front and a brother-in-law in Italy.

Roeux British Cemetery A. 1.

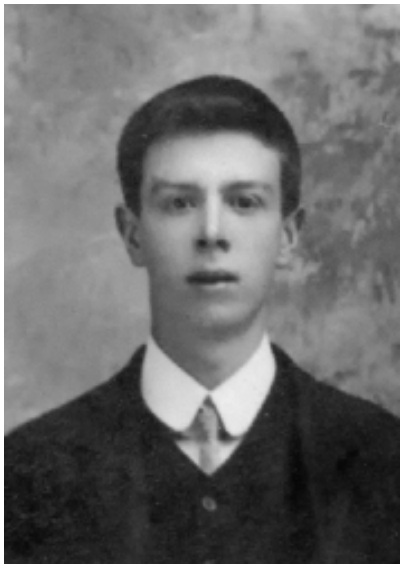
GONE AT AN EARLY AGE
BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

Roeux is a village about 8 miles east of Arras. It was built over a system of caves which helped to make its capture between April and August 1917 exceptionally difficult.

Roeux British Cemetery

Private Charles LAIRD

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
7th Battalion A Company
Service Number: 2353
Date of Death: 26 April 1915 (FH: 25)
Age at Death: 22
Family: Son of Charles and Maria Laird, Wilson's Buildings, Main Street, Stenhousemuir



Private Charles Laird

Charles Laird was a gratefitter with Carron Company before the First World War. He was a notable right-back for Stenhousemuir Hawthorn Football Club.

He enlisted in the local regiment on 7 September 1914 and went to the Western Front in mid-December. He was killed in the Battle of St Julien (25 April- 4 May).

This battle which was the first major piece of fighting the battalion was involved in, was the second phase of the Second Battle of Ypres (22 April-25 May, 1915). It is described in detail under the entry for Private James Dea on page 39.

The battalion war diary recorded that 6 officers and 100 other ranks were killed, but 150 men were posted missing and this was to double the number of other ranks who were killed in this attack. The total number of casualties in the battalion was over 500.

On the next day, the battalion was to be in support but did not leave the trenches they held. This was just as well for the 26th April 1915 was "a truly disastrous day". There were 4,000 casualties on a mile-wide front. "Men were lost in totally fruitless and ill-prepared attacks against an enemy that was reasonably well-prepared and was superior in numbers and artillery."

There had been a rumour for a few days that Private Laird had been killed. A letter was received by his family from a reliable friend at the front who confirmed the death of Charles Laird. The friend had said that he had been shot in the stomach. Surviving army records state that it was a foot wound, from which he died the same day. His friend said that Charles died bravely and that he was a good soldier and one to be proud of.

White House Cemetery, St Jean-Les-Ypres, Belgium I. A. 45.

St Jean is a village just outside Ieper.

Military Operations France and Belgium, 1915, Volume II J E Edmonds, 1928, page 240

Magnificent But Not War, John Dixon, 2013, page 139

Private Malcolm Hutton LAIRD, M.M.

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
1st/7th Battalion
Service Number: 275107
Date of Death: 19 April 1917
Age at Death: 23
Family: Son of Abraham and Nicholas Laird, Carronshore

Private Malcolm Laird

Malcolm Laird was a pupil of Carronshore School and worked as a miner. It may be assumed that he took part in the 7th Argylls' battles of 1915 and 1916. The battalion took part in two major

This war sketch by Fred A Farrell shows the "hideous country" from Pheasant Trench towards Pheasant Farm.

phases of the Battle of the Somme: the attack on High Wood in July, and the attack on Beaumont Hamel which began on November 13. (See entry for James Binnie or Robert Smith.) Malcolm was awarded the Military Medal for "gallantry on 13 November and subsequent days".

In 1917 Malcolm fought in the Battle of Arras and died of the wounds he received in action during the battle.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission gives his date of death as above. The death notice in the *Falkirk Herald* of 5 May 1917 gives this date as well. However, the date given in the official publication *Soldiers Died in the Great War* is April 17. This might mean that he was wounded in action on that date and died two days later.

On April 17, two companies of the battalion moved forward to occupy a position known as Sunken Road between the River Scarpe and the railway. 4 soldiers in the battalion were killed and 18 wounded in this small-scale operation.

It may be that Malcolm was wounded before April 17, perhaps during the fighting the battalion was involved in at the start of the Battle of Arras.

But if he was wounded on April 19, and died the same day, this would have been as a member of a bombing party which raided Ceylon and Colne trenches on April 19. This raid was rated "very successful"; about 30 German soldiers were killed, while only one officer was wounded, 2 ORs were killed and 9 wounded.

Malcolm's service records don't survive, which means that it is uncertain which of the options is the correct one.

It is a curious coincidence that the name of the cemetery in which he is buried, and of the village where the cemetery is located, contains his mother's Christian name.

St Nicholas British Cemetery, Arras, France I. F. 6.

St Nicholas is a village adjoining the city of Arras. From March 1916 onwards, it was occupied by Commonwealth forces and for much of that time it was within the range of German artillery fire.

Private David Meldrum LANGLANDS

Welsh Regiment 16th Battalion
Service Number: 60526
Date of Death: 27 August 1917
Age at Death: 19
Family: Eldest son of James and Emily Langlands, 9 Rae Street, Stenhousemuir

Private David Langlands

David Langlands who was born in Leeds, worked in his father's drapery business; the shop was in North Main Street, (King Street) Stenhousemuir.

In January 1917 he enlisted in the army and joined the Welsh Regiment.

His battalion was in reserve at the start of the Battle of Passchendaele (July 31), and then spent nearly three weeks out of the trenches. On August 26, it began to move up to its assembly position just east of Langemarck for an attack the next day. There was "extraordinarily heavy rain" throughout the night, followed by German artillery shelling throughout the morning.

On 27 August the 16th Battalion Welsh Regiment was to advance at 1.55 p.m. This was part of a wider offensive that day, but the weather was awful. According to the divisional history,

> When the time came to advance, the men who had been lying in shell-holes, which were gradually filling in with water, found great difficulty in getting out and advancing and keeping up with the barrage. The barrage got away from them and they came under the fire of machine guns from the direction of Pheasant Farm. (See sketch on the previous page.)

The attack then failed. The casualty rate was almost 50%; but 70% of 'A' Company were casualties, having advanced only about 50 yards.

At least 65 men belonging to the 16th Battalion were killed in this attack, and of these 56 have no known grave. David Langlands was one of these soldiers. Corporal R B Parker described to David's family the particular circumstances of his death:

> Private Langlands had been wounded in the arm and when he was making his way off the battlefield towards the dressing station, a shell caught him and some of his chums. He was one of the nicest boys I had met. I was rather surprised at his cool ways as he had not seen much fighting previously.

Tyne Cot Memorial, Ieper, BelgiumPanel 93 to 94.

A History of the 38th (Welsh) Division, Edited by Lieut-Colonel J E Munby, 1920, page 27

Private Samuel Hannah LAPSLEY

Gordon Highlanders
1st Battalion
Service Number: S/21486
Date of Death: 15 June 1918
Age at Death: 19
Family: Son of James and Helen Lapsley, Dock Street, Carronshore

Private Samuel Lapsley

Sam Lapsley, who had been working as a Pipe-moulder, joined the Royal Naval Division on 5 May 1915. He was only 16 years of age. He went out to the Dardanelles to take part in the Gallipoli Campaign. He joined Drake Battalion on 20 August that year and, a week later, was temporarily attached to the Royal Marines Cyclist Company. As an RM cyclist he would not have been involved in the fighting and, anyway, on 1 September, at the 11th Casualty Clearing Station, he was diagnosed as suffering from dysentery, a common affliction among the soldiers in Gallipoli. He was invalided home to Britain on 26 October. Subsequently, he was discharged from the forces on 22 January 1916 due to "Mis-statement as to age". He had given his date of birth when enlisting as 23 March 1897, adding 2 years to his age.

When he was 18, he rejoined the army enlisting in Stirling as a Gordon Highlander. He went to the Western Front in April 1918. At the beginning of June, he was slightly wounded and gassed during a German attack.

Private Lapsley's battalion moved into the front line ready for an attack on the German position at Hinges, which was three miles north of the town of Bethune. The attack began at 11.45 p.m. on June 14th and shortly after 5.30 am it was reported that the battalion's objective had been achieved.

Private Lapsley's family received letters from his officer and his chaplain. They revealed that he was "killed instantly by a splinter of a shell while carrying in a wounded German." Prior to his death that night, Private Lapsley had been involved in "the gallant and merciful duty of bringing in the wounded."

Loos Memorial, France Panel 115 to 119.

Lance Corporal John LAVERIE (CWGC: LAVERY)

Cameron Highlanders 1st Battalion
Service Number: S/10895
Date of Death: 29 October 1914
Age at Death: 28
Family: Eldest son of John and Robina Laverie, Muirhall Road, Larbert

John Laverie was born in Stranraer. When war broke out, he had been working for Babcock & Wilcox in Renfrew, and was then living in Glasgow. It was there in Glasgow that he enlisted and by the end of September he was on the Western Front. He probably joined his battalion on September 20 when the battalion war diary records that 161 N.C.O.s and men joined at Bourg, 14 miles east of the French town of Soissons.

At the beginning of October his battalion was in trenches at Vendresse about two miles further from Soissons. Lance Corporal Laverie was one of 10 of the battalion's soldiers wounded on October 15 but he was soon back in the front line.

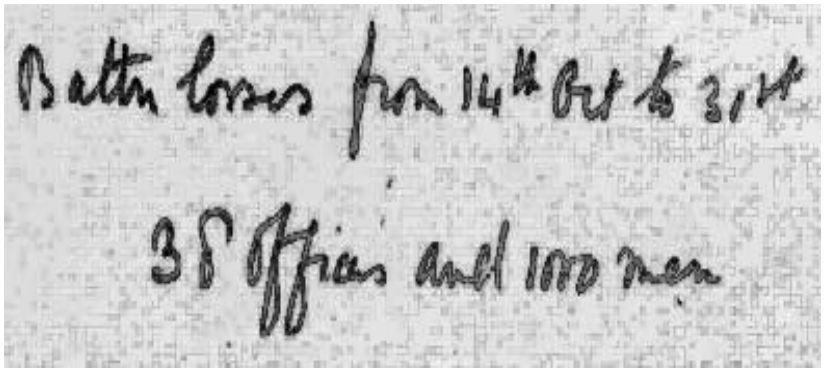
On October 16, the battalion began a move to the Ypres sector. On October 22 it was positioned between Bixschoote and Langemarck, about four miles north of Ypres. The Germans attacked after dark and the battalion had to retire. For the next week there was attack and counter-attack by both sides. There was constant shell and sniper fire. By October 28 the battalion was holding trenches between Reutel and Poezelhoek, south-east of Ypres, near the village of Gheluveld.

The battalion war diary records rather laconically for October 29:

> We were warned that an attack was probable on the right of our line at 5.30 a.m. [A German Army radio message had been intercepted.] About that hour some Germans crossed our front about 300 yards distant. We mowed them down with rapid and machine gun. In afternoon we heard that enemy had got through 7th Division about 1½ miles to our right and in behind right of 1st Brigade. The 2nd and 3rd Brigades made a counter-attack and drove the Germans back.

The German Army had mounted massed infantry attacks whose main thrust was at the crossroads on the Ypres – Menin Road about a mile east of Gheluveld. These attacks produced what has been described as "a day of desperately vicious close-quarter fighting".

It is most likely that John Laverie was killed about the time that the German attack went in.



Extract from the battalion war diary of the 1st Battalion Cameron Highlanders

The *Falkirk Mail* reported that he "was one of the first to be called up on the outbreak of the war and was sent out to the field of action practically at the very outset", and was "well-liked throughout the village."

John was one of the first two local men to be killed in front line action. It is therefore no surprise that the *Falkirk Mail* could report within two weeks of Lance Corporal Laverie's death that "the news of his death was received with widespread regret".

Menin Gate Memorial, Ieper, Belgium Panel 38 and 40.

Two days after John Laverie's death the German Army made its supreme effort to break through to Ypres. The German attack covered a frontage of 12 miles. It lasted all day and most of the night. The Official History noted:

> *A decisive victory seemed to be assured as everything pointed to the British being completely exhausted. However the line that stood between the British Empire and ruin was composed of tired, haggard and unshaven men, unwashed, plastered with mud, many in little more than rags. But they had their guns, rifles and bayonets, and, at any rate plenty of rifle ammunition, whilst the artillerymen always managed to have rounds available at the right place at critical moments.*

Private Archibald LENNOX

Highland Light Infantry 16th Battalion
Service Number: 55168
Date of Death: 4 November 1918
Age at Death: 19
Family: Youngest son of John and Janet Lennox, 6 McKay Place, Stenhousemuir

Private Lennox was killed exactly seven days before the fighting came to an end in the First World War with the armistice taking effect at 11 a.m. on 11 November. He was, therefore, the last local soldier to be killed during the war.

His HLI battalion was known as the Glasgow Boys Brigade battalion as many of the original recruits, when it was formed on 2 September 1914, came from the Boys Brigade.

During the night of 3-4 November 1918, Private Lennox's battalion helped three Royal Engineer companies to construct bridges across the Sambre – Oise Canal to allow an attack to take place at dawn on 4 November. The War Diary of the 16th Battalion HLI records that

> During the bridging operations the enemy's artillery fire was extremely violent and the fire from his machine guns on the opposite bank of the Canal about 30 yards away was very intense. 'A' and 'C' Companies especially took heavy casualties, but the behaviour of all ranks was such that the bridges were thrown across in record time enabling the infantry to attack with success.

Thirten soldiers of the battalion were killed during these operations.

Ors British Cemetery, France B. 20.

DEARLY LOVED
AND SADLY MISSED

Ors is a village approximately a mile east of Le Cateau. It was held by the German Army for most of the war. It was taken by British forces on November 1. On November 4, British soldiers forced their way over the canal near where Ors Cemetery was established.

The historian, Peter Hart, on the final campaign of the war in The Great War, 2001, page 452

> *Yet even so there was much hard fighting to go. The German Army was still a deadly enemy and open warfare, desired for so long, was a cruel mistress, This was the start of a 3-month campaign that was one of the hardest ever fought by the British Army, the only compensation lying in the fact that they were winning. The fighting ranged from full-on assaults on layered defensive positions to bloody ambushes and the resulting frantic skirmishes. There are few more stressful military operations than an advance to contact through unknown country against a concealed enemy. The war was in its last stages but the casualty lists were mushrooming fast. The war had never seemed so painful.*

Private Joseph LEWIS

King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 1st Battalion
Service Number: 22010
Date of Death: 4 October 1915
Age at Death: 28
Family: Son of Joseph and Elizabeth Lewis, Hayford Place, Larbert

Joseph Lewis, who was born in Ayr, was killed during the Battle of Loos.

On the morning of October 4, Joseph's battalion and one other were ordered to attack Hohenzollern Redoubt. They were to be helped by an artillery bombardment. It didn't happen and the attacking companies were, according to the battalion war diary, "practically wiped out" by machine gun and rifle fire. They had got only halfway across No Man's Land, which was 200 yards wide at this point. The battalion war diary recorded that 1 officer and 10 other ranks were killed but 103 were reported missing. As it said in the diary, "there is no doubt that most of the missing were killed."
Loos Memorial, France
Panel 97 to 98.

Corporal William LEWIS

Scottish Rifles (Cameronians) 1st Garrison Battalion
Service Number: 24060
Date of Death: 12 August 1918
Age at Death: 38
Family: Husband of the late Sarah Tracey Lewis; son of William and Jessie Main Lewis, 213 Gairdoch Terrace, Carron Road, Falkirk

William Lewis, who was Grangemouth-born, served in the Cameron Highlanders during the Boer War. He also served with the local regiment, the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.

The Cameronians battalion, to which he belonged, was formed at Hamilton, (Lanarkshire) in February 1916. The battalion was recruited from men who were in the reserve battalions of other regiments. At least half of the men joining the battalion when it was formed had been on active service on the Western Front or in Gallipoli and had been invalided home.

The 1st Garrison Battalion went to India where it remained for the duration of the war.

Corporal Lewis died of heat stroke at Meerut, a town about 40 miles north of Delhi.

Delhi 1914-1918 Memorial, India

Corporal Lewis was originally buried in the Meerut Cantonment Cemetery. The graves in the cemetery could not be maintained, so his death is recorded on the above memorial.

Private Alexander LOGAN

Royal Army Service Corps 596th Motor Transport Company
Service Number: DM2/189307
Date of Death: 4 October 1918
Age at Death: 25
Family: Son of Janet Logan, Tryst Road, Stenhousemuir and of the late William Logan

Alexander Logan was a draughtsman with Carron Company. He had attended Glasgow School of Art for seven sessions. The *Falkirk Herald* commented that he was "looked upon as a brilliant student, with a fine career in prospect."

Private Logan died of pneumonia and malaria in Basra, Mesopotamia. As one historian explained:

> From May to September, the average daytime temperatures in Baghdad ranged from 100 to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Paralysing humidity was accompanied by sandstorms and locust plagues, with flies in stupendous numbers. Cholera was endemic, and typhus often broke out, along with less deadly but debilitating conditions like 'sandfly fever'. It [became], in Western eyes, one of the most repellent parts of the whole world – a quintessential 'white man's graveyard'.

Mesopotamia was part of the Turkish Empire which was mainly in Persia which is now Iraq. It also included part of what is now south-western Iran whose main town is Basra. Despite Private Logan's death being due to illness, the location of his grave is unknown.
Tehran Memorial, Iran Panel 5 Column 2

This memorial commemorates the Allied soldiers who died during the campaigns in Persia (now Iran) and who have no known grave.

When God Made Hell The British Invasion of Mesopotamia and the Creation of Iraq 1914-1921, Charles Townshend, 2010, page 7

In Peter Hart's view

the operations [in Mesopotamia] had achieved their original declared objectives in the first few days of the campaign in November 1914; everything else had been vainglorious nonsense. Mesopotamia was a tragedy from start to finish fought in circumstances of exceptional difficulty.

The Great War, 1914-1918, Peter Hart, 2013, page 294

The British army was never really able to exploit a numerical and material superiority that became, towards the end of the war, overwhelming. Indeed, the astonishing scale of manpower committed in Mesopotamia – totalling nearly 900,000 by the end of the war – and the even more stupendous cost of the campaign, suggest that the Turks could claim the campaign as a moral victory.

When God Made Hell The British Invasion of Mesopotamia and the Creation of Iraq 1914-1921, Charles Townshend, 2010, page 520

Private Francis LORN
(CWGC: LORNE)

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
12th Battalion
Service Number: 5823
Date of Death: 18 May 1917
Age at Death: 21
Family: Fifth son of Francis and Margaret McKinlay Lorn, 9 Goshen, Stenhousemuir

Private Francis Lorn

Francis Lorn was a gratefitter with Dobbie, Forbes & Company, Larbert. He joined up in October 1914 and went the Western Front in September 1915. Two months later, his battalion was sent to serve in the campaign in Salonika.

After serving there for almost a year, Francis Lorn required hospital treatment for dysentery. He was taken to Malta where he spent a month in Imtarfa Hospital and then convalesced on the island for six weeks. In February 1917 he rejoined his battalion in Salonika.

On 19 May 1917, (the day after his death) the *Falkirk Herald* reported that his family had received the news that he had been severely wounded and was dangerously ill. Two weeks later, his death from his wounds was then reported. He was wounded in the abdomen and left hand on 8 May and died ten days later.

Francis Lorn was wounded when British forces attacked the defences of the Bulgarian Army at Doiran on the night of 8-9 May. Previous attacks in April had failed. After an extended artillery bombardment, the main attack went in at 9 p.m. The 12th Battalion of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders in the centre of the attack went forward at 9.50 p.m. and actually entered the Bulgarians' front line. It had advanced close under its barrage and took the Bulgarians totally by surprise. They suffered heavy losses. Large numbers were caught in their dug-outs which were "burrowed beneath the parapets with entrances leading down from the floor of the trenches". There was a considerable amount of hand-to-hand fighting. Many of the Bulgarian soldiers coming out of the dug-outs were bayoneted.

The Argylls withdrew because the battalions on each flank failed to make significant progress. In addition, all the Argylls' officers taking part became casualties.

Four attempts were made on the Bulgarian defences during the night resulting in huge casualties (12,000 British killed, wounded or captured) and the attack was called off. One Bulgarian position known to the British soldiers as "Boris" was also called by them the "valley of death".

When the battalion was relieved, the battalion war diary commented: "Everyone was 'pretty well-done up'"

It is notable the Salonika front was quiet from the time of this attack until two months before the end of the war.

Imtarfa Hospital, Mdina, Malta. Malta became known as the "Nurse of the Mediterranean" because there have been so many hospitals on the island to treat soldiers and sailors who were wounded or ill.

Sarigol Military Cemetery, Kriston, Greece B. 279.

HE ASKED LIFE
AND THOU GAVEST HIM
LENGTH OF DAYS

This cemetery is 25 miles north of Thessaloniki, and contains the graves of many who took part in the attacks of April and May 1917, and who were treated at the CCS established at Sarigol.

David Stevenson's view was that "Salonika was the best example of a waste of Allied resources on a sideshow that contributed almost nothing, until the last weeks of the war, to Germany's defeat."

1914-1918 The History of the First World War, David Stevenson, 2012, page 161

Private Charles MAITLAND

Canadian Infantry (Cameron Highlanders of Canada) 43rd Battalion
Service Number: 1000443
Date of Death: 27 October 1917
Age at Death: 28
Family: Husband of Janet Maitland, Stewartfield Place, Larbert; son of John and Marjorie Maitland, Castlehill, Larbert; brother-in-law of William Osborne (q.v.)

Charles Maitland was a ticket collector at Larbert Station before he emigrated to Canada in June 1912. He was employed as a bank clerk in the Bank of Canada. He enlisted in the Canadian Army in December 1915 at a place called McGregor which was 80 miles west of Winnipeg. A year later, he sailed from Halifax to Liverpool for training in Britain.

On 29 May 1917 Charles was given permission to marry. His bride was Janet Osborne, whose widowed mother lived at Stewartfield Place, Main Street, Larbert. This was close to where Charles lived iuntil he emigrated but how they met up is not known. The wedding took place at Folkestone on June 4. A fortnight later, Charles knew that he was going to the Western Front to join the 43rd Battalion, CEF. He left on July 4.

Private Maitland joined his battalion on July 26. Three months later, on the day before he was killed in action, his battalion was involved in very heavy fighting following a large-scale attack on the German Army south-west of Passchendaele. The 43rd Battalion was one of three assaulting battalions which was to make its way across the Ravebeek swamp towards the Bellevue Spur leading to the main Passchendaele Ridge. Despite heavy rain, which continued all day, the attack began at 5.40 a.m. About an hour later the battalion reached Bellevue Spur and began trying to clear out "two formidable-looking Pill Boxes on the crest of the ridge". But when they moved forward beyond the pill-boxes they were hit by very heavy artillery fire. The other assaulting battalions were falling back. Inspired by Lieutenant Robert Shankland, who was awarded the Victoria Cross for his role during the day, part of the 43rd Battalion was just able to hold its position on the top of the Bellevue Spur about 40 yards in front of the pill-boxes. During the rest of the day further attacks built on this footing so that by mid-afternoon the spur was captured. The attack had gained about 900 yards and these gains were secured that night. Battalion casualties were estimated to be 13 officers and 300 other ranks.

On October 27, the day on which Charles died, the battalion war diary recorded that "The day was comparatively quiet and there was very little shelling by the enemy." The war diary then went on to summarise the battalion's casualties over the two days 26th and 27th October:

Officers
Killed 2 Missing 1
Wounded 10
Other Ranks:
Killed 36 Missing 66
Wounded 234

Charles Maitland's grave was originally located near Strombeck, Waterloo.

Menin Gate Memorial, Ieper, Belgium.

Able Seaman Alexander MALCOLM

Royal Naval Division Howe Battalion
Service Number: Clyde Z/4986
Date of Death: 2 June 1917
Age at Death: 24
Family: Husband of Mary Roberts Malcolm, 147 West Carron

Able Seaman Alexander Malcolm

Alexander Malcolm was a moulder at Falkirk Foundry, which was located on Graham's Road, beside the Forth-Clyde Canal. He enlisted on 1 June 1915; he had been married for 9 weeks. On 1 December he joined Howe Battalion which was taking part in the Gallipoli campaign. That campaign ended for the battalion when it was evacuated between 7 and 9 January 1916.

The battalion was transferred to the Western Front, landing in France on 12 May 1916. A fortnight later, AB Malcolm was diagnosed with scabies and conjunctivitis which led to his being invalided to Britain the following month.

He returned to Howe battalion at the beginning of 1917. As part of the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division he was involved in the main battles of the first half of 1917. (See entry for AB John Watson.)

It was during a relatively quiet period on the front lines that he was killed by enemy shellfire. From the

middle of May the battalion had again been in the Gavrelle sector. The war diary report for June 2 stated that: "Enemy barraged our line in reply to a barrage which our artillery put over. More shelling than normal during the day. In evening were relieved."

Arras Memorial, France Bay 1.

Private Robert MARR

Royal Scots 16th Battalion
Service Number: 38350
Date of Death: 20 (CWGC: 21) November 1917
Age at Death: 21
Family: Son of Robert and Agnes Marr, 11 Millflats Street, Carron Road, Falkirk

Robert Marr belonged to one of the most well-known Scottish battalions of the First World War. It was known as McCrae's battalion, as it was raised, and commanded, by Sir George McCrae, an Edinburgh businessman and MP. It was built round the Hearts football team – 11 of their players volunteered – and their supporters. By December 1914 the battalion had 1,000 recruits. Unfortunately, it is not known when Robert Marr joined the battalion.

It went to the Western Front in January 1916. It was to lead the attack near La Boiselle on the first day of the Battle of the Somme. That was a bloodbath. By the time the battalion was relieved, only 180 out of the 800 soldiers who took part in the attack on the first day survived.

On 26 August 1917, the 16th Battalion of the Royal Scots, along with the 15th Battalion, took part in an attack on the German Army's position near Hargicourt, which was ten miles north-west of St Quentin. The two battalions were on the extreme right flank of the British

Private Robert Marr

Army; they were next to the French-held part of the Western Front. The attack met strenuous resistance from the Germans. There were nearly 200 casualties in the battalion in the two days they were involved in this attack.

The 15th and 16th Royal Scots were the leading battalions in the attack near Poelcapelle on 22 October. The attack began at 5.35 a.m. but the German artillery had already hit the British soldiers as they assembled for Zero hour.

Captain Randle Evans reported that "after about 300 yards the enemy machine-gun fire was very heavy and the men not hit took cover." According to the regimental historian, this meant that "they were forced to embed themselves in the mud [of No Man's Land] without stirring a limb above the surface". They were stuck there until a German counter-attack at 7 a.m. gave them a chance to get back to their own lines.

This was "probably the most ghastly day experienced by the 15th and 16th Royal Scots". The 16th Battalion had over 250 casualties.

In November Robert's battalion was serving in trenches near Cherisy, about nine miles south-east of Arras. On the 20th, according to the battalion war diary, "About thirty shells fell on our front line during the day… otherwise everything quiet.". At 7 p.m. a patrol established that there was a "passable" gap in the enemy wire about thirty yards long. Four hours later, eight patrols were sent out. They "attempted to enter the enemy trenches … [but] were repulsed by heavy machine gun & rifle fire without getting inside the enemy wire. Two men were reported missing". Robert Marr was one of these casualties.

Before he joined the army, Robert was employed in Carron Iron Works.

Rookery British Cemetery, Heninel, France A. 2.

Heninel is a village about 6 miles south-east of Arras. The cemetery was named after a group of trenches

Private Hugh MARTIN

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
7th Battalion
Service Number: 275505
Date of Death: 9 April 1917
Age at Death: 25
Family: Younger son of Hugh and Eliza Reid Martin, The Hollies, Larbert

Private Hugh Martin

Hugh Martin, whose father was headmaster of Larbert Central School (now Larbert High) between 1886 and 1913, was a clerk in the Glasgow office of the Banknock Coal Company. He joined the local regiment in September 1914 and went to the Western Front in December that year.

Private Martin fought in the Battle of St Julien in April 1915. On May 24, he was caught in the German gas attack. As a result, he had to be invalided home and didn't return to his battalion until the end of January 1916. The battalion took part in two major phases of the Battle of the Somme: the attack on High Wood in July, and the attack on Beaumont Hamel which began on November 13. (See entry for James Binnie or Robert Smith.)

Its next major involvement was in the Battle of Arras. Hugh Martin was killed on the first day of this battle. He was one of the Lewis gunners in his platoon. The whole gun team was put out of action. His battalion, like the others belonging to the 51st Division, "attracted most of the enemy's firepower."

At the beginning of April, the 7th Battalion had moved to Roclincourt and on April 9 had taken part in the general attack on Vimy Ridge. It helped to push forward the front line to "within striking distance of Bailleul." The Official History commented that the first day of the Battle of Arras was "one of the great days of the war. It witnessed the most formidable and … most successful British offensive hitherto launched."

The battalion historian described how "the fighting went on till the night of the 11th, [the battalion was relieved then "in a blizzard of exceptional severity]. Trench after trench [was] taken by bombing, by sudden rushes, by stealth in the dark or by straightforward assault in co-operation with the Artillery".

Hugh Martin was among the 38 men of the battalion killed between April 9 and 11.

Highland Cemetery, Roclincourt, France II. A. 28.

WE LOVED THEE WELL BUT JESUS LOVES THEE BEST
GOOD-NIGHT

Roclincourt, a village a little east of the road from Arras to Lens, was just within the British lines before the Battle of Arras 1917; and it was from the village that the advance on the first day of the battle was made on the 9th April 1917.

For a detailed description of the Argyll's action at Arras see entry for Pte. William Armit on page 6.

Cheerful Sacrifice, Jonathan Nicholls, 2005 edition, page 96

Military Operations France and Belgium, 1917, Volume I, Cyril Falls, 1940, page 201

Highland Cemetery

Private James Eadie MENZIES

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders 7th Battalion
Service Number: 2356
Date of Death: 4 February 1915
Age at Death: 21
Family: Eldest son of Helen Eadie Menzies, Central House, Eadie's Buildings, Stenhousemuir and of the late James Menzies

Private James Menzies (top right)

James Menzies had a "bright, genial disposition [and was] well-liked by everybody." He was an engineer employed by Carron Company. He was "a splendid craftsman holding three first-class certificates of merit for his skill in this capacity." He enlisted in September 1914 and went to the Western Front in December.

He was admitted to hospital in Bailleul on 24 January 1915 with scarlet fever. (Scarlet fever was commonly a childhood disease. Symptoms included a sore throat, high temperature and a distinctive pink-red rash). Two days later, he was transferred to a hospital in St Omer, and died nine days later. Private William Taylor (q.v.) was reported as having died of the same fever. He had died a week before James Menzies.

Longuenesse (St Omer) Souvenir Cemetery, France I. A. 35.

HE GIVETH ALL

St Omer was the GHQ of the BEF and an important hospital centre.

Lance Corporal Thomas MENZIES

Gordon Highlanders 2nd Battalion A Company
Service Number: S/3596
Date of Death: 16 May 1915
Age at Death: 23
Family: Son of Andrew and Margaret Menzies, nee Richardson, 24 Stewartfield Place, Larbert

Thomas Menzies had "a quiet and unassuming nature". He was a gratefitter with Dobbie, Forbes & Company, Larbert. He enlisted at the end of August 1914. He had a short period of training in Aberdeen before he arrived on the Western Front near the end of January 1915.

He took part in the fighting at Neuve Chapelle but he was killed as his battalion was attacking the German trenches near Festubert. The *Falkirk Mail* reported that he was "bravely charging the enemy. He was seen getting out of the trench and in the forward movement was shot in a vital part." This was on the second day of infantry attacks in the Battle of Festubert, which was intended to support a major French offensive further south in Artois. Thomas

Lance Corporal Thomas Menzies

Menzies's battalion was to support the 2nd Battalion Scots Guards which "went forward with magnificent dash". The 2nd Gordons were sent in to protect the left wing of the Scots Guards, but without success. Casualties were very heavy, especially since the battalion hadn't really taken a leading part in the attack.

Thomas Menzies was one of the 53 Gordon Highlanders killed in the attack on Festubert.

Le Touret Memorial, France Panel 39 to 41.

The Gordon Highlanders in the First World War 1914-1919, Cyril Falls, 1958, page 43

Le Touret Memorial

Private Henry MILLAR
(CWGC: Miller)

Seaforth Highlanders 8th Battalion
Service Number: S/40907
Date of Death: 22 August 1917
Age at Death: 27
Family: Son of Mary Marshall Miller and of the late Thomas Miller; grandson of John and Agnes McLaren, Skinflats

Harry Millar was reported missing after his battalion attacked near Frezenberg during the early stages of the Battle of Passchendaele.

Private William Crawford wrote to the family:

> The battalion went into action on 22nd August, and a part of the line advancing too far, were cut off from the others. Inquiries have been made, but no information has been ascertained concerning them and except that it is believed that a number of them were made prisoners… I may say that of those missing at present, about half are likely to be prisoners.

The Seaforth Highlanders undertaking this part of the attack were "annihilated" by machine-gun fire. In addition, in his report on the operation, the Commanding Officer said that "Our barrage appears to have been very short."

The second wave of the leading company suffered "a good many casualties before reaching the front line [and] the area they passed over was subjected to practically no enemy shelling."

By 7.45 a.m., three hours after Zero-hour, the battalion "was substantially back in its original position. Enemy sniping became very troublesome and many casualties resulted."

A year later, Private Millar was presumed killed in action. He had enlisted in 1915, having given up his job as a miner at Carron Colliery.

Tyne Cot Memorial, Ieper, Belgium. Panel 132 to 135 and 162A.

The Fifteenth (Scottish) Division 1914-1919, J Stewart & John Buchan, 1926, page 182

2nd Lieutenant James Archibald Montgomery MILLER, M.A.

Northumberland Fusiliers 7th Battalion
Date of Death: 16 April 1917
Age at Death: 25
Family: Son of Mary Miller, Dowanhill, Glasgow and of the late William Miller

In June 1914 James Miller graduated from Glasgow University with an M.A. degree. He was also a Divinity student and became a "very popular" student-assistant minister at the united parishes of Larbert and Dunipace. (Larbert Old Parish Church, as it is now known, and Dunipace Parish Church, which was known as Denovan Church; the latter has been converted into homes for some years. The union of Larbert and Dunipace parishes lasted until 1962 when they became separate parishes.)

The Reverend John Fairley said that James Miller

> had a bright, sunny nature and had a real pleasure in going in and out of the homes of the people. He was a careful and methodical worker and for one so young and inexperienced he preached with remarkable ability and acceptance to all. He had a kindly sympathetic nature and, I am confident, had he been spared, that he would have excelled as a pastor and been trusted as a real friend of the people… He was a young man of much ability and great promise. It was astonishing to see the hold he had gained in the place during so short a sojourn among us. He was very happy here and I was looking forward to having him as my assistant when the war was over.

James was born in Port Bannatyne on the island of Bute and attended Rothesay Academy. In 1909 he began his studies at Glasgow University. He became

Lieutenant James Miller

a member of the University's Officer Training Corps. After graduating in 1914, he began to study Theology in session 1914-15.

The Reverend Fairley explained why his assistant joined the army:

> I remember his desire and determination expressed to me to join the army; he felt that he could not continue to ascend the pulpit stair and preach to the people when the nation was in the midst of such a terrible conflict; he felt that it was his duty to be in the fighting line; and so he forsook the ministry of the Church temporal for service in the field.

James Miller received his commission in September 1915 and arrived on the Western Front in the middle of 1916 as an officer with the Northumberland Fusiliers.

Lieutenant Miller was killed during the Battle of Arras when his battalion was involved in "sharp fighting" on Wancourt Ridge. On April 15 the Germans occupied the ruins of Wancourt Tower. These ruins were located between the two front lines. Lieutenant Francis Buckley wrote: "The place was of vital importance to us as it commanded direct observation on all the roads leading our part of the front."

The Germans were forced out of the ruins by a 6th Northumberland Fusiliers platoon, but the Germans attacked again when Lieutenant Miller's 7th battalion was taking over the area from the 6th. This was "at an unfortunate time for us," Lieutenant Buckley recollected, "and it was a vile night, with a blizzard of snow. The German attack succeeded in driving our men out of the Tower and buildings and though several bombing attacks were made that night to recover the position it could not be done."

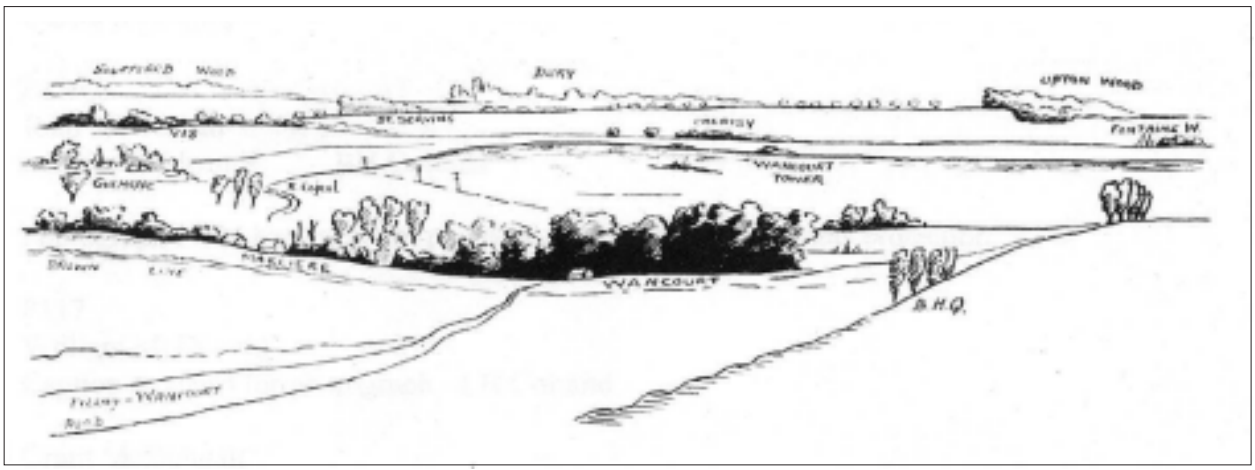
The battalion war diary stated: "The attack failed but reliable information was obtained as to the exact amount of trench the enemy had captured and was holding"

It then recorded the death of 2nd/Lt Miller, J A M and 20 other ranks. At daylight on April 16 every gun available to the British artillery in the area was used to bombard the tower and at 11.53 a.m. two companies of Lieutenant Miller's battalion retook the tower and held on to it.

Arras Memorial, France Bay 2 and 3.

Military Operations France and Belgium, 1917, volume 1, Cyril Falls, 1940, page 380

Q.6.A. and other places Recollections 1916, 1917, 1918, Francis Buckley, 1920, page 130



Wancourt Ridge

Private Thomas Brown MILLER

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders 7th Battalion
Service Number: 276949
Date of Death: 31 July 1917
Age at Death: 31
Family: Youngest son of the late John and Mary Miller, late of Gilmerton, Broomage Avenue, Larbert

Private Thomas B Miller

Thomas Miller was a teacher at Dennyloanhead School before the First World War. He was one of the 19 members of Falkirk Tryst Golf Club who lost their lives during the war.

He enlisted in April 1915 and, after 11 weeks' training, he went to the Western Front.

Private Miller was killed in action on the first day of the Third Battle of Ypres (often known as the Battle of Passchendaele). The 7th Battalion of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders did not take part in the opening day's attacks so it seems that Thomas Miller was serving with another battalion on July 31, possibly the 8th Battalion of his own regiment.

On the first day of the battle the 51st (Highland) Division and the 15th (Scottish) Division belonged to the left wing of the British divisions involved. After a fortnight's intense bombardment of German lines the attack began at 3.50 a.m. Whereas the right wing of the attack failed completely, the Divisions on the left wing achieved all of their objectives, overcoming any resistance they met and defeating the German counter-attacks in the afternoon. The 8th Argylls reached the Steenbeek, which was actually beyond their objectives but counter-attacks forced them to retire.

Menin Gate Memorial, Ieper, Belgium Panel 42 and 44.

The Steenbeek and the battlefield of the Third Ypres

Private Albert Duff MILNE

Gordon Highlanders 1st/6th Battalion
Service Number: 288047
Date of Death: 8 July 1917
Age at Death: 32
Family: Son of Jane Milne, 11 Tryst Road, Stenhousemuir and the late James Milne

Private Albert Milne

Private Albert Milne was "a brave and good soldier and did his duty cheerfully and courageously" according to his Commanding Officer, writing to his mother after his death. Other letters home from the chaplain and from Private Neil McLean described the circumstances of his death: "Their battalion was in the support trenches which were being heavily shelled, when Private Milne was struck by a piece of shell and killed instantaneously."

Albert was one of 10 men killed during this bombardment. He had been at the front for roughly three weeks before his death. He had enlisted in September 1916. Prior to enlistment he had been a moulder with Dobbie, Forbes & Company, Larbert. He was a good footballer, having played both for Stenhousemuir FC and for East Stirlingshire FC.

Vlamertinghe New Military Cemetery, Belgium I. F. 11.

This cemetery is 3 miles west of the town centre of Ieper.

Sergeant George MITCHELL

Highland Light Infantry 17th Battalion
Service Number: 43278
Date of Death: 4 September 1917
Age at Death: 23
Family: Son of George and Isabella Mitchell, 139 Gairdoch Terrace, Carron Road, Falkirk

George Mitchell was a junior footballer "of some repute", said the *Falkirk Herald*. His club was Twechar Rangers. (Twechar is a small village outside Kilsyth. It had a very Protestant population. Nearby Croy was famed for its Roman Catholic population.)

George was employed as a moulder at Mungal Foundry. In October 1914 he enlisted in the Highland Cyclist Battalion. After two years' training, he went to the Western Front. He took part in several attacks over the following year. For example, his battalion had an important role to play on the first day of the Battle of the Somme and had been quite successful. At the end of the battle the battalion attacked the German lines at Beaumont Hamel on November 18. That was a failure.

Having spent 1916 and the first half of 1917 in the Somme area, in June 1917, Sergeant Mitchell's battalion, along with several others, took over from the French a 4-mile stretch of trenches from the sea to south of Nieuwpoort in Belgium. The battalion was to remain in this area for four months. Their first day in the line was typical of the daily routine of aerial and artillery 'strafe' but no important attacks:

"26.6.17

The break of day seemed the signal for enemy activity and his heavy trench mortars bombarded our front line; at times this bombardment of great intinsity [sic] and much havoc was wrought

Sergeant George Mitchell

to the breast work which constitutes the only protection the men have. Later in the day enemy artillery of heavy calibre played on a small part of the right coy front… This artillery fire was continued for nearly 4 hours."

Having spent six weeks out of the front line prior to August 29, the battalion returned to the front at Nieuwpoort. This town was being shelled constantly all through the night. After five days in the front line, the battalion was relieved and went to Queensland Camp, near oost Dunkerke (East Dunkirk).

"About 2 p.m. the Germans shelled the camp. A hut occupied by B Company was struck. Two Sergeants who were in the hut at the time were killed."

One of these sergeants was George Mitchell.

Coxyde Military Cemetery, Belgium III. E. 21.

Coxyde (now Koksijde) was about 6 miles behind the front line in 1917. The village was used for rest billets and was occasionally shelled. It became the most important of the Commonwealth cemeteries on the Belgian coast and was used at night for the burial of the dead brought back from the front line.

Acting Leading Seaman James MITCHELL, M.M.

Royal Naval Division Hawke Battalion
Service Number: Clyde Z/3776
Date of Death: 8 October 1918 (CWGC: **9** October)
Age at Death: 31
Family: Son of Mary Mitchell, Yorkston Buildings, Stenhousemuir & the late James Mitchell

James Mitchell was a gratefitter employed by Dobbie, Forbes & Company before he enlisted on 7 April 1915.

He was drafted to Gallipoli where he saw active service. When Gallipoli was evacuated by the Allied forces, he transferred to Mudros on the island of Lemnos. He then served on the Western Front from May until November 1916. He took part in the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division's attack on Beaumont Hamel but he was seriously wounded in the leg and, two days later, had to be invalided back to Britain. He didn't return to France until June 1917 when he was at Base Depot, Calais. In July 1918 he rejoined Hawke battalion.

Leading Seaman James Mitchell

On 8 October LS Mitchell's battalion took part in an attack near Cambrai. The objective was the village of Niergnies, four

miles south-east of Cambrai. The attack began at 4.30 a.m., with support from the artillery and from eight tanks. The first objective, the trench line in front of Niergnies, was captured by 6 a.m. and by 8.40 a.m. the village and the woods behind it were taken. A German counter-attack, with seven captured British tanks, began at 9.30 a.m. These tanks managed to drive the RND men out of the village. When two of the tanks were put out of action, a British counter-attack regained the village by 9.55 a.m.

The fighting lasted all morning with repeated German attacks, all of which were repulsed.

At 3 p.m. the British advance was renewed and the German line was again pushed back.

James was one of the 61 men and 12 officers of the RND who were killed in action on October 8. The town of Cambrai was taken two days later.

James's death was a second major blow to his mother in 1918. In May her husband had died of influenza and pneumonia.

In August 1919 the official announcement was made that James had been awarded the Military Medal. Given the timing of this announcement and the fact that his battalion was only involved in fierce fighting at the time of his death, it seems most likely that he received the award for his actions then.

Vis-en-Artois Memorial, France Panel 1 and 2.

Regimental Sergeant-Major Robert S MONTEITH, M.C.

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
1st/5th Battalion
Service Number: 201241
Date of Death: 1 August 1918
Age at Death: 29
Family: Son of the late Robert and Isabella Monteith and stepson of Janet Monteith, 8 East Carron

Robert Monteith was a regular soldier who joined the army in 1909 at the age of 19. He served in Malta for three years. When the First World War began, his battalion was in India. It returned to England in November and arrived in France a month later.

In February 1915 Robert suffered from frostbite and returned to Britain to be treated at Charing Cross Hospital in London. He was in hospital for nearly four weeks.

He returned to the Western Front in July 1915 and was promoted to the rank of Sergeant. He had been rising through the ranks since joining the army, and was obviously an exemplary

R S M Robert Monteith

soldier throughout his career. There isn't a single blemish recorded on his Conduct sheet.

His battalion was involved in the battle of Loos. On 1 October he was hit in the back by shrapnel. He was treated at 22 General Hospital, Camiers. "The bullet was extracted, was extruded by an incision two inches in length," wrote J P Gray, a doctor at the Military Hospital at Trent Bridge, Nottingham, where Robert was treated from October 2. J P Gray's report, written on his

Vis-en-Artois Memorial

discharge on October 22, continued: "There is still an unhealed wound. He has got out, earlier than I should have allowed otherwise, because his father has died suddenly."

In January 1916 he was drafted to Egypt and joined the 1st/5th Battalion. He was promoted to the rank of Regimental Sergeant-Major for the duration of the war. In the two years he was in Egypt, he showed that he was undoubtedly a brave soldier. In March 1917 he was "mentioned in despatches" by General Sir A J Murray. In December, during the fighting to capture Jerusalem from Turkish forces, he was awarded the Military Cross. The citation read:

> On several occasions our infantry, having reached its objective, was driven back again by strong and determined counter-attacks. Grasping the situation he at once rallied and organised the men for a further attack and in the face of a severe bombardment from trench mortars and grenades, quite regardless of his own safety, led them forward to the firing line. Thanks to his courage and energetic efforts, the services he rendered on this occasion proved of inestimable value.

In April 1918 his battalion was withdrawn from Egypt and transferred to the Western Front in the wake of the Germany Army's success in the Spring Offensive in March-April.

In June Robert was allowed two weeks' home leave and he returned to East Carron. He had been back in the front line for only two weeks when he was killed in action in an attack which was repeating that of July 29. (See the entry for James Provan.)

At 4.49 a.m. on August 1st, after a bombardment lasting about 50 minutes, the advance was led off by the 5th KOSB and the 5th Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders; its strength was down to 6 officers and 260 other ranks due to the fighting two days previously. Despite poor visibility, the attack on Beugneux and Hill 158 was "entirely successful".

After Hill 158 was captured: "Bn pushes on up the ridge, but held up by intense M G fire from 3 sides. Lt Col Barlow DSO – RSM Monteith – CSM Macnab & 30 more were killed during this period." (*Battalion War Diary 1 August 1918*).

By the end of the day the battalion strength was down to 2 officers and 130 other ranks, plus the Medical Officer.

Oulchy-Le-Chateau Churchyard Extension, France II. A. 3.

There are 32 soldiers of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders who all were killed in action on 1 August 1918 and whose graves are in this cemetery. Oulchy-Le-Chateau is a village 12 miles south of Soissons.

Oulchy-Le-Chateau Churchyard Extension

Lance Corporal John MORRISON

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
10th Battalion
Service Number: 1269
Date of Death: 10 September 1918
Age at Death: 21
Family: Nephew of Mrs George Roughead, 13, St Crispin's Place, Stenhousemuir

Lance Corporal John Morrison

John Morrison lived with his aunt before he joined the army in 1913. He went to the Western Front in May 1915 but in December that year he was transferred to Salonika. He served there for more than two years before returning to the Western Front at the start of August 1918.

At 12.30 a.m. on September 10 an order was received, saying that John's battalion was, that day, to

seize and occupy Hill 135 on Vimy Ridge near the town of Thelus and also a ridge in Holnon Wood. It was thought that there was little chance of carrying out the order successfully. It was a night of torrential rain, gale force wind and it was "inky dark".

At 5.45 a.m. the battalion went forward. It crossed 3,000 yards of No Man's Land without a single casualty thanks to the rain. The German trenches were stormed and the German soldiers were killed in their dugouts. The objectives were all achieved. The Germans made several attempts to recover their lost ground but gave up at 8 p.m. It was, says the battalion historian, "A brilliant action fought by all officers and men with the greatest determination and skill."

John Morrison was one of 50 casualties suffered during this attack. He had been on the Western Front for only five weeks when he was fatally wounded. The letter of Reverend Duncan Blair is an interesting example of what was said to grieving relatives about the death of a soldier:

> The death of such a gallant soldier is a sore loss to our battalion, in which he was known for his good qualities and his excellent work, especially in the very trying day of the fight. The company commander will no doubt inform you of the respect in which he was held by all the officers, and there are many comrades in his platoon who mourn the loss of a quiet and unselfish boy…
> I wish not only to assure you of the gallantry and devotion of your nephew, but to seek to express my deepest sympathy and that of the battalion with you in your hour of sorrow. However painful the loss of such a dear boy must be, there is ground for great pride and comfort in the character of his life and in the noble sacrifice he has made so freely for his home and country. It is by the efforts of such brave lads as he that we are gradually coming within sight of the longed-for day of victory, and none of us can be too grateful for the sacrifices made that we and our children may be free. May God grant you strength to bear your heavy cross with patience and resignation.

Heath Cemetery, Harbonnieres VIII. J. 1.

Harbonnieres is a village 17 miles east of Amiens.

Private David MUNN

Highland Light Infantry 14th Battalion
Service Number: 42477
Date of Death: 24 November 1917
Age at Death: 25
Family: Husband of Agnes Laird, 203 West Carron; (later, Agnes Martin, 5 Dollar Avenue, Falkirk); father of David Munn; only son of David Munn, 12 Church Street, Stenhousemuir and of the late Lizzie Munn

David Munn gave his occupation as electric cranesman when he married Agnes Laird in Larbert East UF Church in July 1916.

He belonged originally to the Royal Scots Fusiliers and was then transferred to the HLI. He was reported missing on 24 November 1917. On that day, the 12th Battalion of the HLI and the 12th Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment were ordered to capture the village of Bourlon. This was following up the opening days of the Battle of Cambrai. At 2.30 p.m. the battalions attacked following about 200 yards behind the 12 tanks leading the attack. Within an hour the village had been entered, though the tanks then withdrew.

Three HLI companies even reached German trenches north of the village. A German counter-attack surrounded these forward companies. By the end of the afternoon the other British troops were forced to withdraw 500 yards from the village.

The survivors of the HLI attack who were cut off by the Germans on the 24th had to surrender on the 25th. By then HLI casualties numbered 17 officers and 428 other ranks.

The fighting near Bourlon continued for another two days but ultimately, the British were forced to give up all the advances they made on the first day of the Battle of Cambrai.

10 months later, Private Munn was officially presumed killed in action. His death notice included the verse:

> He went with a manly heart.
> No conscript would he be
> The blood was in his veins
> For death no fear had he.

Cambrai Memorial, Louverval, France Panel 10.

Lance Corporal Robert MURRAY

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
7th Battalion A Company
Service Number: 2364
Date of Death: 25 April 1915
Age at Death: 21
Family: Fourth son of William and Annie McGregor Murray, 9 St Crispin's Place, Stenhousemuir

Robert Murray was a moulder with Jones & Campbell, Larbert. He enlisted in the local Territorial battalion on 7 September 1914. The battalion went to the Western Front in December.

He was killed in the Battle of St Julien (25 April-4 May) which was the first major piece of fighting the

Lance Corporal Robert Murray

battalion was involved in. It was the second phase of the Second Battle of Ypres (22 April -25 May, 1915). It is described in detail under the entry for Private James Dea on page 39. The battalion war diary recorded that 6 officers and 100 other ranks were killed, but 150 men were posted missing and this was to double the number of other ranks who were killed in this attack. The total number of casualties in the battalion was over 500, including Robert Murray.

The Memorial Notice published in the *Falkirk Herald* on 29 April 1916 said:

> For love of freedom and of right,
> the sons of Scotia bravely fight.
> One son, our brother, despising loss,
> has won, well done, a humble cross.

Menin Gate Memorial, Ieper, Belgium Panel 42 and 44.

Gunner Alan F McARTHUR

Royal Field Artillery 106th Brigade Headquarters
Service Number: 7129
Date of Death: 30 August 1916
Age at Death: 21
Family: Elder son of Robert and Margaret McArthur, Larbert

Alan McArthur, whose father was headmaster of Torwood School, was born in Alloa. He was an employee of R Greenlees, wholesale ironmongers, whose premises were in Great Clyde Street in Glasgow. He joined up at the start of the war. He did his training at Brighton and became a proficient telegraphist and telephonist. He went to serve on the Western Front at the end of August 1915.

Gunner McArthur was killed during the Battle of the Somme in 1916. His brigade spent the second half of August at Maricourt, which was six miles east of the town of Albert. On August 29 at 8 a.m. the British guns began a bombardment of Guillemont. The next day the plan for a general offensive was called off because of bad weather. At 4 p.m. there was a "considerable bombardment on our left," the brigade war diary recorded.

G J Bell, the orderly officer, wrote to Gunner McArthur's father:

> He was mending telephone wires under shell-fire – a thing that requires the greatest courage and coolness – when he was instantly killed by a fragment of shell.
> I cannot say how sorry I am both personally and because he was a very valuable man. He was the first of my telephonists to be killed, and his death has been a great blow to his companions.

Carnoy Military Cemetery S. 30.

Carnoy is a village about 6 miles to the east of the town of Albert.

Able Seaman Robert McCAIG

Royal Naval Division Hood Battalion
Service Number: Clyde Z/3360
Date of Death: 21 November 1915
Age at Death: 22
Family: Eldest son of James and Margaret McCaig, nee Reid, 9 Union Street, Stenhousemuir

Robert McCaig was a labourer before he enlisted on 17 March 1915. He joined the Hood battalion on 20 August that same year. During his service in Gallipoli the battalion was involved in trench warfare with the usual spells of duty in the front lines, in the reserve trenches and rest on the beaches or base camp. Raids by both sides were a regular feature of trench life. It was during Robert's short period of service on the peninsula that, as one member of his battalion wrote:

> sickness became the chief enemy, not the Turk, as a cause of casualties to the British. Dysentery was the main plague. Considering the conditions on the battlefield on those hot summer months, this was almost impossible to avoid. The swarms of flies feasting on the corpses, the poor latrines, and the general lack of clean fresh water made an epidemic a certainty.

Robert was one of the victims. On 23 October 1915 he was admitted to the 15th Stationary Hospital in Mudros (on the Greek island of Lemnos) suffering from dysentery. It was estimated that about 700 men a day were reporting sick, chiefly suffering from dysentery.

AB McCaig died of dysentery a month later.

East Mudros Military Cemetery, Lemnos, Greece III. D. 101.

This Cemetery is on the Greek island of Lemnos in the north-east Aegean Sea. Many medical units were based on the island.

The Hood Battalion, Leonard Sellers, 1995, page 121

East Mudros Military Cemetery

Lieutenant Kenneth McCASKILL

Gordon Highlanders 1st Battalion
Date of Death: 27 September 1918
Age at Death: 26
Family: Elder son of Janet McCaskill, Galatea, Burnhead Road, Larbert, and of the late Murdoch McCaskill

Lieutenant Kenneth McCaskill

Kenneth McCaskill's father died on 31 August 1918. His mother received notification of Kenneth's death five weeks later. His battalion, which had spent the previous ten days in training, attacked the German trenches near Flesquieres, which is a village six miles south-west of the town of Cambrai. This was part of the Allies' Offensive to break through the Germans' Hindenburg Line.

The Battalion's war diary records that, on 27 September:

> Bn attacked after heavy barrage by our artillery at 5.20 a.m., some difficulty at the start owing to the inexperience of the young platoon commander, going forward at 6 a.m. with the 8th King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment (76th Brigade), leading companies suffered considerable loss. Enemy resistance was strong at this stage.

One historian of the Gordon Highlanders commented that: "The Gordons were at this stage of the war an eager but young battalion, with inexperienced platoon commanders."

Despite the problems, Flesquieres was captured from the Germans that day, "a great feat of arms for young troops". It was during this attack that Lieutenant McCaskill was killed. The *Falkirk Herald* reported that he was "shot in the chest by a machine-gun bullet and was killed instantaneously".

He had joined the army soon after the First World War had begun. Before the war, he had been employed in Carron Company's office in Buchanan Street, Glasgow. For the first 15 months of his army service, he had been on the recruiting staff in Aberdeen. He then took up duties at Tillicoultry, Clackmannanshire. There he soon proved to be highly popular with his fellow-officers and the men under his command.

Flesquieres Hill British Cemetery VII. G. 7.

The Gordon Highlanders in the First World War 1914-1919, Cyril Falls,1958, pages 246 & 247

Corporal Andrew McCOWAN

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
7th Battalion
Service Number: 276406
Date of Death: 20 July 1918
Age at Death: 20
Family: Eldest son of Andrew and Jessie McCowan, Rae Street, Stenhousemuir

The *Falkirk Herald* reported that Andrew McCowan had enlisted "practically on leaving school." He enlisted in June 1915 when he was only 17 years old. He arrived on the Western Front in October 1916.

He was wounded in May 1917 and did not return to the front lines until June 1918. Andrew McCowan had been back at the front for only six weeks when he was killed.

July 20 was the first day of an attack near the village of Sarcy that the battalion took part in. Though the attack was timed to begin at 8 a.m., the battalion did not leave its assembly position until 10.15 a.m. and then found it difficult to push on as the forces on their flanks were not up in time. One company pushed forward and managed to occupy high ground near the Bois de Coutron. Eleven men were killed as well as one officer on this the first day of the attack. The battalion historian's conclusion about the "very severe fighting" which continued near Sarcy until July 23 was that "a little ground was gained, but at a cost out of all proportion to the tactical advantage."

Corporal Andrew McCowan

Before enlisting, Andrew was employed by his father who had set up a wholesale confectionery business which, in the 1920s, was to become one of Stenhousemuir's best-known businesses, famous for Highland toffee. The business remained in the ownership of the family until 1959, and flourished thereafter, but from the 1990s faced increasing problems until it ceased to exist in 2011.

Marfaux British Cemetery, France IV. I. 6.

Marfaux is about 12 miles from Reims. There was severe fighting there until the position was retaken from the German Army which had captured it in May 1918.

Private Alexander McCULLOCH

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
1st/8th Battalion
Service Number: 279215
Date of Death: 3 October 1918
Age at Death: 26
Family: Husband of Nellie Fish, Island Cottages, Bothkennar; father of Alexander, Jane and Nellie

Private Alexander McCulloch

In the death notice for Private Alexander McCulloch, "his sorrowing widow and 3 bairns" included the verse:

A better husband never lived,
Nor daddy true and kind,
Worthy of everlasting love
From those he left behind.

Alexander McCulloch was a coal miner employed by Carron Company. He enlisted in November 1914 but in September 1916 he was assessed as being unfit for military duties. No reason was given for this in his obituary in the *Falkirk Herald*. He returned to civilian life and it seems that he worked at Howkerse Colliery at Bothkennar.

He was recalled to the army in April 1918 and had been on the Western Front for only six weeks when he was killed in action. This happened during the Allies' final offensive against the German on the Western Front.

On October 2 the German regiment opposite the 8th Argylls withdrew to the Vendin – Douvrin Line which "he was going to hold to the last." In the early hours of a "very dark night" patrols were sent out and one reached the eastern end of Humbug Alley near its junction with Hand Cuff Trench. Despite increased shelling, the British patrols pushed on "boldly" reaching their objective by dawn. When the remaining companies of the 8th Battalion came up to join them, "the discomfiture of the enemy was complete." By 6.30 a.m. the battalion was beginning to consolidate its hold on the Vendin Line. This process continued during the day. An attack between 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. was made to straighten the line held by the Argylls.

The advance made on October 2nd and 3rd was significant. On a 1500-yard frontage, 4,000 yards were gained at a cost of 5 killed, including Alexander McCulloch.

The *Falkirk Herald* report, which was published two days before the Armistice, said that "It appears that Private McCulloch was killed with 5 others by shrapnel as the company was about to be relieved."

Philosophe British Cemetery, Mazingarbe, France IV. F. 8.

This cemetery is in the town of Mazingarbe, which is 3 miles north-west of Lens.

Private Robert Fish McCULLOCH

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
14th Battalion
Service Number: 275929
Date of Death: 24 April 1917
Age at Death: 22
Family: Son and stepson of Tom and Mary McCulloch Fish, Skinflats; son of William Wilson, Yonderhaugh, Skinflats.

At the time of the 1911 census Robert was a sixteen-year-old miner who was employed as "horsekeeper below ground". He resided in Skinflats with his step faher and mother, his four young sisters and two-year - old brother.

On 9 November 1914 he left his job at Carronhall Colliery and enlisted in the army. He went out to the Western Front at the start of October 1915. About six months later, he was admitted to hospital suffering from enteric fever. He was home on leave at the end of January 1917. He returned to the Western Front on February 7.

Private McCulloch was killed during the Battle of Arras. His battalion was in the front line near Dessart Wood. Under the cover of a barrage which went on for two hours from 4.15 a.m., the battalion went into action. This was the first "over-the-top" attack for the 14th Battalion.

The leading waves found that the Germans' barbed wire had not been

Philosophe British Cemetery

Private Robert McCulloch

cut and that they were on the alert for a British attack. Held up by the uncut wire, there was a number of casualties.

Two companies of the battalion went through Beaucamp village and then ran into heavy enemy fire. When all the battalion companies tried to advance up the high ground north of Beaucamp, many men were hit by machine gun and rifle fire. There was also "deadly enfilade fire" from their left. The village of Beaucamp remained in German hands.

Total casualties for this attack were over 250.

Lowrie Cemetery, Havrincourt, France G. 25.

Havrincourt is 8 miles south-west of the town of Cambrai.

Captain George Bartholomew of the 14th Battalion Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders wrote a vivid description of the action on 24 April 1917 in a diary he kept:

It was great when we reached the German front line to find that parties of prisoners had already been collected, and were being marched off back. After we crossed the German line we went down a gentle slope, and then saw the village in front in the first light of the dawn. The barrage moved slowly, and we had to lie down and wait several times. When we entered the village everything was pretty well mixed up. Machine-gun bullets were stotting off the street at one's feet, snipers were firing from nowhere, and with the houses and trees in the way it was difficult to know exactly where our front Coys. were. We decided not to move on till the front Coys. got clear of the village. About 200 yds. from the edge of the village we dug in along this line and placed our Lewis guns. All the time we were digging in we were badly fired on from the left flank, and it wasn't long before we were also shelled; between the two we had several casualties….

[Lt Bartholomew was asked to report to Captain Urquhart, his Commanding Officer.]

I reached a garden on the left of the village, after being heavily sniped at, and having to crawl over ruins and through hedges. There I found Capt. Urquhart along a hedge. He was facing the left flank and being fired on a bit. He seemed very puzzled, and commenced to ask me what was happening as 'B' Coy. seemed to have retired. While he was speaking to me a bullet struck the back of his helmet and penetrated his head; he must have died at once…

When night came on, we stood to the whole time; 'B' and 'D' Coys. went back to the old Hun trench in support. Parties went out to bring in wounded. Apart from several bursts of rifle and machine-gun fire, when the Hun was supposed to be attacking, and intermittent shell fire, there was nothing very much doing. We got word that we were to be relieved at 3 A.M., but the K.O.R.L. did not arrive till dawn…

So ended the first 'over the top' for the 14th Argylls. We made many mistakes, did many wrong things, but the Battalion had gained a lot by it, and we have been quite different ever since. We had five officers killed, and seven wounded, and lost in all about 250 O.R. 'D' Coy. only brought back about 25 men.

Lowrie Cemetery, Havrincourt

Private John McDONALD

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
7th Battalion
Service Number: 1881
Date of Death: 24 May 1915
Age at Death: 19
Family: Son of John and Ann McDonald, 166 West Carron

Private John McDonald

John McDonald was employed in the Berlin blacking shop of Carron Works. He joined the local regiment of the Territorial Force in April 1913 when he was nearly 18 years old. As a Territorial he was mobilised with his battalion in September 1914 and he left for the Western Front in the middle of December 1914.

He was killed in action during the German offensive beginning on 24 May 1915, known as the Battle of Bellewaarde Ridge.

On the previous day, his battalion was ordered to take over the front-line trenches at Wieltje. At 2.45 a.m. the next morning, the German artillery began a fierce bombardment. "Simultaneously, a yellowish-greenish vapour issued at intervals of 30 yards from the German trenches." This chlorine gas attack stretched over almost five miles of the front and was to last for four-and-a-half hours. The cloud of gas rose to a height of 40 feet above the ground.

Lieutenant A D Morrison, an eyewitness, wrote: "It bleached the sandbags, it withered the grass, it corroded the buttons on the men's tunics, and jammed the mechanism of their rifles."

The men had been given respirators during the previous week. These were pads of cotton waste in bags of mosquito netting. They were to be dampened in a soda solution and then tied over their mouths and nostrils. Lieutenant Morrison said that they "inspired little confidence."

The battalion war diary recorded that about 200 men had to leave the trenches suffering from the effects of gas. Many were slow to put on their respirators because the German trenches were close to theirs and because the German infantry attacked swiftly after the gas. The battalion's trenches were heavily shelled for the whole of the day. The German infantry made some gains on either side of the centre front which held its ground. "But no sensational results were achieved," according to the Official History. The battalion casualties included 6 men killed, 20 wounded and 19 gassed.

White House Cemetery, St Jean-les-Ypres, Belgium III. C. 7.

A SILENT THOUGHT
A SECRET TEAR
KEEPS HIS MEMORY
EVER DEAR

St Jean is a village just outside Ieper.

Military Operations France and Belgium, 1915, Volume II J E Edmonds, 1928, page 342

Magnificent But Not War, John Dixon, 2014, page 285

Scottish troops wearing early gas protection

Private William McDONALD

Seaforth Highlanders 2nd Battalion
Service Number: 267684
Date of Death: 4 October 1917
Age at Death: 35
Family: Grandson of Ann McDonald, 166 West Carron & of the late John McDonald

On the day he was killed, Private William McDonald's battalion was in action from Eagle Trench east of Langemarck during the Battle of Passchendaele.

At 6 a.m. the artillery opened fire on the German trenches and the leading platoons advanced.

Two leading platoons of each assaulting company carried trench boards in case there was difficulty in crossing water and marsh after their starting point. Platoons were to advance in succession under the cover of a creeping barrage with 100 yards between platoons and 150 yards between companies. The ground they were expected to cross was extremely muddy and platoons lost their formation, especially on the left where the leading wave walked into their own barrage.

The battalion war diary notes that "as the advance proceeded, companies endeavoured to regain formation but this was found to be impossible, owing to the confusion and the excited condition of the men." Then, before the Seaforths had reached their objectives, "machine gun fire was encountered, from left flank generally and this fire caused considerable casualties." These numbered 362. It is to be presumed that Private McDonald was killed at some point during this attack.

Tyne Cot Memorial, Ieper, Belgium. Panel 132 to 135 and 162A.

Private George Grant Barr McDOUGALL

Canadian Mounted Rifles 1st Battalion Saskatchewan Regiment
Service Number: 425134
Date of Death: 15 September 1916
Age at Death: 20
Family: Son of James and Mary McDougall, Station Terrace, Larbert

Private George McDougall

George McDougall was employed as a rangefitter in the Dorrator Foundry, Camelon before he emigrated to Canada. In the years 1912-15, he worked on a farm at Oxbow, Saskatchewan. The *Falkirk Herald* reported that he enlisted in the Canadian Army when he reached the age of 18. However, he gave his date of birth to the Canadian Army as 3 August 1893, which made him a few days short of being 22 years old. He joined up in August 1915 and after six months training in Canada, he left with his battalion on 13th March 1916. Three months later he was in the trenches on the Western Front.

Private McDougall was killed during an attack south-west of Courcelette, which is six miles north-east of Albert. This was during the Battle of the Somme. Courcelette was the scene of very heavy fighting in September 1916. On 15 September, Private McDougall's battalion carried out two raiding parties. Both were described in the battalion diary as "successful" but one party found that when they were in position to start their attack, their artillery's shells were falling amongst them, and not in front of them, "inflicting many casualties". Furthermore, when they did advance, the enemy's line was found to be intact and very strongly manned and more men had to be pushed in to hold on to their line until they were relieved. There was heavy German artillery fire during the day and "incessant" machine gun fire and sniping, again causing many casualties.

The battalion played a relatively small part in an offensive which was to last seven days, starting on 15 September – they were relieved that evening having suffered about 250 casualties. Courcelette was on the extreme left of the Allied offensive and was captured on the 15th by the 2nd Canadian Division supported by tanks, with the 4th and 6th Brigades storming the outer trenches and a sugar factory, and the 5th Brigade seizing the village.

Courcelette was destroyed by German artillery after its capture and remained very close to the front line until the Germans withdrew to the Hindenburg Line the following Spring. Private McDougall's death occurred on a very notable date when tanks were used for the first time by the British Army.

Courcelette British Cemetery, France VI. B. 13.

His grave had initially been 4 miles north-west of the town of Arras.

On Larbert War Memorial George's name is spelt McDougal. It is not spelt like this anywhere else.

Private David McEWAN

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
1st/8th Battalion
Service Number: 303163
Date of Death: 17 March 1917
Age at Death: 24
Family: Fifth son of Margaret McEwan, nee Glen, Fraser's Buildings, Stenhousemuir and of the late David McEwan

David McEwan, who was an iron dresser with Dobbie, Forbes and Company, Larbert, had been a corporal in the local Territorial Force battalion. He was mobilised at the start of the war.

On 17 March 1917 a battalion raiding party of 13 officers and 382 other ranks raided the German trenches at Roclincourt, which is 2 ½ miles north of Arras. A report on the raid stated: "The fighting was extremely severe, especially on the left . . .but it was carried to a successful issue in spite of many difficulties. Our casualties (a total of 64 including 25 missing) were heavy but not in proportion to the damage inflicted on the enemy."

Captain F W Bewsher praised the "valiant conduct of the officers and men of the 1st/8th Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders. In spite of the strongest resistance on the part of Germany's best troops, they overcame all obstacles and annihilated the entire garrison of the trenches they raided."

Private McEwan was reported missing on 17 March 1917, and then at the end of the year officially presumed killed in action on that date. A line in the verse accompanying the death notice from his mother read:

Your unknown grave
is the bitterest blow.

Arras Memorial, France Bay 9.

Private John S McEWAN

Royal Highlanders 'Black Watch'
9th Battalion
Service Number: S/5148
Date of Death: 29 September 1915
Age at Death: 37
Family: Eldest son of John and Jemima McEwan, 120, West Carron

John McEwan was a moulder with Carron Company before he enlisted in September 1914. He did not go to the Western Front until 8 July 1915. The following weeks were spent in training for trench warfare. Then, on September 24, the battalion moved to its assembly position to take its part in the Battle of Loos.

Private McEwan died in the 3rd General Hospital, Le Treport from gunshot wounds received in the battle. It seems most likely that he was wounded on the first day of the battle and died a few days later.

When zero hour, 6.30 a.m., on 25 September arrived, the 9th Battalion of the Black Watch, like the other battalions of the 15th (Scottish) Division, found it difficult to start their attack because the gas cloud, which was supposed to sweep over to the German positions, lingered over their trenches. A piper playing 'Scotland the Brave' got the battalions going. The battalion war diary noted:

"The battalion gallantly charged out of our trenches and captured the enemy's first line trenches - the

Private John McEwan

portion of the line allocated to the Battalion and known as the 'Jews Nose' was extremely strong. Between our own trenches and the German fire trenches at the 'Jews Nose' six officers were killed, one seriously wounded and about 100 other ranks killed."

By 7.25 a.m. they had broken through the two German trench lines in front of the village of Loos, and were taking over the village itself. However, there had been considerable losses, especially among officers, with the result that the Division's battalions became mixed together and leaderless. The men left the village about 8.30 a.m. and began climbing Hill 70 – they had "the appearance of a bank holiday crowd." Once over the crest and on the downward slope, the men were in full view of the German soldiers on their second line, which was extremely well-protected. When the 900 or so

Scottish soldiers were halfway down the slope, the German gunners opened fire. There was no cover for the attackers; the German wire was impenetrable. Hardly any attacker escaped the slaughter. Lieutenant-Colonel G S Cartwright wrote that No Man's Land was "carpeted with their [battalion's] dead lying so thickly that they almost touched all the way across." At 1 a.m. on September 26, the battalion was relieved.

By then the 9th Battalion of the Black Watch was "virtually annihilated". 20 out of the 22 officers in the battalion were killed or wounded, and amongst the other ranks there were 680 casualties out of a battalion strength of 850 men. Thus, 25 September 1915 has been described as "The Black Watch's darkest day".

Le Treport Military Cemetery, France Plot 2. Row G. Grave 2.

Le Treport, a coastal town about 20 miles north-east of Dieppe, was an important hospital centre during the war.

The Donkeys, Alan Clark, 1961, page 152

Jim Conners, President, Black Watch Association, in *The Courier*, 24 September 2011

On the day that the Battle of Loos began, the *Falkirk Herald* published a poem written by John McEwan. It was called *Tommy's Dug-out.*

There's a dug-out in the trenches,
Oh! Could you but understand,
What that dug-out means to "Tommy",
As he fights for the dear old land.

It's his only joy, and comfort
When the din and strife are o'er,
And he tries to snatch some slumber
On his little muddy floor.

Try and picture for a moment
What that shelter means to one
Who for hours has been on duty
Holding back the brutal Hun.

Every stitch of clothing is sticking,
And he's mud from head to toe,
As he quietly slings his rifle
And comes off "sentry go".

See him crawl into his dug-out,
Very soon a gentle snore
From that wet and weary "Tommy",
Stretched upon his muddy floor.

Dear friends at home, when you retire
To the soft bed which we adore,
Just have one thought for gallant "Tommy"
On his little dug-out floor.

Private William McEWEN

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
10th Battalion
Service Number: 275501
Date of Death: 12 October 1917
Age at Death: 25
Family: Eldest son of Henry and Maggie McEwen, Muirhead Place, Stenhousemuir

Before the war, William McEwan was a member of the Territorial Force. He joined the 1st/7th Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders (No 2305) on 8 September 1914, and left for the Western Front in mid-December. Thereafter, he spent more of his time back in Britain as a result of injury than he spent at the front.

On 22 February 1915, he went into hospital at Steenwerck with neuritis but the following day the diagnosis was frostbite and he returned to England for treatment in a hospital in London. He didn't return to his battalion until the beginning of September. Within a week, he was wounded in the head by a shell, and again he returned to England for treatment. He was out of front-line action for almost a year, rejoining his battalion on 10 August 1916.

Then William was the victim of a curious accident on 13 December 1916. That night he was in a billet with two other soldiers when one of them decided to get a better fire by using the some of the contents of a petrol tin that was lying in the room. The fire flared up, not surprisingly, and the flames burned the left arm and left thigh of William McEwan. He was taken to the Field Ambulance and then to No 49 Casualty Clearing Station. The incident led to a Court of Inquiry heard by three officers. The testimony of the two soldiers in the billet with William survives, and also the statement by Major J F Jones, the Commanding Officer: "I consider that this injury was purely

accidental & the soldier was in no way to blame."

William's return to Britain was delayed by the inquiry, whose findings have not survived. He was treated in the 2nd Northern General Hospital in Leeds. At the beginning of February he spent a fortnight convalescing at Swinton Grange in Malton, Yorkshire. This was a mansion house built in 1905 and was used as a hospital during the war. He then got 10 days' furlough, which he spent home in Stenhousemuir.

At the end of May, he returned to the Western Front and three weeks later, he was transferred to the 10th Battalion of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders.

William McEwen was killed in action during the latter stages of the Third Battle of Ypres, in a phase known as the First Battle of Passchendaele. The whole battle was infamous for the state of the ground over which it was fought. The rain in the autumn of 1917 and the shelling of both sides churned the ground into what seemed like "a vast lake". The Germans did not always fight from trenches in this battle. The battalion war diary said that they had "organised shell holes and retired into the Pill boxes when the bombardment started."

The 10th Battalion arrived in position at 3 a.m. for the attack of 12 October – Paschendale Ridge Battle as it was named in the war diary. Zero hour was 5.30 a.m. A creeping barrage was used by the artillery but the leading companies found it very difficult to cross the wet ground. They "did not get close enough up behind the barrage when it lifted."

Two companies were held up by a pill box in front of a position called Burns House. It was only 100 yards from their starting point. "This pill-box," wrote Lieutenant-Colonel W D Croft, "was the first of a group which was swarming with very lively Huns who literally mowed our fellows down…. I doubt if there was ever a more expensive pill-box to our troops" Its capture was "the end of our officers that day." An important point noted in the battalion diary was that:

"The Enemy showed a white flag but still continued to fire so the occupants were all killed, some 40 in front and another 20 attempting to escape from the rear. The enemy had 4 machine guns in this pill box."

The line of attack which followed took the men along the bed of a river. It was a quagmire. "Some of the men remaining embedded in the mud were shot down while others wounded fell into the shell holes and were drowned." But, because the British guns did not knock out the Germans' strong points, the battalion war diary concluded: "We suffered most of our casualties from machine gun fire."

The battalion was relieved the following day. 56 members of the battalion had been killed out of a total of 240 casualties.

In the view of the Divisional historian, the action on 12 October 1917 was a "battle which should not have been fought". While recognising that the infantry made "serious errors" by not keeping to the intended line of advance, he concluded that "rain and mud" were the chief factors in the failure on 12 October; "no man could progress at more than a snail's pace, and sheer exhaustion was a factor more potent than the enemy in bringing the advance to a standstill."

Tyne Cot Memorial, Ieper, BelgiumPanel 141 to 143 and 162.

In all the army forms that survive, including one signed by his father, and one signed by his mother, the surname is spelt 'McEwan'.

The History of the Ninth (Scottish) Division, John Ewing, 1921, page 243.

Nick Lloyd in Passchendaele A New History, published in 2017, states that "The attack on 12 October should never have gone ahead." (Page 236).

Three Years with the 9th (Scottish Division, Lieutenant-Colonel W D Croft, 1919, pages160-161

The ruins of the pill box

Corporal (LWM: Pipe-Major) **George McFARLANE**

Royal Highlanders "Black Watch" 3rd Battalion.
Service Number: 3143
Date of Death: 14 November 1914
Age at Death: 42
Family: Husband of Mary Hosie McFarlane, Church Street, Stenhousemuir; father of George

George McFarlane died suddenly from peritonitis at Nigg in Ross-shire.

He had been born at Kinnell in Forfarshire (now Angus). He enlisted at Stirling. The 3rd Battalion Black Watch was moved from Perth to Nigg early in the war to help in the defence of Cromarty in case of a German seaborne attack. It then became a training unit there.

This "tin town", photographed in 1915, was being completed at the time of George McFarlane's death.

Nigg Parish Churchyard, Ross and Cromarty Grave 153

Private John McFARLANE

Royal Highlanders "Black Watch" 4th/5th (Angus & Dundee) Battalion
Service Number: 202171
Date of Death: 24 April 1918
Age at Death: 28
Family: Son of Peter and Marion McFarlane, Williamson's Land, North Main St, Stenhousemuir

Private McFarlane was killed during the German Spring Offensive. His battalion had moved into the Guedecourt sector just south of Bapaume at the end of January 1918. It was not involved on the first day of the German offensive until the late afternoon when it was sent in motor buses to assist further south where there had been a breakthrough. The soldiers, it was reported, were "in great form and laughing as if off on a holiday".

In the morning of March 22, a series of withdrawals began, with heavy losses as the battalion withdrew. Within two days the battalion had lost 150 casualties and by the time it was relieved on the evening of March 30, its strength was reduced to 1 officer and 30 other ranks.

The battalion returned north to Flanders and took up position near the village of Voormezeele on April 11. Over the rest of the month, the battalion was involved in some more fighting. During this time, John McFarlane was killed in action. Having survived the severest fighting in March he was killed during a period which was considered by the regimental historian as 'fairly quiet'.

Voormezeele Enclosure No 3 Belgium, XIV. K. 8.

HE DIED THAT I MIGHT LIVE

This cemetery is 2 miles from the centre of Ieper.

A History of the Black Watch in the Great War, 1914-1918, A G Wauchope, Volume 2, page 96

Black Watch pipers after the capture of Longueval in July 1916

Driver Robert McGREGOR

Royal Field Artillery 8th Division Munition Column
Service Number: 133671
Date of Death: 8 October 1918
Age at Death: 26
Family: Only son of Peter and Annie McGregor, nee Eadie, 161 West Carron

Driver Robert McGregor

Robert McGregor, who belonged to West Carron, was killed in action as the Allies made their final attacks to push the German Army back towards their own border. He had been serving on the Western Front for two years.

On October 7 the 8th Division attacked the Rouvroy-Fresnes Line in conjunction with a French advance. An officer of the 2nd Battalion of the West Yorkshire Regiment wrote: "A magnificent barrage was put down and all objectives were quickly reached with but little opposition and very few casualties. A number of prisoners were taken who all appeared very pleased to be captured."

Since the Division was making good progress, the attack was continued. By the next day the whole of the Rouvroy-Fresnes system was captured though there was "some severe and costly fighting".

Robert McGregor was killed during the second day of the attack. A chaplain's letter told his parents that Robert "had been up to the guns with ammunition and was returning when he was hit by a shell." The chaplain wrote that Robert "had only lived a short time afterwards". It was unusual for such a letter not to say that the soldier had died instantaneously.

Roclincourt Military Cemetery, France VI. E. 13.

A SILENT THOUGHT
A SECRET TEAR
KEEPS HIS MEMORY
EVER DEAR

Roclincourt is a village a little to the east of the road from Arras to Lens.

The Eighth Division in War, 1914-1918, Lieutenant-Colonel J H Boraston & Captain Cyril E O Bax, 1925, pages 257, 259

Private William McGREGOR

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
10th Battalion D Company
Service Number: S/14473
Date of Death: 15 April 1917
Age at Death: 20
Family: Youngest son of Peter and Isabella McGregor, Skaithmuir Mill, Carron

William McGregor, who was employed by the Grahamston & Bainsford Co-operative Society Ltd, joined up in 1915.

Private McGregor was killed in action during the first phase of the Battle of Arras known as the First Battle of the Scarpe. His battalion went "over the parapet" at 5.30 a.m. on April 9, the first day of the battle. It shared in the general success of the first day. For example, it took about 100 prisoners. The battalion war diary

Private William McGregor

said that these German soldiers were "demoralized". It then went on: "In some Dug Outs Ham and eggs were found on the table and which were promptly devoured by our men"

About 1 p.m. the battalion reached the village of Athies, where D Company captured two guns.

By the end of the day, seven of the 16 other ranks killed belonged to D Company.

The 10th battalion was relieved on April 15. This was half completed about 10 p.m. When the rear platoon were about 1,000 yards east of Abbayette, two 5.9 shells fell among them. Lieutenant Hayworth and 6 other ranks were killed. It would seem that William was one of these men as he is one of the 6 soldiers from the 10th Battalion who died on that day and whose names are recorded on the Arras Memorial.

Arras Memorial, France Bay 9.

Private James Brewster McILROY

Royal Berkshire Regiment 5th Battalion (Formerly Royal Engineers) 174166
Service Number: 33680
Date of Death: 27 April 1917
Age at Death: 20
Family: Son of Mrs Mary McIlroy and of the late James McIlroy

Private McIlroy's birthplace was recorded as Stenhousemuir when he enlisted at Stirling but in the 1911 census it was stated to be Bo'ness. He was living there then with his widowed mother, seven brothers and two sisters.

He initially belonged to the Royal Engineers and fought on the Western Front from June 1915. It is not known when he joined the Royal Berkshire Regiment but it is likely to have been after he had recovered from serious wounds.

The 5th Battalion was involved in the Battle of Loos in 1915 and the Battle of the Somme in 1916. In 1917 it took part in the first two days of the Battle of Arras reaching close to the village of Monchy-le-Preux. It was captured by fresh troops the next day. The battalion was not involved in any major attack during the rest of the month.

James was killed in action when, as stated in the battalion war diary for 26th-27th April, the battalion was holding the front line near Fampoux. The diary went on: "under continuous heavy shell fire. Casualties not severe."

Fampoux is a town four miles east of Arras. It had been captured on the first day of the Battle of Arras (April 9).

Arras Memorial, France Bay 7.

Private Andrew McKENDRICK

Royal Highlanders "Black Watch" 6th Battalion
Service Number: 203043
Date of Death: 31 July 1917
Age at Death: 34
Family: Husband of Jeanie Webster, Hay's Buildings, Carronshore; father of Helen and Andrew

Private McKendrick was reported missing on the first day of the battle of Passchendaele, 31 July 1917. It was not until July the following year that he was "presumed to have died on that date or since".

The objectives of the 6th Battalion Black Watch on the first day of the battle were to cross the Steenbeek River and reach 200 yards beyond the German front lines. Andrew's battalion was shelled heavily as they took up position in their assembly area. According to a soldier in 'D' company, the bombardment was "merciless".

The battalion went forward in the second wave of attack and, despite stiff resistance, made good progress. About 10.50 a.m. 'D' Company had been able to cross the Steenbeek River and set up an advanced post there. It had to withstand three German counter-attacks between 3.45 and 5 p.m. But a heavy bombardment about 6 o'clock followed by another German attack forced a withdrawal. As a regimental historian wrote, "By this time the previous fifteen hours of continuous fighting had well nigh exhausted British and German alike, and the night passed without further incident."

The 6th Black Watch was relieved the following evening by which time 40 men in the battalion had been killed; the total number of casualties in the battalion was just over 300.

Andrew McKendrick was born in Forfar. He worked as a gardener. When he married in 1912, he gave his usual address as Greystane, Invergowrie. He had two children; his daughter was born in 1913 and his son in October 1917, a little more than two months after his death. He enlisted in Forfar in order to join his local regiment.

Menin Gate Memorial, Ieper, Belgium Panel 37.

Able Seaman Alexander Grey MacKENZIE

Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve Royal Naval Division Nelson Battalion
Service Number: Clyde Z/4568
Date of Death: 13 November 1916
Age at Death: 20
Family: Son of William and Bella MacKenzie, Bruce's Buildings, Burnhead Road, Larbert

Able Seaman Alexander MacKenzie

Alex MacKenzie was a clerk in the counting house of Carron Company. He was well-known in Camelon as a member of the Gymnasium Club. He enlisted in May 1915 and on 28 August 1916 he joined Nelson Battalion on the Western Front.

AB MacKenzie was reported wounded and missing on 13 November 1916 when the final major attack of the Battle of the Somme was mounted to capture the German lines at Beaumont

Hamel. The objective of the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division was the village of Beaucourt.

Nelson Battalion went in on the left of the advance in support of Hood and Hawke battalions. AB Joseph Murray of Hood Battalion recalled:

> The Drakes and Nelsons got all mixed up and, on our left, they were all banging and crashing about and there was terrible fire coming from this redoubt. It was a square of trenches lined with men manning machine guns – probably a hundred men in it – and it wasn't even touched by the [British] artillery. How they missed that, Lord only knows! We had terrible casualties.

The machine gun fire from the "cunningly concealed" German redoubt located between their first and second lines was devastating. The leading waves of the Battalion's attack suffered heavy casualties whilst the 3rd and 4th waves fell almost to a man.

At 12.20 an attack on the German 3rd line "by all available infantry in the first and second lines" was unsuccessful. An assault at 3.55 p.m. after a 10-minute artillery re-bombardment, also failed. At 6.41 p.m. the order went out to consolidate what had already had been gained.

Beaucourt was captured the next day and the battalions were relieved on November 15.

It was to be early in 1917 before AB MacKenzie was, officially, reported killed in action.

Ancre British Cemetery, Beaumont Hamel, France III. E. 5.

Alex MacKenzie is an exception to the "rule" that seemed to exist at the time of the First World War that all 'Macs' or 'Mcs' were spelt Mc; and the Mcs were listed after all the other surnames beginning M.

Private Duncan McLACHLAN (CWGC: MacLachlan)

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
7th Battalion
Date of Death: 25 April 1915
Age at Death: 23
Family: Son of Alex McLachlan, 23 Prospect Street, Camelon and of the late Ann McLachlan, nee McNicol

Private Duncan McLachlan

Duncan McLachlan, whose father was a gardener, was born at Java Lodge, near Craignure, on the island of Mull. He joined the army on the outbreak of war. His obituary said that "he had no particular liking for soldiering, but at the call of King and country he offered his service… He was a lad of an exceptionally attractive nature and character."

Private McLachlan joined up on 10 September 1914 and went to the Western Front in February 1915.

He was killed in the Battle of St Julien (25 April -4 May).The battle was the first major piece of fighting the battalion was involved in. It was the second phase of the Second Battle of Ypres (22 April – 25 May, 1915). It is described in detail under the entry for Private James Dea on page 39.

The battalion war diary recorded that 6 officers and 100 other ranks were killed, but 150 men were posted missing and this was to double the number of other ranks who were killed in this attack. The total number of casualties in the battalion was over 500 including Duncan McLachlan.

In a letter to his father, Private J Harley said that Private McLachlan was killed in the attack on the village of St Julien, and was buried near the village of Wieltze, along with his comrades who were killed in this attack.

Seaforth Cemetery, Cheddar Villa, Belgium Sp. Mem. C. 3.

THEIR GLORY SHALL NOT BE BLOTTED OUT

Cheddar Villa was the name given by the British Army to a farm on the west side of the road from Wieltje to St. Julien. On 25 and 26 April 1915, during the Battle of St. Julien, severe fighting took place in this area and the Commonwealth dead were buried on the spot. The cemetery was known as Cheddar Villa Cemetery. The name was changed in 1922 to recognise the preponderance of Seaforth Highlanders buried in the cemetery.

Military Operations France and Belgium 1915, Volume II, J E Edmonds, 1928, page 240

2nd Lieutenant Archibald McLARDIE

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
5th Battalion
Date of Death: 24 December 1915 (CWGC: 25)
Age at Death: 27
Family: Youngest son of Isabella McLardie, 7 Greenlaw Avenue, Paisley and of the late William McLardie

Archibald McLardie was a well-known amateur footballer. He played in the Paisley Grammar School team which won the first-ever Scottish School Shield in 1904. He then went to play for John Neilson FPs. His obituary also included the rather curious comment that he "assisted Queen's Park and St Mirren occasionally". In the case of St Mirren this probably refers to the fact that he played 5 times for them between 1910 and 1912.

He attended Glasgow University and served his apprenticeship with McRoberts, Son & Hutchison, writers, Paisley. He spent two years after qualifying with McLay, Murray & Speirs in Glasgow. (Some well-known legal names here!) He then became a solicitor with

Carron Company. His sporting skills were clearly shown as a member of Larbert Tennis Club.

Before coming to work for Carron Company, Archibald belonged to the Territorial Force 5th Scottish Rifles for two years. He received his commission to the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders in June 1915, and served at Gallipoli from 12 November. His front line service was performed at Krithia Gully, which was in Cape Helles. The firing line trenches were named after Glasgow streets: Hope Street, Argyle Street, St Vincent Street, Queen Street, Renfield Street.

On 19 December Lt McLardie and another officer led a successful attack on enemy trenches. Two days later, the battalion went back into the firing line at Krithia Nullah. Their trenches were heavily shelled on a daily basis. Then, on December 24, they moved to the support trenches. These trenches were shelled by howizters and shrapnel which killed Archibald McLardie and two other men from the battalion. According to the Divisonal historian, who served in Gallipoli, Archibald McLardie and his servant Private Hugh Kennedy "could well have gone to hospital… but, preferring the harder path, stayed at duty and later were laid together in a common grave." (They were to be buried in separate graves in Pink Farm Cemetery.)

Two days after their deaths, the British government ordered the evacuation of Helles, which was completed on 9 January – 35,000 soldiers were evacuated in just over a week.

Pink Farm Cemetery, Helles, Turkey III. D. 13.

The 52nd (Lowland) Division, 1914-1918, Lieutenant-Colonel R R Thompson, 1923, page 207

Private John McLAREN

Scottish Rifles (Cameronians) 2nd Battalion
Service Number: 10297
Date of Death: 22 September 1916
Age at Death: 39
Family: Son of Mary McLaren, 1 Lorne Terrace, Muirhall Road, Larbert and of the late John McLaren

Private John McLaren

John McLaren was not serving with the main part of his battalion when he was killed. At the start of September 1916 his battalion took over front line trenches near the small town of Hulluch, two miles north-east of Loos and did a 4-day rota in and out of the trenches. During the month the battalion war diary recorded meticulously the men of the battalion who died during the month.

But on the day of John's death, the war diary states: "Nothing to report". John and five others from the battalion whose deaths are not mentioned in the war diary were buried in a row in Philosophe British Cemetery, Mazingarbe while the other battalion casualties, with two exceptions, around the same date, were buried in Vermelles British Cemetery.

There is a strong possibility that John was serving nearby but outwith the command of the 2nd Battalion of the regiment. On August 3, four officers and 150 men were detached from the battalion to form "a spoils party at Clarke's Keep, Vermelles". If he wasn't there when he was killed in action, he was near at hand as a note with his will says that he died at Vermelles.

John was a regular soldier who had been a moulder with Jones & Campbell, Larbert before he joined the army. He had served in South Africa during the Boer War. He was a volunteer with the Baden Powell Police.

When the First World War broke out, Private McLaren's battalion was based in Malta. It returned to England on 22 September. It arrived on the Western Front in November. In the nearly two years he was there, he experienced some of the fiercest fighting on the front. The battalion took part in the first day of the Battle of the Somme in the trenches opposite Ovillers. Two of the battalion's companies were caught for an hour in a communication trench under intensive shellfire. Then the battalion went into the front line. The casualties reported for July 1 were 2 killed and 9 wounded, but the number of missing, 60, shows the effectiveness of the German artillery.

Philosophe British Cemetery, Mazingarbe, France IV. F. 8.

This cemetery is in the town of Mazingarbe, which is 3 miles north-west of Lens.

Gunner Donald McLEOD

Royal Field Artillery 65th Brigade
466th Battery
Service Number: 201979
Date of Death: 6 October 1917
Age at Death: 35
Family: Husband of Elizabeth Hodge, 3 Munro Street, Stenhousemuir; previously 12 Church Street, Middlesborough

Gunner Donald McLeod

One of the most famous footballers in the British Isles before the First World War was Donald McLeod. Joining from Stenhouse Thistle, he played for Stenhousemuir FC in 1901-02, then for Celtic FC in the years 1902 to 1908 and from 1908 to 1913 he played for Middlesbrough FC in Division 1, (the top league then), in England. He played four times for Scotland in the years 1905 and 1906. He was a right-back who was nicknamed "Slasher" on account of his speed and his ruthless tackling.

Donald was born in Laurieston in 1882 and brought up in Grangemouth and Stenhousemuir. He attended Larbert Central School. When he left school, he followed in his father's footsteps and worked as a slater. He signed for Stenhousemuir FC and played for them in 1901-02, their best-ever season in their first hundred years.

At the end of that season, he was signed by Celtic and he played in 155 games for them in what proved to be a glorious time for the club. During his six years with Celtic, the club won the league four times and the Scottish Cup three times. Donnie was "a brave, determined and highly skilful player… two-footed, fearless, and with tremendous speed."

In 1905-06 he won his first cap for Scotland against Ireland. Scotland won that match in Dublin 4 – 0. In the following season, he played in all three home internationals. When he played right-back against Wales in 1906 at Tynecastle Park in Edinburgh, Donnie was right back and, in front of him, at right-half, was his Celtic team-mate, Alec McNair. Alec, who was eighteen months younger than Donnie, had also been a pupil at Larbert Central School, and had played for Stenhousemuir. It was on Donnie's recommendation that Celtic had signed Alec, who went on to play for Celtic for over 20 years. Known as "the icicle" for his cool defensive play, Alec set a club record of playing 553 league games for Celtic. When he played his last game for Celtic, he was 41 years old!

The inscription on the reverse of this 9-carat medal says that it was presented by the club's directors to the players in recognition of winning in 1907-08 the Scottish League Championship, the Scottish Cup, Glasgow Cup, Glasgow Charity Cup. The rim of this particular medal is inscribed with the name Donald McLeod.

Season 1907-08 was Celtic's best season of the decade but during the season "weight issues" began to be a problem for Donnie. He had grown, it was said, "rather adipose" (that means he was fat!) After he had played poorly in a game against Queen's Park near the start of the 1908-09 season, he was transferred to Middlesbrough FC, then playing in England's top division.

When he played his first game for Middlesbrough on 10 October 1908, Donnie was 5 feet 8 $^{1}/_{2}$ inches tall and weighed 12st 8lbs (80kg). He played in all the rest of the games that season, and was their regular right back over the next three seasons, when they often were in the hunt to be top of the league.

According to the local evening newspaper, he was "a giant" in the local derby game against Sunderland in December 1910. But this match became infamous because Middlesbrough's manager tried to bribe the Sunderland captain. He offered him £30 for his side to "throw" the game. It was the Middlesbrough chairman, Thomas Gibson-Poole, who was behind this ploy. He was the local Conservative Party candidate in the parliamentary election to be held two days after the match. He believed that if Middlesbrough won against Sunderland (which they did 1 – 0) his chances of winning the election would be increased. But he lost the election! The Sunderland captain reported the illegal approach and the Middlesbrough manager and chairman were subsequently banned from football for life. In the opinion of the Middlesbrough club historian, this scandal "probably cost the club the First Division title" that season.

In all, Donnie played 148 times for Middlesbrough. In his eleven seasons playing in the First Divisions of Scotland and England he never scored a goal. In 1914 Donnie McLeod retired from football and became the owner of the Lord Byron pub in Middlesbrough. This was

The Lord Byron was situated on Bridge Street East. This pub was opened in 1864 and closed in 1939. It was used as a Seamen's Mission, warehouse and finally as a factory. It reopened as a pub again 70 years after it was closed.

probably the worst time to buy a pub because, shortly after the outbreak of the war in August 1914, the government introduced many restrictions on licensed premises, including drastically reduced opening hours.

Conscription was introduced in the spring of 1916. Donnie was 34 years old. He joined the Royal Garrison Artillery, and subsequently was transferred to the Royal Field Artillery where he belonged to the 466th Battery of the 65th Brigade. As a gunner with the RFA Donnie would be manning medium-calibre guns deployed close to the front lines. The 466th battery was equipped with 18-pounder guns.

This is an 18-pounder gun in action near Ypres in September 1917

Donald McLeod was wounded in action during the Battle of Passchendaele, a battle infamous for the quagmire of the terrain over which it was fought. A family story was that he had been manning a "railway gun", probably a howitzer, when he was injured. He died of his wounds on 6 October 1917 and was buried in Dozinghem Military Cemetery just outside the town of Poperinge in Belgium. Prior to the start of the battle on 31 July 1917, three Casualty Clearing Stations, known to the troops as Mendinghem, Dozinghem and Bandaghem were established here and Donald McLeod died at the 47th Casualty Clearing Station at Dozinghem.

In December 1905 Donnie married Elizabeth Hodge. Despite being a Celtic first team player, he described himself on his marriage certificate as a slater; Elizabeth was a domestic servant. They were to have three daughters, Elizabeth, Euphimia and Bethia. Only Bethia was born in Middlesbrough. The family lived as lodgers in a guest house there. Another lodger was Donnie's full-back partner, James Weir who had signed from Celtic two years after Donnie.

After Donnie had joined the army, his wife and daughters moved back to Stenhousemuir and at the time of his death, were living at 3 Munro Street. His daughters were then 9, 7 and 6 years of age.

In the year 2000 his Scotland jersey and cap from his match against England in 1906 were sold at auction for over £1200.

Dozinghem Military Cemetery, Poperinge, Belgium V. G. 7.

Private David McLUCKIE

King's Own Scottish Borderers 2nd Battalion
Service Number: 13871
Date of Death: 6 May 1915
Age at Death: 22
Family: Son of David and Graham McLuckie, Waterside, Carronshore; brother of John McLuckie (q.v.)

Private David McLuckie

Private David McLuckie, who was previously employed as a coal miner, went to the Western Front in February 1915.

On May 5, his battalion was ordered to attack the German position at Hill 60. It was "truly an awful place", Lieutenant Billy Congreve of the Rifle Brigade wrote in his diary. It was a man-made hill; it was created when a cutting was made for a nearby railway line. It was very important in the flat landscape surrounding the town of Ypres. It had already changed hands a few times during the first nine months of the war.

The Germans had taken Hill 60 again on the morning of May 5, using gas attacks against the British battalions there. The 2nd Battalion KOSB, part of 13th Brigade, was ordered to counter-attack and reclaim Hill 60. The attack began at 10 p.m. after a 20-minute bombardment, which "warned without cowing the enemy."

An eyewitness of the KOSB attempt to take Hill 60 was Lieutenant A Greg of the 1st Cheshire Battalion:

> At the allotted time they climbed over the parapet. The order was to go half right. They were met with a storm of rifle and machine gun fire from the hill. Our artillery had not yet stopped and soon theirs started. The poor Scots were simply blown back with lead. They started again and went half left. Their wounded were pouring into my trenches. The sounds were terrible, men shrieking, the fierce cackle of machine gun fire and the cruel shriek of the shrapnel. This was battle. When the next volley of star lights went up there were noticeably more bodies in no man's land. Wounded and belated Jocks were still returning, some helping other wounded back or bringing back the body of some comrade. The shattered remains of a fine regiment all found their way back to my already overcrowded trench.

David McLuckie died of his wounds received in the fierce fighting at Hill 60, just one of the 140 casualties his battalion suffered.

The regimental historian's conclusion on this attack by the KOSB was: "Hill 60 remained German, and no further attempt was made to retake it. Yet we did not thereby lose the war."

Divisional Cemetery, Ieper, Belgium B. 8.

This cemetery is a mile west of Ieper town centre.

The KOSB in the Great War, Stair Gillon, 1930, page 66, 67

Private John McLUCKIE

King's Own Scottish Borderers 6th Battalion
Service Number: 13744
Date of Death: 5 May 1918
Age at Death: 23
Family: Third son of David and Graham McLuckie, Waterside, Carronshore; brother of David McLuckie (q.v.)

Private John McLuckie

John McLuckie was a miner at William Pit, Carronhall before he enlisted in the army in August 1914. He went to the Western Front in May 1915.

Private McLuckie saw a great deal of service on the Western Front at the Battle of Loos in 1915, the Battle of the Somme, especially at Delville Wood on 14 August and Butte de Warlencourt on October 18. His battalion also took part in important phases in the Battles of Arras and Passchendaele in 1917.

During the German Spring Offensive of 1918, he was seriously wounded. This may have occurred between April 3rd and 16th when the battalion was in the front line at the notorious Hill 60. It is perhaps more likely that he was wounded on April 24th when an enemy attack on the Vierstraat Line just south-west of

Ypres surrounded and cut off the Battalion headquarters and two companies of the battalion. The battalion was relieved the next day.

The regimental historian commented that the 6th Battalion had faced "a tricky situation". It was "full of new recruits [516 in the whole of April], fine stuff but young and inexperienced". This in itself would have placed an extra burden on an 'old hand' like John McLuckie.

He died of his wounds at No 54 Casualty Clearing Station.

Boulogne Eastern Cemetery, France IX. B. 52.

This cemetery contains nearly 6,000 graves, an indication that Boulogne was one of the main hospital areas serving the Western Front. One of the unusual features of this cemetery is that the gravestones are laid flat, due to the sandy soil in the area.

The KOSB in the Great War, Captain Stair Gillon, 1930, page 369

Gunner Andrew McLURE

Royal Garrison Artillery 270 Siege Battery
Service Number: 190571
Date of Death: 19 October 1918
Age at Death: 19
Family: Eldest son of Thomas and Mary McLure, 29 James Street, Stenhousemuir

Andrew McLure was a moulder with Jones & Campbell, Larbert. He joined the army in January 1918 and had been on the Western Front for only three months when he was wounded as the Allied armies made their final attacks on the German Army in the Cambrai area. Private McLure died of these wounds.

The captain of his battery wrote to his mother to say:

> Your boy was an exceedingly fine and gallant soldier, bright and cheerful at all times. He showed a magnificent example of grit and courage, and endeared himself to all, both officers and men. His death is very deeply felt by us all. He lived and died a hero, and no man could do more. His share in the Great War was done nobly.

It is hard not to think that the Captain's comments were the kind of stock phrases that were allegedly used when officers wrote letters home about the casualties in their companies

Gunner Andrew McLure

Busigny Communal Cemetery Extension, Busigny, France VIII. C. 60.

Busigny is a village 10 miles south-east of Cambrai.

Royal Garrison Artillery in action on the Western Front

Private Matthew McNICOL

Gordon Highlanders 5th Battalion
Formerly Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders 325583
Service Number: 263026
Date of Death: 31 July 1917
Age at Death: 33
Family: Husband of Annie McNicol; father of Laurence McNicol; son-in-law of Mrs Jeanie Hodge, Wheatsheaf Buildings, Larbert; brother-in-law of Robert Hodge (q.v.) and of John Wood (q.v.)

Matthew McNicol was a resident of Alexandria in Dunbartonshire where he was employed as a painter and decorator. In November 1914 he joined the army.

At the time of his death, he belonged to the Gordon Highlanders. He had been at the front for only six weeks. He was killed on the first day of the Battle of Passchendaele when his battalion attacked the German front line over the Yser canal from the village of Boesinghe.

The battalion suffered 40 casualties before they left their assembly trench. It was to follow the 1/7th Black Watch into the attack. Unfortunately, its second wave did not go forward for 20 minutes and this led to the casualties.

Thereafter they met relatively few difficulties during the advance. There were casualties when the Gordons encountered a machine gun firing from a shell hole just behind a concrete emplacement; also from machine gun, rifle fire and bombers on the German left flank; from "serious opposition" at FRANCOIS FM. This strong point was captured by four platoons of the Gordons. "They were subjected to fire from three machine guns but, as the shell hole advance was carried out exactly as practised, the defenders, finding themselves unable to stop the advance gave themselves up when we got within 50 yards of their position. Here 4 Officers and 40 other ranks were taken prisoners." The Gordons then consolidated their position.

The battalion war diary concluded: "the whole attack was conducted entirely to the programme and in accordance with the careful training the battalion had received."

Three battalions of the Gordon Highlanders took part in the attacks of July 31. These were "a complete success," according to the regimental historian. The three battalions "were all at the top of their form".

However, Matthew McNicol was one of the 58 soldiers of the 5th Battalion of the Gordon Highlanders killed in action. The battalion's casualties that day totalled 244.

Artillery Wood Cemetery, Boezinge, Belgium IV. E. 3)

Private Matthew McNicol's headstone in Belgium

The Gordon Highlanders in the First World War 1914 – 1919, Cyril Falls, 1958, page 157

Artillery Wood Cemetery, Boezinge, Belgium

Able Seaman Hector McPHAIL

Royal Naval Division Hood Battalion
Service Number: Clyde Z/9049
Date of Death: 28 March 1918
Age at Death: 21
Family: Eldest son of Hugh and Helen McPhail, 94 Dock Street, Carronshore

Hector McPhail was a miner at Carronhall Colliery before he enlisted in April 1915. He joined Nelson battalion on 21 September and took part in the Gallipoli campaign until December 4 when his battalion was evacuated. He was transferred to the 8th Mining Corps for a month before rejoining Nelson battalion.

AB McPhail was now fighting on the Western Front until he was wounded in the right hip on 13 November 1916 on the first day of the attack on the German position at Beaumont Hamel. He rejoined his battalion in December.

In February 1918 he was transferred to Hood battalion.

At 4.50 a.m. on March 21, a terrific bombardment of gas and high explosive shells began along the whole of the Somme front. This was the start of the German Spring Offensive of 1918. As one RND general said, "There was no mistaking about it, this was the real thing."

Hood Battalion was in reserve at Havrincourt Wood. At 8.40 a.m. it was ordered to move up to the second system of defence at Trescault. This was held until late on the next day when the order was received to retire to Ruyaulcourt, which was reached at 4 a.m. on the 23rd. Six hours later, the order was to withdraw to the Green Line, a prepared defensive line on the entire front facing the German offensive. On March 24 "the enemy attacked and gained

Able Seaman Hector McPhail

access to our trenches". The battalion retired again and another retirement was needed later in the day. By then the situation was desperate. The RND front-line battalion commanders decided that if the whole Division was to avoid annihilation it had to retreat further. It was to "march across country to the neighbourhood of Bazentin le Petit and Martin Puich". This involved a march of about nine miles over the Somme battlefield of 1916. The next morning about 8 a.m. the Germans attacked again and by midday Hood battalion was withdrawing towards Courcelette. Within a couple of hours the pressure exerted by the German attacks made it necessary to retire to Thiepval which was held overnight. But at 4 a.m. on March 26 Thiepval was evacuated and a defensive line was formed in front of Hamel and Aveluy Wood. That evening the Division was relieved and Hood battalion went into reserve at Englebelmer. Yet, in the early hours of March 27, the battalion was warned to expect an attack by 2,000 German soldiers within minutes. But before the Germans reached Englebelmer, they were intercepted by other RND battalions and forced back.

Over the first week of the German Spring Offensive the battalions of the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division were in headlong retreat. Under constant pressure from the speed of the German advance, which repeatedly left Hood battalion with no support on its flanks or from the rear, there were successive difficult and dangerous retirements over the old Somme battlefield.

At the end of the first week of the German offensive Hector McPhail was killed in action.

Though the historian of the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division acknowledged that British forces "had suffered a defeat", he also concluded: "it was clear once and for all that, man for man, officer for officer, the British infantry was superior in tenacity, in resilience, in personality, to the enemy."

Engelbelmer Communal Cemetery, Boezinge, Belgium I.E.2

In July 1920 Hector McPhail's body was exhumed. It was reported to be at I.E.7. The exhumation located the body at I.E. 2. The exhumation report then recorded the Date of Death as "6/4/18". No reason is given for this.

The village of Englebelmer, which is 5 miles north-west of Albert, was in Allied hands during the whole of the War, and it was used as a Field Ambulance station.

The Royal Naval Division, Douglas Jerrold, 1923, page *294*

Lance Corporal Colin Hunter NISBET

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
7th Battalion
Service Number: 276418
Date of Death: 10 April 1917
Age at Death: 20
Family: Son of James and Lizzie Nisbet, 38 Steps Street, Stenhousemuir

Lance Corporal Colin Nisbet

Colin Nisbet was a clerk in the shipping office of Falkirk Iron Company, Graham's Road, Falkirk. He joined the army in June 1915 and went to the Western Front in October.

Lance Corporal Nisbet was killed on the second day of the Battle of Arras. He was "shot through the head while advancing over open ground" the Falkirk Herald reported..

At the beginning of April, in preparation for the battle, the 7th Battalion had moved to Roclincourt. On April 9 it had taken part in the general attack on Vimy Ridge. It helped to push forward the front line to "within striking distance of Bailleul." The Official History commented that the first day of the Battle of Arras was "one of the great days of the war. It witnessed the most formidable and … most successful British offensive hitherto launched."

The battalion historian described how "the fighting went on till the night of the 11th, [the battalion was relieved then "in a blizzard of exceptional severity"]. Trench after trench [was] taken by bombing, by sudden rushes, by stealth in the dark or by straightforward assault in co-operation with the Artillery".

Colin Nisbet was among the 38 men of the battalion killed between April 9 and 11.

Arras Memorial, France Bay 9.

Military Operations France and Belgium, 1917, Volume II, Cyril Falls, 1940, page 201

For an account of the Argyll's actions at Arras see the entry for Private Willam Armit on page 6.

Arras Memorial

Captain Arthur Roxburghe ORR

Scots Guards 2nd Battalion
Date of Death: 17 October 1915
Age at Death: 30
Family: Youngest son of Jane S Orr, Kinnaird House, Larbert and of the late Robert Orr of Kinnaird

Captain Arthur Orr

Arthur Orr was born in Glasgow and educated at Loretto School in Musselburgh. From 1901 he attended the Royal Military College, Sandhurst. In 1904 he was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Scots Guards. From 1912 he was assistant director of gymnasia for London District. Whilst his battalion was based at the Tower of London, his home address was in Tedworth Square, Chelsea, a very desirable part of London.

Lieutenant Orr went to the front line at the beginning of the war. He was wounded in the fighting at Ypres in October 1914 and invalided home.

He was promoted to Captain in December. He returned to the front in the spring of 1915.

His battalion began fighting in the Battle of Loos on September 27th the third day of the battle and were relieved on the 30th. The

battalion war diary entry for that date revealed the appalling conditions they fought in: "The rain which had been coming down in sheets for the last three days showed no signs of stopping. The troops are very cold and wet and had had no sleep for these nights. In spite of all they were cheery and worked well."

Captain Orr was killed in action during a later phase of the Battle of Loos. The attack on the Hozenhollern Redoubt on October 17 began at 5 a.m. with the ultimate objective of capturing Dump and Fosse Trenches. Captain Orr's battalion had a leading part in this attack but they met very stiff resistance. "An attempt by Captain Orr to improve the situation with "F" [Company] was stopped early, both Captain Orr and Lieutenant Lechmere being killed." In his commanding officer's words, Captain Orr "died a hero's death, shot through the head while mustering his men for a dangerous attempt."

A total of 3 officers and 20 other ranks were killed in this attack. While a morning mist lasted the next day, the Scots Guards brought in "the dead lying in the open".

Sailly-Labourse Communal Cemetery, M. 16.

Sailly-Labourse is a village 3 miles from the town of Bethune. It was near to where the Battle of Loos was fought. For most of the war, it was used for field ambulances and rest billets.

The Scots Guards in the Great War, 1914-1918, F Lorraine Petre, William Ewart & Major General Sir Cecil Lowther, 1925, Page 124

Private William OSBORNE

Border Regiment 5th Battalion
Service Number: 13583
Date of Death: 2 October 1918
Age at Death: 35
Family: Fourth son of Elizabeth Osborne, Stewartfield Place, Larbert and of the late James Osborne; brother-in-law of Charles Maitland (q.v.)

William Osborne was employed as a range fitter with Dobbie, Forbes & Company of Foundry Loan, Larbert. The family home on Main Street, Larbert, was rented from the company.

However, before the First World War, William Osborne was working as a gamekeeper on Lord Rochdale's Lingholm estate at Keswick in Cumberland. (This estate had been, between 1885 and 1907, a favourite holiday spot for the author and illustrator Beatrice Potter and was said to be the inspiration for her children's books including Peter Rabbit, Mrs Tiggywinkle and Squirrel Nutkin.)

William enlisted at Keswick on 19 September 1914. He saw front-line service from July 1915 when his battalion joined the Gallipoli Campaign. The battalion took part in the landings at Suvla Bay on August 6. These landings showed many of the general faults of the whole campaign, particularly the inept leadership of the generals in charge.

As a British war correspondent stated this was the "last great effort to achieve some definite success against the Turks", but, in his view, it "never had the slightest chance of succeeding… The Staff seem to have carefully searched for the most difficult points and then threw away thousands of lives in trying to take them by frontal assault." His conclusion was that "This was the most ghastly and costly fiasco in our history since the Battle of Bannockburn" . From whose point of view was Bannockburn a "fiasco"?

The battalion was evacuated from Gallipoli on 18 December 1915. It spent Christmas at Mudros on the island of Lemnos before going to Egypt in January 1916. Six months later it was transferred to the Western Front.

During the second half of September 1916 the 6th Battalion attacked German trenches in the vicinity of Ovillers and took part in the attack on the Schwaben Redoubt starting on September 26. The battalion diary reported that "The waves left in grand style all along the front… Nearly 200 prisoners. 100 enemy killed."

On 7 June 1917 the battalion took part on the first day of the battle of Messines Ridge. It began with the detonation of mines under the ridge; the explosion was heard in London. The 6th Border battalion went into action at 12 noon. A letter written by Sergeant W Hogg of Falkirk said that it was: "worth any man's money to have witnessed the mines exploding; then when the barrage started it was hell let loose. The preparations were perfect, and the boys, knowing the efficiency of our gunners, went into it with entire confidence, and all our schemes were realised a few hours afterwards. 'Fritz never showed any fight at all."

The letter then mentioned that William also was "through the 'valley of death' which is the name the troops gave to a valley where 'Fritz' put his barrage, endeavouring to stem our advance but it took more than that to stop the 'Iron Army,' as we are now called."

In September 1917 William fractured his left clavicle in an accident while "engaged in recreation & exercise", his commanding officer reported, and "this soldier was in no way to blame". He returned to England. He was treated at the Westminster Auxiliary Hospital which was part of the 1st Western General Hospital in Liverpool. After being treated for

a month, he got a short home leave before going back to the front line. William had not been long back when a return to hospital, this time in Manchester, was necessitated. His treatment lasted for over 3 months. He was discharged from hospital on 18 June 1918 and, after another furlough, he returned to the front line on June 27. By then, the 6th battalion had been disbanded and he was posted to the 5th battalion.

Private Osborne was killed during the Allies' final offensive against the German Army in the autumn of 1918. On 29 September the 5th battalion took part in the attack on the Hindenburg Line. It crossed the St Quentin Canal, attacked Joncourt at 8am on October 1, capturing the village and then went on to enter the village of Preselles but heavy machine gun fire meant a withdrawal to a railway embankment. Overlooked by German artillery, this position was heavily and frequently shelled on October 2. By then, the fourth day of their advance, the battalion was exhausted and suffered considerable casualties so it was then relieved.

William Osborne was the only soldier of the battalion to be killed on October 2.

Vis-en-Artois Memorial, France Panel 6.

Lance Corporal Robert S PARKER

Gordon Highlanders 4th Battalion
Service Number: S/41622
Date of Death: 29 August 1918
Age at Death: 22
Family: Second son of William and Jeanie Parker, Church Street, Stenhousemuir

Lance Corporal Robert Parker

When Robert Parker was called up in April 1916, he was a grocer working for Cooper & Company in Falkirk. (Cooper's became part of Fine Fare, then Gateway, and, ultimately, part of Asda.)

Despite his stated preference being to join the Royal Scots, he was posted to the Black Watch. He was soon made a Lance Corporal. After over a year in training, he went to the Western Front in September 1917.

Within days of arriving at the front he was transferred to the 1st/4th Battalion Gordon Highlanders, joining the battalion on 25 October 1917. His battalion then took part in the Battle of Cambrai in November 1917. It stayed in the Cambrai area through the winter of 1917 -1918.

In February 1918 Robert lost his Lance Corporal stripe. He had missed a Lewis Gun inspection and had disobeyed an order to live in the same hut as was allotted to his section. There is no explanation for his disobedience. However, within three months, he was returned to the rank of Lance Corporal, though it was an unpaid post to begin with.

When the German Spring Offensive was launched, Robert's battalion took part in a fighting withdrawal back to Bapaume. In April it moved north and fought in the Battles of the Lys. It was out of the front line near Arras from May to July.

The battalion was in action in late July – early August taking part in a French and British counter–attack against the German army in the Battle of Tardenois, a phase in the Second Battle of the Marne, July-August, 1918.

On August 29, the 4th Gordons captured a position known as Greenland Hill – as a "hill", it was 30 feet above the land around it! Lance Corporal Parker was

> leading his section on an advance when he was killed by a machine gun bullet. His death was instantaneous and he was indeed a very great loss to his company as he was one of the first and best Lewis gun instructors in the battalion, and will be very hard to replace.

He was reported as having died between August 29 and 31.

Vis-en-Artois Memorial, France Panel 10.

The capture of Greenland Hill

Private Richard PATERSON

Gordon Highlanders 1st/7th Battalion
Service Number: S/42333
Date of Death: 20 July 1918
Age at Death: 27
Family: Husband of Eva Paterson, North Broomage; father of Richard; son of Richard Paterson, farmer and the late Mary Ann Paterson, nee Steven; CWGC states 'Son of Mr J Paterson, Struan House, Kingussie'

Richard Paterson, who was born in Kingussie, enlisted in Inverness.

In April 1917 he married Evelyn Jane Philip of North Broomage in the Masonic Hall, Stenhousemuir. He then belonged to the 5th Battalion of the Gordon Highlanders.

The Allied armies were recovering from the German Spring Offensive of 1918 when Private Paterson was killed in action during an attack on the German Army's position at Bois de Courton. The battalion arrived in position for the attack over four hours late. The barrage began at 8 a.m. and there was little opposition to the initial advance. According to the regimental historian, "The wood was exceptionally dense… The Gordons reached the western edge without undue loss, but were met by a storm of fire."

The attacking battalions faced "considerable difficulty" from this point on. "During the day the fighting was of a strenuous nature and consisted principally of machine gun defence which in many places was most effective," the battalion's Commanding Officer reported. At night, the battalion was relieved and withdrew to its morning position. Its casualties were heavy, but its attack continued the next morning.

See entry for Andrew McCowan on page **]

La Neuville-aux-Larris Military Cemetery, France A. 37.

This cemetery is about 12 miles west of Reims.

The Gordon Highlanders in the First World War, 1914-1919, Cyril Falls, 1958, page 209

Private James PENMAN

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders 5th Battalion
Service Number: S/19576
Date of Death: 9 June 1918
Age at Death: 20
Family: Son of John and Kate Penman, Old Schoolhouse, Kinnaird

Private James Penman was killed on his 20th birthday. He had been called up two years previously, but didn't join the army until March 1917. Prior to this, he was a miner.

After four months' training, he sailed for Egypt in August 1917. He landed at Alexandria but was immediately admitted to hospital there with a severe bout of diarrhoea. He didn't rejoin his battalion until December 5. A fortnight later, he was wounded by shrapnel in the left ankle and that kept him out of action for two months.

Private James Penman

When reinforcements were needed on the Western Front in the wake of the German Spring Offensive of 1918, James Penman's battalion was transferred to the Western Front in April 1918.

On June 8, the battalion took over trenches at Willerval, about six miles north-east of Arras. German shelling the next day caused two casualties and James Penman was the one soldier killed.

La Targette British Cemetery, Neuville-St Vaast, France III. A. 4.

TOO DEARLY LOVED
TO BE FORGOTTEN

This cemetery is about 4 miles north of Arras.

La Targette British Cemetery

Private Peter PENMAN

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders 10th Battalion
Service Number: S/6932
Date of Death: 25 September 1915
Age at Death: 22
Family: Son of David and Elizabeth Penman, 23 Longdyke, By Falkirk

Private Peter Penman

Peter Penman was a miner at Carronhall Colliery when he enlisted in the army in December 1914. He went to the Western Front in May 1915.

On the second day of the Battle of Loos Private Peter Penman was officially reported as wounded and missing. According to army records, he died between September 25 and 27.

The battle is notable because the British Army used poison gas for the first time. This was to offset the lack of shells for an effective artillery bombardment. The battalion war diary of the 10th Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders only mentions the use of gas when it noted that the saps in front of the firing line could not be used for the deployment of the battalion at the start of the advance – the saps were "full of Gas plant and gas".

The battle was the first "Big Push" by the British army – 75,000 soldiers were to take part in an offensive intended to break through the Germans' front line. Most of these British soldiers belonged to the battalions raised at the start of the war and were part of what was called the "New Army". The battle was fought before the artillery on both sides churned the landscape into mud. The Loos battlefield was "as flat as a pancake" but dominated by the equipment of the coal mines and industrial sites of this part of France.

The 10th Battalion of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders took up position at Annequin late in the evening of 24 September 1915 in the northern sector of the battle front. The battalions in the southern sector of the battlefield did well on the first day of the battle. For example, the 15th (Scottish) Division broke through two German defensive lines and captured both the village of Loos and Hill 70.

In the northern sector the progress of the divisions met significant difficulties after zero hour, 6.30 a.m. The 10th battalion war diary notes that "about 5.45 a.m. a furious bombardment of the German lines began." Then there were considerable delays. At one stage progress was slow because of "wounded soldiers and German prisoners endeavouring to get to the rear". The battalion did not begin its advance until 9.15 a.m. "The advance continued without interruption, skirting the face of HOHENZOLLEREN REDOUBT [a massive German earthwork] across BIG WILLIE and German main line trenches." This advance was made while being heavily shelled and then the men came under fire from a machine gun on the Fosse No 8, a huge slag heap fortified by the Germans, which caused many casualties. "The advance continued up and over the hill which was devoid of any cover from fire until FOSSE ALLEY was reached about 12 noon." The battalion then halted while the commanding officer decided where he should go next. At 1.30 p.m. 'A' Company was sent to support the British soldiers holding PEKIN TRENCH but it was "decimated by shell fire"

About 4 p.m. the battalion found itself "alone with its flanks exposed" due to the withdrawals of other battalions. Though efforts were made to hold on to this position, the battalion was forced by German counter-attacks to retreat and by 2 a.m. "the firing line from which the attack was launched that morning was reoccupied".

The battalion went forward the next evening and followed part of the route taken on 25 September. On the afternoon of September 27, the battalion was forced to retreat again and went back to the trenches they were in on the evening of September 24.

It was on the 26th September that Peter Penman was posted wounded and missing. A year later, he was officially reported killed in action between the 25th and 27th September 1915. In his diary for 28 September 1915, Captain Neil Weir of the 10th Battalion of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders wrote: "What a show. Few instructions, little ammunition or bombs, next to no support from the artillery. No system of looking after the wounded. And practically no food.

No wonder we lost the ground we had won and lost so many casualties."

Loos Memorial, France Panel 125 to 127.

Casualties as recorded in the Battalion War Diary

Date	*Killed*	*Wounded*	*Missing*	*Total*
25 Sept	15	122	60	197
26 Sept	—-	38	0	38
27 Sept	30	181	56	267

Corporal Thomas PENMAN

Royal Scots 11th Battalion
Service Number: 13141
Date of Death: 13 May 1916
Age at Death: 26
Family: Husband of Elizabeth Hastings, Glengowan Buildings, Stirling; son of Janet Penman and of the late Thomas Penman

Thomas Penman was living in Glasgow when he enlisted in the army at Cambuslang. He went to the Western Front in May 1915.

The battalion's first experience of the trenches was at Armentieres, and then at Festubert. It took part in the first three days of the Battle of Loos. Losses were heavy: the battalion's commanding officer was killed, 35 others were killed and 175 were missing; many of these were presumed killed in action.

In 1916, from January to May, the battalion was serving in the Ypres salient, mainly around Ploegsteert

Corporal Thomas Penman

Wood. The German trench line opposite their position had so much barbed wire to protect it that it was known to the Royal Scots as the "Birdcage". But a British mine was being made under it. (The mine was to be detonated on 9 June 1917 as part of the attack on Messines Ridge.) The mining activity was probably suspected by the Germans.

The position held by the 11th Royal Scots was heavily bombarded by German artillery during the morning of May 13. In the evening, there were two German bombardments of heavy shells and trench-mortars, each lasting an hour. At 8.45 p.m. two German raiding parties of about 25 soldiers each attacked.

The 11th Battalion "fought like tiger-cats" and with "utter abandon" drove the Germans back. Corporal Penman was one of the 16 Royal Scots killed in action, most of them due to the bombardments.

Rifle House Cemetery, Hainaut, Belgium I. E. 1.

This cemetery is about 4 miles south of the town centre of Ieper. It is located in the wood at Ploegsteert.

The Royal Scots 1914-1919, John Ewing, 1925, page 252

Rifle House Cemetery, Hainaut, Belgium

Private William PENMAN

Scots Guards 2nd Battalion
Service Number: 10614
Date of Death: 16 May 1915
Age at Death: 24
Family: Son of Agnes Jack Penman, 19 Maclaren Terrace, Carron and of the late Robert Penman

Private William Penman

William Penman was an enthusiastic member of Carron and Carronshore Bowling Club. He worked as a miner at Carronhall Colliery. His chum was Thomas Rae (q.v.). They were "In life inseparable," according to William's mother, "in death, not divided." William enlisted on 8 September 1914 and received training at Caterham and London. He went to front line service in February 1915.

Three months later, Private Penman was killed in action "whilst charging German trenches" near Festubert.

Over 400 guns and howitzers had begun the bombardment of the German trenches on 13 May. They fired a total of 100,000 shells but reports highlighted a high proportion of dud shells which failed to explode.

On May 16 there was a 30-minute bombardment of the German trenches opposite the 2nd Battalion Scots Guards and the 2nd Battalion Border Regiment who went into the attack at 3.12 a.m. The plan was to cross No Man's Land under the cover of the last three minutes of the bombardment. Some platoons advanced too quickly and there were considerable casualties hit by British shells. The German front line was captured and "the whole battalion rushed on" towards their second objective. At this point there was heavy German crossfire which caused "somewhat heavy casualties," according to the battalion war diary.

Further advances were met with German machine gun and rifle fire and counter-attacks. In addition, the battalion suffered more casualties caused by British artillery. One company (F Company) got completely cut off by a German counter-attack. The area where they fought was visited later and in the battalion war diary it was noted that: "The German and Scots Guards dead [lay] mingled together… They must have fought the battle out there to the finish."

By 9 a.m. the attack had been halted as the Germans had brought up strong reinforcements. While severe fighting went on elsewhere, the Scots Guards held their position. They were pinned down by the Germans until nightfall. The Scots Guards and the 2nd Battalion Gordon Highlanders then took over the old German front line as a support trench for the new front line.

Scots Guards casualties numbered 10 officers and 399 Rank and File, including Private William Penman.

[*See entries for L Cpl George Graham, L Cpl Thomas Menzies and Pte David Laing.*]

Le Touret Memorial, France Panel 39 to 41.

Corporal Henry Thomson PHILIP

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders 7th Battalion
Service Number: 2776
Date of Death: 26 August 1916
Age at Death: 20
Family: Fifth son of John and Mary Philip, 239 West Carron; brother of William Philip (q.v.)

Corporal Henry Philip

Henry Philip's father, John, and three of his brothers, served in the army during the First World War. Henry worked as a grinder for Carron Company before he joined up in September 1914. He went with his battalion to the Western Front in December, and took part in its battles in 1915-16. He was in hospital for about a month in May – June 1915 after being caught in a German gas attack.

He was admitted with a heart problem to No 30 Casualty Clearing Station on 2 May 1916. This was a month after his brother had died there of endocarditis. In Henry's case he was first diagnosed with inflammation of the "moycardium" [myocardium]. A day later, the diagnosis was constipation!

He was back with his battalion in June. In July it served on the Somme and was then switched to the Armentieres sector on 11 August.

Corporal Philip was killed about midnight on 25 August 1916. "He was killed instantaneously by a machine gun bullet as he was going out with a wiring party," his mother was told in a letter written by Captain A W S Mitchell, Henry's company commander. Captain Mitchell also wrote:

> Corporal Philip was like a son to me, as he was in my platoon when we came out to France, and has always been in my company. He was an excellent soldier and *n.c.* [non-commissioned], always cheery and obliging, and it did one good to see his cheery face about the trench.

And then Captain Mitchell made this rather astonishing final comment:

> As I saw him lying dead on a stretcher this morning, and uncovered his face, which still bore his cheery look, I rather envied him lying in peace, with all the strain and worry and discomfort of this awful war left behind him.

His death notice included the verse:

> Killed in the pride of his
> youth and his glory
> Far from the home
> and the land of his birth
> None near to mourn him
> save willows weeping
> Mantling the place
> where a hero lies sleeping.

John Philip, the father of Henry Philip, enlisted in the Royal Scots just after the outbreak of the First World War. He was then 51 years old. He had served in the local volunteer company for 18 years. However, in December 1915 Carron Company had him returned home to do munition work.

Thomas Philip, the eldest son, who was 31 years old in 1914, also served in the 7th Battalion Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders from 1914, like two of his brothers. Thomas was wounded on 25 April 1915, but returned to front-line duties in July. He survived the war.

John Philip, aged 29 in 1914, joined the Scottish Horse at the start of the war. From July 1915 he took part in the Gallipoli campaign. When that ended, he served in Egypt. He also survived the war.

His brother, William, died in April 1916.

Cite Bonjean Military Cemetery, Armentieres, France I. F. 20.

Armentieres is a town close to the Belgian frontier and about 10 miles north-west of Lille.

Private William PHILIP

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
7th Battalion
Service Number: 2317
Date of Death: 5 April 1916
Age at Death: 28
Family: Third son of John & Mary Philip, 239 West Carron; brother of Henry Philip (q.v.)

Like two of his brothers, William Philip joined the local regiment at the start of the First World War, and went off to the Western Front in December 1914.

In 1915 he was out of front-line action between the end of April and the beginning of June with an ankle problem. He was home on leave in 1916 but shortly after he returned to France he was taken to No 30 Casualty Clearing Station at Aubigny diagnosed with influenza. A few days later, he was reported as suffering from malignant endocarditis, an acute bacterial form of heart disease. He died the following day.

Private William Philip

The Officer in charge of No 30 Casualty Clearing Station, to which William had been taken, said that William "had a centre of infection" which was a septic mouth. This was probably 'trench mouth', a severe gum infection common amongst First World War soldiers. It caused painful bleeding gums and ulcers in the gums. The doctor treating William blamed "his fatal illness" on a "lowered resistance brought on by exposure to cold and wet."

It is a reminder that infection was commonplace amongst the mud and unhygienic conditions of trench life and there were few ways available for treating infection.

Aubigny Communal Cemetery Extension, France I. A. 26.

Aubigny-en-Artois is a village about 10 miles north-west of the town of Arras.

Signalman Andrew Binnie PHILP

Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve
Service Number: Clyde Z/4081
Date of Death: 10 April 1917
Age at Death: 20
Family: Youngest son of Elizabeth Philp, Millar Place, Stenhousemuir, and of the late George Philp; brother of Robert Philp (q.v.)

Signalman Andrew Philp

Andrew Philp was a stencil cutter with Falkirk Iron Company. He joined the RNVR in April 1915.

Signalman Philp was lost at sea when HM Hospital Ship *Salta* was sunk by a mine laid the previous day by UC26, a German minelaying submarine.

At 11.10 am, the *Salta* had arrived from Southampton at the entrance channel of the port of Le Havre. As the ship made her way through the channel, she hit a mine at 11.43 a.m., and sank within 10 minutes. Strong winds and rough seas hampered the rescue operation. Out of a total of 205 passengers and crew, 9 nurses, 45 wounded soldiers and 79 crewmen died.

Andrew's brother, Robert, was killed on the Western Front six months later, and he had two other brothers in the forces.

Portsmouth Naval Memorial 28

HM Hospital Ship *Salta*

The Portsmouth Memorial is for those men of the Royal Navy who have no known grave.

The Ste Marie Cemetery in Le Havre (left) with the memorial (right) which commemorates by name the soldiers, nurses and merchant seamen lost from the *Salta* and its escort vessel whose bodies were not recovered, and also marks the graves of 24 other casualties from the *Salta*.

Lance Corporal Robert PHILP

Royal Scots 17th Battalion
Service Number: 40666
Date of Death: 23 October 1917
Age at Death: 24
Family: Third son of Elizabeth Philp, Millar Place, Stenhousemuir, and of the late George Philp; brother of Andrew Philp (q.v.)

Lance Corporal Robert Philp

Before the war Robert Philp was a gardener and for a considerable time worked in the gardens of Larbert House. In August 1914 at Kirkintilloch he joined the Scots Greys (2nd Dragoon Guards) and a year later he went with his battalion to the Western Front. In January 1916 he was severely wounded and he did not return to the army until December. At this point he was transferred to the Royal Scots.

The 17th Battalion was, the regimental historian noted, "practically immune from battle during 1917". Having served in the vicinity of Villers-Guislain from May 1917, the battalion was transferred to the Ypres area from October 17. It was in reserve for the action of October 22. [See entry on Private Thomas Rae.]

The death of Lance Corporal Philp, which occurred towards the end of the Battle of Passchendaele near Hothulst Forest, was described in a letter from 2nd Lieutenant D Weatherstone: "It was during an extremely heavy barrage, which preceded a Boche counter-attack, your son was hit and killed instantaneously by a shell, when he was on the look-out for the first sign of the Boche behind the barrage."

The battalion war diary records that 2 other ranks were wounded on 23rd October; 6 other ranks were killed the following day and 3 the day after that.

Robert's brother, Andrew, died at sea 6 months previously. Their brother, John, served in the Royal Navy, while their brother James had been discharged from the army after 17 years' service.

Tyne Cot Memorial, Ieper, Belgium Panel 11 to 14 and 162.

The Royal Scots 1914-1919, John Ewing, 1925, page 548

Able Seaman Harry PRESTON

Royal Naval Division Drake Battalion
Service Number: Clyde Z/3876
Date of Death: 13 November 1916
Age at Death: 25
Family: Son of Mary Preston, Crownest Loan, Stenhousemuir and of the late William Preston

Harry Preston was a twin; his brother was called William. Harry enlisted in April 1915, leaving his job as a clerk. He was drafted for the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force and joined Drake Battalion in September. Just over three weeks later, he was suffering from jaundice. By the time he had recovered and rejoined Drake battalion, the Gallipoli campaign was over. The battalion moved to France in May 1916. In October it moved into the Somme area.

Harry Preston's death occurred on the first day of the final British attack of the Battle of the Somme. This phase is known as the Battle of the Ancre, 13-18 November 1916.

At zero hour, 5.45 a.m. on 13 November, the German artillery suddenly opened fire with minenwerfers on the Drake battalion as its advance began. Despite this bombardment, the battalion "appeared to be getting on well" though it met heavy machine gun fire. Because of the officer casualties, the mist, darkness, smoke and dust, "direction and control became extremely difficult," according to the battalion war diary.

Nelson Battalion went in on the left of the advance in support of Hood and Hawke battalions, ignoring orders to wait until the first objective had been taken.

AB Joseph Murray of Hood Battalion recalled:

> The Drakes and Nelsons got all mixed up and, on our left, they were all banging and crashing about and there was terrible fire coming from this redoubt. It was a square of trenches lined with men manning machine guns – probably a hundred men in it – and it wasn't even touched by the [British] artillery. How they missed that, Lord only knows! We had terrible casualties.

The machine gun fire from the "cunningly concealed" German redoubt [Joseph Murray's 'square of trenches'] located between their first and second lines was devastating. The leading waves of the battalions' attack suffered heavy casualties whilst the 3rd and 4th waves fell almost to a man. "A good many casualties were caused … by our heavy batteries."

Drake battalion's target was the village of Beaucourt but more than half of its strength was lost in the advance towards their first objective which was called Station Road.

The survivors of the Drake battalion joined up with Hood battalion and others to move on behind the barrage. By 6.20 a.m. this mixed force had gained the second objective. They also got near to the third objective in front of Beaucourt but here the advance was halted. The troops to their left were held up and their own barrage did not move forward. Several men were killed "owing to our own heavies falling about 100 yards short". German machine guns and snipers became active and from 7 a.m. the Drake Battalion's line was subjected to constant artillery bombardment. When Beaucourt was captured the next day at 7.45 a.m., the battalion was in support.

By the time the battalion was relieved on 15 November, casualties numbered 220. Overall, the part played by the Drake Battalion in this battle was thought to be a considerable success. The battalion war diary praised the men's morale as "excellent throughout the whole operation", and commented that "they kept up to the barrage without flinching."

Ancre British Cemetery, Beaumont Hamel, France VII. A. 41.

Private James PROVAN

King's Own Scottish Borderers
1st/5th Battalion
Service Number: 242648
Date of Death: 29 July 1918
Age at Death: 27
Family: Eldest son of Alexander and Ann Provan, Bothkennar Road, Carronshore

Private James Provan

James Provan, who was born at Banton, a village a few miles outside Kilsyth, was training to be a mine manager under the guidance of his father at Nethercroy Colliery, Croy. At the start of the First World War, James enlisted in the Royal Army Medical Corps of the Scottish Horse. In September 1915 he went to Gallipoli and took part in the last four months of the campaign. He was transferred to Egypt and also served in the Palestine campaign.

In April 1918 Private Provan was transferred to the KOSB and to the Western Front.

The battalion was told on 28 July that it was to attack Beugneux the next day. Beugneux is a small village about 11 miles south of Soissons.

At 8.45 p.m. the battalion under the direction of French guides began to move up to its start position. "The Battn was heavily shelled passing Bois de Bailette and suffered a good many casualties." The leading company lost touch with the rest of the battalion and even though guides and runners were sent back to find them they did not do so! Even just over an hour before Zero hour (4.10 a.m.) they could not be located and an Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders battalion was to take its place. However, in the nick of time the rest of the battalion appeared.

According to the battalion war diary, "The Battn was hurriedly got together behind the line just as the barrage lifted. In the hurry the reserve coy went over behind the other 3 coys."

The 5th KOSB advanced about a mile, "fighting its way through fields of wheat standing breast high". It got through the woods to the south-west of Beugneux. Fighting continued during the morning. The attack came to a standstill. At 1 p.m. the French artillery put down a heavy barrage which "unfortunately came on behind our line".

In the afternoon, the Germans attacked about 20 minutes before the British battalions were due to make another attempt to capture Beugneux. Though the German attack was repelled, the 5th KOSB had to retire, halfway back to their jumping-off line. The Loyal North Lancs gave the order to fall back. Casualties during the withdrawal were heavy.

At some point during this attack, Private Provan was killed in action.

Raperie British Cemetery, Villemontoire, France IX. E. 10.

TOO DEARLY LOVED
TO BE FORGOTTEN

Villemontoire is a village about 6 miles from Soissons.

War History of the 5th Battalion KOSB, G F Scott Elliot, 1928, page 244

Able Seaman James QUIN
(LWM: QUINN)

Royal Naval Division Anson Battalion
Service Number:
Date of Death:
Age at Death:
Family: Son of Isabella Quin and of the late James Quin; brother of Robert Dallas Quin

There is no official record of James Quin's death in the First World War nor can any record of his death after the war be traced.

James Quin was born on 12 May 1889 at New Street, Stonehaven. When his parents married in Stonehaven in 1887, his father, also called James, was a mechanic. His mother, Isabella, already had a daughter, Maggie Scott Dallas, born in 1884; Dallas was her mother's maiden name. At the time of her marraiage, Isabella, was employed in the fishing industry as a factory net worker. Stonehaven at this time was an important centre of the fishing industry. During the herring boom of the 1890s, nearly 200 fishing boats used its harbour. It may be that the family "followed the herring". This might explain the absence of James from Census records.

There appears to be no trace of the family in the 1891 Census.

In 1895 James's brother, Robert Dallas Quin was born in Newcastle. Shortly after this the family returned to Stonehaven. James's father died there in 1896. When the 1901 Census was taken, the family was living in Stonehaven and now included Robert J Dallas, the 4 month-old son of James's half-sister, Maggie. But James was not living with his family and there is no trace of him in the census.

According to the 1911 census, his brother Robert and his mother, Isabella, (but not James) were living in Torwood in the home of William Harwell, who had married their sister Maggie in 1904 at Stonehaven. William worked as a farm servant when he got married and it seems that the family moved south to Stirlingshire and settled in Plean after the marriage of William and Maggie. Their daughters, Isabella in 1906 and Barbara in 1908, were born in Plean. Their father was then a pit worker. Isabella became a member of Plean Church in 1905, transferring from Stonehaven. She transferred to Larbert Parish Church in 1914 when the family was living in Fitzpatrick's Buildings on Larbert Road. William was now a kilnworker. James does not seem to have lived with his mother in the years immediately before the outbreak of war. It may be that James went his own way when the family moved south to Plean.

In April 1916, at a service honouring the Fallen of Larbert Parish Church, James Quin's name was included. His name was, presumably, put forward by his mother. His name was not included in the list of men associated with Larbert Parish Church who had joined the forces; this list, published in January 1915, was probably compiled before Isabella joined the church. James's name was not on the list of the Fallen at the memorial service held in August 1917. Between these two dates the family had moved again.

William Harwell and family went to live in Clydebank where he became a holder [a riveter's assistant], at John Brown's shipyard. There is no evidence to show whether Isabella went with the family to Clydebank or returned north at this point. Her death occurred in 1937 at Stonehaven.

James's death was recorded in the final Roll of Honour for Larbert Parish Church and on Larbert War Memorial. The death of his brother, Robert, is not so recorded, but his name is on Aberdeen War Memorial. (Neither brother is on Stonehaven War Memorial.)

Robert Quin was killed in action on 25 September 1915. He had moved from Plean to Aberdeen in 1913. He had been employed in the nearby colliery in Cowie. In Aberdeen he began working with his uncle, Alexander Stewart, who was a cooper. Three weeks after his death, Robert's obituary and photograph were published in the *Falkirk Herald*. The information was presumably supplied by his mother. There is no such obituary for James.

In the Registers of Soldiers' Effects, the record for Robert Quin shows that monies were authorised to be paid to Isabella Quin (£1-0-7) and to James Quin (£2-1-1) on 17 May 1916. The War Gratuity (£4) was paid only to Isabella on 27 September 1919. There does not appear to be any significance in only Isabella being paid the gratuity. This record does show that in the first years of the war James and his mother and brother were at least in touch with one another.

When a handwritten draft list of names for Larbert War Memorial was compiled, the name of AB James Quin was included. The source of the name was Larbert Parish Church and there is also a note "Left parish See…". James is stated as belonging to Anson Battalion of the Royal Naval Division but there is no such record in the archives of the Royal Naval Division. The most important point here is that RND archives survive intact.

It would therefore appear that at some point between October 1915 and April 1916 Isabella Quin was told that her son, James, had died but after moving away from Larbert that information was corrected. When the names for the war memorial were being compiled the name of James Quin was put forward on behalf of Larbert Parish Church by someone who remembered that the church had been notified of his death prior to the 1916 Service for the Fallen

Leading Seaman Thomas RAE

Royal Naval Division Nelson BattalionAttached 1st Royal Marine Battalion
Service Number: Clyde Z/4167
Date of Death: 7 April 1918
Age at Death: 26
Family: Eldest son of Alexander and Lizzie Rae, 14 Maclaren Terrace, Carron

Disrated! In April 1916 Thomas Rae was disrated [demoted] from Leading Seaman to Able Seaman. He had failed to "take proper & sufficient precautions to prevent pillage [robbery] of two cases of liquor under his charge." This happened at Mudros on the island of Lemnos, which had been a base for the Gallipoli campaign. When the campaign ended, British troops had been evacuated to Mudros. Thomas's offence perhaps offers a glimpse of what life was like on a Mediterranean island for the soldiers a few weeks out of the front line as they awaited being transferred to other theatres of war.

Thomas had been rated Leading Seaman in September 1915, just four months after he had enlisted in the RND. He recovered the rating he'd lost in April 1916 a year later. He even reached for a couple of weeks in February 1918 the rating of Acting Petty Officer.

By then he had been serving on the Western Front for 15 months. In April 1917 Nelson Battalion took part in the Battle of Arras and then in the final stages of the Battle of Passchendaele. But for six weeks from 30 September Thomas was out of action as a result of an accidental unspecified injury sustained when not on duty!

In March 1918 he joined the Royal Marines and exactly a week later his battalion was facing the onslaught of the German Spring Offensive of 1918.

On April 5 at 9 a.m. as part of the second phase of their Spring Offensive, four German Divisions attacked along a 5-mile front between Albert and Hamel. Three British Divisions held this line but the Official Historian judged them to be "weak" and "tired". It was to be late in the afternoon before the German attack made a real impact. About 6 p.m. the troops of the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division were seen withdrawing. The next day they took part in a counter-attack which eventually forced the Germans back. In the early hours of April 7 the Germans attacked again and got into the British trenches but a counter-attack starting at 7.45 a.m. drove them out. The original British line was regained.

Thomas Rae was posted wounded and missing, presumably in this fighting on 7 April 1918. A year later, he was presumed killed in action.

Prior to the war, Thomas Rae was a coal miner. His chum was William Penman (q.v.). William's mother said that they were "In Life inseparable; in death, not divided."

Pozieres Memorial, France. Panel 1.

Military Operations France and Belgium 1918 Volume 2, James E Edmonds, 1937, page 132

Private Thomas RAE

Royal Scots 16th Battalion A Company
Service Number: 411228
Date of Death: 22 October 1917
Age at Death: 38
Family: Husband of Joan Wright Rae, West Park, Main Street, Stenhousemuir; father of James Wright Rae; son of James and Christine Rae, Hawthorndean, Roslin, Midlothian

Thomas Rae was born in Ballingall, County Galway, then a part of the United Kingdom. He was a postman prior to his attestation in December 1915. He was mobilised in June 1916, being assigned to the 3rd Battalion Royal Scots. In January 1917 he was transferred to the Black Watch but, two months later, when he arrived in France, he was transferred back to the Royal Scots, this time joining the famous 16th Battalion.

Just over a week later, the Battle of Arras began. The 16th Battalion fought in two important phases of the battle.

In October the battalion was transferred north for the latter stages of the Battle of Passchendaele. On 20 October both the 15th and 16th Battalions of the Royal Scots were told to prepare for an attack two days later. They went into the trenches just to the north of Poelcapelle, six miles north-east of Ypres. Having been given their objectives, some officers checked their maps and couldn't see the point of the attack. They were baffled. The attack was to begin at 5.35 a.m. but the German artillery had already hit the British soldiers as they assembled for Zero hour. Captain Randle Evans wrote:

> Before reaching "jumping-off" place, at least thirty per cent of my company became casualties… I estimate that not more than 200 men moved to the attack at zero.

Thomas Rae belonged to 'A' Company which, with 'D', led the attack over a waterlogged No Man's Land. Captain Randle Evans reported that "after about 300 yards the enemy machine-gun fire was very heavy and the men not hit took cover." According to the regimental historian, this meant that "they were forced to embed themselves in the mud [of No Man's Land] without stirring a limb above the surface". They were stuck there until relieved at first light the next morning.

This was "probably the most ghastly day experienced by the 15th and 16th Royal Scots". The 16th Battalion had over 250 casualties. Private Rae was reported missing.

This was an unfortunately common occurrence in this battle. A total of 35, 000 British soldiers were posted missing during the battle and this is often blamed on the mud of the battlefield. Captain Randle Evans said that he saw many men killed in the initial attack. "The survivors were scattered round in the mud. Many wounded were undoubtedly drowned." Thomas Rae may have been one of them.

Tyne Cot Memorial, Ieper, Belgium Panel 11 to 14 and 162.

The 16th Battalion Royal Scots had been recruited and led by the Edinburgh businessman, George McCrae. It was also the battalion which had included many footballers from Hearts and several other teams. It had taken part in the attack on the first day of the battle of the Somme and suffered devastating casualties.

The Royal Scots 1914-1919, John Ewing, 1925, pages 486, 489

Royal Scots relax following an attack

Private John Henderson RAMSAY

Royal Scots Fusiliers 1st Battalion
Service Number: 51131
Date of Death: 25 February 1918
Age at Death: 19
Family: Son of Agnes Ramsay, 26 Roughead Place, Stenhousemuir and of the late James Ramsay

Private John Ramsay

John Ramsay was called up for military service on his 18th birthday, September 3, 1916. (Conscription had been introduced earlier that year.) He was an apprentice patternmaker with Carron Company.

After a relatively short time on the Western Front, he was killed in action. On 24 February 1918 the 1st Battalion RSF took over trenches at Croisilles, a village 8 miles south-east of Arras. February 25 was, noted the battalion war diary, "A splendid day. Slight activity enemy artillery… 1 OR killed" This was John Ramsay.

His chaplain wrote at some length to his mother:

> The sector [south of Arras] which the battalion was holding has been fairly quiet of late, and we were not anticipating any serious casualties, but unfortunately in the quietest spots death will sometimes come. The battalion was in the trenches holding the line, and your son and a few others were in the bay of the trench when a shell landed in the bay, wounding some of the soldiers, and, I regret to say, causing the death of your son. It is a sorrow to all of us.
> On Wednesday afternoon, in the presence of his comrades, your son was buried in the military cemetery of Boyelles. At the close of the service, 'The Flowers o' the Forest' was played by members of our pipe band. A cross has now been erected at your son's grave.

Boyelles Communal Cemetery Extension, France II. B. 7.

IN THE PRIDE
OF MANHOOD'S BLOOM
THOU WERT YET

Boyelles is a village about 7 miles south of Arras. It was actually held by the German Army when John Ramsay was killed.

Private Dugald RANKINE

(CWGC: Dougal)

Seaforth Highlanders 4th Battalion
Service Number: S/24252
Date of Death: 20 July 1918
Age at Death: 18
Family: Son of John & Mary Rankine, Gardner's Buildings, Stenhousemuir

The death notice of Dugald Rankine in the *Falkirk Herald* emphasised that he was 18 years and 11 months old when he was killed in action near Reims. The city had been captured by the German Army during their Spring Offensive in March 1918. His battalion had been very much involved in the first week of that offensive, during which it suffered 399 casualties; more than half of these (204) were men reported missing.

It also faced from April 9 the first days of the second phase of the German Spring Offensive. This time there were 245 casualties, including 111 posted missing.

The battalion took part in the Allied counter-attack after the final phase of the German Offensive in Champagne in July. On the 19th the battalion was called out at 4 a.m. In very warm weather, it took up its place in the front line near Marfaux. The battalion's advance began at 8 a.m. the following day at the western edge of Montagne de Rheims. It got to the crest of the hill and was then halted by machine gun fire. Every effort to move forward for the rest of the day was stopped by some very determined defence. German counter-attacks at 4.30 p.m. and at 6.30 p.m. had to be repelled.

At some point during the day Dugald was killed in action.

Marfaux British Cemetery, France I. J. 14.

Marfaux is a village about 12 miles from Reims.

Private Norman Duncan RANKINE

Royal Scots Depot Battalion
Service Number: 10550
Date of Death: 17 May 1915
Age at Death: 23
Family: Second son of James Rankine, 26 Tryst Road, Stenhousemuir and of the late Annie Reid Rankine; stepson of Mrs Jessie Rankine

Norman Rankine joined the army at the end of October 1909 after 6 months "good" service in Special Reserve. He was 18 years old. He was based at Edinburgh Castle for nearly a year and then served in India for 3 years. In July 1914 an officer's assessment stated that his military character was "good", the second highest possible grade. The assessment concluded that he was:

> A smart, intelligent soldier, has been a duty man all his service, but was employed as a billiard marker in Regt Institute.

It seems astonishing that this was his duty or employment while stationed in India! Perhaps a sign that the officers had a cushy time there. Given his "good" assessment in July, it is surprising to find from his entries in the Defaulter Book that he was recorded as committing multiple breaches of military discipline from the start of his military service through to shortly before he suffered the wounds which led to his death.

At the start of May 1915 his battalion was in action near Hooge in the Ypres sector. Norman was serving a punishment, imposed on April 14, of 28 days of Field Punishment No 1 for drunkenness. During the night of 3rd/4th May, his battalion withdrew to a new line On the 4th he suffered shrapnel wounds in the back. The next day he was back in England for treatment. Three days later, he arrived at the 1st Scottish General Hospital in Aberdeen. It was noted on his admission that he had "shrapnel wounds of sacral region [the lower back] & signs of septicaemia".

On 17 May 1915, Norman Rankine died at 12.20 pm, one of the few soldiers whose date and exact time of death is known. The family gravestone says that he died "for his country's cause"

Larbert Parish Churchyard
11.B. 7

Able Seaman Arthur REID

Royal Naval Division Hood (CWGC: Hawke) Battalion
Service Number: Clyde Z/903
Date of Death: 3 August 1915
Age at Death: 28
Family: Son of Ann Reid, Torwood; brother of Pte William Reid, 10th/11th Battalion HLI (q.v.)

Arthur Reid, who had a twin brother, James, was a grate fitter prior to enlistment on 12 October 1914. In March 1915 he joined Benbow Battalion, which sailed for Gallipoli at the beginning of May. On May 22 the battalion arrived at Lemnos, the island base from which operations on Gallipoli were conducted. A few days later, it landed on V Beach, one of five coves at the southern end of the Gallipoli peninsula used for the original landings on 25 - 26 April.

AB James Hart of Benbow Battalion described in his memoirs what happened to them next:

> We arrived at our allotted position and orders soon came round to dig in as quickly as possible… all of a sudden our officer shouted his very loud order to lie down, and to get as much cover, and no sooner had he given this order a large Turkish shell burst into our lines. This was their morning hate to us fresh comers. For about three hours they rained shells on us… This to me was something new, and I must admit made me feel very shaky for the terrible screaming noise was an awful sensation, as they shot very close to my dugout, sending up huge clouds of smoke and gravel sky high.
>
> I began to wonder where the British and French were holding their position. Away in the front of me, about six miles was a huge hill running right across the peninsular [sic] and appeared to me like another Gibraltar, an impregnable position, held by the enemy. This hill is known as Achi Baba and stands at a height of 860 feet above the sea level, giving the enemy full

survey of the land in front. Knowing every inch of the ground we had taken from them, they could drop shells wherever it was their wish. The nature of the country was very rugged, and proved a difficult task for our troops, as the land to them was strange. This was the hill we were trying to wrest from the Turks.

Benbow Battalion didn't take part in the RND attacks on Achi Baba on June 4. Losses were so severe that Benbow Battalion, after nine days at Gallipoli, including four in the front lines, was disbanded to provide reinforcements for five other RND battalions. Arthur Reid was transferred to Howe Battalion on 12 June. [AB James Hart was transferred to Nelson Battalion.]

For the next six weeks or so, the fighting at Gallipoli settled into the routines of trench warfare. Near the end of this period, and only a couple of days before the Allied forces made a major attempt to break out of the stalemate that had developed, AB Arthur Reid was killed in action.

Lancashire Landing Cemetery, Gallipoli E. 74.

The memoirs of James Hart (at www.benbowbattalion.co.uk*) give a tremendously vivid account of the fighting at Gallipoli.*

Able Seaman Ebenezer REID

Royal Naval Division Anson Battalion A Company 3rd Platoon
Service Number: R/6770
Date of Death: 27 September 1918
Age at Death: 28
Family: Husband of Agnes McLay Philip Reid, Raemont Place, Stenhousemuir; father of Mary Thomson Reid; fourth son of Janet Reid, 16 Munro St, Stenhousemuir & of the late Thomas Reid

Able Seaman Ebeneezer Reid

Ebenezer Reid, who was a fitter with Jones & Campbell, Larbert, joined the Army Reserve in June 1916. He enlisted in May 1918 and went to the Western Front on September 5, joining Anson Battalion.

Less than three weeks later, he was posted missing. This occurred on the first day of a major Allied offensive which was headed by Canadian battalions. The aim was to advance through the northern extension to the Hindenburg Line, aiming for Cambrai. This required the crossing of the Canal du Nord. There was a 1½ mile long dry section because the canal had yet to be completed. This section was chosen for crossing the canal. The offensive was "a spectacular success". The Allied forces advanced 6 miles and captured 10,000 German troops.

The Anson battalion was part of the British Third Army which supported the Canadian forces on their left. At 7 a.m. on September 27 the Ansons started their advance after other RND battalions had made the first crossing of the Canal du Nord. They overcame some "surprisingly strong resistance" from the Germans and at 7.58 a.m. were ready for the next stage of the assault, the capture of the village of Graincourt-les-Havrincourt. They made good progress until they were held up by machine guns firing from a sugar-beet factory. Helped by Drake battalion, the Ansons took the factory by midday but there were many casualties at this stage.

By the end of the afternoon Grandcourt-les-Havrincourt had been captured and a heavy German counter-attack repelled.

For British forces, September 27 had proved to be "one of the toughest days in the history of the Western Front." The defences of the Hindenburg Line and the resistance of the German soldiers under orders to "stay put" meant that there were a great many casualties, including Ebenezer Reid.

It was reported that he was buried at an isolated grave by the Reverend A L Ross who was attached to 1st/4th Battalion KOSB. However, the grave was subsequently lost.

Vis-en-Artois Memorial, France Panel 1 and 2.

Hundred Days, Nick Lloyd, 2013, page 170

Khaki Jack The Royal Naval Division in the First World War, E C Coleman, 2014, page 231

Sergeant Fred REID

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
1st/7th Battalion
Service Number: 275503
Date of Death: 24 April 1917 (FH: 23)
Age at Death: 24
Family: Husband of Isabella Wright, Binnie's Land, Stenhousemuir; father of Frederick Reid Wright.

Fred Reid was employed as a sawmiller in Falkirk before he joined up in September 1914 and went to the Western Front with his battalion in the middle of December.

In October 1915 he was back home and, on the 22nd, married Isabella Wright at the County Buildings in Falkirk. This was done by declaration before two witnesses, quite a common practice at this time.

Sergeant Fred Reid was killed in action during the Second Battle of the Scarpe (the third phase of the Battle of Arras). On April 23, the Battalion's and Division's objectives included the village of Roeux and its "ill-famed" Chemical Works. At 4.45 a.m. the Battalion set off in three waves at the same time as the barrage on the German lines. The battalion war diary stated that "Our barrage was not very defined and the first wave unfortunately pushed into it and had considerable casualties." But Lieutenant John B Gregory in his memoir was blunter: "We had practically no artillery support and a machine-gun barrage from the ridge behind did more harm than good".

Sergeant Fred Reid

The serious failings of the artillery were to continue. Areas strongly held by German soldiers were "passed over without doing much harm and the whole attack was delayed at one and a half hour while our losses in officers were very heavy." By this time all of the battalion's officers had become casualties.

At 6.30 a.m. the Germans "began to trickle away". Helped by a single tank, the battalion entered the village of Roeux and Roeux Wood. The men were much troubled in both locations by snipers and machine guns. A German counter-attack at 10.30 a.m. forced the battalion out of the northern end of the village but a new trench line was made of shell-holes and held rather precariously until they were relieved that evening. By nightfall the village of Roeux was again held by the Germans.

The casualties, according to the battalion war diary, numbered 6 officers killed and 9 other officers were wounded and one was posted missing. The casualties amongst the other ranks included 48 killed, 220 wounded and 39 were missing.

It is therefore no surprise that this battle has been described as "one of the blackest days in the story of the Battalion."

Arras Memorial, France Bay 9.

Lieutenant George REID

Royal Field Artillery 27th Brigade Headquarters
Date of Death: 25 August 1918
Age at Death: 28
Family: Son of Alexander and Ann Reid, Wellpark, Larbert; (later: 11 Gurney Street, Stonehaven)

Lieutenant George Reid

George Reid, who was born at Urie Gardens, Fetteresso in Kincardineshire, was educated at Forfar Academy, and then was a student in the Faculty of Arts at Edinburgh University from 1908 until 1911 when he graduated with an M.A. degree. Through all his years at university he was an enthusiastic member of the Officer Training Corps Artillery section. He was a schoolmaster at Falkirk High School where he was liked for "his gentlemanly and kindly bearing and sympathetic manner."

When war was declared he was approached by the War Office. He "placed himself unreservedly at the disposal of the authorities". He was commissioned immediately into the RFA 11th DAC . He trained the army's new recruits at various bases in England for over a year before being posted on active service on the Western Front. In July 1916 he was slightly wounded at Vimy Ridge.

In November 1917 the 5th Division was transferred to northern Italy. The soldiers spent the next six weeks "very happily, though uneventfully… Leave was granted pretty freely to Venice and Rome. Padua was a great shopping centre." At the end of January 1918 they went into the front line about 60 miles to the north of Padua. Even here "No Man's Land was so wide that the men in the trenches were immune from snipers and ordinary machine-gun fire." An attack planned for early March had to be cancelled. Then the German Spring Offensive brought the Division back to the Western Front.

Lieutenant George Reid was killed in action near the town of Bapaume. On 21 August 1918 the 27th Brigade RFA supported the attack by the 63rd (Royal Naval Division) near the village of Bucquoy. Two days later, the brigade as part of the 5th Division was active in the same area. On 25 August, the brigade was involved in the attack on the village of Sapignies. It then moved forward east of the village of Bihucourt. It came under very heavy enemy fire, particularly during the afternoon. The Brigade war diary records that Lt G Reid and two other officers "were killed during the day". His family was told that he had been on a reconnaissance of the forward area but when he was returning "a shell burst at Mr Reid's feet and he was killed instantaneously… he was a most gallant officer who was always untiring and efficient in his work."

Adanac Military Cemetery, Miraumont, France IV. F. 20.

VIRTUS VIA VITAE

[The Truth The Way The Life]

The cemetery, whose name is 'Canada' reversed, was formed after the Armistice.

The Fifth Division in the Great War, Brigadier-General A H Hussey & Major D S Inman, 1921, pages 199, 198, 204

Private Robert William REID

Royal Scots 13th Battalion
Service Number: 18351
Date of Death: 11 May 1916
Age at Death: 21
Family: Son of John and Sarah Reid, 12 Tryst Road, Stenhousemuir

Private Robert Reid

Robert Reid, who was a moulder with Carron Company, joined up in January 1915 with his friend William Cowan. They went to the Western Front in July 1915. In the weeks before the battalion went to France, Robert's Conduct Sheet recorded a number of minor transgressions such as "Gambling in camp", "Dropping his Rifle on Parade" and "Talking on Parade".

In September1915 Robert's battalion took part in the Battle of Loos in which it suffered 340 casualties.

On 27 January 1916 Robert was wounded in action and required treatment for Shell-Shock. He was treated at No 23 Casualty Clearing Station at Lozinghem, 4 miles west of Bethune. Six weeks later, on March 14, he was discharged to his unit for duty and rejoined his battalion. But on the same day, according to his records, he was admitted to hospital; no reason is given.

What happened to him then is not recorded but when his battalion was

in action on 11 May 1916 both he and his pal William Cowan were reported missing.

Their battalion was one of four Scottish battalions holding the line near the Hohenzollern Redoubt. According to the Official Historian, this sector "had the reputation of being one of the worst on the British front." The Scottish battalions were actually manning what was known as the Kink Salient. This had "the worst reputation of any place in the sector". No-Man's-Land was narrow and pitted with mine craters.

On May 11, the German Army, having decided that the British were to be removed from the Kink Salient, put into operation a very carefully-planned attack. At 4 p.m. the German barrage began and soon concentrated on the part of the Kink Salient held by the 13th Royal Scots. At 5.25 p.m. the bombardment intensified. According to the Official History, "it was one of the heaviest concentrations of artillery on a small area in the war." Using high explosive and gas shells, the Germans "exterminated" the men in the front line trenches which were turned into "a sea of shell holes".

At 6 10 p.m. there was a German infantry attack which had "an easy task" in capturing the Kink. The Germans advanced "at a slow double in a succession of lines or waves. The leading line consisted of bombers who threw bombs as they advanced. Behind them were thick lines of infantry with a distance of 25 to 50 yards between lines."

British artillery did not know of the German success and bombarded their old front line trenches which allowed the Germans to consolidate their position. The Royal Scots withdrew to the British second line. This became the new front line when the decision was taken to abandon any attempt to recover the ground lost. Two British counter-attacks had failed.

The 13th Battalion's casualties numbered 240.

In October Robert Reid was reported to have been killed in action on the day he went missing. By then it was known that William Cowan was a prisoner of war in Germany.

Loos Memorial, France Panel 10 to 13.

Private William REID

Highland Light Infantry 10th/11th Battalion Formerly Royal Scots Fusiliers 3rd Battalion 27197
Service Number: 42512
Date of Death: 18 April 1917
Age at Death: 32
Family: Son of Mrs Ann Reid, Torwood; brother of Arthur Reid (q.v.) nephew of John and Jeanie Murdoch McOustra

William Reid worked for Dobbie, Forbes and Company before he joined the army. At first he belonged to the Royal Scots Fusiliers and served with the 5th Battalion.

When he took part in the Battle of Arras in 1917, he was in the HLI. On the evening of April 4th, his battalion moved into cellars beneath the Grande Place and remained there until the morning the battle started. According to the battalion war diary, "everything was done to keep the men amused". This meant that every morning the soldiers got "an hour of physical drill and afterwards packs of playing cards were issued to the men". April 8 was a Sunday and in the cellars there were Easter parade services with "a celebration of the communion".

The Battle of Arras began on April 9 at 5.30 a.m. The 10th/11th Battalion, which took up its starting position at 10 o'clock, was in reserve; two companies were detailed to carry ammunition for the attacking battalions in front of them. The battalion was quite heavily shelled and suffered about 40 or 50 casualties as the fighting went on over the first objective.

From about 2 p.m. William's battalion followed the attacking forces as they gained the other objectives of the day. The next day was "quiet and uneventful".

On April 11, at 2.30 a.m., the battalion was ordered to take part in a major attack which was to begin at 5 a.m. It took an hour's march to reach the part of the front line from which the battalion was to launch its attack. It was to capture a significant part of the German trenches north of the village of Monchy.

'B', 'D' and 'C' companies went forward split into two waves 50 yards apart, while 'A' company was 150 yards behind them in reserve. All the battalions involved in the attack came under heavy machine gun fire. The 10th/11th HLI were particularly held up by four guns in a trench 400 yards north-west of Monchy until 'B' company attacked from a flank and overcame the German gunners. There were many casualties and the original objective was still not reached. The officers and men who had survived so far then tried to advance again but were halted by a German artillery barrage and once more by machine gun fire. They were able to take up a position north of Monchy which turned out to be the main German line when the attack was begun.

The battalion was relieved the following day. It had suffered 224 casualties but the Commanding

Officer considered that "Most of our casualties were wounded and comparatively few were killed."

William Reid was one of those wounded at some point during the fighting on April 11. He died of these wounds a week later.

Etaples Military Cemetery, France XIX. C. 9.

SHEW MERCY LORD TO ME
FOR MAN WOULD
SWALLOW ME OUTRIGHT

Etaples was an important base for the British Army and a hospital centre whose hospitals could treat up to 22,000 servicemen suffering from wounds or illness.

William's mother chose the first two lines of Psalm 56 for his headstone. The psalm goes on:

He me oppresseth, while he doth against me daily fight.
They daily would me swallow up that hate me spitefully;
For they be many that do fight against me, O most high.

The conflict referred to in the psalm was between the Israelites and the Philistines in the 11th century BC. Mrs Reid was making a comparison between that Biblical conflict and the war between Britain and Germany. The inspiration she was taking from the psalm is summed up in the eleventh verse, which reads: "In God I trust; I will not fear what man can do to me."

Able Seaman William REID

Royal Naval Division Drake Battalion

Service Number: Clyde Z/4641
Date of Death: 3 September 1918
Age at Death: 26
Family: Youngest son of Annie Reid, Burnside Castle, Stenhousemuir and of the late James Reid

Able Seaman William Reid

William Reid was a vanman who enlisted in May 1915. He joined Drake Battalion in October 1915 and served in Gallipoli. He was diagnosed with enteritis at the end of December just before the evacuation of the Allied forces from the peninsula. He rejoined his battalion in February 1916 at Mudros.

By September he was on the Western Front. He was attached for duty to the 6th Casualty Clearing Station Convalescent Billet at Bruay, a town six miles south-west of Bethune. He was then out of action for a month because of dental problems. He was back with his battalion for six weeks in the spring of 1917. An incident, presumably an accident, in which he scalded his left foot, led him to being invalided back to Britain in April. At the end of the year, he qualified as an instructor at the Bombing School at Lyndhurst in Hampshire.

AB Reid joined his battalion on the Western Front in March 1918 just days after the start of the German Spring Offensive. He served through the campaigns of spring and summer. On 2 September the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division supported the Canadian and British forces which swept through a very strong German defensive system known as the Drocourt-Queant Line, which was the northward extension of the Hindenburg Line, and about ten miles north of Arras. Field-

Marshall Haig congratulated the Canadians: "You broke the line and got through! The whole thing was simply magnificent and it was wonderful."

During the night of 2-3 September there was a general German withdrawal. British forces moved forward cautiously. Drake battalion advanced towards the village of Moeuvres, six miles west of Cambrai. German troops occupying a wooded area known as Tadpole Copse halted their advance. Machine gun nests were the problem but these were captured as a result of individual initiatives, especially that of the Commanding Officer of Drake battalion. By the end of the day Tadpole Copse was in the hands of the battalion.

The 63rd (Royal Naval) Division as a whole on 2-3 September "had found even greater success than had been planned, or expected. Equally remarkable was the fact that the cost to the Division had been fewer than a thousand casualties."

But AB William Reid was one of these. When his death was reported in the *Falkirk Herald*, his brother 2nd Lieutenant D G Reid of the KOSB was wounded and in hospital in London. Another brother, Sergeant Thomas Reid of the Seaforth Highlanders had been discharged from the army as unfit in April of 1918. A third brother was serving with the Royal Garrison Artillery in London.

AB Reid's mother said in the death notice:

> Dear son of my bosom,
> you sleep with the brave.

Vis-en-Artois Memorial, France Panel 1 and 2.

Hundred Days, Nick Lloyd, 2013, page 101

Khaki Jack The Royal Naval Division in the First World War, E C Coleman, 2014, page 229

Sapper William REID

Royal Engineers 105th Field Company
Service Number: 93542
Date of Death: 28 October 1918
Age at Death: 28
Family: Son of the late William and Maggie McOustra Reid, Stenhousemuir

Sapper William Reid

William Reid was an irondresser employed by Dobbie, Forbes & Company, Larbert. His parents and grandparents were all dead so he was lodging with Mrs Mary Henderson, 19 Tryst Road, Stenhousemuir at the time of his enlistment in June 1915. He served a year as a Pioneer in the RE 219th Field Company at Deganwy in Wales. He went to the Western Front in 1916 joining RE 105th Field Company. In May 1917 he passed a test which meant that he was a "skilled" sapper, paid at the rate of 1/4d (7p) per day.

During 1917 William was admitted to hospital three times for brief periods of treatment. The records don't give any reasons for his hospital admissions.

His Field Company was attached to the 25th Division, which was involved in some stages of the Battle of the Somme. In 1917 the Division made the initial attack in its sector on the first day of the Battle of Messines (June 7) and carried out a further attack in mid-June. It was involved in the early stages of the Battle of Passchendaele until it was taken out of the firing line on September 9 and moved to the Bethune area.

In 1918 the Division was heavily involved in trying to stem the advance of the German Spring Offensive north –west of Bapaume. In the first week of that offensive it lost half of its fighting strength. It was again involved against the second stage of the German Offensive in April 1918 and suffered further heavy losses. In May the Division was transferred to Fismes, 20 miles south-east of Soissons, an area that had been very quiet since 1917. But it was exactly here that the Germans launched another stage of their Spring Offensive. The Division suffered such losses that it was withdrawn from front-line duties and rebuilt.

From the end of September the Division was involved in a more or less continuous and ultimately successful advance across Picardy. On October 23 the Division was involved in a general attack aimed towards Foret de Mormal. The 105th Field Company was to construct three new bridges to cross the River Selle, but only one was required and the Company was withdrawn to Le Cateau. On the following two days the Company was taking a water supply to forward areas. Then part of the Company laid out a support line which ran between 200 and 400 yards east of the front line from Fontaine aux Bois and Malgarni.

On October 27th and for the following 3 days

> the whole Company was employed on Support Line. During this period there was heavy shelling of position in rear of work; little direct shelling of actual position; the former, however, made going to and from work difficult… very few casualties were incurred.

Sapper William Reid was one of these casualties being wounded, possibly on October 25th. He was taken to the 6th General Hospital in Rouen where he died of his wounds.

St Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen, France S..II. G. 8.

Rouen was a hospital centre for practically the whole of the war.

Gunner Joseph REILLY

Royal Horse Artillery 5th Brigade 9th Battery LWM: Royal Field Artillery
Service Number: 93400
Date of Death: 12 August 1918
Age at Death: 24
Family: Husband of Agnes McDonald, 133 West Carron

Joseph Reilly, who was born in Armadale, West Lothian, enlisted in Lochgelly, Fife. He went to the Western Front in October 1915.

The Royal Horse Artillery was responsible for the light, mobile guns which were intended, initially, to support the cavalry. Each battery consisted of 5 officers, 200 men, over 200 horses and 6 13-pounder guns.

Gunner Reilly was wounded in the fighting in the summer of 1918. His brigade had moved to Vaux sur Somme, about six miles from Albert, to support an attack by Australian Divisions in June and July. Then, on 8 August 1918, in the same area, the brigade took part in the Allied attack which was the very beginning of the offensive that was to bring the war to an end. The Brigade War Diary states:

> Zero 4.20 a.m. Thick fog which did not lift till 8.30 a.m. Attack was supported by heavy barrage and tanks accompanied infantry… Batteries brought into action north of SAILLY LAURETTE… From here the further progress of our infantry was covered. During afternoon Batteries moved forward to positions west of MALARD WOOD. Many targets were engaged and harassing fire carried out that evening and night.

The next day 9th Battery followed the British and American infantry who "succeeded in advancing to GRESSAIRE WOOD and beyond".

Very few casualties are mentioned in the brigade war diary. It is therefore, not clear when Joseph was wounded. He was taken to No 1 General Hospital in Etretat, a small town in Normandy about 15 miles north of Le Havre. He died there on August 12. The hotel pictured below became the 1,000-bed No 1 General Hospital in 1914

Etretat Churchyard Extension, France II. F. 1.

TO MEMORY EVER DEAR

Private Ebenezer Reid RENNIE M.M.

Cameron Highlanders 5th Battalion
Service Number: S/41537
Date of Death: 14 October 1918
Age at Death: 19
Family: Second youngest son of William and Annie Rennie, 20 Tryst Road, Stenhousemuir

Private Ebenezer Rennie

Ebenezer Rennie, whose father was a famous Stenhousemuir cricketer, was an apprentice bank clerk with the Clydesdale Bank in Larbert. When he reached his 18th birthday in June 1917, he joined up, first in the Lovat Scouts, then in the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders.

In July 1918, Private Rennie was drafted to the Western Front. He had been there for only a fortnight when he was awarded the Military Medal for the bravery he showed in despatch running between the French and British headquarters on 19 July when the village of Meteren, about ten miles south-west of Ypres, was being captured after being in German hands since April. A fortnight's bombardment had preceded the attack on Meteren.

The attack on Meteren was a particularly successful one. After a barrage of high-explosive and smoke shells, plus "some hundreds of drums of burning oil thrown over", the Cameron Highlanders went forward at 7.55 a.m. "in fine style" and in 30 minutes reached all their objectives, an advance of over 1,000 yards.

Between September 29 and October 3 the battalion was involved in heavy fighting in the Ypres area. Then, on 14 October it was in support of the 8th Black Watch. Three minutes after the barrage began, the battalions of 26th Brigade moved forward. But, "owing to a very thick fog Battalion eventually found themselves in the front line near Rolleghem – Capelle."

After strenuous fighting, the battalions entered Winkel St Eloi. By noon, the fighting was desperate. The battalions managed to fight their way into a wood called Laaga Capelle Wood and dug in. At some point during this attack, Ebenezer Rennie was killed.

The German position the British troops now faced was naturally strong, and they were short of artillery ammunition. So, the next stage of the attack was postponed until the next day.

Cement House Cemetery, Langemarck, Belgium XVII. D. 10

Cement House Cemetery

Lance Corporal George RITCHIE

Gordon Highlanders 7th Battalion
Service Number: 313129
Date of Death: 6 September 1918
Age at Death: 25
Family: Husband of Winifred Doris Ritchie, 77 Sherwood Park Road, Streatham Vale, London; fifth son of Robert and Janet Ritchie, Westfield, Victoria Road, Larbert

Lance Corporal George Ritchie

George Ritchie, who was born in Coatbridge, was a van driver with Stenhousemuir Co-operative Society, and then with Kilwinning Co-operative Society. He enlisted in the Army Service Corps in May 1915. He was then a drill instructor with the London Scottish for quite some time. He went to the Western Front with a detachment of the Gordon Highlanders.

The 7th Battalion was involved in fierce fighting at Bois de Courton between July 20 and 24, 1918 when 176 men were wounded, and between July 26 and 30 at Bois d'Eclisse when 197 were wounded. Their next action took place north of the River Scarpe from August 26 to 28 when 76 men were wounded.

During one of these actions George Ritchie was wounded in the thigh. It was not considered serious although he was taken to a London hospital for treatment. His recovery

from the wound was considered satisfactory right up to the day of his death. Therefore, his death was quite unexpected.

He had three other brothers in the army and two of them had been severely wounded.

Wimbledon (Gap Road) Cemetery, London J. B. 60.

AT REST

Corporal Thomas ROBB

Argyll Sutherland Highlanders 1st Battalion
Service Number: S/6811
Date of Death: 30 September 1916
Age at Death: 45
Family: Husband of Elizabeth Robb, Greenfield Place, Stenhousemuir; father of Mary, Elizabeth and the late James.

Corporal Thomas Robb

Thomas Robb, who was born in Leith, had been a soldier for 5 years in the Scots Guards – he was 6 feet 4½ inches in height. After leaving the army, he was in the licensed trade for 13 years. He was a barman in Gilmour's Bar, Stenhousemuir. In his spare time he was an enthusiastic Free Gardener of the Ancient Lodge, a fraternal society which is not commonly found in Scotland nowadays. He was also a member of the local Masonic Lodge, Lodge No 139.

He joined the army in December 1914. He was promoted to the rank of Lance-Corporal on 16 April 1915. But on that same day his only son, James, aged 6, died of caries of the cervical vertebrae and paraplegia. (He and his wife also had two daughters aged then 7 and 4.) He was at home to register the boy's death.

Two weeks later, he went back to the Western Front. He served there for six months before he was transferred to Salonika. By then he had been made a corporal.

On September 30 British forces began their attack on Karajakois. This was the first battle in the Salonika campaign and it caught the Bulgarians by surprise at first. At 11.30 a.m. the 1st battalion went into the attack on the village of Karadzakoj Zir, but within 10 minutes the leading companies came under heavy enfilade fire from an enemy trench which could not be seen because of the crops in the field. When this trench was attacked a short time later, the casualties were severe. At 12.30 p.m. the battalion attacked Zir but could not make any headway during the afternoon. The battalion officers came to the conclusion that it was impossible to attack Zir. However, at 4.15 p.m. the 1st Battalion Royal Scots was ordered in behind very heavy artillery fire and took the village by 7 p.m. The Argylls spent the night consolidating their position. The battalion historian commented that this was "an expensive battle without a great deal to show for it."

According to the *Falkirk Herald*, Thomas Robb was wounded on the day of his death. His Casualty Sheet records that he was wounded on September 28, which was the date he returned to duty having been previously been wounded on September 3. But September 28th and 29th were spent on long marches taking the battalion to their positions for the start of the attack on September 30th.

At the time of his death, his wife was receiving a separation allowance of 21 shillings (£1.05), including 3/6d (17½ p) allotment of pay.

Struma Military Cemetery, Greece II. D. 10.

This cemetery is 40 miles north-east of Thessaloniki.

History of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders 1st Battalion 1909-1939, R C B Anderson (1954), page 60

Gilmour's Bar where Thomas Robb was a barman for 13 years

Private Alexander ROBERTSON

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
8th Battalion
Service Number: 5634
Date of Death: 13 November 1916
Age at Death: 22
Family: Only son of the late James and Jane Baird Robertson, Larbert; nephew of Robert Baird, Tryst Road, Stenhousemuir

Private Alexander Robertson

In September 1914 Alexander Robertson joined the army. For the previous two years he had been a costing clerk at the Lion Foundry in Kirkintilloch and before that he had worked for Carron Company.

Private Alexander Robertson was killed "in a charge on enemy positions" when his battalion took part in the final act of the Battle of the Somme, known as the Battle of the Ancre, 13-18 November 1916. The objective of the 51st (Highland) Division was the village of Beaumont-Hamel. The attack began at 5.45 a.m. with the blowing of a mine in Hawthorn Crater. The leading battalions were already moving out to clear the British wire before zero hour was reached. Six minutes after zero hour the creeping barrage started – lifting 100 yards every 5 minutes.

A vivid impression of what this battle was like is given in an account by an unnamed soldier of the 8th battalion:

> The Germans are putting up a determined resistance with much bayonet work, rifle firing, and bombing… Overhead the screaming shells and hailing bullets are making, still, their infernal din, while ahead is a wall of flickering flames, flashing in and out with reddish flares, as if the thousand furnace-doors of Hell itself are being flung open. .. Our artillery has done its wire-cutting well…
>
> B' Company are in the second German line, and are having a rough time of it with bombs very much to the fore. They are wearing down the opposition… A few of 'C' Company will have jumped over the trenches and will have been shot at from some of those dug-outs now behind us. But more of 'C' are coming on, will take part in this game and, infuriated by this shooting of their comrades in the back, will 'attend promptly' to the thirteen Germans on the losing side. ['Attending to' is a synonym for killing regardless of whether or not they had surrendered].

It took until early afternoon before the Division was able to attack the southern end of Beaumont-Hamel. Despite stiff resistance, Beaumont-Hamel was taken.

The battalion war diary records the booty captured in Beaumont Hamel on November 13. Apart from the items to be expected like machine guns, bombs and flares, and even cigars, cigarettes including Will's Goldflake, unexpected items were listed – Piano, Dancing Slippers, Soda water, Women's Clothing, Cat O' Nine Tails, Lager Beer!

Battalion casualties numbered 82 killed, including 5 officers, 250 wounded and 13 missing. In a message to the soldiers of the 51st (Highland) Division after the battle, the Corps Commander, Lieutenant Edward Fanshawe said:

> All the world looks upon the capture of BEAUMONT HAMEL as one of the greatest feats of the war , and to those who know the ground and defences it must ever be a marvellously fine performance.

Alexander Robertson's next of kin was his eldest sister Margaret, who was in service in Hampstead in London. The Army Records Office had to enlist the services of the Metropolitan Police in 1920 to track his sister down in order to present to her his memorial scroll and medals. A maid in a house in Belgravia gave the information that she had married and was living in La Bouverie, in Mons, Belgium. In 1919 she had married Valentin Thiry.

Mailly Wood Cemetery, Mailly-Maillet, France I. J. 23.
This cemetery is 6 miles north of Albert.

Digging trenches at Beaumont-Hamel

Corporal James Hall ROBERTSON

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
11th Battalion
Service Number: S/9720
Date of Death: 26 (CWGC: 25) May 1918
Age at Death: 25
Family: Son of Mark and Isabella Robertson, Victoria Place, Stenhousemuir

James Robertson was a railway goods clerk at Larbert and Denny until he joined the army in June 1915. He went to the Western Front in 1916 and served there until his death.

The chaplain, who was attached to the Cameron Highlanders, A Robertson, wrote his family describing Private James Robertson's death: "He was killed on the morning of 25th May, as a result of intense shellfire. His death was practically instantaneous and so painless. All his company and his comrades mourn with you his death."

The battalion war diary says that May 25 was "a very quiet day" when they were in the front line at

Corporal James Robertson

Fampoux. But for the following day, it reported:

> Artillery bombardment opened on front system at 3.30 a.m. Enemy bombarded heavily all day… flattened Front line in many places. Also communication trenches, remarkably accurate shooting on trenches continued all day. Dugout in support line blown in. 12 men buried of whom 4 were killed and 8 injured… All quiet by 11 p.m. Line very battered… 5 killed.

It seems that James was killed during the bombardment of May 26. The records of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission state that 4 soldiers from the 11th Argylls were killed on that date. The total of "5 killed" in the battalion war diary seems to apply to the 26th and therefore James needs to be counted in on that date. It is most likely that he was one of those killed when the dugout was "blown in". Three of the 11th Argylls killed on May 26, are, like James Robertson, buried in Duisans British Cemetery; the name of the other soldier is recorded on the Arras Memorial.

The chaplain's tribute to James Robertson went on:

> We all owe much to the courage, hopefulness and devotion of brave men like him. I trust that you and all to whom he was dear will have the strength and grace to bear up bravely under the burden of grief, and I pray that our Saviour's own promise will comfort your heart and mind.

Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun, FranceV. G. 59.

ONE OF THE BEST

Duisans British Cemetery

Private James ROBERTSON

Royal Scots 7th Battalion A Company
Service Number: 2460
Date of Death: 22 May 1915
Age at Death: 17
Family: Son of William and Mary Robertson, Meadow Cottage, Carronshore

Private James Robertson was killed in the Quintinshill Rail Disaster, the worst ever railway accident in Britain's history. It is commemorated by a plaque at Larbert Station, for the troop train involved in the accident started from Larbert.

James Robertson joined the Royal Scots in November 1914 at Musselburgh where he worked as a collier. A total of 120 recruits had joined up from the twin villages of Musselburgh and Inveresk and had been assigned to the two companies which were to be on the fateful troop train.

In April 1915 the 4th and 7th Battalions of the Royal Scots arrived in Stenhousemuir to begin training beside the golf course of Falkirk Tryst Golf Club. The soldiers camped "where the 'shows' of Tryst time generally offer their variegated amusements to the public". Not long after the soldiers arrived, the golf club's minutes for 6 May were saying that "part of the course had been rendered almost useless for golfing purposes". Presumably the soldiers were spilling over on to the 12th and 13th fairways (not quite the present the 13th and 14th holes). The soldiers' Commanding Officer was to be asked to do something to prevent the course being used by the soldiers "to the exclusion of golfers."

"Their rows of tents formed an interesting spectacle," the *Falkirk* Herald reported, "and the camp attracted considerable attention." Since they were there for a month the men became "familiar figures in

Private James Robertson

the streets of Falkirk, and of Larbert and Stenhousemuir." Willie Muir, then 19 years old and living in Stenhousemuir, recalled in 1986 that "they seemed to mix more with the inhabitants. Certainly one wouldn't sit in a tent of an evening if there was elsewhere to go."

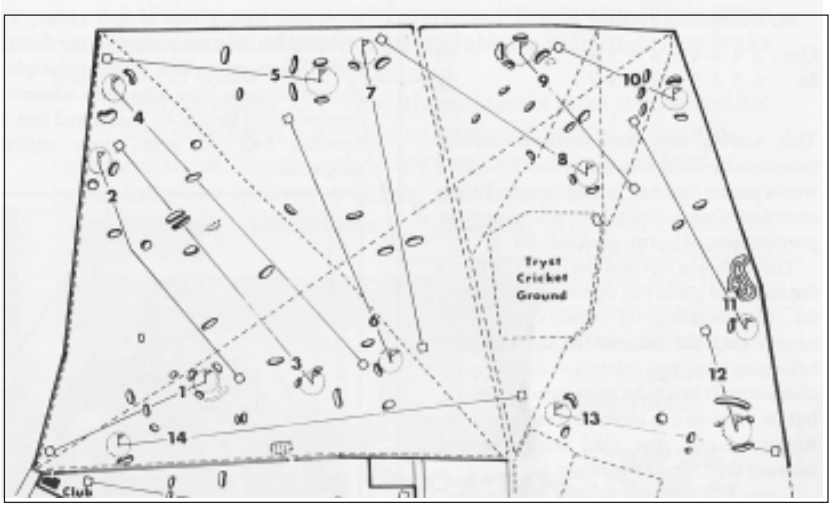
James Robertson and his friends in the battalion often visited his parents in Carronshore; his last visit was on the evening of Friday May 21. His battalion and the other Royal Scots battalion were bound for Gallipoli. They were to go by train to Liverpool and sail from there.

Willie Muir also remembered that "despite the very early start… when the troops marched out of camp the streets were thronged all along the route, and at the station I was one of the crowd that enveloped the place & gave such a parting cheer."

The train involved in the crash left Larbert Station at 3.42 a.m. on Saturday May 22. The train carried 500 officers and men of the 7th Battalion. It consisted of 15 wooden-bodied, gas-lit carriages– the gas was stored in cylinders under the carriage floors. At the rear were 5 wagons carrying military equipment, and a brake van. The guard, Charles Leggatt, was lodging in Larbert at this time.

At about 6.40 the troop train, travelling at 70 miles per hour, approached Quintinshill, just north of Gretna. At the signal box there was a loop beside each main line. Immediately below the signal box on the south-bound loop was a coal train; on the north-bound loop was a goods train. A local north-bound train from Carlisle, ten miles to the south, consisted of 3 carriages and a milk van. When it arrived at Quintinshill, it had been put on the south-bound main line so that two late-running, north-bound express trains from London could 'overtake' it.

The local train had arrived at 6.30 a.m. On it had been James Tinsley, a signalman who was due to start work in the Quintinshill signal-box at 6 a.m. But he and the other signalman, George Meakin, had an arrangement which meant that the day-shift signalman could get the local train and begin work approximately half an hour late. This unofficial arrangement was



concealed by the day-shift signalman writing up the train movements from 6 a.m. to 6.30 a.m. in the Train Register from a rough copy kept by the night-shift signalman. This is what James Tinsley was doing when the troop train from Larbert neared the signal box. George Meakin continued working as his colleague wrote up the Register. It was George Meakin who 'accepted' the troop train from the previous signal box. Neither of the signalmen noticed the local train was on the troop train's line. This was despite the fact that the fireman from the local train had gone into the signal box to warn the signalmen about his train. He spent most of his time there talking about that day's war news. The first of the north-bound express trains went through at 6.38 a.m.

Ten minutes later, the troop train smashed into the local train and pushed it backwards for 40 yards. The debris from the collision was spread over the two main lines. Less than a minute after the first collision the second express from London crashed into the wreckage. Masses of blazing debris were thrown all over the place.

The *Falkirk Herald* reported:

> The centre of the huge pile of debris [became] a mass of roaring flame, in the midst of which the heavy steel frames of waggons and coaches, white hot, could be seen twisting and curling like drying leaves. On the fringe of this furnace there proceeded for hours a noble struggle for the lives of men. Some of the work was heroic in the fullest sense… But all the courage in the world could not move the tons of tangled metal work in a tornado of flame, and there were times when the flames won in a struggle for the victim.

At 4 p.m. a roll call was taken of the 7th Battalion of the Royal Scots. Only 52 men were uninjured and only 2 of them were from A Company, to which James Robertson belonged. 214 soldiers of the 7th Royal Scots died in this crash, plus the driver and fireman of the troop train. 8 people were killed on the express and 2 on the local train. There were 226 injured.

Because of the inferno which engulfed the troop train, no trace could be found of many of the soldiers. It was estimated that 25 of these came from Musselburgh. It is likely that James Robertson was one of those of whom nothing was found.

The two signalmen were brought to court for their failings. James Tinsley said that he "forgot about it [the local train] after I jumped off the engine and it never entered my head again until after the accident happened… The only thing that I can account for my forgetting the 'local'… was my mind being occupied by entering the times of the trains." James Tinsley was sentenced to 3 years' penal servitude and George Meakin to 18 months' imprisonment. Both were released a year later.

Edinburgh (Rosebank) Cemetery Memorial Ground

The Quintinshill Conspiracy, *by Jack Richards and Adrian Searle, published in 2013, challenges the explanation that this was "a simple, albeit tragic, case of negligence in the signal-box! The authors make the case there was "a high level cover-up and conspiracy". From immediately after the accident, the Caledonian Railway management, with government approval, with "sophisticated deceit" acted to ensure that the signalmen were blamed entirely for what happened. There were "lamentable" management failings; for example, railway managers ignored the signalmen's rule-breaking practices. Furthermore, the train made up of "antiquated rolling stock", and operating at express speeds, was "unfit for purpose". These were the issues which needed a cover-up. The authors also believe there is "a credible case" for the view that James Tinsley, the signalman who was most to blame, was suffering from epilepsy. This would explain his "shambolic performance and fatally flawed memory in the signal box". The authors allege that "a deal was in place to keep [the cause of the accident] quiet". The signalmen took the blame completely. The failures of the Caledonian Railway were not mentioned. The men were re-employed on their release from prison, though not as signalmen.*

Private William ROBERTSON

Highland Light Infantry 9th Battalion
Service Number: 333004
Date of Death: 17 June 1917
Age at Death: 44
Family: Husband of Mrs Mary Robertson, Waddell Street, Carronshore & father of 10 children

William Robertson, who was born at Drybridge in Ayrshire, had belonged to the Lanarkshire Yeomanry. He worked as a slater. He enlisted in Bo'ness.

Private Robertson died of his wounds in one of the General Hospitals in Le Treport, a small port about 15 miles north-east of Dieppe, and, at the time of the First World War, an important hospital centre. He had sustained these wounds some time between mid-April and the end of May; his battalion spent most of the month of June in training.

In April and May the battalion had been on the front line at Croisilles, a village eight miles south-east of Arras. It had attacked the German fortified trench system known as the Hindenburg Line, and had also been subjected to heavy shelling. There were three occasions when there was intense fighting in which the battalion was involved. The first of these was on 23 April. Then on 20 May there was an advance on the Hindenburg front line in which over 200 soldiers were wounded; it is most likely that William was wounded during this attack. The total number of casualties was 297 out of a battalion strength on the day of 496. The battalion historian commented:

> The proportion of loss to numbers engaged was exceptionally high and was far beyond what in other wars was regarded as the strain which troops could endure without serious loss of morale. Our men had stood the strain.

In another attack on 27 May, 23 soldiers of the battalion were wounded (and 13 killed).

Mount Huon Military Cemetery, Le Treport, France IV. G. 7B.

Shoulder to Shoulder The Glasgow Highlanders 9th Bn Highland Light Infantry 1914-1918, Colonel A K Reid (1988)

This history gives a detailed account of all three attacks the battalion made in April and May 1917.

Private David Darling RUNCIMAN

Seaforth Highlanders 7th Battalion
Service Number: S/24034
Date of Death: 11 April 1918
Age at Death: 18
Family: Only son of George Runciman, 25 East Carron & of the late Elizabeth Runciman

David Runciman was an employee of Carron Company before he enlisted in June 1915 when he was 16 years old.

In early April 1918, the 7th Battalion Seaforth Highlanders were serving in the trenches at Hollebeke, about five miles to the south-east of Ypres. The battalion went into Seddon Camp on April 10 and in the war diary the Commanding Officer noted:

> Up to this point no convincing evidence had been secured to indicate the coming of an enemy offensive on this front… With this comforting assurance, the Battalion was warned to be ready to return to the line this night (10th/11th)

At 8 am on April 11 the Germans attacked and, in the morning mist, got within 150 yards of the British trenches south of the Ypres – Comines Canal. The attack was repelled by the 7th Battalion of the Seaforth Highlanders and the other two battalions of 26th Brigade. Another attack near Hollebeke was also shot down.

While it could be said that "the rest of the day passed uneventfully", David Runciman was killed during the fighting in the morning when the battalion suffered about 135 casualties.

Tyne Cot Memorial, Ieper, Belgium Panel 132 to 135 and 162A.

Military Operations France and Belgium 1918 Volume II, James E Edmonds, 1937, page 243.

Private David Walker RUSSELL

Royal Scots Fusiliers 2nd Battalion
Service Number: 24073
Date of Death: 12 October 1916
Age at Death: 31
Family: Son of Magnus Russell, 6 Dawson Terrace, Carron and of the late Helen Agnes Walker Russell

David Russell gave his occupation as ironmonger when he attested in November 1915. In March 1916 he joined the KOSB but he was transferred to the Royal Scots Fusiliers in the Machine Gun section in June, a few days before he went to the Western Front.

The Royal Scots Fusiliers 2nd battalion took part in the first day of the Battle of the Somme. It went forward at 8.30 a.m., an hour after the first attacks. It reached the village on Montauban at 10.05 a.m. but during the day suffered 170 casualties.

The battalion's attack on Guillemont on July 30 was a disaster: there were 650 casualties out of an attacking force of 750.

Private David Russell

Then, on October 12 the battalion took part in an attack in the Flers sector. The German Army was well-prepared for this attack. Their artillery had bombarded the Royal Scots Fusiliers throughout the previous day and night and during the morning of the 12th. Zero hour was 2.05 p.m. The battalion war diary described the attack:

> The attacking lines were met at once by devastating machine gun fire and an accurate barrage. Our bombardment had evidently not been accurate enough materially to decrease enemy fire power… Many men were hit before they were more than a few yards from our trench. The attack never had a chance from the first and was definately [sic] held up about 100 yards from the German front line.

The battalion's casualties were 9 officers and 261 other ranks, including 47 soldiers who were suffering from shell shock. Private Russell was one of those killed. The Official Historian concluded:

> The British battalions [2nd Battalion Royal Scots Fusiliers and the 17th Battalion Manchester Regiment] showed admirable powers of endurance, but were woefully weak in numbers, with many half-trained men in their ranks.

Thiepval Memorial, France Pier and Face 3 C.

Private James SCOTT

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
2nd Battalion
Service Number: 10234
Date of Death: 9 March 1915
Age at Death: 29
Family: Son of James and Janet Scott, Burnside Castle, Stenhousemuir

James Scott was a moulder with Carron Company. He was a reservist and was called up on the outbreak of war. He went to France less than a week after war had been declared, on 10 August 1914. He took part in the Battle of Mons, which began on August 23. This was the first major battle the British Expeditionary Force fought in the First World War.

Private Scott had been expected home on leave at the start of March 1915, but it was the news of his death that was received. He had been killed "instantaneously" at Neuve Chapelle. The battalion war diary recorded that the battalion had moved between 6.15 and 9 p.m. into the trenches near Bois Grenier, which is two miles south of Armentieres. During that time "one man was killed." This was Private James Scott.

The day after his death occurred, the first large-scale organised attack by the British Army on the Western Front went in at Neuve Chapelle.

Ration Farm Military Cemetery, La Chapelle-D'armentieres, France VI. M. 3.

This cemetery is on the south-eastern outskirts of Armentieres. Ration Farm was about 1,000 yards behind the front line for most of the war.

Ration Farm Military Cemetery

Private James SCOTT

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders 11th Battalion
Service Number: S/3935
Date of Death: 10 December 1915
Age at Death: 27
Family: Second son of Robert & Alison Thomson Scott, 134 West Carron; brother of John (q.v.) & Walter (q.v.)

Private James Scott

Prior to his enlistment in September 1914, James Scott was a moulder in Mungal Foundry. He went to the Western Front in July 1915.

In the aftermath of the Battle of Loos, which was officially fought between September 25 and October 18 1915, the 11th Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders did their tours of duty in December in trenches opposite the Hohenzollern Redoubt. The bottoms of these trenches were a foot deep in mud. The Commanding Officer complained that "The men suffered considerably from exhaustion and the general inconvenience caused by ploughing through sticky mud."

There was heavy shellfire on the afternoon of the day James Scott died. Three soldiers were killed. It seems likely that James was one of these men. The battalion war diary commented that "In every case the casualties only occurred when a shell exploded in the trench itself or on the parados."

The battalion war diary also records that three other men were killed on the same day when the dugout they were in collapsed as a result of a period of heavy rain. These men had been warned that it was not safe to use this dugout.

Loos Memorial, France Panel 125 to 127.

The names of 4 of the 6 soldiers of the 11th Battalion of the Agyll & Sutherland Highlanders killed on 10 December 1915 are recorded on the Loos Memorial.

Private James Henderson SCOTT

East Lancashire Regiment 13th Battalion
Service Number: 33386
Date of Death: 30 (FH: 28) August 1918
Age at Death: 26
Family: Elder son of James and Jean Scott, The Clydesdale Bank House, Larbert

James Scott was employed in the fitters' shop at Fairfield Shipyard at Govan on the River Clyde. Established in 1864, Fairfield was the largest and most successful shipbuilding yard on the Clyde before 1914.

James joined the Royal Engineers in 1915. After two years in the trenches, he suffered a bad bout of trench fever, a common disease which was spread by the bites of body lice. The main symptoms were headaches, skin rashes, inflamed eyes and leg pains. The fever usually lasted for about five days, but relapses were common. Rarely a fatal disease, recovery usually took about a month.

When Private Scott returned to active service, he was transferred to the 13th Battalion of the East Lancashire Regiment. This was a new battalion which was formed

Private James Henderson Scott

in June 1918. It did two tours of duty at the end of August in the Vieux Berquin sector, the first between 22nd and 26th August and the second between the 27th and the 30th. During both tours it was the Support Companies that came under heavy shellfire and suffered heavy losses. When this happened on the first tour, 'D' Company was ordered "well forward in immediate support to the 2 front coys". What happened next was decidedly unusual. "This [order] was not carried out by the Coy commander who was relieved of his command, the movement was successfully carried out before dawn." The German withdrawal, which began in this sector on August 18, continued.

The total casualties over the battalion's two tours in the front line were 19 killed, 49 wounded and 33 gassed.

Private Scott died of his wounds on August 30.

Nieppe Bois (Rue-du-Bois) British Cemetery, Vieux-Berquin, France C. 2.

GENTLE, AFFECTIONATE
TRUE AND KIND
A BEAUTIFUL MEMORY
LEFT BEHIND

Vieux Berquin is a village 5 miles east of Hazebrouck.

Private John SCOTT

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders 14th Battalion
Service Number: S/21737
Date of Death: 23 November 1917
Age at Death: 20
Family: Fourth son of Robert and Alison Thomson Scott, 134 West Carron; brother of James (q.v.)and Walter (q.v.)

Perhaps the shortest of the soldiers named on Larbert War Memorial. His height, according to the medical examination at the time of his enlistment, was given as 4 feet 11 inches, although a later report did add 2 ½ inches to his height!

Also, he lasted only a fortnight on the Western Front before he was killed in action.

John Scott was a joiner at Carron Iron Works when he enlisted in July 1917. He had a short period of training and was then drafted to the Western Front in November.

Shortly afterwards, he was reported missing in action at some point between 23 and 26 November, according to information given to his parents. Nine months later, he was officially presumed to have died during the Battle of Cambrai on November 23. This was the first day of the attack to capture Bourlon Wood. Private Scott's battalion, fighting on the flank of the British forces, were not able to make much progress.

Private John Scott

Between November 23 and 25, the battalion suffered 191 casualties.

Cambrai Memorial, Louverval, France Panel 10.

Private Walter SCOTT

Prince of Wales's Own Royal Hussars 10th Battalion
'A' Squadron LWM: *Hussars*
Service Number: 1646
Date of Death: 3 May 1917
Age at Death: 30
Family: Eldest son of Robert & Alison Thomson Scott, 134 West Carron; brother of James (q.v.) and John (q.v.)

Walter Scott was a regular soldier who in nearly 10 years' service was home for a total of only 8 days. Before the First World War began, he had served in Ireland, then India followed by three years in South Africa.

At the outbreak of war, he returned with his regiment from Capetown arriving in England in September. They headed off to the Western Front in early October.

This cavalry battalion was present at the major battles of 1915 – 16 like the Battle of Loos and the Battle of the Somme. The battalion historian remarked of the Somme: "There never was… any opportunity for the employment of Cavalry. Day after day the cavalry were 'standing to' for half-an-hour to four hours' notice."

Private Scott died of wounds he suffered during the Battle of Arras in No 11 General Hospital, Camiers, France.

The 10th Battalion Prince of Wales's Own Hussars was involved in the first days of the battle. At 10.30 a.m. on April 10, the second day of the Battle, it moved up to Orange Hill, which was captured by the infantry by midday. At 5 p.m. it was ordered forward but came under heavy machine gun and artillery fire. A severe snowstorm allowed the men to take cover and avoid what would have been "very heavy casualties", according to the battalion war diary.

On April 11, at 8 a.m. the battalion, whose role was to support

Private Walter Scott

the infantry and exploit any breakthrough, was ordered to advance on the area centring on the village of Monchy-le-Preux, four miles south-east of Arras. The village stood on a hill and was a landmark for the surrounding countryside.

Despite a severe artillery barrage and machine gun fire, the village was captured. By the time the whole of the battalion was in the village, "the whole force of the German artillery seemed to be concentrating on it." The village was put into "a fair state of defence" as a German counter-attack was anticipated.

Monchy was shelled with such severity on April 11 that, whereas it was "practically intact" when the 10th Royal Hussars first entered it, there was "very little of the place left standing" by nightfall. The main street was littered with dead horses and at one point the pile of dead horses was an obstacle that had to be climbed over to get along the street.

The Royal Hussars were relieved by the West Kent Regiment at 10 p.m. But, owing to the West Kents' lack of numbers, the 10th Royal Hussars' 'A' and 'B' Squadrons were left behind to help in the defence of the village.

All day on the 12th there was "a severe artillery bombardment". A German counter-attack was expected but it was British troops who attacked at 6 p.m. Within two hours they had pushed north out of the village, which allowed the withdrawal of the squadrons belonging to the 10th Royal Hussars.

Since his battalion was in action only between April 10 and 12, it seems most likely that Walter suffered the wounds from which he died at some point during these days. It is also most likely that he was wounded when his squadron was left behind to defend Monchy-le-Preux. The extent of the casualties in his squadron is shown by the fact that over 50% of the 62 reinforcements received by the regiment shortly afterwards were directed to 'A' Squadron.

Etaples Military Cemetery, France XVIII. G. 10.

HE GAVE HIS LIFE FOR KING AND COUNTRY

Etaples is a town over 15 miles south of Boulogne. It was remote from enemy attack, and was therefore an immense army base. There were also many hospitals – they could deal with 22,000 wounded or sick soldiers.

The 10th (PWO) Royal Hussars and the Essex Yeomanry During the European War, 1914-1918, Lt Col F H D C Whitmore (1920) page 105-6

Private William SCOTT

Royal Scots 2nd Battalion
Service Number: 30276
Date of Death: 14 July 1916
Age at Death: 31
Family: Son of James and Elizabeth Scott, nee Brown, 5 Tryst Road, Stenhousemuir

William Scott worked for Carron Company as a grate fitter before enlisting in February 1916.

Private William Scott's battalion was involved in the second major phase of the Battle of the Somme, an attack on Bazentin Ridge. His battalion's target was Bazentin-le-Grand. The attack began before first light at 3.25 am on July 14 after a 5-minute artillery bombardment (quite different from the advance on the first day of the battle).

In the opinion of Lieutenant-Colonel W D Croft:

> On the 14th July, 1916, the British Army performed one of the finest feats which have ever been done in war, to wit, a night march to a position of deployment within five hundred yards of a vigilant enemy, then a crawl forward on hands and knees, to be followed at zero by the assault of a strongly-wired and embedded position which had suffered no previous bombardment to shake the moral [sic] of the defenders.

22, 000 British soldiers advanced on the second-line German defensive complex in the southern sector of the Somme. The attack has been described as a "stunning success resulting in the capture of the German second position on a front of 6,000 yards." But resistance then stiffened once the attackers were beyond the German front line, and thereafter the British edged forward.

The 2nd Battalion Royal Scots began the attack in reserve to the 8th Brigade. When the leading battalions suffered great losses because the German wire was intact, the 2nd Royal Scots were ordered to pass through and carry the German trenches. The battalion's bombers and snipers attacked from the flank. The Germans' resistance quickly collapsed and 8th Brigade took the German second line.

The 2nd Battalion's losses were not heavy at this point but the German shelling, which was "very severe and accurate" caused a "most alarming" increase in the afternoon.

At some point during the day William Scott was killed.

Thiepval Memorial, FrancePier and Face 6 D and 7 D.

Three Years with the 9th (Scottish) Division, Lieutenant-Colonel W D Croft, 1919, page 54

The Royal Scots 1914 -1919, John Ewing, 1925, page 290

One peculiarity of the 14th July was that the cavalry were in action. The 2nd battalion war diary recorded:

> *In the afternoon our cavalry, which had been massing in the valley, went through and at the same time the 5th Div attacked HIGH WOOD in front of us and got in.*
>
> *The Cavalry were unable to go very far, but cut off a certain number of the enemy in retreat. The Germans holding the NORTH end of DELVILLE WOOD, on our right opened machine gun fire on our Cavalry.*

Lieutenant Alexander Nimmo SHERRIFF

Northampton Regiment 1st Battalion D Company
Date of Death: 30 October 1914
Age at Death: 20
Family: Son of Catherine Jane Sherriff and the late George Sherriff, Carronvale, Larbert; brother of John (q.v.)

Lieutenant Alexander Sherriff

Alexander Sherriff became an officer in the Northampton Regiment early in 1914 before the First World War began. He had been educated at Sedbergh School in Yorkshire and then at the Royal Military College at Sandhurst.

He was involved in the fighting on the Western Front from an early stage, having arrived in France on August 13. His battalion took part in the major battles of 1914 and sometime during these battles he had been reported wounded.

According to the inscription on the family gravestone in the graveyard of Larbert Old Parish Church, Lieutenant Sherriff was "killed in action near Ypres 1st November 1914, and buried in a wood near Hooge".

The 1st battalion of the Northampton Regiment fought in the First Battle of Ypres in October-November 1914. Their greatest involvement was in the second phase of the battle when, between October 29 and 31, the German Army made repeated mass infantry attacks on the British 1st Division, to which Lieutenant Sherriff's battalion belonged, and on the 7th Division. They were forced back to Gheluvelt but regained lost ground by the end of the day.

On the next day, October 30, the Germans managed to penetrate the British front line and went on to take Zandfoorde Ridge. Lieutenant Sherriff's battalion was sent in to help at 9.15 a.m. With the other battalions involved the German attack was halted. Lieutenant Sherriff's death was officially reported to have occurred on this date.

The next main German effort was made on October 31 when, at one point, the German forces occupied Gheluvelt but a surprise counter-attack restored the British trench line, and saved Ypres from capture.

On October 30 and 31, Lieutenant Sherriff's battalion fought at places known to the soldiers as Bodmin Copse and Shrewsbury Forest. At one point the battalion was ordered "to stand fast at all costs".

On November 1, the date of death given on the family gravestone, a German attack began at 11 a.m. and then two hours later, "a very determined general effort to advance fell severely on the 1st Northampton Regiment." They held their line under a heavy artillery pounding and with the only protection in front of their position being a wire fastened from tree to tree.

By November 2 the 1st Northampton Regiment was reported to be short of 16 officers and over 500 other ranks.

Alexander Sherriff was described by the Reverend John Fairley, the minister of Larbert Parish Church, in a tribute to Alexander as "a noble gallant youth [with a] genial, open and intelligent countenance." He was not well known in the parish "but his grandparents and father are buried in Larbert Churchyard. So we cannot but feel he was one of ourselves."

Menin Gate Memorial, Ieper, Belgium Panel 43 and 45.

Military Operations France and Belgium, 1914, J E Edmonds (1922) page 336, 358

Lieutenant John George SHERRIFF

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
7th Battalion
Date of Death: 25 (CWGC: 26) April 1915
Age at Death: 24
Family: Eldest son of Mrs Catherine Jane Sherriff and the late George Sherriff, Carronvale, Larbert; brother of Alexander (q.v.)

Lieutenant John Sherriff

John Sherriff was born at Woodcroft in Larbert. He was educated at Merchiston Castle School, Edinburgh, and Wadham College, Oxford. His studies at Oxford University were completed in the summer of 1914. When he returned to Larbert, he immediately obtained a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the 7th battalion. Within a few days of doing so, war was declared, and soon afterwards the battalion left for England. In December the battalion went to the Western Front, and he was promoted to Lieutenant.

He was killed in the Battle of St Julien (25 April-4 May). The Battle of St Julien, which was the first major piece of fighting the battalion was involved in, was the second phase of the Second Battle of Ypres (22 April-25 May, 1915). It is described in detail under the entry for Private James Dea on page 39.

The battalion war diary recorded that 6 officers and 100 other ranks were killed, but 150 men were posted missing and this was to double the number of other ranks who were killed in this attack. The total number of casualties in the battalion was over 500 including Lieutenant Sherriff.

The battle began on the morning of 24th April and continued through the 25th. The next day the battalion was to be in support but did not leave the trenches they held. This was just as well for the 26th April 1915 was "a truly disastrous day". There were 4,000 casualties on a mile-wide front. "Men were lost in totally fruitless and ill-prepared attacks against an enemy that was reasonably well-prepared and was superior in numbers and artillery."

The particular circumstances of Lieutenant Sherriff's death, which indicate that he died on the 25th, were described by Private James Thomson who had been wounded and sent back to Britain. He wrote in a letter to his parents in West Carron and published in the *Falkirk Herald*:

> It was terrible. It was nothing but pure hell to see men dropping at your side. I am very sorry that Lieutenant Sherriff was killed… We got a good cutting up. The last time I saw Lt Sherriff was when we were about ten yards from the German trenches, and he was going about with his revolver in his hand, giving his orders quite calmly.

In another published letter James Thomson wrote: "He was such a good sort, he would never see us wanting if he had it to give us. Every day in the trenches we were sure to get something from him."

The *Falkirk Herald* obituary commented:

> He had many friends and it was hoped that he would return to Larbert, ripened by his experiences and take a prominent place in public affairs as the largest landed proprietor in the Larbert district.

Thus, John Sherriff can be regarded as a member of the "Lost Generation", the many who, but for being killed in the war, would have gone on to be very influential figures in public life, nationally and locally. It is an indication of John Sherriff's importance that his personal estate was valued at just over £80,000. (His grandfather had established a whisky-distilling business in the mid-19th century and it had been continued by his father. At the time of the First World War it included Lochindaal Distillery in Islay and Lochead Distillery in Campbelltown.)

Menin Gate Memorial, Ieper, Belgium Panel 42 and 44.

Military Operations France and Belgium 1915 Volume II J E Edmonds, 1928, page 240

Carronvale House, Larbert

Private James SHIRRA

Scottish Rifles (Cameronians) 9th Battalion Formerly Hussars 13472
Service Number: 18812
Date of Death: 11 December 1915
Age at Death: 28
Family: Son of the late William and Elizabeth Shirra, Broomagehall Cottage, Larbert

James Shirra was a bricklayer with the local building firm of J J & P McLachlan (remembered in the street of that name in Stenhousemuir). He enlisted in Alloa immediately the First World War was declared. He joined the 11th Hussars but was transferred to the 9th Battalion Cameronians (Scottish Rifles).

His battalion took part in the Battle of Loos in which it suffered "grievous losses". It was then sent to the Ypres sector.

On 11 December 1915 when Private Shirra was killed in action, the battalion war diary states: "Enemy aircraft were very active all day. Otherwise things were very quiet."

Though their service in this part of the line, which was known as Leicester Square, was usually quiet in late November and early December, on the previous day "Enemy was very active. The vicinity of battalion Headquarters was heavily shelled but no damage was done."

The sources therefore do not provide much in the way of useful information about James Shirra's death. It may just be that he was killed in the ordinary routine of the war in the trenches.

Menin Gate Memorial, Ieper, Belgium Panel 22.

Magnificent But Not War The Battle for Ypres 1915, John Dixon, 2013, page 139

Sergeant Robert SILCOCK

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders 2nd Battalion
Service Number: 4/9569
Date of Death: 20 July 1916

[*The first intimations of his death in the Aberdeen newspapers gave the date as July 19th or 21st.*]

Age at Death: 39
Family: Husband of Betsy Emslie Smith, Campbell Parish Home, Cullen, Banffshire; son of the late William and Agnes Silcock, West Carron

Robert Silcock enlisted in the army in Aberdeen, and went to the Western Front on 1 October 1915.

Sergeant Silcock's battalion was involved in the Battle of the Somme from July 15 when it was in reserve for an attack which was made between Bazentin-Le-Petit and High Wood.

About midnight on July 19th/20th the battalion took over trenches north of Bazentin-Le-Petit. At 1.30 a.m. 'D' Company took over, with little opposition, trenches 300 yards in front of the battalion's front line. 'C' Company was able to advance about halfway to the German defences but machine gun fire stopped them. About 6 p.m. a German aeroplane, flying low, was shot down by men from the battalion.

Robert Silcock's Headstone

During the day, the battalion suffered a total of 72 casualties, including 14 killed. Robert Silcock was one of those killed.

Ovillers Military Cemetery, France XIV. M. 10.

Ovillers is a village about 3 miles north-east of the town of Albert.

It may be that Robert Silcock was one of the victims of the German barrage near High Wood described in the memoirs of Frank Richards, Old Soldiers Never Die, page 136:

> *Down in the valley below us was a company of Argyles who were occupying some shell holes and shallow trenches. They seemed to be just outside the German barrage. I had to pass by them when I was taking back a message to Brigade Headquarters, about a hundred yards beyond. I had just reached Brigade when it seemed that every German artillery gun had lengthened its range and was firing direct on the Argyles. This lasted about fifteen minutes and then the shelling slackened. I waited awhile before making my way back and when I did pass by the Argyles' position I could only see heads, arms, legs and mangled bodies. I have often wondered since then, if all the leading statesmen and generals of the warring countries had been threatened to be put under that barrage during the day of the 20th July and were told that if they survived it they would be forced to be under a similar one in a week's time, whether they would have all met together and signed a peace treaty before the week was up.*

Out of 15 soldiers of the 2nd Battailion Argylls who died "during the day of 20th July", 12 have no known grave; Robert Silcock was one of the three who have a known grave, which may mean that he was killed in another incident that day.

Corporal John SIM

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
10th Battalion
Service Number: S/6256
Date of Death: 9 August 1916
Age at Death: 31
Family: Son of James Sim, Kirkton Farm, Bothkennar and of the late Janet Sim

John Sim, like his father, was a farm labourer. He enlisted in the army in November 1914 and went to the Western Front in May 1915. Given his promotion to the rank of Corporal, it seems safe to assume that his conduct as a soldier was exemplary. But he was discharged from the army on 31 May 1916. There is no record of the reason for his discharge but it is surely linked to the fact that just over two months later he died of tuberculosis at Kirkton Farm, Bothkennar.

There is, however, no mention of him in the records of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and his grave in Larbert Cemetery is unmarked. The qualifying criterion for a CWGC headstone was that the death of a soldier discharged from the army prior to 1921 had to be due to an illness or to injury brought about by his army service. It seems that the view was taken that his death was not due to an illness which was attributable to his war service. He therefore does not qualify for a Commonwealth War Grave Commission headstone nor an entry in their records.

His grave is unmarked but his family had his war service duly recognised whenever that was possible. For example, in October 1919, a framed certificate of sympathy was received by the family from the Larbert War Memorial committee.

Larbert Cemetery, Muirhead Road, Stenhousemuir. Section 2 Lair 315.

Bothkennar Church

Able Seaman William SINCLAIR

Royal Naval Division Howe Battalion
Service Number: Clyde Z/847
Date of Death: 14 (FM: 15) May 1915
Age at Death: 18
Family: Son of Alexander and Elizabeth Sinclair, Fitzpatrick's Buildings, Larbert

William Sinclair was a clerk at the Buckie depot of James Jones & Sons of Larbert. He lived at 15 Evedonsburgh, Buckie. He enlisted in October 1914 and joined Howe battalion at the start of November. His battalion landed at Cape Helles on the Gallipoli peninsula on 25 April 1915.

On 6 May the Howe Battalion took part in the 2nd Battle of Krithia. The aim was to attack the Turkish lines in broad daylight on a wide front, advancing one mile, then to capture the village of Krithia and the hill at Achi Baba. It was on the first day of this attack that AB William Sinclair was severely wounded in the left shoulder.

About midday some of William's battalion, together with the Hood and Anson battalions, had been ordered into the advance alongside a French force. According to the Official Historian, they did "good work" and made "substantial progress" but "considerable casualties" meant they had to withdraw. Joseph Murray of Hood Battalion took part in this attack. He said:

> The Turkish fire was murderous and we lost a lot of men. The Turks must have had their machine-guns perfectly sighted… The fire was coming from all directions, yet we could not see a single Turk or any sign of a trench.

There was strong Turkish resistance over the three days of this battle, which was ended by the British without ever completing the first phase of their plan. During the battle, one-third of the British, French, Australian and New Zealand soldiers

Able Seaman William Sinclair

who took part became casualties. Another notable feature was the "woeful" inadequacy of the medical provision for the wounded. There were insufficient stretcher bearers and hospital ships.

AB Sinclair was transferred to the 15th General Hospital in Alexandria in Egypt where he died of his wounds. While the family was receiving official reports that William had been wounded and then that he was in hospital in Alexandria, they were told of his death by a family in Larbert. Their son had been in hospital in Alexandria when William Sinclair was admitted. In a letter home he mentioned that William had died. When William's father had contacted the War Office, officials there could not confirm that he had died. Subsequently, his father received a letter from the 15th General Hospital in Alexandria that his son had died there "from the effects of gunshot wounds of the head" (and not the shoulder as in RND records). Thus there was a sad end to "many weeks of anxiety" for the family.

Alexandria (Chatby) Military and War Memorial Cemetery, Egypt. M. 165.

Military Operations Gallipoli Volume 1, C F Aspinall-Oglander, 1929, page 335.

Gallipoli As I Saw it, Joseph Murray, 1965, page 59

Private James SMITH

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders 7th Battalion
Service Number: 275246
Date of Death: 17 December 1917
Age at Death: 22
Family: Second son of Mary Smith, 208 West Carron and of the late James Smith

James Smith was an apprentice moulder employed at Carron Iron Works. He was mobilised with the Territorials when war was declared. He was sent to the Western Front in July 1916. (See entry for Robert Taylor for July 1916; James Brown or Robert Smith for November 1916.)

In April 1917 the 7th Argylls were involved in two of the main phases of the Battle of Arras. [See entry for William Armit or Hugh Martin or Peter Watson or Colin Nisbet for the start of the Battle of Arras; Robert Hunter or Malcolm Walker or James Laing for the third phase of the battle, 23 April].

In November 1917 James was home on leave. Shortly after his return to the front, he was killed in action while his battalion was holding the front line at Beugny. When it moved in on December 16, the battalion's war diary noted that "the night was fairly quiet", December 17, was "pretty quiet. 1 OR wounded" and December 18 was "generally quiet. Intermittent shelling all over. 1 OR killed. 3 ORs wounded." James Smith was the soldier killed.

His death notice in the *Falkirk Herald* ended:

> Compassionate heart of Jesus,
> grant him eternal rest. R.I.P.

Red Cross Corner Cemetery, Beugny, France I. G. 5.

R.I.P.
ON WHOSE SOUL
SWEET JESUS HAVE MERCY

Beugny is a village 3 miles north-east of the town of Bapaume.

Private Robert SMITH

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
7th Battalion B Company
Service Number: 275249
Date of Death: 15 November 1916
Age at Death: 21
Family: Fifth son of Henry and Jeanie Smith, 8 Steps Street, Stenhousemuir

Private Robert Smith

Robert Smith was an apprentice plumber employed by his brother David Smith, whose business was in Stenhousemuir. (The business still operates to this day.) He was a member of the Territorial Force and was mobilised when war was declared. He did not go to the Western Front, however, until 5 December 1915.

The Battle of the Ancre began on November 13 with an attack by the 51st (Highland) Division on Beaumont Hamel, which is six miles north of the town of Albert. This was the final phase of the Battle of the Somme which had begun on 1 July 1916. It was also a formidable task. The battalion historian referred to "the supposed impregnable fortress of Beaumont Hamel, with its almost ridiculous depth of wire entanglements, its fabulously deep cellars and caves and its picked garrison of the best of the enemy's troops". It was also "literally an uphill fight".

On November 13, the 7th Battalion of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders was in support as the 51st (Highland) Division, with the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division on the right and the 2nd Division on the left, stormed and took possession of Beaumont Hamel.

At 7.30 a.m. the next day three companies of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders advanced to occupy the next objective, Munich Trench, which was achieved "with slight opposition". However, at 1.30 p.m. they withdrew from this trench "on account of the shelling of our own guns". At 6 p.m. a company of prisoners dug New Munich Trench.

The battalion war diary's report on the attack began: "Our artillery barrage opened short." The 51st Division report, stated that the attack "started according to time table and the waves successfully crossed MUNICH TRENCH, when they ran into the barrage and suffered severe losses, sufficient to totally disorganise the attack. Only a few individuals reached FRANFURT TRENCH," the attack's third objective. The survivors returned to New Munich Trench, "still the most advanced part of the British line".

The 7th Argylls' casualties on November 15 were heavy – 2 officers, missing believed killed, and 3 wounded; 22 other ranks killed, 97 wounded and 19 missing. At first, Robert Smith was reported missing; his death was confirmed in August 1917.

Robert had four brothers who were all in the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders, who had all been wounded but who were all still serving when his death was reported.

Frankfurt Trench British Cemetery, Beaumont Hamel, France C. 23.

Frankfurt Trench British Cemetery is named from a German trench about a mile north-east of the village of Beaumont Hamel, which remained in enemy hands until the Germans withdrew early in 1917.

51st (Highland) Division Memorial at Beaumont Hamel

Private William SMITH

Cameron Highlanders 1st Battalion
Service Number: 5937
Date of Death: 11 November 1914
Age at Death: 32 (FH: 36/34)
Family: Youngest son of John and Susan Smith, The Inns, Carron

Private William Smith was in the Special Reserve when war broke out. He had been a soldier in the regular army for 8 years, serving in China, Malta and South Africa. He was a moulder in Mungal Foundry when war was declared. He was called up immediately and left Britain for the Western Front on 13 September 1914.

From the next day and over the next month the battalion was involved in the fighting at Vendresse in France. In the middle of October the battalion was moved to the Ypres sector where there was desperate fighting as the German Army tried repeatedly to capture Ypres.

On October 31 the German Army made its supreme effort to break through to Ypres. The German attack covered a frontage of 12 miles. It lasted all day and most of the following night. The Official History noted:

> A decisive victory seemed to be assured as everything pointed to the British being completely exhausted. However the line that stood between the British Empire and ruin was composed of tired, haggard and unshaven men, unwashed, plastered with mud, many in little more than rags. But they had their guns, rifles and bayonets, and, at any rate plenty of rifle ammunition, whilst the artillerymen always managed to have rounds available at the right place at critical moments.

The 1st Camerons took over a position four miles east of Ypres on November 5. It was involved

Private William Smith

in what was called the Battle of Nonne Bosschen (Nun's Copse) when William Smith was killed in action.

The German Army had decided to make a final attempt to capture Ypres before winter set in. The fiercest artillery bombardment so far in the war and lasting three hours preceded the German infantry attack along a 9-mile front. The attack began at 9 a.m. and was only moderately successful. The Germans broke through the British lines in two places.

William Smith's battalion was overrun by the bayonet attack of a German force which in total outnumbered the British force facing it by 3 to 1. The British soldiers had been fighting almost continuously for three weeks, had not had regular hot meals or drinks and lacked washing and sanitary facilities. They faced the picked troops of the German Army. The greatest weight of the German attack was in the centre, which was held by three "weak" Scottish battalions; by "weak" the Official Historian meant that the combined strength of the three battalions, 800 men, was, at this time just about the usual strength of one battalion. The front line they held, about 900 yards near Polygon Wood, was overwhelmed but the Scottish battalions put up a "stout resistance" and, with an accurate barrage on the German Army, the German front-line soldiers got few reinforcements. This meant that although they took the front-line trenches between the Menin Road and Polygon Wood, "they had little else except heavy casualties to show for their final and desperate attempt to break through."

At some point during the battle William Smith was killed. His family was notified that he had been posted missing. The battalion war diary noted on November 11 that "C & D Coys were nearly all reported missing."

The *Falkirk Herald* reported in March 1915 the family's anxiety about his fate but it was to be May 1916 before he was officially presumed killed in action.

William had sent regular letters from the front to his family. The last one they received from him was dated 1 November 1914. He wrote:

> I am sitting in the trenches keeping out of the way of German shells, which are flying over our heads every minute. We are not just so bad to-day as we were yesterday (Saturday), for I really thought, we would all have been blown to atoms. We were in the trenches yesterday morning when they started shelling us with their heavy shells, and it was a constant job digging one another out of the earth. There were a few killed and one or two buried alive, so I can count myself lucky having come through what I have. I do wish this was finished, as it is a terrible time. We never know the moment we are going to get 'it', but I hope and trust in God and pray to Him to guard me through.

Menin Gate Memorial, Ieper, Belgium Panel 38 and 40.

Military Operations France and Belgium 1915 Volume II J E Edmonds, 1928, page 426, 444

Gunner William SMITH

Royal Garrison Artillery 261st Siege Battery
Service Number: 117103
Date of Death: 21 May 1917
Age at Death: 30
Family: Second son of Ann Smillie Smith, 7 Company's Row, Stenhousemuir and of the late James Smith

Gunner William Smith

William Smith was an iron grinder at Torwood Foundry, which belonged to Jones & Campbell. He was also the Secretary of Larbert Baptist Church.

He enlisted in December 1915 and was placed in the Army Reserve until he was mobilized in September 1916. He went to the Western Front on 7 February 1917. In an RGA siege battery, the usual armaments were 6 inch, 8 inch and 9.2 inch howitzers, guns which fired high explosive shells, aimed at destroying enemy artillery and other targets like roads and railways behind enemy lines.

Gunner Smith's battery took part in the Battle of Arras. Then, after the main phases of the battle were over, he and four other members of his battery were killed on the same day, as a flanking operation was being attempted on the Hindenburg Line. The hostile artillery fire was said to be "considerable" and aimed particularly at the roads in the area to the south-west of Arras.

Tilloy British Cemetery, Tilloy-Les-Mofflaines, France I. E. 2.

The village of Tilloy-Les-Mofflaines, which is 2 miles south-east of Arras, was captured on 9 April 1917 on the first day of the Battle of Arras.

Private John SNEDDON

Australian 5th Pioneer Battalion
Service Number: 4598
Date of Death: 21 March 1918
Age at Death: 42
Family: Son of the late Joseph and Jane Sneddon, Carronshore

Jack Sneddon gave his occupation as an iron dresser when he attested in Liverpool, New South Wales, (a suburb of Sydney) in December 1915. He was living in an inner-city suburb called Alexandria. He was nearly 39 years old. He was 5 feet 7 inches tall and weighed 11 stones. He had brown hair, light blue eyes and a fair complexion.

He first joined the 13th battalion of the Australian Imperial Force. He went to Egypt in March 1916 where he was transferred to the 5th Pioneer Battalion when it was set up. In June he left Alexandria in Egypt for the Western Front. His battalion served at Fromelles, near the city of Lille, and then spent six months over the winter until April 1917 in the Somme area near Montauban.

On 1 May 1917 Jack Sneddon went absent without leave from 8.45am-1pm. There is no information in the records to explain where he went. He received Field Punishment No 2. (This meant that he was shackled in fetters and handcuffs.) Then, on June 9, Private Sneddon faced a charge of "Conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline." His offence was that he made "an improper remark to an NCO". There is no record of what he actually said, but it cost him 7 days of Field Punishment No 2. The next day he reported sick and was diagnosed with influenza. He ended up being transferred to the 15th General Hospital in Stirchley in Birmingham. In July he was transferred to an auxiliary hospital in Dartford and he got two weeks' furlo (leave). He did not return to the hospital after two weeks, as he was meant to do. He was absent without leave until he reported back on 6 August. It was not stated where he had been. He lost 13 days' pay for this offence.

The soldiers of the Australian Imperial Force were notorious for their lack of discipline as perceived by the British Army's rank and file. As one Australian general put it, they were "not easily made submissable to formal discipline."

The "propensity" of Australian soldiers to go absent without leave was seen by them as a sign of "an independent spirt" and also of a "larrikin" - a high-spirited, rowdy kind of person defying conventions. The evidence shows that the 5 Australians Divisions on the Western Front had the highest rate of offences of all the divisions of the British Expeditionary Force. Their absence and desertion rates were four times greater. Their 1917 desertion rate was 34.2 per month; the average for all other divisions was 8.87. However, John Sneddon's indiscipline, if fully recorded on his service record, seems well below the average for a typical 'larrikin' Australian soldier

In October 1917 he went back to his battalion. It was serving in the Ypres area.

Early in 1918 the battalion moved to the Wyteschaete area. The Battalion History notes:

February and March 1918 found the Battalion working quietly in good weather on a very peaceful front, and a great deal of useful work was carried out.

But at 6.30 am on March 21, the German artillery began a heavy bombardment, using guns of all calibres, and also poison gas, along the whole front. Though the Battalion History says that "things soon settled down to their usual calm", and the main attack was further south near St Quentin, Jack Sneddon was killed. It was the first day of the German Spring Offensive of 1918.

Wyteschaete Military Cemetery, Belgium I. A. 8.

This cemetery is about 4 miles south of the centre of Ieper.

Sergeant Alexander SPENCE

Gordon Highlanders 8th/10th Battalion
Service Number: S/5617
Date of Death: 31 July 1917
Age at Death: 26
Family: Eldest son of Reverend A Easton Spence and of Barbara Milne Cowan Spence, UF Manse, Dollar

Alick Spence, who was born in the Free Church Manse at Insch in Aberdeenshire, was the son and grandson (twice over) of Free Church ministers. His father was the minister of Larbert East United Free Church from 1903 to 1911 when he became minister of Dollar UF Church. Alick was educated at Stirling High School and at the Technical College in Glasgow. He enlisted at Hamilton on 3rd September 1914. At that time he was Assistand Surveyor for Lanarkshire. He went to the Western Front in July 1915. It is a remarkable statistic that 90% of the military-age 'sons of the manse' volunteered for military service during the First World War.

In May 1916 the 8th and 10th battalions were amalgamated before going into action during several phases of the Battle of the Somme, and, in 1917, the Arras Offensive. The 8th/10th Battalion then moved north to Flanders to take part in the Battle of Passchendaele. A fortnight's intense bombardment preceded the first day of the battle. At 3.50 am, in mist and semi-darkness, Sergeant Spence's battalion was one of the numerous battalions which attacked the German Army's position at the centre of the Pilckem Ridge. His was the leading battalion on the right of the attack. Aided by a precise "creeping barrage", the British troops were immediately successful but in the early afternoon German counter-attacks halted progress.

Sergeant Spence was killed during this first attack on Pilckem Ridge in the Battle of Passchendaele.

Menin Gate Memorial, Ieper, Belgium Panel 38.

The Last Great War, Adrian Gregory, 2008, page 83

Larbert East Church

Private Robert STARK

Royal Scots 15th Battalion
Service Number: 20150
Date of Death: 19 June 1916
Age at Death: 21
Family: Third son of Margaret Stark, nee Goodwillie, Elm Cottage, Carronshore Road, Carron and of the late James Stark, merchant, Carronshore

Private Robert Stark

Robert Stark, whose mother ran a grocer's shop in Carronshore, was an electrician at Carron Iron Works. He was keenly interested in the Boys Brigade at Carron Church, and was an enthusiastic instructor there.

He enlisted in January 1915, and exactly a year later went to the Western Front. His battalion was to take an important part in the attacks on the first day of the Battle of the Somme but Robert Stark was killed in action near Albert in the lead-up to the first day. The battalion was then involved on a nightly basis providing working and carrying parties.

From 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. on June 19 the Germans mounted a trench mortar bombardment on the battalion's left, killing 2 soldiers and wounding 8 others. Robert Stark was one of the men killed.

Becourt Military Cemetery, Becordel-Becourt, France I. O. 5. 5.

This cemetery is a mile east of the town of Albert.

Lance Corporal George STEEDMAN (LWM: Steadman)

Gordon Highlanders 6th Battalion 'A' Company. Formerly Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders 7th Battalion 278093
Service Number: 2088048
Date of Death: 23 November 1917
Age at Death: 27
Family: Son of Peter and Elizabeth Steedman, Braefoot, Low Town, Larbert

George Steedman, who was born in Dunblane, worked for Dobbie, Forbes & Company, Larbert. He enlisted in Stenhousemuir and joined the local regiment.

It seems likely that he joined the 6th Gordon Highlanders in the spring of 1917. Between April and May, the battalion had suffered over 600 casualties, and received over 800 reinforcements between April and June.

The battalion played an important part in the Battle of Cambrai which began at 6.20 a.m. on 20 November 1917. At 7.50 a.m. 'B' and 'D' companies left their assembly positions and crossed the first, second and third German lines, which had already been captured by the 5th Seaforths. The two companies soon caught up with the six tanks which had spearheaded the advance on their part of the front. They now reached "the green fields, unmarked by the ravages of war." They had done so well that it seemed like a practice attack. One soldier said: "We thought we were marching straight to Berlin."

But, when they climbed a ridge to the east of the village of Flesquieres, the advance was halted. The tanks were knocked out. As a result the belts of barbed wire protecting the Hindenburg Line were undamaged. 'B' and 'D' companies of the 6th Battalion tried to find a way through and suffered 60 casualties in three minutes. The battalion then took up a defensive position outside Flesquieres for the rest of the day. This included 'A' and 'C' companies which had moved forward at 10.15 a.m.

The 51st (Highland) Division, under the command of General George Harper, was to continue the attack on November 23, and the 152nd Brigade was chosen to do so. According to Captain R T Peel, of the 6th Seaforth Highlanders, General Harper chose the 152nd Brigade rather than the 153rd Brigade (both were "more or less played out") by tossing a coin. This "fateful decision" meant that the 6th Battalions of the Seaforth Highlanders and the Gordon Highlanders "were to bear the brunt of their Divisonal attack" on Bourlon Wood. Lance Corporal Steedman's battalion was to take the village of Fontaine-Notre-Dame as well as La Folie Wood.

The attack was considered to be "most difficult" because the battalion's right flank would always be exposed to La Folie Wood and the high ground to the north and east of the village of Fontaine Notre Dame. A request for a smoke barrage to protect the flank was ignored. 'A' and 'C' companies were to form the leading waves of the attack and George's company was to be on the right.

At 10.10 a.m. three tanks moved forward towards the village and at zero hour 10.30 a.m. the 1st/6th Battalion Gordon Highlanders followed them. Despite enemy shelling the advance began "in excellent formation".

To reach Fontaine Notre Dame "it was necessary to cross a deep valley, both slopes swept by machine gun fire from La Folie Wood and ground north of it… In addition, every house on the southern front of the village itself appeared to contain more than one machine gun, and these had not been dealt with by the tanks, which had attacked both flanks but not the front."

Several attempts were made to get across this valley but all failed. In the afternoon the Germans reoccupied their original front line in front of Fontaine Notre Dame. Both sides planned but did not develop further assaults. At dusk the assessment was made that no further advance was possible and the 6th Gordons were relieved at 3 a.m. the following morning. "The men were very exhausted."

The attack of November 23 produced heavy casualties – a total of 143. George Steedman was recorded in the battalion war diary as wounded but subsequently reported as "Died in the Field".

In the commanding officer's analysis to explain the "ill-success which attended this attack", he reported that:

> The attack was launched with the right flank entirely exposed and it was in great part the machine gun fire from this flank which held up the advance…
> The success of this operation appeared to depend upon the enemy retiring without fighting – in the face of stubborn resistance it was doomed to failure.

The battalion commander said that November 23 was: "one of the worst days I have ever spent, we lost many a good lad to no purpose whatever. It's a sad and weary business, this war, to those who are in personal touch with the sacrificed."

Cambrai Memorial, Louverval, France Panel 10.

The Sixth Gordons in France and Flanders, Captain D Mackenzie, 1922, page 131

Cambrai 1917 The Myth of the First Great Tank Battle, Bryn Hammond (2008) {booksgoogle.co.uk}

What happened to the 6th Gordons after they were relieved is interesting as an example of what happened to the soldiers after an attack. It is taken from the battalion war diary:

The Battalion… marched back to the Flesquieres area… A good hot meal and a rum ration was waiting the battalion when it marched in. The men rested in the shelters they had built the previous day and at 3.30 p.m. moved back to Metz.

A halt was made near Havrincourt Wood for teas after which the march to Metz was resumed. Buses were supposed to meet the battalion there and convey it to Ytres. They failed to appear with the result that Ytres had to be reached by route march. This was done in pouring rain and the men were absolutely exhausted on reaching the entraining point. In spite of all the hardships they had undergone, not a man fell out. No train was available owing to an accident on the line and a most miserable night was spent at the station where there was no cover from the hurricane of wind and rain.

November 25th 6.30 a.m. Fortunately dixies had been carried and it was possible to give the men tea which cheered them up a little."

Lance Corporal James STEELE

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
7th Battalion
Service Number: 279024
Date of Death: 21 November 1917
Age at Death: 25
Family: Husband of Maisie Duguid, Halifax, Yorkshire; 2nd son of Isabella Steele, Carron and of the late William Steele

Jim Steele enlisted in Stenhousemuir and belonged to the local regiment which went to the Western Front on 12 December 1914. He was a resident of Yorkshire, according to official records.

He was killed in action on the second day of the Battle of Cambrai. His battalion had taken part in the attack with tanks on the village of Flesquieres, which was three miles south-west of Cambrai. The Germans withdrew from Flesquieres to a more easily defended position at Fontaine-Notre-Dame, which was to be the main target for the attack on November 21.

Jim's battalion helped to capture the village of Anneux in the morning. They were held up at Cantaing. This village was "a serious obstacle to the battalion and our men had to dig in until the tanks had cleared it." It was captured by 1.30 a.m.

At 3 p.m. six tanks led the Argylls and the 1st/4th Seaforth Highlanders into Fontaine, which was occupied after some sharp fighting.

At some point during the day Jim was killed.

Orival Wood Cemetery, Flesquieres, France I. A. 25.

Private Andrew STEVENSON

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
7th Battalion A Company
Service Number: 2308
Date of Death: 16 September 1915
Age at Death: 23
Family: Eldest son of John and Isabella Stevenson, nee Little, 15 Grange Street, Stenhousemuir

Andrew Stevenson had a "cheery, genial nature". He was employed in the heavy foundry at Carron Iron Works. He was an enthusiastic bowler as well as being the treasurer of Stenhousemuir Hawthorn FC, a local amateur football team. He enlisted on 8 September 1914 and went to the Western Front three months later.

On September 15th, 1915 he was wounded and died of these wounds the following day. For the previous week his battalion had been stationed at Beaussart in the Somme area and the men had provided working parties.

Private Andrew Stevenson

For September 15 the Battalion war diary records: "Wounded on fatigue. OR 1 (since died of wounds)". This was Private Andrew Stevenson. He was said to be "a brave soldier – one of the best – and he died a soldier's death."

Mailly-Maillet Communal Cemetery Extension, France B. 9.

This cemetery is 6 miles north of Albert.

Private Robert STEWART

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
14th Battalion B Company
Service Number: S/21732
Date of Death: 27 March 1918
Age at Death: 20
Family: Youngest son of Archibald and Helen Stewart, nee King, Gardner's Building, East End, Stenhousemuir

Robert Stewart, who was a grinder with Jones & Campbell, Larbert, attested on 21 February 1916, and was placed on the Army Reserve. At his medical examination, conducted by the local doctor, Dr John G Ronald, he was found to be 5 feet 4 inches in height, weighed 8 stones 2 pounds, and his physical development was assessed as being "fair". He also had a deformed little finger on his left hand.

In July 1917 he was called up and underwent his training at Redford Barracks in Edinburgh. He went to the Western Front in November.

Private Robert Stewart

He was reported missing at the start of the German Spring Offensive of March 1918. In the official records, his death is stated to have occurred between March 21 and 27. This reflects the level of disorganisation that the British forces experienced at the first impact of the German offensive.

The 14th Battalion of the Argylls was at Vaulx-Vraucourt, four miles north-east of Bapaume, when the German offensive began. But the Germans did not attack their front until midday on the 22nd. The line was held until the late afternoon when a withdrawal took place.

The situation was described in the battalion war diary as "quiet" for the 23rd and 24th. Due to attacks to the right of the battalion, another withdrawal was required in the evening of the 24th. On the 25th the battalion held the line in front of Behagnies but Germans attacks meant a retreat to Gomiecourt at 4 p.m. and then in the evening to Douchy. Then on the 26th the Battalion's position was in front of Adinfer Wood, about six miles south of Arras.

At 12.30 a.m. on the 27th the battalion was relieved. By then it had suffered over 300 casualties.

Arras Memorial, France Bay 9.

In Private Robert Stewart's death notice in the Falkirk Herald it stated: "May the heavenly winds blow softly, O'er that unknown grave across the sea"

Private William STEWART

Cameron Highlanders 5th Battalion
Service Number: S/18858
Date of Death: 26 July 1916
Age at Death: 27
Family: Fourth son of Peter and Mary Stewart, North Broomage

At one time William Stewart was a range fitter employed by Dobbie, Forbes & Company, Larbert. By the time he enlisted in June 1915, he was living in Edinburgh and had enlisted in Leven in Fife. He went to the front on 1 October 1915.

Private Stewart was wounded in the same month and was in hospital for about two months before he was able to return to his regiment.

He was wounded again during the Battle of the Somme. At 2 p.m. on 14 July his battalion was ordered to help in clearing the German Army's position at Longueval; in particular, a strong point at the south-eastern end of the village. There was "drenching shellfire" as they moved up. It took until 5 p.m. for the 7th Seaforth Highlanders and the 5th Cameron Highlanders to overcome this strong point.

Private William Stewart

The fighting in this sector remained fierce until the battalion was relieved on July 20. 295 soldiers of the battalion were wounded during this time.

William's wounds were serious and he was taken to the 3rd Southern General Hospital in Oxford where he died a few days later.

Oxford (Botley) Cemetery, North Hinksey, Oxford II. 50.

PEACE PERFECT PEACE

Botley Cemetery, Oxford

Private James Watson STODDART

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders 12th Battalion
Service Number: S/7604
Date of Death: 8 June 1918
Age at Death: 29
Family: Husband of Margaret Stoddart, 52 Main Street, Carronshore; father of Andrew, William and Margaret; son of Andrew and Elizabeth Watson Stoddart, Carronshore

James Stoddart had been a miner at Carronhall Colliery. Before 1914 he had twice been in the army! He enlisted in the King's Own Scottish Borderers and then bought himself out of the army on 1 June 1907. According to his wife, "my Husband was only about a week in KOSB and he lay all the time in the Gallowgate."

In March 1909, he had re-enlisted, this time in the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders and bought himself out two months later.

After the First World War had begun, he enlisted once more on 18 December 1914 in Hawick, where he had been living at 9, Dickson Street. He was entitled to a refund of his "purchase money". When he re-enlisted, the money that he paid to get himself out of the army could be paid back to him. His "purchase money" amounted to £5, a significant sum then. His claim for a refund did not appear to have been approved. This enraged his wife who had a relative type a letter to the officer in charge of records:

> You know he was bought out twice… If I don't get word from you very soon I am going to put it into the hands of a lawyer as I don't mean to be done out of it and I have those belonging to me that will see into it although my Husband is at the front supposing it takes every penny of it to pay a lawyer I will do it an early reply will Oblige

Private James Stoddart

This letter seems to have been written early in 1918. The Infantry Record Officer replied on 6 March 1918, explaining that her husband's claim for a refund relating to the KOSB was disallowed because he did not claim within a year of his re-enlistment in 1909. But his claim for a refund relating to his first enlistment in the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders was paid to her husband in 1915! Margaret Stoddart was also told if she felt aggrieved – in one letter she wrote: "if I don't get a favourable reply I know who's hands I will put the case in" - she should not put the matter into the hands of a lawyer but should consult the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association.

By the time this letter was sent to Margaret Stoddart, her husband was on the verge of being sent back to England for treatment as he was suffering repeatedly from malaria. He had gone to the Western Front in September 1915. In November his battalion was transferred to Salonika. From September 1916 he started to suffer from recurring attacks of malaria and was transferred to Malta for treatment. He was there for over four months before returning to Salonika in April 1917 but he continued to suffer from the malaria. Eventually he was sent back to Britain. However, when he was sailing back to Britain, he was diagnosed with pneumonia and was set ashore at Le Havre. He died there at No 2 General Hospital.

The *Falkirk Herald* reported that he was respected by all who knew him.

Ste Marie Cemetery, Le Havre, France Div 62. III. I. 27.

Private Alexander Knowles SYMON

Gordon Highlanders 1st Battalion
Service Number: S/5968
Date of Death: 29 September 1915
Age at Death: 24
Family: Son of David Symon, 502 Springburn Road, Glasgow and the late Mary Symon

When Alex Symon enlisted on 6 September 1914, he gave his occupation as a Stove Repairer. He enlisted in Glasgow; his father and all of the family but the oldest brother had gone to live in Springburn in Glasgow in May 1914. (At the time of Alex Symon's death, his father was still keeping a house in James Street, Stenhousemuir.)

The day after he enlisted, Alex Symon arrived in Aberdeen for training. He went to the Western Front in December 1914 and he went through service in the Ypres sector, particularly at Hill 60 and Hooge. As Alex Symon's battalion war diary records, there was a "Big Attack" on 25th September at Loos. With four other battalions, it attacked at 4.10 a.m. at Bellewarde. This was intended to be a diversionary attack. The war diary went on:

> This attack was repulsed by the enemy whose trenches and wire were not affected by the heavy bombardment, the wire could not be cut by our cutters, very heavy casualties suffered.

On that single day, the 1st Gordons' casualties numbered 42 killed, 240 wounded and 61 missing. The regimental historian concluded that the attack had been "of no avail" as a diversion.

Since his battalion was taken out of the front line on the night of the first day of the battle, it can be concluded that Alex Symon was seriously wounded on the first day of the Battle of Loos. He was taken to hospital in Etaples where he died of his wounds at 1a.m. on 29 September 1915.

A notable point about his death notice in the *Falkirk Herald* is that it was inserted by Agnes McDonald, 133 West Carron. A sweetheart?

Two years later, she married Joseph Reilly. (q.v.)

Etaples Military Cemetery, France IV. G. 5A.

The Gordon Highlanders in the First World War, 1914-1919, Cyril Falls, 1958, page 69

Ste Marie Cemetery, Le Havre

Sergeant Alexander TASKER

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
7th Battalion
Service Number: 1847
Date of Death: 26 July 1916
Age at Death: 26
Family: Son of Alex and Janet Tasker, 13 Tryst Road, Stenhousemuir

Sergeant Alexander Tasker

Alex Tasker was a clerk with Jones & Campbell, Larbert, when he joined the local regiment of the Territorial Force in April 1913. On the outbreak of war he was called up for service and went to the Western Front in December 1914.

In May 1915 he was promoted to Lance Sergeant but four days later he was caught in a German gas attack and had to be admitted to hospital. For two weeks in June he was treated in a hospital in Rouen. He returned to his regiment on 18 June 1915. By the end of the year he had been gassed on three separate occasions.

In April 1916 he was promoted to Sergeant and Assistant Company Accountant.

Sergeant Tasker was killed in action during the Battle of the Somme when his battalion took part in the 51st (Highland) Division attack on the German trenches at High Wood between July 24 and 26. The battalion war diary said that July 26 was "comparatively quiet" and then recorded that 5 other ranks were killed and 33 wounded. The battalion was relieved that night.

Flatiron Copse Cemetery, Mametz, France I. C. 13.

Able Seaman William Thomson TASKER

Royal Naval Division Anson Battalion
Service Number: Clyde Z/5133
Date of Death: 28 April 1917
Age at Death: 19
Family: Youngest son of James and Margaret Tasker, 27 Tryst Road, Stenhousemuir

Able Seaman William Tasker

Willie Tasker, who was a moulder with Carron Company, joined up at his 18th birthday in June 1915. After training, he left for Gallipoli in October. Less than three months later, the Anson Battalion was evacuated from Gallipoli. The battalion was transferred to France, arriving on 19 May 1916. On that very day Willie Tasker was diagnosed with scabies. He was out of the firing line for six months as he received treatment. He rejoined his battalion on the day the last phase of the Battle of the Somme began. This was the battle of the Ancre, November 13-18. Willie Tasker came through the fierce fighting there without injury, but there were 4,000 RND casualties.

In April 1917, in the 3rd phase of the Battle of Arras, the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division had helped to capture the village of Gavrelle.

In the next phase, which began at 4.25 am on April 28, the 2nd Battalion Royal Marine Light Infantry, part of the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division, was to capture the Gavrelle Windmill, whilst one company of Anson Battalion was to follow the 2nd RM to guard its flank. When the Anson company went forward at 5 a.m. it advanced only 400 yards before it was stopped by a German strongpoint. The strongpoint was overcome by the 2nd RM who went on to take the windmill by 7.30 a.m. By then the Anson company was under attack from the enemy and taking heavy casualties. Another company was sent to help but at 10 a.m. the men of these companies were ordered to withdraw as the losses were so heavy. This left the 2nd RM exposed to attack from both sides. (This battalion suffered huge casualties –161 killed, 157 wounded and 176 taken prisoner.)

For the rest of the day until 8.30 p.m. the survivors of the 2nd RM and the Anson companies were subjected to heavy shelling. There were two German counter-attacks at 11.45 a.m. and 8.30 p.m. which were repulsed, with significant help from the artillery. Anson battalion casualties, with only one company really involved, numbered 24 killed, 80 wounded and 6 missing.

Willie Tasker was wounded during the day, and reported missing. The *Falkirk Herald* of 12 May 1917 was able to report that he had died of his wounds. It also contained a tribute from his platoon officer: "He was one of the best men in my platoon, cheery and

ready to do his duty under any circumstances. He did his duty fearlessly and well always, until he made the supreme sacrifice."

In his death notice, his mother said:

Could I have only smoothed the hair
From off his fair young brow
My heart, I think, would not have bled
As it is bleeding now.

Arras Memorial, France Bay 1.

Sergeant John TAYLOR

Canadian Infantry 4th Battalion D Company
Service Number: 402407
Date of Death: 29 May 1917
Age at Death: 27
Family: Eldest son of John B and Annie Taylor, 29 Rae Street, Stenhousemuir; brother of Helen

John Taylor was a pattern maker with Carron Company when he emigrated nearly two years before the First World War began. When he enlisted in the Canadian Army in January 1915, however, he gave his occupation as a farm hand. Later that year he came to England and then was sent to the Western Front.

Sergeant John Taylor

John Taylor's battalion took part in the capture of Vimy Ridge, April 9 – 12, 1917. This was a remarkably successful operation, though just one part of the much larger offensive known as the Battle of Arras.

He was wounded on April 26. His battalion was to take part in an attack on the Arleux Loop near the village of Arleux-en-Gohelle. He was taking a look round the night before the attack was due when an enemy shell exploded nearby, wounding him in the back, arm and leg. After being extricated from a mass of wreckage, a soldier tried to carry him to the rear but a sniper shot John's comrade. Only with great difficulty did John Taylor reach safety. He was taken to a hospital in France, where he spent three weeks being treated for his wounds. He was then taken to the Military Hospital in York. A week after his arrival there, he died of his chest wound. His funeral took place in Stenhousemuir on 2 June 1917.

Larbert Cemetery, Muirhead Road, Stenhousemuir. Section 1 Lair 796

Canadian troops attack at Vimy Ridge

Private John TAYLOR

East Yorkshire Regiment 1st/4th Battalion
Service Number: 29446
Date of Death: 10 April 1918
Age at Death: 22
Family: Son of James and Isabella Taylor, Dobbie's Buildings, Muirhall Road, Larbert

John Taylor, who was born in Montrose, was a shoemaker who served his apprenticeship with Larbert Co-operative Society. He was working with Carstairs Co-operative Society when he attested in February 1916. He was posted to the 3rd Battalion Royal Scots and then in April 1916 joined the Royal Scots Labour Battalion on the Western Front. The men of this battalion did construction work. For example, in May 1917 they built a large artillery dump at Abancourt. On one occasion, while he was serving in the Labour Battalion, Private John Taylor lost 3 days' pay for "Idling during working hours". This was in December 1916.

Lieutenant-Colonel W D Croft in his memoir *Three Years with the 9th (Scottish) Division* commented on the life of a pioneer:

Private John Taylor

The lot of a pioneer was not a particularly happy one. It is true that he was used to get part of his night in bed, a convenience which the trench-living infantry envied him. But he had to go up to work night after night, winter or summer, wet or fine, with no rest from it all. He was not a soldier, because he had no time to train, nor anyone to train him. But he was a damn fine fellow all the same, and he put in some useful work with the bayonet – he could not have hit a haystack with his rifle – during the retreat in 1918.

The town of Estaires in 1914

In October 1917 John was transferred to the 1st/4th Battalion East Yorkshire Regiment. This battalion was involved in ten days of strenuous rearguard fighting at Brie as they faced the first attack of the German Spring Offensive of March 1918 and suffered heavy losses. At the end of the month, their strength stood at 3 officers and 36 other ranks.

On April 4 the battalion, now restored to a strength of 13 officers and 643 other ranks, arrived in the Bethune area for training. But, on April 9, the battalion faced the second attack of the German Offensive, known as the Battle of Estaires, 9 – 11 April. By 7 a.m. on the first day the German attackers penetrated the village of Trou Boyard. While other battalions were forced to withdraw, John's battalion maintained its position near Trou Boyard.

On the second day of the battle, the fighting became more and more intense. The battalion occupied a "key position" which was to be held at all costs. The Germans were able to attack from both flanks and eventually forced a withdrawal. The battalion's casualties were very great; three days of fighting took the battalion strength back down to 5 officers and 80 other ranks.

John Taylor was posted missing, though his death was not officially confirmed for some considerable time. His father had written in April 1919 asking for "a definite answer": "If the worst has happened surely it is time I knew about it for I have been waiting patiently for an answer." Three months later, he got the "definite answer".

The battalion historian wrote about the Battle of Estaires: "It is doubtful if the strong resistance put up by these gallant fellows, who held off the enemy for three days, was ever equalled in the whole of the 1/4th Battalion's strenuous years in France and Flanders."

Ploegsteert Memorial Panel 4.

Private Robert TAYLOR

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
7th Battalion
Service Number: 4253
Date of Death: 24 July 1916
Age at Death: 33
Family: Son of Robert and Janet Taylor, Dawson's Buildings, Stenhousemuir

Private Robert Taylor

Robert Taylor, who was living in Stenhousemuir at Morrison's Buildings when he enlisted in May 1915, was a moulder at Carron Iron Works. He went to the Western Front in September 1915.

Three weeks after the start of the Battle of the Somme, Robert's battalion was moved into the vicinity of High Wood, which had already been subjected to attacks by large British forces. On July 23 two companies of the battalion were in reserve when the 9th Royal Scots and the 4th Gordons advanced on High Wood. That attack failed and the Argylls moved into the front line trenches. Working parties dug a new trench which was shelled on the morning of July 24. Though it caused little damage, two soldiers were killed and six were wounded.

At 8 p.m. that evening large numbers of German soldiers were seen along the eastern edge of High Wood. The German attack was repulsed by shell fire as was a further attack. "Our barrage completely checked enemy's attacks," the battalion war diary reported. One officer and four men were killed in this attack.

Robert was killed in one of these two incidents. His death notice included this verse:

Duty called and he was there
To do his bit and take his share.
His heart was good, his spirit brave
His resting-place a soldier's grave.

Flatiron Copse Cemetery, Mametz, France II. B. 15.

Lance Sergeant William TAYLOR

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
10th Battalion
Service Number: S/2573
Date of Death: 10 July 1916
Age at Death: 20
Family: Son of Mrs Martha Nimmo, 4 Kirk Wynd, Falkirk and of the late Alexander Taylor

William Taylor was employed at Carron Brick Works. When he enlisted, he gave his occupation as a Brassfinisher. He was in the Territorials' ' Royal Engineers for four years, and was discharged on 9 March 1909.

On 24 August 1914 he enlisted and he went to the Western Front in May 1915.

The *Falkirk Herald* reported that when he was killed by shrapnel near the start of the Battle of the Somme, he was attached to the Royal Warwickshire Regiment. The report does not say which battalion he belonged to. Eight battalions of the regiment were involved in the early days of the Battle of the Somme. It seems most likely that he was attached to the 11th Battalion. It was in a forward position between Contalmaison and La Boiselle between the 8th and 11th July. It suffered 170 casualties from shelling during that short period.

Three other family members were in the armed forces. His elder brother belonged to the Seaforths, another brother was with the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders, while his stepfather, who was a reservist, was called up at the start of the war and was with the Royal Scots Fusiliers in India.

Thiepval Memorial, France Pier and Face 15 A and 16 C.

Royal Warwickshire Regiment at the Somme

Private William Gardner TAYLOR

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
7th Battalion B Company
Service Number: 2320
Date of Death: 29 January 1915
Age at Death: 20
Family: Son of Robert and Helen Taylor, Broomfield Cottage, Larbert (later Broompark, Larbert)

Private William Taylor (bottom centre). Private Menzies is top right)

When the news of William Taylor's death was heard in Larbert, it spread "quite a gloom over the district", according to the *Falkirk Mail.* This was because he was the first local soldier from the local Territorial Battalion to die at the front. He had been at the front for only six weeks. But as the *Falkirk Herald* reported it was "not through the stress of battle". He died of an unspecified fever in hospital. When the death of Private James Eadie Menzies (q.v.) was reported, he was said to have been suffering from the same fever as Private William Taylor. In James Menzies' case, his was identified as scarlet fever.

At the time it was reported that he had died in the base hospital in Boulogne. Given the location of his grave in St Omer, it is most likely that he died in one of the hospitals there. St Omer was the General Headquarters of the British Expeditionary Force from October 1914 until March 1916.

Prior to enlistment, he had been a clerk employed by Carron Company. He had, it was said, "a bright and genial disposition". He was also an "enthusiastic" cricketer.

Longuenesse (St Omer) Souvenir Cemetery, France I. A. 35.

Private William Wilson THOMPSON

Gordon Highlanders 6th/7th Battalion
Service Number: S/21294
Date of Death: 16 October 1918
Age at Death: 19
Family: Eldest son of Alexander and Jeanie Thompson, 19 Grange Street, Stenhousemuir

When William Thompson reached his 18th birthday, he enlisted in the army at Stirling. Prior to his enlistment, he was an apprentice moulder with Dobbie, Forbes & Company, Larbert.

He reached the Western Front in March 1918. The 6th/7th battalion was created by amalgamating the 1/6th & 1st/7th battalions in October, a few days before William Thompson died. The two battalions had suffered heavy losses as they took part in the defence of the Allied lines near Bapaume and then Amiens in the first phase of the German Spring Offensive of 1918. They then moved to the Arras sector before taking a full part in pushing back the German Army in the final advance.

When the 6th/7th Battalion came into existence, the German Army was in retreat. As the battalion war diary noted: "News from the front continues to be very good. Bosche reported to be retreating well beyond Cambrai."

On 13th October the battalion went forward at Avesnes-le-Sec, a village about 9 miles north of the

Private William Thompson

town of Cambrai. They were met with a heavy bombardment of high explosive and gas shells from the enemy artillery. They were "very badly shot up" and had to retire back to their original jumping-off point. Casualties were heavy: 1 officer killed and 7 wounded; 22 men killed, 271 wounded and gassed, 17 missing and 4 died of wounds. On the 14th, there was a small patrol of 20 soldiers, who tried to investigate the German positions; 2 men were killed and 3 were wounded. At 5 p.m. the battalion was relieved.

Though the *Falkirk Herald* reported that William Thompson died two days after he had been wounded, it is likely that he suffered his wounds during the attack on the 13th. He was treated for his wounds on No 20 General Hospital in Camiers, just three miles from Etaples.

Etaples Military Cemetery, France LXVI. J. 15.

Etaples is a town over 15 miles south of Boulogne remote from enemy attack. It was an immense army base with many hospitals which could deal with 22,000 wounded or sick soldiers.

The Gordon Highlanders in the First World War, 1914-1919, Cyril Falls, 1958, page 251

Air Mechanic 3rd Class George Graham THOMSON

Royal Air Force
Service Number: 292470
Date of Death: 7 December 1918
Age at Death: 17
Family: Eldest son of James G and Agnes Thomson, 8 Rae Street, Stenhousemuir

Graham Thomson, whose father was the librarian at Larbert Library, joined the RAF in September 1918. Previously, he was employed as an electrician.

He was the victim of the influenza epidemic of 1918. (See entry for Thomas Cowan.) His flu developed into pneumonia which caused his death at Henlow Camp, Bedford. The Armistice had been signed only four weeks earlier.

Larbert Cemetery, Muirhead Road, Stenhousemuir. Section 3 Lair 292.

Private Henry THOMSON

Seaforth Highlanders 2nd Battalion
Service Number: 6540
Date of Death: 22 January 1915 (FH: 24th)
Age at Death: 38
Family: Youngest son of Agnes McLay Thomson, 106 West Carron and of the late James Thomson

Harry Thomson was a soldier who had served in the Boer War and then been a reservist. He was called up when the First World War broke out. He was among the first to be sent from the local area to the Western Front with the British Expeditionary Force. He was in France a week before the end of August. His battalion took part in the main battles of 1914. It also was involved in the Christmas Truce of 1914, which was described by a soldier in the same battalion as Henry in a letter to his wife:

> We had a great time of it on Christmas Day. We were in the trenches. The Germans came out and we went over halfway and shook hands with them. We had a good time of it and exchanged knives, pipes and postcards. I got a knife, three cigars and a postcard. I got some of the Germans to sign their names and the postcard I now send to you as a keepsake. The folk at home will not believe it but it is true.
>
> *Ayr Advertiser, 14 January 1915*

At the very start of January 1915 Henry's battalion was manning Douve Trenches south of Messines. There was a lot of shelling, which, the battalion war diary said, "bothered us considerably". Between January 1st and 4th, 3 soldiers of the battalion were killed by the shelling and 8 were wounded. Henry was wounded on 4 January 1915 and died of these wounds almost three weeks later.

St Sever Cemetery, Rouen, France A. A. 20

The Daily Mirror

WHY DELAY? THE DAILY MIRROR OVERSEAS WEEKLY EDITION

AN HISTORIC GROUP: BRITISH AND GERMAN SOLDIERS PHOTOGRAPHED TOGETHER.

The Christmas Truce 1914

Sergeant John THOMPSON

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
10th Battalion
Service Number: S/1431
Date of Death: 25 September 1915
Age at Death: 30
Family: Son of George and Eliza Thomson, Maitland Cottage, Main Street, Stenhousemuir

John Thomson, who was born in Alloa, enlisted in Stirling on 7 August, 1914 and was promoted to Lance Corporal three weeks later. In March 1915, he was made a Lance Sergeant. He served on the Western Front for just over four months, having landed at Boulogne on 11 May 1915.

He was killed on the first day of the Battle of Loos. It is a notable battle because the British Army used poison gas for the first time. This was to offset the lack of shells for an effective artillery bombardment. The battalion war diary of the 10th Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders only mentions the use of gas when it noted that the saps in front of the firing line could not be used for the deployment of the battalion at the start of the advance – the saps were "full of Gas plant and gas".

The battle was the first "Big Push" – 75,000 British soldiers were to take part in an offensive intended to break through the Germans' front line. Most of these British soldiers belonged to the battalions raised at the start of the war and were part of what was called the "New Army". The battle was fought before the artillery on both sides churned the landscape into mud. The Loos battlefield was "as flat as a pancake" but dominated by the equipment of the coal mines and industrial sites of this part of France.

Soldiers in 'Big Willie' trench

The 10th Battalion of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders took up position at Annequin late in the evening of 24 September 1915 in the northern sector of the battle front. The battalions in the southern sector of the battlefield did well on the first day of the battle. For example, the 15th (Scottish) Division broke through two German defensive lines and captured both the village of Loos and Hill 70.

In the northern sector the progress of the divisions met significant difficulties after zero hour, 6.30 a.m. The 10th battalion war diary notes that "about 5.45 a.m. a furious bombardment of the German lines began." Then there were considerable delays. At one stage progress was slow because of "wounded soldiers and German prisoners endeavouring to get to the rear". The battalion did not begin its advance until 9.15 a.m. "The advance continued without interruption, skirting the face of HOHENZOLLEREN REDOUBT [a massive German earthwork] across BIG WILLIE and German main line trenches." This advance was made while being heavily shelled and then the men came under fire from a machine gun on the Fosse No 8, a huge slag heap fortified by the Germans, which caused many casualties. "The advance continued up and over the hill which was devoid of any cover from fire until FOSSE ALLEY was reached about 12 noon." The battalion then halted while the commanding officer decided where he should go next. At 1.30 p.m. 'A' Company was sent to support the British soldiers holding PEKIN TRENCH but it was "decimated by shell fire"

About 4 p.m. the battalion found itself "alone with its flanks exposed" due to the withdrawals of other battalions. Though efforts were made to hold on to this position, the battalion was forced by German counter-attacks to retreat and by 2 a.m. "the firing line from which the attack was launched that morning was reoccupied".

The battalion went forward the next evening and followed part of the route taken on 25 September. On the afternoon of September 27, the battalion was forced to retreat again and went back to the trenches they were in on the evening of September 24.

In his diary for 28 September 1915, Captain Neil Weir of the 10th Battalion of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders wrote:

> "What a show. Few instructions, little ammunition or bombs, next to no support from the artillery. No system of looking after the wounded. And practically no food. No wonder we lost the ground we had won and lost so many casualties.

Loos Memorial, France Panel 125 to 127.

CASUALTIES recorded in the Battalion War Diary

Date	Killed	Wounded	Missing	Total
25 September	15	122	60	197
26 September	—-	38	0	38
27 September	30	181	56	267

Private Robert Burnett THURSBY

Cameron Highlanders 7th Battalion
Service Number: S/25925
Date of Death: 28 April 1917
Age at Death: 39
Family: Son of Augustine and Agnes Thursby, 10 Stirling Road, Denny

Private Robert Thursby

Robert Thursby was born in Campbeltown. He was employed as a moulder by Jones & Campbell, Larbert for 15 years before he emigrated to Canada. He lived there for 4 years and then returned to Scotland in December 1914. In September 1916 he enlisted in the Cameron Highlanders.

Private Thursby was slightly wounded in January 1917. He was killed during the Battle of Arras, at the end of the phase known as the Second Battle of the Scarpe.

On the day that he was killed in action, his battalion was withdrawn from the support line at Shovel Trench, having been relieved from the Arras front line late on April 27. Prior to this, his battalion had been in action for four days attacking the German lines. On the first of these days (April 23), starting from 4.45 a.m., the fighting was fierce. For instance, a German strong point "was rushed at the point of a bayonet". The fighting continued during the day until 6 p.m.

The battalion history – one of the authors was the battalion's commanding officer from April 23 - commented:

> Everyone believed we were now done with fighting for the time being, as our casualties had been heavy, and we were all congratulating each other on being the lucky ones who had got through it.

On April 26, Robert's battalion was ordered to attack Cavalry Farm. The attack began at 11 p.m. and the farm was captured. When the attacking force reached the German trenches to the east, they found them strongly held. In particular, machine guns in a German strong point were able to fire into the battalion's rear when they went forward. Since this strong point could not be taken, the battalion, about midnight, fell back to Cavalry Farm.

The battalion's strength when they "went in" on April 23 was 13 officers and 570 other ranks; on April 28, 6 officers and 191 other ranks "came out".

Tank Cemetery, Guemappe, France F. 1.

Private Thursby is buried in one big grave which contains 64 soldiers of the 7th Battalion of the Cameron Highlanders.These soldiers were buried in their kilts, lying on their sides, with each man's arm round the body next to him, embracing his fellow-soldier in death. This was done to save space. The battalion history describes in detail the burial, on April 27, of those killed in the attack on Cavalry Farm:

> *This work was difficult, as the enemy, seeing the movement, kept up intermittent shelling. However, we managed to collect 64 bodies of Camerons, which we buried in one grave. The Commanding Officer took the service, but had to limit the number of men present owing to the danger of casualties from shelling.*
>
> *In order to save space, the majority of men were buried lying on their side. A touching feature was the fact that someone had taken each man's arm and put it round the body lying next to him. From the top of the trench one could imagine that the men were sleeping, embraced in each other's arms, more especially as they were buried in their kilts just as they had fought, no blankets or other covering being available. Altogether it was a most moving scene. The machine gun [in the German strong point] which should have been knocked out before the attack, had taken its toll, as most of these bodies were found round about its emplace-ment. One could well appreciate the desperate gallantry of the men who rushed it. We had the satisfaction, however, of knowing that many of the enemy's gun crew had been bayoneted by our men.*

Private Thursby is one of 64 soldiers in this grave. This suggests that he was killed in action on April 26 or possibly 27, rather than the official date given.

Tank Cemetery Guemappe

Private Thomas TOUGH

Highland Light Infantry 16th Battalion
Service Number: 14616
Date of Death: 1 July 1916
Age at Death: 24
Family: Fourth son of Robert and Jeanie Tough, Hollings, Larbert

Private Thomas Tough

Thomas Tough was the only soldier named on Larbert War Memorial to die on the first day of the Battle of the Somme, one of the most iconic days in the First World War.

His battalion was to lead the attack on the western part of Leipzig Salient, which was just south of the village of Thiepval. This was one of the most strongly-fortified sections of the German line. The preliminary bombardment destroyed the village and left the landscape pitted with shell craters. It didn't destroy the barbed wire as anticipated or eliminate the German machine guns. The official historian of British Military Operations in France and Belgium remarked: "Only bullet-proof soldiers could have taken Thiepval" on July 1.

At 7.30 a.m. the 16th H.L.I. crept out of their trenches and moved close up to the German wire under cover of the barrage. This was by order of the Brigade Commander, Brigadier-General J. B. Jardine, as an alternative to the usual practice at that time of advancing in extended waves. The moment the barrage lifted the soldiers rushed forward. The 16th H.L.I. "had no luck this day", (unlike the 17th H.L.I. on their right who found the barbed wire demolished by the guns, and so entered the enemy line before the Germans had had time to come up from their dug-outs).

As soon as the 16th HLI went over the top, they immediately came under heavy enfilade fire from the ruins of Thiepval; the wire was intact except for the odd gap each of which was covered. They charged forward first together and then in groups. Within moments of the men going forward, they were "simply mown down by machine gun fire", the battalion war diary said. They had with them sappers, who carried Bangalore torpedoes. These consisted of a number of connected tubes which had an explosive charge. They were mainly used to blow up the enemy barbed wire. This was why they were being carried forward during this attack. It was realised that the barrage had not been effective on the wire in this sector. But these sappers were all shot down on the wire.

In a short time the 16th H.L.I. lost 19 officers and 492 other ranks out of a strength of about 800 all told.

Prior to enlistment, Thomas Tough was an accountant with the Commercial Bank in Kilwinning, having served his apprenticeship with the bank in Falkirk. He enlisted in September 1914. He went to the Western Front late in November 1915.

Thiepval Memorial, France Pier and Face 15 C.

Lieutenant-Colonel C B Oatts, who wrote the Story of the Highland Light Infantry, commented that the "unfortunate 'Jerries'" who endured the preliminary bombardment "were looking forward to the coming assault with the liveliest apprehensions. 'Thou fearsome night, what wilt thou bring us? 'wrote the good soldier Eversmann of the 143rd Infantry, as he took up his pen in Thiepval for the last time in his life.

> *Five days and five nights has this hell-concert lasted. One's head is as a madman's; the tongue sticks to the roof of the mouth. No sleep, almost nothing to eat or drink. All contact with the outer world cut off. How long is this going to last?*

Lieutenant-Colonel Oatts went on:

> *Sympathy for him, his comrades and their families at home would be natural but misplaced. They asked for it and they got it. The British soldiers had not asked for it. The H.L.I. would have been quite happy driving trains, totting up ledgers, keeping shops and delivering coal until pensioned off; their only excitements caused by the arrival of a baby or a trip down the Clyde. Yet here they were, under arms, forming up in pouring rain for their first venture 'over the top,' and well aware that they would be uncommonly lucky to get through the day alive. When the Divisional Commander inspected them before the battle they cheered him lustily. Knowing what he did about war, he must have been hard put to it to restrain his emotion, but they would have thought little of him had he not done so, for they were tough men—very tough men indeed.*

Eversmann was killed when the Germans counter-attacked in the afternoon and were pushed back. Two soldiers of the 15th HLI found his notebook and handed it over to an officer..

For many people the Somme and the equally ugly Verdun have come to symbolise the Great War: futile battles fought with other people's lives by incompetent and uncaring generals. In particular, for the British, the disaster of 1 July, on the Somme, has become the sole prism through which the conduct of the whole of the Great War has been viewed. There is no light and shade here; just a dark despair at the numbing horror of the teeming casualties. Explanations of what went wrong and why are thrust aside; indeed in the past, subdued references to a 'learning curve' for the generals have been seen as an insult to the dead.

There remains a widespread belief that 'there must have been a better way'; something could, or should, have been done; someone must be blamed. Much of this opprobrium has fallen on the head of Douglas Haig, who has at times been reviled as a mass murderer. Yet this was the inevitable price of engaging in continental warfare on the main field of battle against the primary enemy.

The Great War, Peter Hart (2013) page 239

In recent years, analysis of Haig's battle planning has become a political football, with right-wing defenders attempting to rescue his reputation from the mire of the Western Front. In reality, Field Marshal Haig and his generals were every bit as stupid as caricatured in the television comedy Blackadder Goes Forth, in which Blackadder wearily enquires as to whether Haig's brilliant new plan involves the troops climbing out of their trenches and walking slowly toward the enemy. Colonel Melchett's response is to claim that the plan is brilliant — by virtue of the fact that, having been used eighteen times previously, it will be the last thing the Germans expect. Blackadder, however, does spot one small snag— that everyone tends to get slaughtered within ten seconds.

For Team and Country, Tim Tate (2014), page 124

Private George TRAYNER

King's Own Scottish Borderers
6th Battalion
Service Number: 35103
Date of Death: 16 October 1918
Age at Death: 19
Family: Son of Patrick and Janet Trayner, formerly 11 West Carron

George Trayner enlisted at Stirling.

In 1918 the Allied advance in the Somme area was taking place. On 16 October the 6th KOSB crossed the River Lys about two miles north-east of Coutrai and carried out a successful attack along the Courtrai to Harlbeke road at 8 p.m. The battalion could not capture the village of Harlbeke – it was "too hard a nut to crack". German counter-attacks that night and the following day were repelled and a bridgehead established for further advances. George Trayner was killed in action during the fighting on the first evening.

When the battalion was relieved the following evening, Lieutenant-Colonel Croft noted that "they were singing as well they might", presumably a reference to the ferocity of the fighting.

Thiepval Memorial, FrancePier and Face 66 to 68.

Captain Grahame Hardie WADE

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
7th Battalion
Date of Death: 25 April 1915
Age at Death: 41
Family: Fourth son of Mrs Eliza Wade, Woodcroft, Larbert and of the late Reverend George Wade, (formerly minister of Falkirk West United Presbyterian Church for 36 years).

Grahame Wade served on the Western Front for less than a month when he was killed in action. He arrived in France on 1 April 1915 to take the place of an officer who had been invalided home.

The Battle of St Julien, which was the first major piece of fighting the battalion was involved in, was the second phase of the Second Battle of Ypres (22 April – 25 May, 1915). It is described in detail under the entry for Private James Dea on page 39.

The battalion war diary recorded that 6 officers and 100 other ranks were killed, but 150 men were posted missing and this was to double the number of other ranks who were killed in this attack. The total number of casualties in the battalion was over 500, including Grahame Wade.

It was reported in the *Falkirk Herald* that Captain Wade

> was of bright and cheerful disposition and he delighted in hard work. As an officer he was keen, enthusiastic and thoroughly in earnest. It was not from any sense of adventure that he went abroad but from a keen sense of duty. In training his men since the war began he was most impressed with the seriousness of the task which would be imposed on them and he communicated his earnestness to the men under him. He was most popular with his men and was looked on as one of the most efficient officers in the battalion.

Captain Grahame Wade

Grahame Wade was single and lived at Woodcroft, Carronvale Road, Larbert. He was a partner in the Glasgow law firm of Logie & Fisher, whose office was in St Vincent Place. He had served his law apprenticeship with the firm of Russel & Aitken in Falkirk, and then from 1892 attended law classes at Edinburgh University. He also played rugby for the First XV. His schooling had been at Falkirk High School and at the Royal High School in Edinburgh.

In 1901 he was commissioned into the 4th Volunteer Battalion of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders. He belonged to one of the Falkirk companies. He was an enthusiastic officer. He took every opportunity for training and spent time at Stirling Castle training with regular soldiers. He was promoted to the rank of Captain and took over command of the Carronshore Company.

When the Territorial Force was set up in 1908, the Carronshore Company was amalgamated with the Larbert Company. Captain Wade, like several other officers, was left without a company. He maintained his interest by taking charge of the machine guns. In 1912 he retired after 11 years' service.

At the outbreak of the First World War, he volunteered his services and he joined the reserve battalion of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders. When the 2nd/7th Battalion was set up, he joined as a captain. In order to serve on the Western Front, Grahame Wade transferred to the 1st/7th Battalion.

Seaforth Cemetery, Cheddar Villa, Langemarck, Belgium A. 2.

SOLICITOR SON OF THE REVEREND GEORGE WADE FALKIRK

Military Operations France and Belgium 1915, Volume II J E Edmonds, 1928, page 240

Magnificent But Not War The Battle for Ypres 1915, John Dixon, 2013, page 139)

Woodcroft, Larbert

Private Alexander Stewart WALKER

Gordon Highlanders 10th Battalion
Service Number: S/7072
Date of Death: 11 April 1916
Age at Death: 20
Family: Second son of George and Annie Walker, 35 Stewartfield Place, Larbert

Private Alexander Walker

Alex Walker, who was a fitter with Dobbie, Forbes & Company, Larbert, enlisted in November 1914. He went to the Western Front on 9 July 1915.

His battalion took part in the battle of Loos. It attacked and captured the village of Loos within 90 minutes of the start of the attack. But this was far from success in the battle, which was waged fiercely for three weeks; by then, Private Alex Walker's battalion had suffered over 50% casualties.

At some point in the winter of 1915 – 16, Alex Walker developed pneumonia and was admitted to hospital where he died on 11 April 1916. The battalion war diary recorded that two men died in hospital in April "from sickness". 50 other ranks were sent to hospital in the month; similarly large numbers from the battalion were recorded in the diary over the first three months of the year as having been sent to hospital "sick". It didn't specify the illnesses the soldiers were suffering from.

Lillers Communal Cemetery, France V. B. 22.

EVER FONDLY
REMEMBERED

Lillers, which was a hospital centre for the British Army during the war, is a small town about 10 miles from Bethune.

Private George WALKER

Gordon Highlanders 1st Battalion
Service Number: S/7313
Date of Death: 14 December 1914
Age at Death: 26
Family: Eldest son of Jane Inglis Walker, 206 West Carron and of the late Charles Walker

George Walker had the shortest period of army service among the men named on Larbert War Memorial, a total of 34 days.

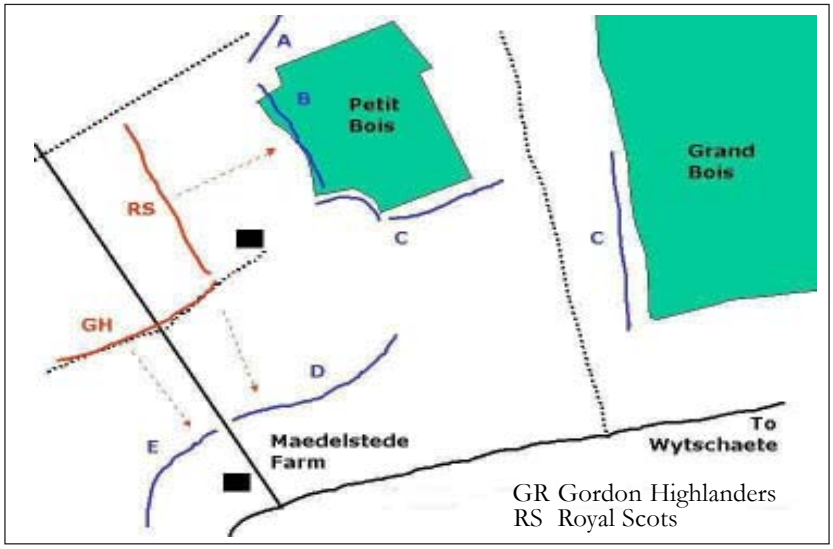
Prior to his enlistment on 11 November 1914, George Walker was a pattern filer with Carron Company. He had also been for some years secretary to the National Union of Gas Workers and General Labourers. He had served for two years in the old Stirlingshire Volunteers (which was replaced by the Territorial Force in 1908).

Private George Walker

He joined the Gordon Highlanders and left for the Western Front on 3 December 1914. He was one of the many fresh recruits who were needed to rebuild the 1st Battalion which had almost been obliterated in the early weeks of the war. Most of these men, like George Walker, were virtually untrained.

George Walker had been at the front for only 12 days when he was reported missing. On that day, his battalion took part in an attack near Wytschaete.

Originally planned as a large scale attack, combined with a significant contribution from the French Army, it actually consisted of two single battalion attacks by the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Scots and by the 1st Battalion of the Gordon Highlanders. In



short, two 'pinprick assaults', as one historian wrote.

The attack began at 7am with a 'wholly insufficient' artillery bombardment. At 7.45am the two battalions started to cross the 200 yards to their separate objectives. One Gordon Highlander wrote home "We were up to our knees in mud and water, shivering with cold." The Gordon Highlanders advanced uphill towards MAEDELSTEDE FARM.

Billy Congreve, a staff officer in the same division as the Gordon Highlanders, wrote in his diary the next day scathing comments on this attack:

> The Gordons left their trenches to attack D and E. The mud on the ploughed field which they had to attack over was *so bad* that they could only just move out of a walk. On leaving their trenches they at once came under a terrible rifle and machine-gun fire from C, D and E.
>
> Imagine sending a battalion alone to attack a strongly wired position up a hill and over mud a foot deep, under frontal and enfilade fire... It was a regular Valley of Death. The losses were, of course, very heavy. They were very, very gallant… They lost seven out of nine officers and 250 men.
>
> Such was the attack ordered by Sir John French. Next day, I read in the paper *'British troops hurl back Germans at Wytschaete'*. A beautiful epitaph for those poor Gordons who were little better than murdered.

It has been said that this was a "demonstration attack" - put on for a show. This seems to be behind Billy Congreve's comment that:

> Sir John [French], Sir H. Smith-Dorrien, HRH the Prince of Wales and many other lights of the Gilded Staff sat about on the Scherpenberg, and watched the preliminary bombardment by ours and the 5th Division's artillery - and then saw these two unfortunate battalions [1st Gordons and 2nd Royal Scots] go to more or less certain failure. The reason why? Because it was considered time to be able to report some form of victory.

[Sir John French was then Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Force; Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien was Commander of the British II Corps and the Prince of Wales became King Edward VIII, later the Duke of Windsor.]

An Irish officer wrote in January 1915:

> Our guns were pouring heavy shrapnel fire into the German lines and many poor Highlanders were knocked over by our own shrapnel… The whole affair was apparently very badly organised; never thought out at all.

A total of 121 Gordon Highlanders were killed on that day; the casualty rate in the battalion was over 50%.

Menin Gate Memorial, Ieper, Belgium Panel 38.

The Truce. The Day the War Stopped, Chris Baker, 2014, page 47.

Armageddon Road A VC's Diary, Billy Congreve edited by Terry Norman, 1982, pages 90-91, 88-89

The bodies of the Gordon Highlanders killed on 14 December could not be recovered and were left out in No Man's Land close to the German front line. A Canadian Scot soldier, Donald Fraser, explored that section of No Man's Land one night in November 1915. He found "a fairly even line of dead three or four hundred yards long… Most of the bodies were skeletons or partly mummified and fell to pieces when moved." In June 1917 an Irish battalion found in the same area the remains of 33 soldiers which they buried in a mass grave. Only three of the Gordons could be identified. Only seven Gordons who took part in the attack have identifiable graves.

Second Lieutenant Malcolm Reid WALKER

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders 7th Battalion
Date of Death: 23 (FH: 24) April 1917
Age at Death: 26
Family: Second son of John Cameron and Marion Reid Walker, Hazelbank, Larbert

Lieutenant Malcolm Walker

Two young officers of the local battalion, Malcolm Walker and Robert Hunter, were killed on the same day in the Battle of Arras and both came from Larbert.

Malcolm Walker's father was a partner in the firm Dobbie, Forbes & Company, and Malcolm was employed as an "Apprentice in ironfounding" in the company prior to his enlistment. "He was particularly interested," the *Falkirk Mail* reported, "in all manly sports." He was a distinguished tennis player and had won the Stirling & Clackmannan Championship Trophy in 1913-14.

He was commissioned into the army in May 1915, and joined his battalion in April 1916. He suffered from trench fever and was invalided home in June 1916. He did not return to the front until the start of 1917.

Lieutenant Walker was killed in action during the Second Battle of the Scarpe (the third phase of the Battle of Arras). On April 23, the Battalion's and Division's objectives

included the village of Roeux and its "ill-famed" Chemical Works. At 4.45 a.m. the Battalion set off in three waves at the same time as the barrage on the German lines. The battalion war diary stated that

> Our barrage was not very defined and the first wave unfortunately pushed into it and had considerable casualties." But Lieutenant John B Gregory in his memoir was blunter: "We had practically no artillery support and a machine-gun barrage from the ridge behind did more harm than good.

The serious failings of the artillery were to continue. Areas strongly held by German soldiers were "passed over without doing much harm and the whole attack was delayed at one and a half hour while our losses in officers were very heavy". It is reckoned that all the battalion's officers were casualties within the first hour of the attack.

At 6.30 a.m. the Germans "began to trickle away". Helped by a single tank, the battalion entered the village of Roeux and Roeux Wood. The men were troubled by snipers and machine guns. A German counter-attack at 10.30 a.m. forced the battalion out of the northern end of the village but a new trench line was dug and held rather precariously until they were relieved that evening. By nightfall the village of Roeux was again held by the Germans.

The casualties, according to the battalion war diary, numbered 6 officers killed, including Lieutenant Malcolm Walker. 9 other officers were wounded and one was posted missing. There were over 300 casualties amongst the other ranks.

It is therefore no surprise that this battle has been described as "one of the blackest days in the story of the Battalion."

Level Crossing Cemetery, Fampoux, France I. A. 11/16.

GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN THAN THIS

Able Seaman George WALLACE

Royal Naval Division 189th Brigade Machine Gun Company
Service Number: Clyde Z/5039
Date of Death: 13 November 1916
Age at Death: 20
Family: Son of Joseph & Mary T P Wallace, 44 Bothy Row, Carronshore; brother of John, killed in Italy 16 December 1946 and of Susan and Joseph

Able Seaman George Wallace

George Wallace was a miner at Carronhall Colliery before he enlisted in June 1915. He was drafted to the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force as a Machine Gunner 1st Class in December. He joined Drake Battalion on 10 January 1916, and, thus, missed out on the Gallipoli campaign. He went to Egypt and also Mudros.

His experience of fighting came in the second half of 1916 after he had been transferred to France and to the 2nd Brigade Machine Gun Company at the end of June 1916.

It was in the last phase of the Battle of the Somme known as the Battle of the Ancre, 13-18 November 1916 that George Wallace lost his life. The objective of the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division on 13 November was the village of Beaucourt.

The 189th Brigade which included the Nelson, Hood and Drake Battalions, as well as the Machine Gun Company, began their advance at 5.45 a.m. "almost in darkness owing to thick mist". The battalions had initial success but "suffered considerable casualties from our own artillery fire".

AB Joseph Murray of Hood Battalion recalled:

> The Drakes and Nelsons got all mixed up and, on our left, they were all banging and crashing about and there was terrible fire coming from this redoubt. It was a square of trenches lined with men manning machine guns – probably a hundred men in it – and it wasn't even touched by the [British] artillery. How they missed that, Lord only knows! We had terrible casualties.

The machine gun fire from the "cunningly concealed" German redoubt located between their first and second lines was devastating. The leading waves of the battalions' attack suffered heavy casualties whilst the 3rd and 4th waves fell almost to a man.

At 12.20 p.m. an attack on the German 3rd line "by all available infantry in the first and second lines" was unsuccessful. An assault at 3.55 p.m. after a 10-minute artillery re-bombardment, also failed. At 6.41 p.m. the order went out to consolidate what had already had been gained.

Beaucourt was captured the next day and the battalions were relieved

George Wallace was one of 23 men from his Machine Gun Company who were killed on 13 November 1916.

Thiepval Memorial, France Pier and Face 1 A.

Private George Steedman WATSON

Central Ontario Regiment 15th Battalion
Service Number: 28101
Date of Death: 26 September 1916
Age at Death: 23
Family: Son of Ross and Janet Steedman Watson, 1 Steps Street, Stenhousemuir

George Watson, who gave his occupation as a baker, enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force a month after the First World War started.

His battalion served in the Ypres sector during the early months of 1916. By September it was down in the Somme area. On 25 September it took up position in the trenches north-east of Pozieres in readiness for an attack the next day. This was a phase in the Battle of the Somme and became known as the Battle of Thiepval Ridge fought between Courcelette and the German trenches south of the village of Thiepval.

The attack began at 12.35 p.m. with "a perfect barrage", according to the battalion war diary. The first objective was taken in 15 minutes. When the soldiers pressed on for their next objective, they met "stiff resistance from the Huns which the boys handled in good shape." By 4.50 p.m. they had created a new and secure front line. Later in the evening, the battalion was relieved and returned to billets in Albert. Despite what seemed a successful operation, the estimated number of casualties for the battalion on that one day was over 300.

George Watson was initially posted missing and, eight months later, officially presumed to have died on 26 September 1916.

Courcelette British Cemetery, France I. G. 5.

BLESSED ARE THE DEAD
WHICH DIE IN THE LORD

Able Seaman John Fleming WATSON

Royal Naval Division Howe Battalion
Service Number: Clyde Z/4084
Date of Death: 28 April 1917
Age at Death: 21
Family: Second son of Duncan and Agnes Watson, Dock Street, Carronshore; grandson of John and Mary Fleming, Main Street, Carronshore

Able Seaman John Watson

John Watson was "a good lad, liked by all" the officer said when writing to John's mother after his death. John was very badly wounded in the fighting near Arleux-en-Gohelle in which the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division were involved. His battalion had arrived on April 22 in preparation for an attack on Gavrelle. They took up position in what had been the German front line at the start of the Battle of Arras. Gavrelle was captured on April 23 by 189 Brigade.

John's Howe battalion was involved in intense fighting over the next two days. On April 28, British and Canadian forces began an attack on Arleux-en-Gohelle. This was captured quite easily by the Canadian

soldiers. The 1st Battalion Royal Marine Light Infantry, part of the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division, was to mount a supporting attack from just north of the village of Gavrelle. This attack began at 4.25 a.m. but little more was ever heard of the battalion – it was wiped out. Other battalions tried to keep the attack going but a massive German counter-attack forced them back to the jumping-off trenches.

Howe battalion was not involved in this attack until at 10 a.m. it was ordered to move forward to hold Hill 80. The Germans were reported to be advancing on this position. The battalion war diary, rather laconically, reported: "Lost some men through shell fire on the way up." Since no enemy attack developed, it was at this time that John was hit. He died of his wounds "almost immediately", according to the report in the *Falkirk Herald*.

Before enlisting in April 1915, John was a miner. Five months later, he joined the Howe Battalion serving in Gallipoli.

A few months after the evacuation from Gallipoli, the Royal Naval Division was transferred to the Western Front. In May 1916 the Howe Battalion arrived there.

On 13 November 1916 John Watson's battalion led the attack on their part of the front line near Beaumont-Hamel. The attack began in the dark at 5.45 a.m. with an effective barrage on the German Army's position. It was captured but with heavy losses.

John Watson suffered shell-shock during this attack, and required treatment for three days. By then this final phase of the Battle of the Somme was over.

Arras Memorial, France Bay 1.

Private Peter Wilson WATSON MM

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
7th Battalion
Service Number: 276661
Date of Death: 9 April 1917
Age at Death: 21
Family: Son & stepson of James and Elizabeth Ramsay, 31 Carronhall Row, Carronshore; son of the late Robert Watson

Private Peter Watson

Peter Watson was a miner at Carronhall Colliery but, for six months before he joined the army, he was working as a ploughman at Knowcreich Farm, Culcreuch, Fintry.

He joined the 3rd/7th battalion on 1 December 1915. On 1 May 1916 he went to the Western Front as a soldier in the 1st/7th battalion. The battalion took part in two major phases of the Battle of the Somme: the attack on High Wood in July, and the attack on Beaumont Hamel which began on November 13. (See entry for James Binnie or Robert Smith.)

Peter was awarded the Military Medal for his gallantry on November 13 and the following days. The citation praised his "heroic work as a platoon dispatch runner". He had, it said, "distinguished himself carrying messages under heavy shellfire." His award was recorded in the entry in the battalion war diary for December 7 which was his 21st birthday.

Peter was killed in action on the first day of the Battle of Arras. At the beginning of April, in preparation for the battle, the 7th Battalion had moved to Roclincourt, which was a village about two miles from the town of Arras. On April 9 Peter's battalion had taken part in the general attack on Vimy Ridge. It helped to push forward the front line to "within striking distance of Bailleul." The Official History commented that the first day of the Battle of Arras was "one of the great days of the war. It witnessed the most formidable and … most successful British offensive hitherto launched."

The battalion historian described how "the fighting went on till the night of the 11th, [the battalion was relieved then "in a blizzard of exceptional severity]. Trench after trench [was] taken by bombing, by sudden rushes, by stealth in the dark or by straightforward assault in co-operation with the Artillery".

Peter Watson was among the 38 men of the battalion killed between April 9 and 11, when the battalion was relieved.

Roclincourt Valley Cemetery, France III. E. 14.

HE DIED A HERO

[Inscription supplied by Mrs Janet McLuckie, 30 Carronhall Rd, Carronhore]

Cheerful Sacrifice, Jonathan Nicholls, 2005 edition, page 96

Military Operations France and Belgium, 1917, Volume I, Cyril Falls, 1940, page 201

For an account of the Argyll's actions at Arras see the entry for Private Willam Armit on page 6.

Lance Corporal (LWM: *Private*)
Robert WATSON M.M.

Seaforth Highlanders 9th Battalion
Service Number: S/4022
Date of Death: 27 March 1918
Age at Death: 25
Family: Eldest son of Alexander and Catherine Watson, Mungal Farm Cottages, Bainsford

Robert Watson went to the Western Front on 10 May 1915. His battalion fought in the Battle of Loos, then in several phases of the Battle of the Somme and in each of the major battles of 1917. He was awarded the Military Medal for "conspicuous bravery in June 1917". The battalion spent ten days during the first half of the month in the front line at St Laurent Blang. In the evening of June 5 an attack by 27th Brigade captured a line of trenches which were consolidated by the 9th Seaforths. Being a pioneer battalion they were very much involved in trench digging. A war diary entry for June 5/6 reported that one company dug 300 yards of new communication trench to a depth of 3 feet 9 inches while "there was considerable barrage and a great deal of sniping". When they used this trench through the Chemical Works to "return home" the men were "heavily shelled" with gas trench mortar bombs. Two nights later, the sniping was so heavy that "the men had to commence work on their knees".

Robert's battalion belonged to the Fifth Army which bore the brunt of the first attacks of the German Spring Offensive of 1918. On March 21 his battalion was in reserve and was standing by all day. The following day the retreat began, going from Sorel, which was ten miles south-east of the town of Bapaume, to Hennois Wood and from there to Combles the next day.

On March 24, the battalion withdrew through St Pierre Vaast Wood. The men were subjected to heavy machine gun fire as they emerged from the wood. They had to fight a rearguard action back to Hardicourt and took up position at Maricourt, where they experienced a "quiet night".

By this time the Fifth Army was in headlong retreat. The 9th Seaforths went from Bray to Etinehem, then to Henencourt and on 27 March they reached Toutencourt and were relieved by Australians. One other rank was killed on the 27th – Robert Watson.

The number of casualties suffered during the six days of retreat included 22 killed, but also 91 missing and 174 wounded.

Pozieres Memorial, France Panel 72 and 73.

Corporal Robert WAUGH

Royal Scots 12th Battalion
Service Number: 34220
Date of Death: 11 April 1918
Age at Death: 37
Family: Son of James and Mary Waugh, Hayfield Cottage, Carronshore

Corporal Robert Waugh

Robert Waugh, who was a baker with Carron Co-operative Society, enlisted in February 1916. His battalion was very much involved in the major battles of 1916 and 1917.

On 21 March 1918, the first day of the German Spring Offensive, the 12th Battalion of the Royal Scots were serving at Dessart Wood, about eight miles north-east of Peronne. The next day they withdrew to Nurlu. Then the night of 22-23 March was:

> such as in olden times might have believed that the powers of darkness stalked abroad, and there were few who could wholly shake off a superstitious thrill, as in ghost-like fashion the troops groped their way past smoking dumps and burning villages. The inky blackness of the night was ripped by flashes of brilliant flame as innumerable rockets and flares soared skywards, the leaping lights against the dark curtain of the night forming a baroque spectacle as fantastic as the visions of a lunatic. By the flickering glow of burning houses the Royal Scots caught glimpses of men in business

similar to their own. None knew for certain where the Germans were, and all felt a vast sensation of relief when at last they reached their allotted position.

There followed a protracted rear-guard action in which the "indomitable pluck" of both the 11th and 12th Royal Scots saved the 27th Brigade to which they belonged, from being "utterly overwhelmed" On 24 March the 12th Royal Scots "repelled every hostile thrust with apparently effortless ease".

The 12th Royal Scots were relieved on 27 March and transferred north to the Ypres sector. In the fighting between 21 and 27 March, the Battalion suffered over 400 casualties.

On April 10 the battalion held the front line near White Chateau, about four miles south-east of Ypres. This was heavily bombarded causing "rather severe casualties". The infantry attack that followed was repelled by "good shooting".

On April 11, two platoons tried to capture two enemy pill boxes in front of their trenches. Enfilade fire from their right forced the men to return to their trenches. Also, on 11 April, as part of the second stage of the German Spring Offensive, the Germans attacked the line near White Chateau again. The Germans were sent "bolting for shelter in terror-stricken panic".At some point during this attack, Corporal Waugh was killed in action.

His death notice, inserted by his parents, brothers and sisters ended with the verse:

His cheery ways, his smiling face,
Are a pleasure to recall:
He had a kindly word for each
And died beloved by all.

Tyne Cot Memorial, Ieper, BelgiumPanel 11 to 14 and 162.

The Royal Scots 1914-1919, John Ewing, 1925, pages 573-575, 630

Private William WAUGH

King's Own Scottish Borderers 1st Battalion
Service Number: 15262
Date of Death: 11 April 1918
Age at Death: 28
Family: Youngest son of Helen Waugh, Carronshore and of the late James Waugh

Private William Waugh

William Waugh, who was a moulder at Mungal Foundry, enlisted at Stenhousemuir in September 1914. His battalion served in the Gallipoli Campaign, transferred to France in March 1916 and took part in the Battle of the Somme. It was involved in the major battles of 1917.

In April 1918 the Allied forces had just survived the first onslaught of the German Spring Offensive. The second major phase began on April 9 when the main thrust of the German attack struck near Bethune. The British forces retreated giving up gains from 1914. The Germans reached Estaires, took Armentieres on April 10 and further north took Messines on April 11. This was the British Army's most desperate day of 1918.

It was on this day that Private William Waugh was killed in action. The battalion had, on the previous afternoon, taken up position between Estaires and Steenwerke where the enemy had broken through.

About 6 a.m. on the 11th the Germans attacked "in overwhelming force". The 1st KOSB (except for 'A' Company which was in reserve) was "practically surrounded" and had to retreat.

The casualties were very heavy: 20 killed, 215 wounded and almost 250 missing.

Ploegsteert Memorial Panel 5.

Ploegsteert Memorial

Private Daniel WHITE

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
10th Battalion
Service Number: S/6211
Date of Death: 25 September 1915
Age at Death: 31
Family: Husband of Elizabeth Blackhall Whyte, Palace Street, Parkhead, Glasgow; son of William and Margaret Whyte; brother of Henry

Private Daniel White

Daniel White, who was born in Dunblane, gave his occupation as an iron moulder when he enlisted in November 1914. He was living then in the Parkhead district of Glasgow with his wife Elizabeth. Their daughter, also called Elizabeth, was three months old when Daniel joined up.

Daniel had lived in Rae Street, Stenhousemuir, and played for Stenhousemuir Football Club before the war.

After his enlistment, the 10th battalion went to Arlesford in Hampshire and were there until, in February 1915, it moved to Bramshott, also in Hampshire. On 11 May, it landed at Boulogne on its way to the Western Front.

Daniel White was reported missing on the first day of the Battle of Loos. This is a notable battle because the British Army used poison gas for the first time. This was to offset the lack of shells for an effective artillery bombardment. The battalion war diary of the 10th Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders only mentions the use of gas when it noted that the saps in front of the firing line could not be used for the deployment of the battalion at the start of the advance – the saps were "full of Gas plant and gas".

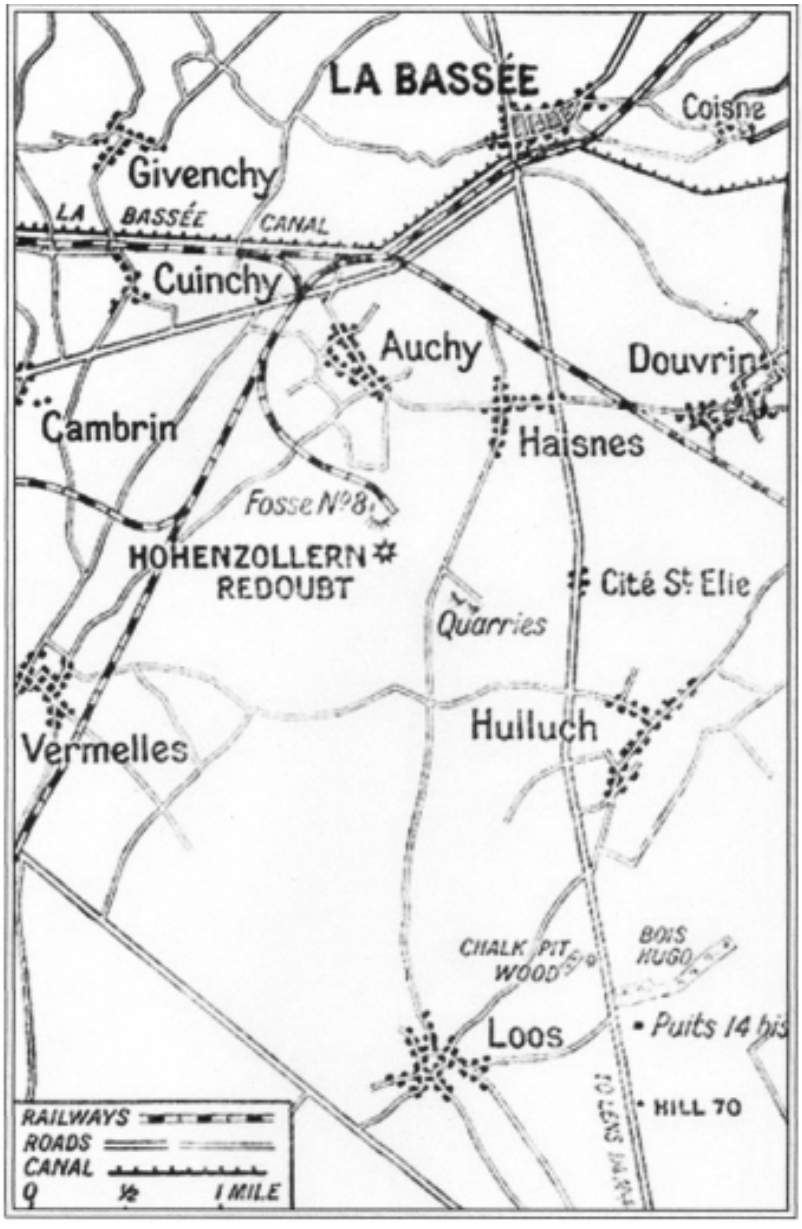
The battle is described in detail in the account of the death of Private Peter Penman on pages **

Daniel White's death was confirmed in mid-October. This merely added to the grievous suffering of his wife. Their daughter, Elizabeth, had died of measles and other complications on April 27. His wife was by then pregnant again. She was living in Falkirk when on 1 September 1915 she gave birth to a daughter, named Agnes, who died when she was 6 weeks old. The news of her husband's death must have arrived around the time of the death of Agnes.

By 1920 Elizabeth Whyte had remarried.

Loos Memorial, France Panel 125 to 127.

While the family name was spelt WHYTE, Daniel's surname on Larbert War Memorial and in army records is spelt WHITE .



The area around Loos

Private Sydney Albert WHITE

Royal Berkshire Regiment 5th Battalion
Service Number: 41625
Date of Death: 12 May 1918
Age at Death: 18
Family: Son of Sydney Albert and Ellen White, Low Town, Larbert

Private Sydney White

Sydney White, who was born in Sheffield, was a moulder with Jones & Campbell, Larbert before he moved to Birmingham in England in 1915. He enlisted in Birmingham and joined the Worcesters in February 1916. Later, he was transferred to the Royal Berkshire Regiment.

In March 1918, his battalion was moved to Albert, and then sent forward to meet the expected German attacks across the old Somme battlefields. This was part of the first stage of the German Spring Offensive. By 4.30 a.m. on 26 March, the battalion took up position west of the River Ancre as shown on the map below. There were no trenches or barbed wire.

.The battalion fought off strong German attacks on the 27th and 28th March before being relieved.

Their next stint of heavy fighting was on 5-6 April near Bouzincourt. It may be that Sydney White was wounded then. After an intense bombardment at 7 a.m. on 5 April, there were repeated German attacks during the morning. These were all repulsed. But at 12 noon, a German attack entered the line held by the battalion's centre and left companies and took control of about 1,000 yards.

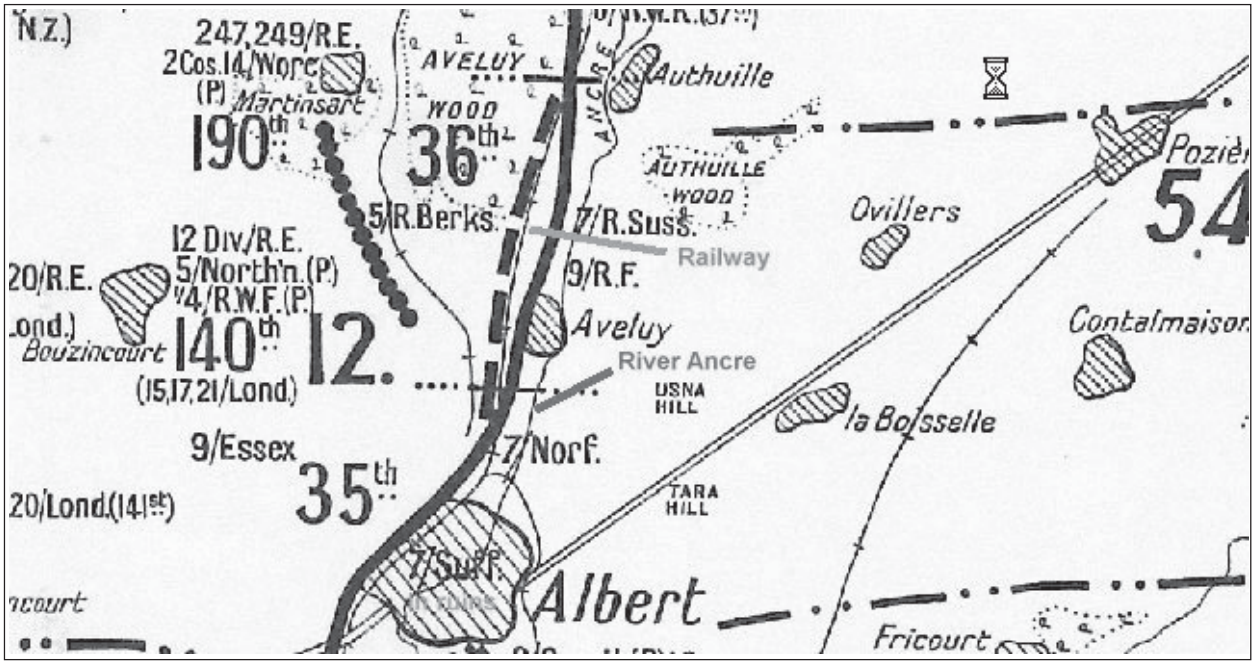
At 2.30 p.m. reinforcements were sent up but they suffered 50% casualties from machine gun fire. They dug in on the support line.

When the centre and left companies were relieved the next day, there were "very few survivors". There were over 250 casualties in the battalion.

On 6 May the battalion was again in the front line, near Acheux. Between May 7 and 10 there were 11 other ranks wounded. This may be when Sydney was wounded. He died of his wounds at one of the four British Casualty Clearing Stations which were located at Gezaincourt.

Bagneux British Cemetery, Gezaincourt, France I. B. 22.

WE CANNOT LORD
THY PURPOSE SEE
BUT ALL IS WELL
THAT'S DONE BY THEE



The River Ancre position near Albert

Private Thomas WHITTET

Seaforth Highlanders 6th Battalion
Service Number: S/40637
Date of Death: 23 November 1917
Age at Death: 21
Family: Youngest son of William and Agnes Whittet, Morrison's Land, Stenhousemuir

Tom Whittet was born at the Golf House, Stenhousemuir – his father was, according to Tom's birth certificate, a golf conservator (i.e. a greenkeeper!) at Falkirk Tryst Golf Club. Tom enlisted in Falkirk in 1915. He was wounded while serving with the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders. He then was transferred to the Seaforth Highlanders.

In November 1917 his battalion took part in the Battle of Cambrai. The men were given a hot meal at 2 a.m. on November 20, "a very fine night". They then moved forward to their assembly position. "At Zero (6.20 a.m.) plus 30 minutes all the men were given a good breakfast of porridge, bacon and tea." At 7.50 a.m. the first of the attacking waves set off. The objectives were to capture the Hindenburg Support Line, the Flesquieres Trench and beyond. "The Tanks, which had preceeded [sic] the attacking waves got forward splendidly." The first objective was taken. The battalion moved on to attack Flesquieres. "Several [tanks] were, however, knocked out by direct hits as they were proceeding to the Flesquieres Trench and the others running short of petrol could not proceed further." The intensity of the machine gun fire from Flesquieres Trench, Wood and village halted the battalion's advance, despite its very determined efforts. The next morning the village was occupied - the Germans had evacuated it during the night.

The 51st (Highland) Division, under the command of General George Harper, was to continue the attack on November 23, and the 152nd Brigade was chosen to do so. According to Captain R T Peel, of the 6th Seaforth Highlanders, General Harper chose the 152nd Brigade rather than the 153rd Brigade (both were "more or less played out") by tossing a coin. This "fateful decision" meant that the 6th Battalions of the Seaforth Highlanders and the Gordon Highlanders "were to bear the brunt of their Divisonal attack" on Bourlon Wood.

"The wood was a claustrophobic place in which to fight. In addition to the dense trees, which made linear movement impossible and reduced the light levels, the Germans had laced the terrain with bunkers, trenches, machine-gun nests and many other hazards. Combat took place at close quarters, even as the bullets and shells smashed through the trees above."

The battalion's objective was to capture ground between Bourlon Wood and the village of Fontaine Notre Dame. At 10.10 a.m. "the tanks went forward in excellent style and at Zero (10.30 a.m.) the battalion followed. At the commencement of the attack and for some hours after, the enemy put down a very heavy barrage but our men got forward through it." They made good progress through the wood until they reached the north-east corner where they were stopped by intense machine gun fire from the village. On the west side of the village the companies there could not get into Fontaine Notre Dame because of "very heavy machine gun fire… every house seemed to have a machine gun… Our whole front was under continuous enfilade Machine Gun fire but we maintained our ground, although suffering very heavy casualties."

The 6th Seaforths kept their precarious position until darkness fell. During the night, the battalion was relieved as promised before the attack. Captain Peel blamed the failure of the attack mainly on the tanks' lack of organisation – "they came into action in futile driblets" - and also on the lack of artillery support. The battalion suffered 124 casualties and including 31 dead or missing.

At some point during the attack, Thomas went missing. Since he was later reported to have died of wounds, it seems that one of his colleagues must have seen him wounded.

Cambrai Memorial, Louverval, France Panel 10.

Cambrai 1917, Chris McNab, 2012, page 109

Private George WHYTE
(LWM White)

Scottish Rifles (Cameronians)
10th Battalion
Service Number: 40668
Date of Death: 26 (FH: 23) April 1917
Age at Death: 29
Family: Husband of Mary Waugh Whyte, Hayfield, Carronshore

George Whyte, who enlisted in Glasgow, was killed in action during a significant phase of the Battle of Arras. The 10th Battalion had played an important part in the first three days of the battle. During that time the battalion suffered over 100 casualties.

Ten days later, on 23 April the battalion went back into the front line near Guemappe. At 6 o'clock in the evening it passed through other battalions to take over and consolidate a trench east of Shovel Trench. This was due to the inability of the 10th/11th HLI to keep in touch with the Cameronians' battalion.

At 3.40 a.m. the following day the German artillery began to bombard the battalion's position. The 10th Battalion Cameronians started to move forward under a creeping barrage. The German barrage "thickened considerably" and then there was very heavy machine gunfire. One company reached the Blue Line, which was one of the original objectives for the first day of the battle. The other companies could not get to the top of the ridge and had to dig in. German snipers and machine guns were particularly active from a position known as Cavalry Farm, not only during the rest of the day but also during the night.

At 3.30 p.m. on April 25, the battalion had to endure a very heavy barrage before being relieved from the front line. Over the 3 days April 23-25, the 10th Battalion Cameronains suffered just over 200 casualties.

Since the death notice in the *Falkirk Herald* gave April 23 as the date of George Whyte's death, it may be that he was one of the 36 other ranks killed in action among the 200 casualties.

Arras Memorial, France Bay 6.

Corporal Henry WHYTE

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
2nd Battalion
Service Number: 967
Date of Death: 27 October 1916
Age at Death: 24
Family: Sixth son of William and Margaret Whyte, Elder Place, Stenhousemuir; brother of Daniel White (q.v.) and Hugh.

As his service number suggests, Harry Whyte was a regular soldier, who joined the army in 1912.

In 1914 he arrived in France six days after war was declared. His battalion fought in the Battle of Le Cateau and then in the so-called "Race to the Sea". He was wounded in the shoulder in October 1914 and he returned to the UK. Six months later, he was fit to return to the Western Front.

His battalion took part in the Battle of Loos in 1915.

In March 1916 he was given one week's furlough (leave).

His battalion fought in the Battle of the Somme from the middle of July. It took part then in attacks on High Wood and again in mid-August. In late October it moved into position in the Lesboeufs sector where Harry was killed. During this time when the battalion was in support the whole battalion was used for carrying and working parties duties. Between October 25th and 27th the battalion suffered 15 casualties. Only one was killed and that was Harry Whyte.

Guards' Cemetery, Lesboeufs, France XI. W. 3.

THY WILL BE DONE

Able Seaman David WILSON

Royal Naval Division Howe Battalion
Service Number: Clyde Z/4050
Date of Death: 22 August 1917
Age at Death: 20
Family: Son of David and Agnes Wilson, 1 The Avenue, Carronshore

Able Seaman David Wilson

David Wilson, who was a miner at the William Pit in Carronshore, enlisted in April 1915. He was drafted to the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force in September, joining up with the Howe Battalion at Helles on the Gallipoli peninsula. He served with his battalion for two months. However, on November 24, he was found guilty of the charge "Did sleep on watch in the trenches". For this misdemeanour he was sentenced to 90 days' detention. By the time he was clear of his detention – he served just over a month – the Gallipoli Campaign was over.

In May 1916 his battalion was transferred to the Western Front.

Howe Battalion was deeply involved in the final phase of the Battle of the Somme when the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division attacked and captured the village of Beaucourt between November 13 and 15, when it was relieved.

On 14 February 1917 David Wilson suffered an inflammation in his right foot. This might have been an incidence of "trench feet", a common ailment of the men in the trenches (It was a foot infection caused by cold, wet and insanitary conditions. In the trenches men stood for hours on end in waterlogged trenches without being able to remove wet socks or boots. The feet would gradually go numb and the skin would turn red or blue.) David Wilson was out of the front line for six weeks.

In April 1917 the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division took part in the Battle of Arras, capturing the village of Gavrelle, which became its headquarters through the summer of 1917. (See entry for AB John Watson.)

During the first week in August Howe battalion was in rest at St Aubin before resuming front line duties in the Gavrelle sector. Between August 19th and 24th when the battalion held the front line it was "on the whole… a quiet time… Total casualties 4 killed – 13 wounded."

David Wilson's parents were informed that he had been killed when he was shot by a sniper. It is intriguing that he was shot while on sentry duty, given his misdemeanour in the Gallipoli trenches.

His parents said in his death notice:

Somewhere in France a volley rings
A bugle sounds farewell
A wooden cross, a passing flower
Marks where our dear son fell.

Naval Trench Cemetery, Gavrelle, France C. 2.

TO MEMORY EVER DEAR

This cemetery is named after a second-line trench made by the 63rd (Royal (Naval) Division in the summer of 1917.

Private David Ferguson WILSON

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders
7th Battalion A Company.
Service Number: 2360
Date of Death: 13 May 1915
Age at Death: 19
Family: Son of Robert and Elizabeth Wilson, Mitchell's Land, East End, North Main Street, Stenhousemuir

Like many other young men from the local area, David Wilson joined the local regiment in the first week in September 1914 and, after training in England, went to the Western Front in mid-December.

In the first major battle that his battalion was involved in, the battle of St Julien, David Wilson was wounded in the neck on 25 April 1915.

This battle was the second phase of the Second Battle of Ypres (22 April – 25 May, 1915). During the first phase, the German 4th Army had attacked two French Divisions at 5 pm between Steenstraat and Langemarck, a few miles north of Ypres. They used chlorine gas successfully for the first time. 6,000 French soldiers were killed in 10 minutes and a huge 4 – 5-mile gap opened up in the front line as the survivors withdrew towards Boesinghe. A Canadian Division fought to stem the German advance but over the next two days the Allied forces had to retreat. The village of St Julien, on 22 April safely behind the front line, was now on the front line. The 7th Battalion of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders were sent to Ypres the day after the start of the German attack.

For a full account of the battle see the entry for Private James Dea on pages 39.

The battalion war diary recorded that 6 officers and 100 other ranks were killed, but 150 men were posted missing and this was to

double the number of other ranks who were killed in this attack. The total number of casualties in the battalion was over 500, including David Wilson.

A week after he was wounded, David was transferred to England for further treatment. (His Military History Sheet records his overseas service as from 15 December 1915 to 31/4/15 [sic]. He was treated at a hospital in Leicester but he died of his wounds.

His funeral, perhaps the first in the Larbert area for a soldier who died in the war from wounds, was reported in detail in the *Falkirk Herald*, which described him as "a fine type of young soldier":

The funeral took place on Saturday afternoon [15 May 1915] to Stenhousemuir Cemetery. The remains, which had been removed to his father's residence at Mitchell's Land, were conveyed to the cemetery on a gun carriage, preceded by the pipes and bugles of the Third Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders from Alloa, and followed by a firing party from the same battalion, under Sgt Mitchell, the Larbert Volunteer Training Corps, and the Boys' Brigade.

In many businesses and private houses blinds were drawn and, as the cortege passed, the pipers played dirges. It was respectfully watched by a large number of spectators. An impressive spectacle was witnessed in the cemetery, where a large crowd had assembled, as the military prepared to pay the last honours to the deceased. The coffin, which was draped with the Union Jack, was borne by soldiers to the graveside, where the firing party discharged three volleys and the buglers sounded the 'Last Post'. Rev Mr Morrow conducted the service at the grave, on which several floral tributes were placed.

Larbert Cemetery, Muirhead Road, Stenhousemuir. Section 2 Lair 317.

TO MEMORY EVER DEAR

Private John William WOOD

South Lancashire Regiment 6th Battalion LWM: Yorks & Lancs Regiment
Service Number: 36901
*Date of Death:*17 (FH: 23) July 1917
Age at Death: 35
Family: Husband of Margaret Hodge Wood, Barnsley; son-in-law of Jeanie Hodge, Wheatsheaf Buildings, Larbert, and of the late Lawrence Hodge; brother-in-law of Mathew McNicol (q.v.) and of Robert Hodge (q.v.); son of Philip and Janet Wood, Selkirk

John Wood was born in Selkirk and was working as a cabinetmaker when he joined the army at the start of 1916. He was sent, first of all, to the Western Front. He was wounded during his service there. Following his recovery, he was drafted to Mesopotamia. It is likely that it was at this point that he joined the South Lancashire Regiment.

In 1917 the 6th Battalions of the South Lancashires, of the East Lancashires and of the Loyal North Lancashires brought to an end the siege of Kut (25 February 1917). They then attacked and helped to bring into British hands the main Iraqi city of Baghdad (11 March 1917). There were successes in three more battles before fighting stopped for the summer.

In July John Wood fell ill with the effects of the heat and died later in hospital. The heat was not to be under-estimated as the midday temperatures in Baghdad in the summer were usually 122^{0}F (50^{0}C) in the shade, but the summer of 1917 was the hottest in living memory. According to an officer in the South Lancashires, "every day is absolutely the same… a sort of mixture of life and death".

Baghdad (North Gate) War Cemetery, Iraq. XIX. D. 1.

Baghdad War Cemetery

Regimental Losses: Summary

Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders	96	East Lancashire Regiment	2
Royal Naval Division	25	Hussars	2
Gordon Highlanders	24	Royal Army Medical Corps	2
Royal Scots	23	Royal Berkshire Regiment	2
Royal Field Artillery	12	Scots Guards	2
Seaforth Highlanders	12	Bedford Regiment	1
Royal Hdrs 'Black Watch'	10	Border Regiment	1
King's Own Scottish Borderers	9	King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry	1
Highland Light Infantry	8	Lancashire Fusiliers	1
Royal Scots Fusiliers	6	London Regiment	1
SR 'Cameronians'	6	Northampton Regiment	1
Cameron Highlanders	5	Northumberland Fusiliers	1
Machine Gun Corps	3	Scottish Horse	1
Royal Air Force	3	Welsh Regiment	1
Royal Army Service Corps	3	East Yorkshire Regiment	1
Royal Engineers	3	Yorkshire & Lancashire Regiment	1
Royal Garrison Artillery	3	Canadians	9
Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve	3	Australians	2

TOTAL including James Quin(n): 286

B Company of the 7th Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders on the Cambrin Road near Beaumetz at the Battle of St Quentin 21-23 March 1918. B Company recruited in the Larbert and Denny area.

Larbert War Memorial

Panels 1 and 2

Regimental Losses

BATTN	RANK	NAME	DATE of DEATH
Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders			
7th	Maj	J F JONES	29 March 1917
7th	Capt	A S HUNTER M.C.	29 August 1918
7th	Capt	Grahame H WADE	25 April 1915
7th	Lt	R G HUNTER	23 April 1915
5th	Lt	Arch McLARDIE	25 December 1915
7th	Lt	J G SHERRIFF	26 April 1915
7th	Lt	Malcolm R WALKER	23 April 1917
5th	RSM	R MONTEITH M.C.	1 August 1918
12th	CSM	William DICK D.C.M.	19 September 1918
11th	CSM	Thomas INGLIS	1 September 1916
7th	Sgt	Fred REID	23 April 1917
2nd	Sgt	Robert SILCOCK	20 July 1916
7th	Sgt	Alex TASKER	26 July 1916
10th	Sgt	John THOMSON	25 September 1915
10th	L Sgt	Andrew FINLAY	29 May 1915
10th	L Sgt	William TAYLOR	10 July 1916
10th	Cpl	Alex HASTINGS	19 December 1915
7th	Cpl	Thomas INGLIS	17 April 1915
7th	Cpl	Andrew McCOWAN	20 July 1918
7th	Cpl	Henry PHILIP	26 August 1916
1st	Cpl	Thomas ROBB	30 September 1916
11th	Cpl	J H ROBERTSON	25 May 1918
7th	Cpl	John SIM	9 August 1916
2nd	Cpl	Henry WHITE	27 October 1916
11th	L Cpl	Andrew DICK	22 August 1917
8th	L Cpl	J E GIBSON	9 October 1918
10th	L Cpl	Rowland HILL	26 September 1915
7th	L Cpl	James HUSKIE	26 April 1915`
10th	L Cpl	John MORRISON	10 September 1918
7th	L Cpl	Robert MURRAY	25 April 1915
7th	L Cpl	C H NISBET	10 April 1917
7th	L Cpl	James STEELE	21 November 1917
7th	Pte	Daniel AITKEN	8 April 1915
7th	Pte	William ARMIT	9 April 1917
14th	Pte	James BAIRD	27 March 1918

Larbert War Memorial

Panels 3 and 4

BATTN	RANK	NAME	DATE of DEATH
Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders (continued)			
7th	Pte	James BINNIE	15 November 1916
11th	Pte	J A BINNIE	13 March 1918
11th	Pte	Abner BORTHWICK	14 May 1916
11th	Pte	G F BROCK	28 March 1918
1st/8th	Pte	Frank BROWN	22 August 1918
7th	Pte	A F BUIST	24 April 1915
7th	Pte	A K CHESNEY	29 March 1915
10th	Pte	James COWAN	30 September 1918
7th	Pte	Robert CUNNINGHAM	21 April 1917
7th	Pte	J T K DEA	25 April 1915
7th	Pte	John DICK	8 August 1917
11th	Pte	Douglas DOBBIE	17 February 1916
10th	Pte	James DONOGHUE	3 May 1917
7th	Pte	Edward EASTON	3 September 1917
7th	Pte	Alex ESSLEMONT	10 July 1917
7th	Pte	William FLEMING	11 April 1917
11th	Pte	Thomas FOOTE	22 July 1917
7th	Pte	James GRAHAM	19 May 1915
2nd	Pte	William HAMILTON	25 September 1915
11th	Pte	John HARLEY	27 September 1915
1st/8th	Pte	F J HEAVER	21 April 1917
7th	Pte	William JARVIE	2 August 1916
11th	Pte	Donald JENKINS	16 October 1917
1st/7th	Pte	David JOHNMAN	27 April 1917
10th	Pte	Andrew JOHNSTON	12 October 1917
7th	Pte	A R KEMP	30 July 1918
10th	Pte	William KERR	8th March 1918
7th	Pte	J H LAING	23 April 1917
7th	Pte	Charles LAIRD	26 April 1915
7th	Pte	Malcolm LAIRD	19 April 1917
12th	Pte	Francis LORN	19 May 1917
7th	Pte	Hugh MARTIN	9 April 1917
7th	Pte	J E MENZIES	4 February 1915
7th	Pte	T B MILLER	31 July 1917
8th	Pte	Alex McCULLOCH	3 October 1918
14th	Pte	R F McCULLOCH	24 April 1917

Larbert War Memorial

Panels 5 and 6

BATTN	RANK	NAME	DATE of DEATH
Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders (continued)			
7th	Pte	John McDONALD	24 May 1915
1st/8th	Pte	David McEWAN	17 March 1917
10th	Pte	William McEWAN	12 October 1917
1st	Pte	William McGREGOR	15 April 1917
7th	Pte	Duncan McLACHLAN	25 April 1915
9th	Pte	M McNICOL	31 July 1917
5th	Pte	J A PENMAN	9 June 1918
10th	Pte	Peter PENMAN	25 September 1915
7th	Pte	William PHILIP	5 April 1916
8th	Pte	Alex ROBERTSON	13 November 1916
2nd	Pte	James SCOTT	9 March 1915
11th	Pte	James SCOTT	10 December 1915
14th	Pte	John SCOTT	23 November 1917
7th	Pte	James SMITH	17 December 1917
7th	Pte	Robert SMITH	15 November 1916
7th	Pte	George STEADMAN	23 November 1917
7th	Pte	Andrew STEVENSON	16 September 1915
14th	Pte	Robert STEWART	27 March 1918
12th	Pte	J W STODDART	8 June 1918
7th	Pte	Robert TAYLOR	24 July 1916
7th	Pte	William TAYLOR	29 January 1915
7th	Pte	P M WATSON M.M.	9 April 1917
10th	Pte	Daniel WHITE	25 September 1915
7th	Pte	D F WILSON	13 May 1915
7th	Pte	John Campbell DUFF	19 October 1918
Australians			
17th	Pte	J M JOINER	26 July 1916
5th	Pte	John SNEDDON	21 March 1918
Bedford Regiment			
2nd	Capt	S G HAGUE	21 September 1918
Border Regiment			
5th	Pte	William OSBORNE	2 October 1918

BATTN	RANK	NAME	DATE of DEATH
Cameron Highlanders			
1st	L Cpl	John LAVERIE	29 October 1914
5th	Pte	Eben RENNIE M.M.	14 October 1918
1st	Pte	William SMITH	11 November 1914
5th	Pte	William STEWART	26 July 1916
7th	Pte	Robert THURSBY	28 April 1917
Canadians			
Ord Corp	A S Sgt	John CLARK	7 August 1918
85th	Sgt	Robert EDGAR	15 August 1917
4th	Sgt	John TAYLOR	29 May 1917
85th	Pte	James DUNCAN	25 September 1918
13th	Pte	William FORSYTH	7 September 1916
3rd	Pte	John GLEGG	8 October 1916
43rd	Pte	Charles MAITLAND	27 October 1917
1st	Pte	George McDOUGAL	15 September 1916
15th	Pte	George WATSON	26 September 1916
Highland Light Infantry (HLI)			
17th	Sgt	George MITCHELL	4 September 1917
9th	Pte	Alex COOK	7 October 1918
10th/11th	Pte	James GARDNER	9 April 1918
12th	Pte	Robert HODGE	13 August 1916
16th	Pte	Arch LENNOX	4 November 1918
14th	Pte	David MUNN	24 November 1917
9th	Pte	William ROBERTSON	17 June 1917
16th	Pte	Thomas TOUGH	1 July 1916
Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry (KOYLI)			
1st	Pte	Joseph LEWIS	4 October 1915

BATTN	RANK	NAME	DATE of DEATH
East Lancs Regiment			
2nd	Lt	David DONLEY	3 September 1917
13th	Pte	James SCOTT	30 August 1918
Lancashire Fusiliers			
10th	L Cpl	John GRANT	25 August 1918
Gordon Highlanders			
1st	Lt	Kenneth McCASKILL	27 September 1918
8th/10th	Sgt	Alex SPENCE	31 July 1917
	Cpl	Francis CROMBIE	14 October 1918
3rd	Cpl	Frank HODGE	22 August 1917
2nd	L Cpl	William DICKMAN	10 November 1915
2nd	L Cpl	G B GRAHAM	16 May 1915
2nd	L Cpl	Thomas MENZIES	16 May 1915
1st/6th	L Cpl	A D MILNE	8 July 1917
4th	L Cpl	R S PARKER	31 August 1918
7th	L Cpl	George RITCHIE	6 September 1918
1st	Pte	Andrew AITKEN	1 October 1918
1st	Pte	John ALLAN	30 August 1918
1st	Pte	John ANDERSON	2 March 1916
1st	Pte	Thomas DOUGLAS	7 September 1918
1st	Pte	James FERGUSON	23 October 1918
1st	Pte	Francis GRANT	23 April 1915
1st	Pte	Robert HEGGISON	29 July 1916
2nd	Pte	David LAING	16 May 1915
1st	Pte	Samuel LAPSLEY	15 June 1918
1st/7th	Pte	Richard PATERSON	20 July 1918
1st	Pte	Alex SYMON	29 September 1915
6th/7th	Pte	William THOMPSON	15 October 1918
10th	Pte	Alex WALKER	11 April 1916
1st	Pte	George WALKER	14 December 1914

BATTN	RANK	NAME	DATE of DEATH
Hussars			
10th	Pte	Walter SCOTT	3 May 1917
11th	Pte	James SHIRRA	11 December 1915
Kings Own Scottish Borderers (KOSB)			
6th	Pte	A B CUNNINGHAM	21 April 1916
1st	Pte	Thomas FORRESTER	5 August 1914
10th	Pte	William HUNTER	28 May 1917
2nd	Pte	Cornelius HUTTON	30 July 1916
2nd	Pte	David MCLUCKIE	6 May 1915
6th	Pte	John MCLUCKIE	5 May 1918
1st/5th	Pte	James PROVAN	29 July 1918
6th	Pte	George TRAYNER	16 October 1918
1st	Pte	William WAUGH	11 April 1918
London Regiment			
2nd/23rd	L Cpl	Walter HOTSON	10 August 1916
Machine Gun Corps			
45th Coy	L Cpl	John HASTINGS	27 April 1917
	Pte	Joseph BLAIR	25 September 1917
	Pte	Andrew GARDINER	22 November 1918
Northampton Regiment			
1st	Lt	A N SHERRIFF	30 October 1914
Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC)			
49th F.A.	Capt	J A S BURGES	23 April 1917
27th	Pte	Alex BINNIE	13 July 1916

BATTN	RANK	NAME	DATE of DEATH
Royal Air Force			
49th	Sgt	R S DOBBIE	23 July 1918
33rd Sqdn	AM	William KEMP	17 February 1919
	AM	Graham THOMSON	7 December 1918
Northumberland Regiment			
7th	Lt	J A M MILLAR	16 April 1917
Royal Army Service Corps (RASC)			
26th Field Bakery	Cpl	William ANDERSON	1 January 1916
	Pte	T F GALBRAITH	25 February 1919
596th M T Coy	Pte	Alex LOGAN	4 October 1918
Royal Berkshire Regiment			
5th	Pte	J B McILROY	27 April 1917
5th	Pte	S A WHITE	12 May 1918
Royal Engineers			
289th	Spr	David EWING	3 January 1918
206th	Spr	W I GODSON	25 August 1916
105th	Spr	William REID	28 October 1918
Royal Field Artillery (RFA)			
27th Bde	Lt	George REID	25 August 1918
35th Bde	Gnr	Daniel BUCHANAN	9 September 1916
71st Bde	Gnr	James GALBRAITH	3 September 1918
86th Bde	Gnr	W E GIBSON	10 April 1917
12th Bde	Gnr	Peter HENDERSON	27 October 1916

BATTN	RANK	NAME	DATE of DEATH
Royal Field Artillery (RFA) continued			
35th Bde	Gnr	James HILL	10 September 1916
69th Bde	Gnr	David HUSKIE	3 October 1918
106th Bde	Gnr	A F McARTHUR	30 August 1916
65th Bde	Gnr	Donald McLEOD	6 October 1917
29th Div	Dvr	Joseph BALFOUR	23 October 1915
8th Div	Dvr	Robert McGREGOR	8 October 1917
5th Bde	Dvr	Joseph REILLY	12 August 1918
Royal Garrison Artillery (RGA)			
116 Bty	BSM	Alex HILL	25 February 1915
270 Sge Bty	Gnr	Andrew McLURE	19 October 1918
261 Sge Bty	Gnr	William SMITH	21 May 1917
Royal Highlanders 'Black Watch'			
3rd	Pipe-Maj	Geo McFARLANE	13 November 1914
6th	Pte	George BROUGH	28 July 1916
9th	Pte	John COCKBURN	7 September 1916
2nd	Pte	Peter DAVIE	7 January 1916
13th	Pte	Alex GENTLES	14 October 1917
2nd	Pte	David GLANVILLE	31 October 1918
8th	Pte	Thomas HANNAH	8 May 1916
9th	Pte	John McEWAN	29 September 1915
4th/5th	Pte	John McFARLANE	24 April 1918
6th	Pte	Andrew McKENDRICK	31 July 1917
Royal Scots Fusiliers			
1st	Pte	William HAIRE	25 September 1915
1st	Pte	George JOHNSTON	22 August 1918
6th/7th	Pte	Charles JOHNSTONE	20 July 1917
1st	Pte	John RAMSAY	25 February 1918
5th	Pte	William REID	18 April 1917
2nd	Pte	D W RUSSELL	12 October 1916

BATTN	RANK	NAME	DATE of DEATH
Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve (RNVR)			
Nelson	Chf S AB SIG	Fulton GILLESPIE Alex McKENZIE Andrew PHILIP	13 March 1918 13 November 1916 10 April 1917
Royal Naval Division			
Hawke	LS	Jas MITCHELL M.M.	9 October 1918
Nelson	LS	Thomas RAE	7 April 1918
Drake	AB	Alex BAIRD	10 July 1919
Drake	AB	Allan BROWN	4 February 1917
Howe	AB	John DAVIE	20 July 1917
	SIG	A G DOUGLAS	20 January 1918
Drake	AB	J A FERGUSON	14 September 1916
Nelson	AB	Alex GIBB	24 April 1917
Nelson	AB	Edward HAMILL	23 April 1917
Drake	AB	Robert HILL	14 November 1916
Nelson	AB	R T HODGE	13 November 1916
Nelson	AB	Daniel KEMP	13 November 1916
Howe	AB	Alex MALCOLM	2 June 1917
Hood	AB	Robert McCAIG	21 November 1915
Hood	AB	Hector McPHAIL	28 March 1918
Drake	AB	Harry PRESTON	13 November 1916
Anson	AB	James QUINN	
Hawke	AB	Arthur REID	3 August 1915
Anson	AB	Ebenezer REID	27 September 1918
Drake	AB	William REID	3 September 1918
Howe	AB	William SINCLAIR	14 May 1915
Anson	AB	William TASKER	28 April 1917
189 Bde MGC	AB	George WALLACE	13 November 1916
Howe	AB	J F WATSON	28 April 1917
Howe	AB	David WILSON	22 August 1917
Scottish Horse			
7th	Pte	Thomas GARDNER	31 July 1917

BATTN	RANK	NAME	DATE of DEATH
Royal Scots			
11th	Cpl	Thomas PENMAN	13 May 1916
12th	Cpl	Robert WAUGH	11 April 1918
4th	L Cpl	C P HAGUE	25 September 1915
17th	L Cpl	Robert PHILP	23 October 1917
11th	Pte	Robert BROWN	22 October 1916
2nd	Pte	James CAMPBELL	3 May 1917
13th	Pte	J A CARMICHAEL	15 September 1916
1st	Pte	James COOK	21 February 1915
4th	Pte	Thomas COWAN M.M.	26 October 1918
12th	Pte	Ross DALGETTY	19 April 1918
12th	Pte	John DUNCAN	7 May 1917
3rd	Pte	Archibald FAIR	14 April 1918
11th	Pte	William FERGUSON	27 September 1915
17th	Pte	Thomas FLEMING	23 August 1917
13th	Pte	Samuel GRAY	28 September 1915
11th	Pte	Thomas JARDINE	22 October 1916
16th	Pte	Robert MARR	21 November 1917
16th	Pte	Thomas RAE	22 October 1917
Depot	Pte	N D RANKINE	17 May 1915
13th	Pte	Robert REID	11 May 1916
7th	Pte	James ROBERTSON	22 May 1915
2nd	Pte	William SCOTT	14 July 1916
15th	Pte	Robert STARK	19 June 1916
Scots Guards			
2nd	Capt	A R ORR	17 October 1915
2nd	Pte	William PENMAN	16 May 1915
Scottish Rifles - Cameronians			
1st Garr	Cpl	William LEWIS	12 October 1918
9th	Pte	John ADAM	22 July 1916
1st	Pte	Robert FLEMING	20 July 1916
9th	Pte	William GOOD	18 August 1916
2nd	Pte	John McLAREN	22 September 1916
10th	Pte	George WHITE	26 April 1917

BATTN	RANK	NAME	DATE of DEATH
Seaforth Highlanders			
9th	L Cpl	Robert WATSON M.M.	27 March 1918
8th	Pte	James DUNCAN	23 April 1917
1st/4th	Pte	James GORRIE	3 September 1917
1st/5th	Pte	Alex GRAHAM	24 September 1917
7th	Pte	Hugh HAMILTON	14 July 1916
9th	Pte	John HAMILTON	24 March 1918
8th	Pte	Henry MILLAR	22 August 1917
2nd	Pte	William McDONALD	4 October 1917
4th	Pte	Dugald RANKINE	20 July 1918
7th	Pte	David RUNCIMAN	11 April 1918
2nd	Pte	Henry THOMSON	24 January 1916
6th	Pte	Thomas WHITTET	23 November 1917
Welsh Regiment			
16th	Pte	D M LANGLANDS	27 August 1917
East Yorkshire Regiment			
1st/4th	Pte	John TAYLOR	10 April 1918
Yorks & Lancs Regt			
	Pte	John WOOD	17 July 1917

Note: The names, regiments, battalions and ranks are as stated on Larbert War Memorial.

Deaths by Theatre

WESTERN FRONT 1914			
		First Battle of Ypres	
October 29	L Cpl	John LAVERIE	1st Cameron Hdrs
October 30	Lt	A N SHERRIFF	1st Northampton Regt
November 11	Pte	William SMITH	1st Cameron Hdrs
		The Attack on Wytschaete	
December 14	Pte	George WALKER	1st Gordon Hdrs
WESTERN FRONT 1915			
		Neuve Chapelle	
March 9	Pte	James SCOTT	2nd A & S H
		St Julien	
April 25	Capt	Grahame H WADE	7th A & S Hdrs
	Lt	J G SHERRIFF	7th A & S Hdrs
	L Cpl	James HUSKIE	7th A & S Hdrs
	L Cpl	Robert MURRAY	7th A & S Hdrs
	Pte	J T K DEA	7th A & S Hdrs
	Pte	Duncan McLACHLAN	7th A & S Hdrs
April 26	Pte	Charles LAIRD	7th A & S Hdrs
April 27	Pte	David JOHNMAN	7th A & S Hdrs
May13	Pte	D F WILSON	7th A & S Hdrs
May 17	Pte	N D RANKINE	Depot Royal Scots
May 19	Pte	James GRAHAM	7th A & S Hdrs
		Hill 60	
May 6	Pte	David McLUCKIE	2nd KOSB
		Frezenberg Ridge	
May 8	Pte	Daniel AITKEN	7th A & S Hdrs

WESTERN FRONT 1915 (continued)			
		Festubert	
May 16	L Cpl	G E GRAHAM	2nd Gordon Hdrs
	L Cpl	Thomas MENZIES	2nd Gordon Hdrs
	Pte	David LAING	2nd Gordon Hdrs
	Pte	William PENMAN	2nd Scots Guards
		Bellewaarde Ridge	
May 24	Pte	A F BUIST	1st A & S Hdrs
	Pte	John McDONALD	1st A & S Hdrs
		Loos	
September 25	Sgt	John THOMSON	10th A & S Hdrs
	L Sgt	Andrew FINLAY	10th A & S Hdrs
	L Cpl	C P HAGUE	12th Royal Scots
	Pte	Peter PENMAN	10th A & S Hdrs
	Pte	Daniel WHITE	10th A & S Hdrs
	Pte	William HAIRE	1st RSF
	Pte	William HAMILTON	2nd A & S Hdrs
September 26	L Cpl	Rowland HILL	10th A & S Hdrs
September 27	Pte	John HARLEY	11th A & S Hdrs
	Pte	William FERGUSON	15th Royal Scots
September 28	Pte	Samuel GRAY	13th Royal Scots
September 29	Pte	Alex SYMON	1st Gordon Hdrs
	Pte	John McEWAN	9th Black Watch
October 4	Pte	Joseph LEWIS	1st KOYLI
October 17	Capt	A R ORR	2nd Scots Guards
November 10	L Cpl	William DICKMAN	2nd Gordon Hdrs
December 10	Pte	James SCOTT	11th A & S Hdrs
WESTERN FRONT 1916			
		The Bluff	
March 2	Pte	John ANDERSON	1st Gordon Hdrs
		The Birdcage	
May 13	Cpl	Thomas PENMAN	11th Royal Scots

WESTERN FRONT 1916 (continued)			
		The Kink Salient	
May 11	Pte	Robert REID	13th Royal Scots
May 14	L Cpl	Abner BORTHWICK	11th A & S Hdrs
		Somme – First Day	
July 1	Pte	Thomas Tough	16th HLI
		Somme - Bazentin	
July 10	L Sgt	William TAYLOR	Royal Warwicks
July 13	Pte	Alex BINNIE	27th RAMC
July 14	Pte	Hugh HAMILTON	7th Seaforth Hdrs
	Pte	William SCOTT	2nd Royal Scots
July 20	Pte	Robert SILCOCK	2nd A & S Hdrs
	Sgt	Robert FLEMING	1st Cameronians
July 22	Pte	John ADAM	9th Cameronians
July 24	Pte	Robert TAYLOR	7th A & S Hdrs
July 26	Sgt	Alex TASKER	7th A & S Hdrs
	Pte	William STEWART	1st Cameron Hdrs
		Somme - Pozieres	
July 27	Pte	J M JOINER	17th Australians
August 1	Pte	William JARVIE	7th A & S Hdrs
`			
September 7	Pte	William FORSYTH	13th Canadians
		Somme – Delville Wood	
July 28	Cpl	George BROUGH	6th Black Watch
July 30	Pte	Cornelius HUTTON	2nd KOSB
August 13	Pte	Robert HODGE	12th HLI
August 30	Gnr	A F McARTHUR	106th RFA
September 1	CSM	Thomas INGLIS	11th A & S Hdrs
September 7	Pte	John COCKBURN	9th Black Watch
September 9	Gnr	Daniel BUCHANAN	35th RFA
September 10	Gnr	James HILL	35th RFA

WESTERN FRONT 1916 (continued)			
		Somme – Flers-Courcelette	
September 15	Pte	J A CARMICHAEL	13th Royal Scots
	Pte	George McDOUGALL	1st Canadians
		Somme – Thiepval	
September 26	Pte	George WATSON	15th Canadians
		Somme – Ancre Heights	
October 8	Pte	John GLEGG	3rd Canadians
		Somme – Le Transloy	
October 12	Pte	D W RUSSELL	2nd RSF
October 22	Pte	Robert BROWN	11th Royal Scots
	Pte	Thomas JARDINE	11th Royal Scots
October 27	Gnr	Peter HENDERSON	12th RFA
	Cpl	Henry WHYTE	2nd A & S Hdrs
		Somme – Ancre	
November 13	Pte	Alex ROBERTSON	8th A & S Hdrs
	AB	Alex MacKENZIE	RND
	AB	Robert HILL	RND
	AB	R T HODGE	RND
	AB	Daniel KEMP	RND
	AB	Harry PRESTON	RND
	AB	George WALLACE	RND 189th MGC
November 15	Pte	James BINNIE	7th A & S Hdrs
	Pte	Robert SMITH	7th A & S Hdrs

WESTERN FRONT 1917			
		The Capture of Puisieux Trench	
February 4	AB	Allan BROWN	RND Drake
		Arras	
April 9	Pte	William ARMIT	7th A & S Hdrs
	Pte	Hugh MARTIN	7th A & S Hdrs
	Pte	P M WATSON M.M.	7th A & S Hdrs
April 10	L Cpl	C H NISBET	7th A & S Hdrs
	Gnr	W E GIBSON	RFA 86th Bde
April 11	Pte	William FLEMING	2nd Seaforth Hdrs
April 15	Pte	William McGREGOR	1st A & S Hdrs
April 16	Lt	J A M MILLER	7th Northumberland Fusrs
April 17	Cpl	Thomas INGLIS	7th A & S Hdrs
April 18	Pte	William REID	10th/11th HLI
April 19	Pte	Malcolm LAIRD	7th A & S Hdrs
April 21	Pte	Robert CUNNINGHAM	7th A & S Hdrs
	Pte	F J HEAVER	8th A & S Hdrs
May 3	Tpr	Walter SCOTT	Hussars
		Arras – 2nd Battle of the Scarpe	
April 23	Capt	J A S BURGES	RAMC
	Lt	R G HUNTER	7th A & S Hdrs
	Lt	Malcolm R WALKER	7th A & S Hdrs
	Pte	James DUNCAN	8th Seaforth Hdrs
	Pte	J H LAING	7th A & S Hdrs
	AB	Edward HAMILL	RND Nelson
April 24	Sgt	Fred REID	7th A & S Hdrs
	Pte	R F McCULLOCH	14th A & S Hdrs
	AB	Alex GIBB	RND Nelson
April 26	Pte	George WHITE	10th Cameronians
April 27	L Cpl	John HASTINGS	MGC 45th Coy
	Pte	J B McILROY	5th Royal Berks Regt
April 28	Pte	Robert THURSBY	7th Cameron Hdrs
	AB	William TASKER	RND Anson
	AB	J F WATSON	RND Howe
May 29	Sgt	John TAYLOR	Canadians

WESTERN FRONT 1917 (continued)			
		Arras – 3rd Battle of the Scarpe	
May 3	Pte	James CAMPBELL	2nd Royal Scots
	Pte	James DONOGHUE	10th A & S H
May 7	Pte	John DUNCAN	12th Royal Scots
May 28	Pte	William HUNTER	15th KOSB
		Arras – Battle of Bullecourt	
May 21	Gnr	William SMITH	RGA 261 Siege Bty
		Arras: Hindenburg Line	
June 17	Pte	William ROBERTSON	9th HLI
		3rd Ypres – Pilckem	
July 31	Sgt	Alex SPENCE	8th/10th Gordon Hdrs
	Pte	Thomas GARDNER	Scottish Horse
	Pte	Andrew McKENDRICK	6th Black Watch
	Pte	M McNICOL	5th Gordon Hdrs
	Pte	T B MILLER	7th A & S Hdrs
September 4	Pte	James GORRIE	1st/4th Seaforth Hdrs
		3rd Ypres – Langemarck	
August 22	L Cpl	Andrew DICK	11th A & S Hdrs
		3rd Ypres– Frezenberg	
August 22	Pte	Henry MILLAR	8th Seaforth Hdrs
		3rd Ypres – Pheasant Farm	
August 27	Pte	D M LANGLANDS	16th Welsh Regt
		3rd Ypres – Menin Road	
September 24	Pte	Alick GRAHAM	8th Seaforth Hdrs
September 25	Pte	Joseph BLAIR	MGC

WESTERN FRONT 1917 (continued)			
		3rd Ypres – Broodseinde	
October 4	Pte	William McDONALD	2nd Seaforth Hdrs
October 6	Gnr	Donald McLEOD	RFA 65th Bde
		3rd Ypres – 1st Passchendaele	
October 12	Pte	Andrew JOHNSTON	10th A & S Hdrs
October 12	Pte	William McEWEN	10th A & S Hdrs
		3rd Ypres – Poelcapelle	
October 22	Pte	Thomas RAE	16th Royal Scots
		3rd Ypres – Houthulst Forest	
October 23	L Cpl	Robert PHILP	17th Royal Scots
		3rd Ypres – 2nd Passchendaele	
October 27	Pte	Charles MAITLAND	43rd Canadians
		3rd Ypres - Hill 70	
August 15	Sgt	Robert EDGAR	131st Canadians
		Cambrai – Tank Attack	
November 21	L Cpl	James STEELE	7th A & S Hdrs
		Cambrai– Bourlon Wood	
November 23	L Cpl	George STEEDMAN	6th Gordon Hdrs
	Pte	John SCOTT	14th A & S H
	Pte	Thomas WHITTET	6th Seaforth Hdrs
November 24	Pte	David MUNN	14th HLI

WESTERN FRONT 1918

		GERMAN SPRING OFFENSIVE Picardy	
March 21	Pte	Robert STEWART	14th A & S Hdrs
March 24	Pte	John HAMILTON	9th Seaforth Hdrs
March 27	L Cpl	Robert WATSON M.M.	9th Seaforth Hdrs
	Pte	James BAIRD	14th A & S Hdrs
March 28	Pte	G F BROCK	11th A & S Hdrs
	AB	Hector McPHAIL	RND Hood
		GERMAN SPRING OFFENSIVE Flanders	
April 7	LS	Thomas RAE	1st Royal Marines
April 9	Pte	James GARDNER	10th/11th HLI
April 10	Pte	John TAYLOR	1st/4th East Yorks Regt
April 11	Cpl	Robert WAUGH	12th Royal Scots
	Pte	David RUNCIMAN	7th Seaforth Hdrs
	Pte	William WAUGH	1st KOSB
April 19	Pte	Ross DALGETTY	12th Royal Scots
April 24	Pte	John McFARLANE	4th/5th Black Watch
May 5	Pte	John McLUCKIE	6th KOSB
May 12	Pte	S A WHITE	5th Royal Berks
		ALLIED COUNTER-ATTACK Champagne	
July 20	Cpl	Andrew McCOWAN	7th A & S Hdrs 1st/7th
	Pte	Dugald RANKINE	4th Seaforth Hdrs
	Pte	Richard PATERSON	1st/7th Gordon Hdrs
July 23	Sgt	R S DOBBIE	RAF 49th Sqd
July 29	Pte	James PROVAN	1st/5th KOSB
July 30	Pte	A R KEMP	7th A & S Hdrs
August 1	RSM	R MONTEITH, M.C.	1st/5th A & S Hdrs 1st/5th
August 12	Dvr	Joseph REILLY	RFA 5th Bde
August 29	Capt	A S HUNTER	7th A & S Hdrs
September 6	L Cpl	George RITCHIE	7th Gordon Hdrs

WESTERN FRONT 1918

		ADVANCE TO VICTORY **Picardy**	
August 22	Pte	George JOHNSTON	1st RSF
August 25	Lt	George REID	RFA 27th Bde
	L Cpl	John GRANT	10th Lancs Fusrs
		ADVANCE TO VICTORY **Breaking the Hindenburg Line**	
August 30	Pte	James SCOTT	13th East Lancs
	Pte	John ALLAN	1st Gordon Hdrs
	L Cpl	R S PARKER	4th Gordon Hdrs
September 3	Gnr	James GALBRAITH	RFA 71st Bde
	AB	William REID	RND Drake
September 7	Pte	Thomas DOUGLAS	1st Gordon Hdrs
September 10	L Cpl	John MORRISON	10th A & S Hdrs
September 21	Capt	S G HAGUE	2nd Bedford Regt
September 27	Lt	Kenneth McCASKILL	Gordon Hdrs
	AB	Ebenezer REID	RND *Anson*
September 30	Pte	James COWAN	10th A & S Hdrs
October 1	Pte	Andrew AITKEN	1st Gordon Hdrs
October 2	Pte	William OSBORNE	5th Border Regt
October 7	Pte	Alex COOK	9th HLI
October 8	LS	Jas MITCHELL, M.M.	RND Hawke
October 12	Pte	John DUFF	7th A & S Hdrs
1919			
July 10	AB	Alex BAIRD	RND Drake
		FINAL ADVANCE **TO VICTORY** **Artois**	
October 3	Pte	Alex McCULLOCH	1st/8th A & S Hdrs
October 8	Dvr	Robert McGREGOR	RFA 8th Div
October 9	L Cpl	J E GIBSON	1st/8th A & S Hdrs

WESTERN FRONT 1918 (continued)

		FINAL ADVANCE TO VICTORY Flanders	
October 14	Cpl	Francis CROMBIE	2nd/14th London Scottish
	Pte	Eben RENNIE M.M.	5th Cameron Hdrs
October 16	Pte	William THOMPSON	6th/7th Gordon Hdrs
	Pte	George TRAYNER	6th KOSB
		FINAL ADVANCE TO VICTORY Picardy	
October 19	Gnr	Andrew McLURE	RGA 270 Bty
October 23	Pte	James FERGUSON	1st Gordon Hdrs
October 28	Spr	William REID	2nd RE
November 4	Pte	Arch LENNOX	16th HLI

WESTERN FRONT TRENCH WARFARE

		1915	
January 24	Pte	Henry THOMSON	Seaforth Hdrs
February 21	Pte	James COOK	1st Royal Scots
March 29	Pte	A K CHESNEY	7th A & S Hdrs
April 22	Pte	Francis GRANT	1st Gordon Hdrs
July 29	Pte	Robert HEGGISON	1st Gordon Hdrs
September 16	Pte	Andrew STEVENSON	7th A & S Hdrs
December 11	Pte	James SHIRRA	9th Cameronians
December 19	Cpl	Alex HASTINGS	10th A & S Hdrs
		1916	
February 17	Pte	Douglas DOBBIE	11th A & S Hdrs
April 21	Pte	A B CUNNINGHAM	6th KOSB
June 19	Pte	Robert STARK	15th Royal Scots
August 10	L Cpl	Walter HOTSON	2nd/23rd London Regt
August 18	Pte	William GOOD	9th Cameronians

WESTERN FRONT TRENCH WARFARE (continued)

1916 (cont.)			
August 26	Cpl	Henry PHILIP	7th A & S Hdrs
	Spr	W I GODSON	206th RE
September 14	AB	J A FERGUSON	RND Drake
September 22	Pte	John McLAREN	2nd Cameronians
1917			
March 17	Pte	David McEWAN	8th A & S Hdrs
June 2	AB	Alexander MALCOLM	RND Howe
July 8	Pte	A D MILNE	1st/6th Gordon Hdrs
July 10	Pte	Alex ESSELMONT	1st/6th Gordon Hdrs
July 20	Pte	Charles JOHNSTONE	6th/7th RSF
	AB	John DAVIE	RND Howe
July 22	Pte	Thomas FOOTE	11th A & S Hdrs
August 22	AB	David WILSON	RND Howe
August 23	Pte	Thomas FLEMING	Royal Scots
September 3	Pte	Edward EASTON	7th A & S Hdrs
September 4	Sgt	George MITCHELL	17th HLI
September 30	Lt	David DONLEY	2nd East Lancs
October 16	Pte	Donald JENKINS	11th A & S Hdrs
November 21	Pte	Robert MARR	16th Royal Scots
December 17	Pte	James SMITH	7th A & S Hdrs
1918			
January 3	Spr	David EWING	289th RE
February 25	Pte	John RAMSAY	1st RSF
March 8	L Cpl	William KERR	10th A & S Hdrs
March 13	Pte	J A BINNIE	11th A & S Hdrs
March 21	Pte	John SNEDDON	5th Australians
May 25	Cpl	J H ROBERTSON	11th A & S Hdrs
June 9	Pte	J A PENMAN	5th A & S Hdrs
June 15	Pte	Samuel LAPSLEY	1st Gordon Hdrs
August 7	A S Sgt	John CLARK	Canadians
August 22	Pte	Frank BROWN	1st/8th A & S Hdrs
September 25	Pte	James DUNCAN	85th Canadians

WESTERN FRONT

		ACCIDENT	
1915			
February 25	BSM	Alex HILL	116 Bty RGA
1916			
January 1	Cpl	William ANDERSON	RASC 26th Field Bakery
May 8	Pte	Thomas HANNAH	8th Black Watch
ILLNESS			
1915			
January 29	Pte	William TAYLOR	7th A & S Hdrs
February 3	Pte	J E MENZIES	7th A & S Hdrs
1916			
April 5	Pte	William PHILIP	7th A & S Hdrs
April 11	Pte	Alex WALKER	10th Gordon Hdrs
1917			
March 29	Maj	J F JONES	7th A & S Hdrs
1918			
October 26	Pte	Thomas COWAN, M.M.	4th Royal Scots
1919			
February 25	Pte	Thomas GALBRAITH	195th Sge Bty

GALLIPOLI (1915)

May 14	AB	William SINCLAIR	RND Howe
August 3	AB	Arthur REID	RND Hawke
December 25	Lt	Arch McLARDIE	5th A & S Hdrs
ILLNESS			
1915			
November 21	AB	Robert McCAIG	RND Hood

MESOPOTAMIA			
1916			
January 7	Pte	Peter DAVIE	2nd Black Watch
ILLNESS			
1917			
July 17	Pte	John WOOD	6th South Lancs
1918			
October 3	Gnr	David HUSKIE	69th Bde RFA
October 4	Pte	Alex LOGAN	596th RASC
SALONIKA			
1916			
September 30	Cpl	Thomas ROBB	1st A & S Hdrs
1917			
May 18	Pte	Francis LORN	12th A & S Hdrs
October 14	Pte	Alexander GENTLES	13th Black Watch
1918			
September 19	CSM	William DICK DCM	12th A & S Hdrs
ILLNESS			
1918			
June 8	Pte	J W STODDART	12th A & S Hdrs
EGYPT AND PALESTINE			
1918			
October 31	Pte	David GLANVILLE	2nd Black Watch
1917			
August 8	Pte	John DICK	7th A & S Hdrs
1918			
August 12	Cpl	William LEWIS	1st Garr Cameronians

AT SEA			
1915			
October 23	Dvr	Joseph BALFOUR	29th Div RFA
1917			
April 10	Sig	Andrew PHILP	RNVR
1918			
January 20	AB	A G DOUGLAS	RN
March 12	Chf S	Fulton GILLESPIE	RNVR
AT HOME (Accident)			
1914			
August 5	Pte	Thomas FORRESTER	1st KOSB
1915			
May 22	Pte	James ROBERTSON	7th Royal Scots
AT HOME (Illness)			
1914			
November 14	Pipe-Maj	George McFARLANE	3rd Black Watch
1916			
August 9	Cpl	John SIM	7th A & S Hdrs
1917			
August 22	Cpl	Frank HODGE	3rd Gordon Hdrs
1918			
April 14	Pte	Archibald FAIR	3rd Royal Scots
November 22	Pte	Andrew GARDINER	MGC
December 7	AM	Graham THOMSON	RAF
	AM	William KEMP	RAF

Note: The regiments, battalions and ranks are stated as at the date of death. The names of battles and actions were established by the Battle Nomenclature Committee, a special committee set up at the end of the war to determine the official names to be used.

Analysis

WESTERN FRONT

	Battles	Trench Warfare*	Accident	Illness	Total
1914	4	1			5
1915	37	8	1	2	48
1916	44	9	2	2	58
1917	61	15		1	76
1918	56	11		1	68
1919	1			1	2
Total	203	44	3	7	257

AT SEA	4				4
GALLIPOLI	3			1	4
MESOPOTAMIA	1			3	4
SALONIKA	4			1	5
EGYPT & PALESTINE	1			1	2
INDIA				1	
HOME			2	6	9
Total	13		2	13	29
Overall Total	**217**	**42**	**5**	**20**	**285**

Not included: AB James Quin(n)

* This relates to the deaths of many soldiers during the ordinary routine of trench warfare as a result of shelling, sniping or raids rather than in one of the major battles on the Western Front. 20% of the Larbert soldiers' deaths in action on the Western Front were due to this "petty warfare" as one historian described it.

- The Western Front accounted for the deaths of 256 out of the 285 men commemorated on Larbert War Memorial, 90% of the deaths.
- 10 deaths on the Western Front were due to accident or illness.
- Over all fronts, 26 deaths were the results of accidents or illness, 8% of the total.

WESTERN FRONT

Number of Larbert soldiers' deaths in Major Battles

1914	
First Battle of Ypres	3
1915	
Second Battle of Ypres	13
Battle of Loos	17
1916	
Battle of the Somme	41
1917	
Battle of Arras	36
Third Battle of Ypres	19
Battle of Cambrai	5
1918	
German Spring Offensive: Operation Michael	5
German Spring Offensive: Operation Georgette	6
Allied Advance:Hundred Days	34

Calendar of Deaths

1914			
August 5	Pte	Thomas FORRESTER	1st KOSB
October 29	L Cpl	John LAVERIE	1st Cameron Hdrs
October 30	Lt	A N SHERRIFF	1st Northampton Regt
November 11	Pte	William SMITH	1st Cameron Hdrs
November 14	Pipe-Maj	George McFARLANE	3rd Black Watch
December 14	Pte	George WALKER	1st Gordon Hdrs
1915			
January 24	Pte	Henry THOMSON	2nd Seaforth Hdrs
January 29	Pte	William TAYLOR	7th A & S Hdrs
February 3	Pte	J E MENZIES	7th A & S Hdrs
February 21	Pte	James COOK	1st Royal Scots
February 25	BSM	Alex HILL	RGA 116th Bty
March 9	Pte	James SCOTT	2nd A & S Hdrs
March 29	Pte	A K CHESNEY	7th A & S Hdrs
April 22	Pte	Francis GRANT	1st Gordon Hdrs
April 25	Capt	Grahame H WADE	7th A & S Hdrs
	Lt	J G SHERRIFF	7th A & S Hdrs
	L Cpl	James HUSKIE	7th A & S Hdrs
	L Cpl	Robert MURRAY	7th A & S Hdrs
	Pte	J T K DEA	7th A & S Hdrs
	Pte	Duncan McLACHLAN	7th A & S Hdrs
April 26	Pte	Charles LAIRD	7th A & S Hdrs
April 27	Pte	David JOHNMAN	7th A & S Hdrs
May 6	Pte	David McLUCKIE	2nd KOSB
May 8	Pte	Daniel AITKEN	7th A & S Hdrs
May13	Pte	D F WILSON	7th A & S Hdrs
May 14	AB	William SINCLAIR	RND Howe
May 16	L Cpl	G B GRAHAM	2nd Gordon Hdrs
	L Cpl	Thomas MENZIES	2nd Gordon Hdrs
	Pte	David LAING	2nd Gordon Hdrs
	Pte	William PENMAN	2nd Scots Guards
May 17	Pte	N D RANKINE	Royal Scots Depot
May 19	Pte	James GRAHAM	7th A & S Hdrs
May 22	Pte	James ROBERTSON	7th Royal Scots
May 24	Pte	A F BUIST	7th A & S Hdrs
	Pte	John McDONALD	7th A & S Hdrs

1915 (continued)			
July 29	Pte	Robert HEGGISON	1st Gordon Hdrs
August 3	AB	Arthur REID	RND Hawke
September 16	Pte	Andrew STEVENSON	7th A & S Hdrs
September 25	Sgt	John THOMSON	10th A & S Hdrs
	L Sgt	Andrew FINLAY	10th A & S Hdrs
	L Cpl	C P HAGUE	12th Royal Scots
	Pte	Peter PENMAN	10th A & S Hdrs
	Pte	Daniel WHITE	10th A & S Hdrs
	Pte	William HAIRE	1st RSF
	Pte	William HAMILTON	2nd A & S Hdrs
September 26	L Cpl	Rowland HILL	10th A & S Hdrs
September 27	Pte	John HARLEY	11th A & S Hdrs
	Pte	William FERGUSON	11th Royal Scots
September 28	Pte	Samuel GRAY	13th Royal Scots
September 29	Pte	Alex SYMON	1st Gordon Hdrs
	Pte	John McEWAN	9th Black Watch
October 4	Pte	Joseph LEWIS	1st KOYLI
October 17	Capt	A R ORR	2nd Scots Guards
October 23	Dvr	Joseph BALFOUR	RFA 29th Div Am Col
November 10	L Cpl	William DICKMAN	2nd Gordon Hdrs
November 21	AB	Robert McCAIG	RND Hood
December 10	Pte	James SCOTT	11th A & S Hdrs
December 11	Pte	James SHIRRA	9th Cameronians
December 19	Cpl	Alex HASTINGS	10th A & S Hdrs
December 25	Lt	Arch McLARDIE	5th A & S Hdrs
1916			
January 1	Cpl	William ANDERSON	RASC 26th Field Bakery
January 7	Pte	Peter DAVIE	2nd Black Watch
February 17	Pte	Douglas DOBBIE	11th A & S Hdrs
March 2	Pte	John ANDERSON	1st Gordon Hdrs
April 5	Pte	William PHILIP	7th A & S Hdrs
April 11	Pte	Alex WALKER	10th Gordon Hdrs
April 21	Pte	A B CUNNINGHAM	6th KOSB
May 8	Pte	Thomas HANNAH	8th Black Watch
May 11	Pte	Robert REID	13th Royal Scots

1916 (continued)			
May 13	Cpl	Thomas PENMAN	11th Royal Scots
May 14	Pte	Abner BORTHWICK	11th A & S Hdrs
June 19	Pte	Robert STARK	15th Royal Scots
July 1	Pte	Thomas TOUGH	16th HLI
July 10	L Sgt	William TAYLOR	Royal Warwicks
July 13	Pte	Alex BINNIE	RAMC 27th Field Amb.
July 14	Pte	Hugh HAMILTON	7th Seaforth Hdrs
	Pte	William SCOTT	2nd Royal Scots
July 20	Sgt	Robert SILCOCK	2nd A & S Hdrs
	Pte	Robert FLEMING	1st Cameronians
July 22	Pte	John ADAM	9th Cameronians
July 24	Pte	Robert TAYLOR	7th A & S Hdrs
July 26	Sgt	Alex TASKER	7th A & S Hdrs
July 27	Pte	J M JOINER	17th Australians
	Pte	William STEWART	5th Cameron Hdrs
July 28	Cpl	George BROUGH	6th Black Watch
July 30	Pte	Cornelius HUTTON	2nd KOSB
August 1	Pte	William JARVIE	7th A & S Hdrs
August 9	Cpl	John SIM	10th A & S Hdrs
August 10	L Cpl	Walter HOTSON	2nd/23rd London Regt
August 13	Pte	Robert HODGE	12th HLI
August 18	Pte	William GOOD	9th Cameronians
August 26	Cpl	Henry PHILIP	7th A & S Hdrs
	Spr	W I GODSON	RE 206th Field Company
August 30	Gnr	A F McARTHUR	RFA 106th Bde
September 1	CSM	Thomas INGLIS	11th A & S Hdrs
September 7	Pte	John COCKBURN	9th Black Watch
	Pte	William FORSYTH	Canadians 13th
September 7/8/9	Gnr	Daniel BUCHANAN	RFA 35th Bde
September 10	Gnr	James HILL	RFA 35th Bde
September 14	AB	J A FERGUSON	RND Drake
September 15	Pte	J A CARMICHAEL	13th Royal Scots
	Pte	George McDOUGALL	Canadians 1st
September 22	Pte	John McLAREN	2nd Cameronians
September 26	Pte	George WATSON	Canadians
September 30	Cpl	Thomas ROBB	1st A & S H
October 8	Pte	John GLEGG	Canadians
October 12	Pte	D W RUSSELL	2nd RSF
October 22	Pte	Robert BROWN	11th Royal Scots
	Pte	Thomas JARDINE	11th Royal Scots
October 27	Cpl	Henry WHYTE	2nd A & S Hdrs
	Gnr	Peter HENDERSON	RFA 12th Bde

1916 (continued)			
November 13	Pte	Alex ROBERTSON	8th A & S Hdrs
	AB	Alex MacKENZIE	RND Nelson
	AB	Robert HILL	RND Drake
	AB	R T HODGE	RND Nelson
	AB	Daniel KEMP	RND Nelson
	AB	Harry PRESTON	RND Drake
	AB	George WALLACE	RND 189th MGC
November 15	Pte	James BINNIE	7th A & S Hdrs
	Pte	Robert SMITH	7th A & S Hdrs
1917			
February 4	AB	Allan BROWN	RND Drake
March 17	Pte	David McEWAN	8th A & S Hdrs
March 29	Maj	J F JONES	7th A & S Hdrs
April 9	Pte	William ARMIT	7th A & S Hdrs
	Pte	Hugh MARTIN	7th A & S Hdrs
	Pte	P M WATSON M.M.	7th A & S Hdrs
April 10	L Cpl	C H NISBET	7th A & S Hdrs
	Gnr	W E GIBSON	RFA 86th Bde
	Sig	Andrew PHILP	RNVR
April 11	Pte	William FLEMING	2nd Seaforth Hdrs
April 15	Pte	William McGREGOR	1st A & S Hdrs
April 16	Lt	J A M MILLER	7th Northumb Fusrs
April 17	Cpl	Thomas INGLIS	7th A & S Hdrs
April 18	Pte	William REID	10th/11th HLI
April 19	Pte	Malcolm LAIRD M.M.	7th A & S Hdrs
April 21	Pte	Robert CUNNINGHAM	7th A & S Hdrs
	Pte	F J HEAVER	8th A & S Hdrs
April 23	Capt	J A S BURGES	RAMC 49th Field Amb
	Lt	R G HUNTER	7th A & S Hdrs
	Lt	Malcolm R WALKER	7th A & S Hdrs
	Pte	James DUNCAN	8th Seaforth Hdrs
	Pte	J H LAING	7th A & S Hdrs
	AB	Edward HAMILL	RND Nelson
April 24	Sgt	Fred REID	7th A & S Hdrs
	Pte	R F McCULLOCH	14th A & S Hdrs
	AB	Alex GIBB	RND Nelson
April 26	Pte	George WHITE	10th Cameronians
April 27	L Cpl	John HASTINGS	MGC 45th Coy
	Pte	J B McILROY	5th Royal Berks Regt
April 28	Pte	Robert THURSBY	7th Cameron Hdrs
	AB	William TASKER	RND Anson
	AB	J F WATSON	RND Howe

1917 (continued)

May 3	Pte	James CAMPBELL	2nd Royal Scots
	Pte	James DONOGHUE	10th A & S Hdrs
	Pte	Walter SCOTT	10th Hussars
May 7	Pte	John DUNCAN	12th Royal Scots
May 18	Pte	Francis LORN	12th A & S Hdrs
May 21	Gnr	William SMITH	RGA 261 Siege Bty
May 28	Pte	William HUNTER	15th KOSB
May 29	Sgt	John TAYLOR	Canadians 4th
June 2	AB	Alex MALCOLM	RND Howe
June 17	Pte	William ROBERTSON	9th HLI
July 8	L Cpl	A D MILNE	1st/6th Gordon Hdrs
July 10	Pte	Alex ESSLEMONT	1st/6th Gordon Hdrs
July 17	Pte	John WOOD	6th South Lancs
July 20	Pte	Charles JOHNSTONE	6th/7th RSF
	AB	John DAVIE	RND Howe
July 22	Pte	Thomas FOOTE	11th A & S Hdrs
July 31	Sgt	Alex SPENCE	8th/10th Gordon Hdrs
	Pte	Thomas GARDNER	7th Scottish Horse
	Pte	Andrew McKENDRICK	6th Black Watch
	Pte	M McNICOL	5th Gordon Hdrs
	Pte	T B MILLER	7th A & S Hdrs
August 8	Pte	John DICK	7th A & S Hdrs
August 15	Sgt	Robert EDGAR	Canadians 131st
August 22	Cpl	Frank HODGE	3rd Gordon Hdrs
	L Cpl	Andrew DICK	11th A & S Hdrs
	AB	David WILSON	RND Howe
	Pte	Henry MILLAR	8th Seaforth Hdrs
August 23	Pte	Thomas FLEMING	17th Royal Scots
August 27	Pte	D M LANGLANDS	16th Welsh Regt
September 3	Pte	Edward EASTON	7th A & S Hdrs
	Pte	James GORRIE	1st/4th Seaforth Hdrs
September 4	Sgt	George MITCHELL	17th HLI
September 24	Pte	Alex GRAHAM	1st/8th Seaforth Hdrs
September 25	Pte	Joseph BLAIR	MGC
September 30	Lt	David DONLEY	2nd East Lancs Regt
October 4	Pte	William McDONALD	2nd Seaforth Hdrs
October 6	Gnr	Donald McLEOD	RFA 65th Bde
October 12	Pte	Andrew JOHNSTON	10th A & S Hdrs
	Pte	William McEWEN	10th A & S Hdrs
October 14	Pte	Alex GENTLES	13th Black Watch
October 16	Pte	Donald JENKINS	11th A & S Hdrs
October 22	Pte	Thomas RAE	16th Royal Scots

1917 (continued)			
October 23	L Cpl	Robert PHILP	17th Royal Scots
October 27	Pte	Charles MAITLAND	Canadians 43rd
November 21	L Cpl	James STEELE	7th A & S Hdrs
	Pte	Robert MARR	16th Royal Scots
November 23	L Cpl	George STEEDMAN	6th Gordon Hdrs
	Pte	John SCOTT	14th A & S Hdrs
	Pte	Thomas WHITTET	6th Seaforth Hdrs
November 24	Pte	David MUNN	14th HLI
December 17	Pte	James SMITH	7th A & S Hdrs
1918			
January 3	Spr	David EWING	RE 289th Army Troops Coy
January 20	AB	A G DOUGLAS	RND/Royal Navy
February 25	Pte	John RAMSAY	1st RSF
March 8	L Cpl	William KERR	10th A & S Hdrs
March 12	Chf S	Fulton GILLESPIE	RNVR
March 13	Pte	J A BINNIE	11th A & S Hdrs
March 21	Pte	John SNEDDON	Australians 5th Pioneer
March 21-27	Pte	Robert STEWART	14th A & S Hdrs
March 24	Pte	John HAMILTON	9th Seaforth Hdrs
March 27	L Cpl	Robert WATSON M.M.	9th Seaforth Hdrs
	Pte	James BAIRD	14th A & S Hdrs
March 28	Pte	G F BROCK	11th A & S Hdrs
	AB	Hector McPHAIL	RND Hood
April 7	LS	Thomas RAE	1st Royal Marine
April 9	Pte	James GARDNER	10th/11th HLI
April 10	Pte	John TAYLOR	1st/4th East Yorks Regt
April 11	Cpl	Robert WAUGH	12th Royal Scots
	Pte	David RUNCIMAN	7th Seaforth Hdrs
	Pte	William WAUGH	1st KOSB
April 14	Pte	Archibald FAIR	3rd Royal Scots
April 19	Pte	Ross DALGETTY	12th Royal Scots
April 24	Pte	John McFARLANE	4th/5th Black Watch
May 5	Pte	John McLUCKIE	6th KOSB
May 12	Pte	S A WHITE	5th Royal Berks Regt
May 25	Cpl	J H ROBERTSON	11th A & S Hdrs
June 8	Pte	J W STODDART	12th A & S Hdrs
June 9	Pte	J A PENMAN	5th A & S Hdrs
June 15	Pte	Samuel LAPSLEY	1st Gordon Hdrs

1918 (continued)

July 20	Cpl	Andrew McCOWAN	7th A & S Hdrs
	Pte	Dugald RANKINE	1st Seaforth Hdrs
	Pte	Richard PATERSON	1st/7th Gordon Hdrs
July 23	Sgt	R S DOBBIE	RAF 49th Sqdrn
July 29	Pte	James PROVAN	1st/5th KOSB
July 30	Pte	A R KEMP	7th A & S Hdrs
August 1	RSM	R MONTEITH M.C.	5th A & S Hdrs
August 7	AS Sgt	John CLARK	Canadians Ordnance Corps
August 12	Cpl	William LEWIS	1st Garr Cameronians
	Dvr	Joseph REILLY	RFA 5th Bde
August 22	Pte	Frank BROWN	8th A & S Hdrs
	Pte	George JOHNSTON	1st RSF
August 25	Lt	George REID	RFA 27th Bde
	L Cpl	John GRANT	10th Lancs Fusrs
August 28	Pte	James SCOTT	13th East Lancs Regt
August 29	Capt	A S HUNTER M.C.	7th A & S Hdrs
August 30	Pte	John ALLAN	1st Gordon Hdrs
August 31	L Cpl	R S PARKER	4th Gordon Hdrs
September 3	Gnr	James GALBRAITH	RFA 71st Bde
	AB	William REID	RND Drake
September 6	L Cpl	George RITCHIE	7th Gordon Hdrs
September 7	Pte	Thomas DOUGLAS	1st Gordon Hdrs
September 10	L Cpl	John MORRISON	10th A & S Hdrs
September 19	CSM	William DICK D.C.M.	12th A & S Hdrs
September 21	Capt	S G HAGUE M.C.	2nd Bedford Regt
September 25	Pte	James DUNCAN	Canadians 85th
September 27	Lt	Kenneth McCASKILL	1st Gordon Hdrs
	AB	Ebenezer REID	RND Drake
September 30	Pte	James COWAN	10th A & S Hdrs
October 1	Pte	Andrew AITKEN	1st Gordon Hdrs
October 2	Pte	William OSBORNE	5th Border Regt
October 3	Pte	Alex McCULLOCH	8th A & S Hdrs
	Gnr	David HUSKIE	RFA 69th Bde
October 4	Pte	Alex LOGAN	RASC 596th MT Company
October 7	Pte	Alex COOK	9th HLI
October 8	Dvr	Robert McGREGOR	RFA 8th Div Mun Col
	LS	Jas MITCHELL M.M.	RND Hawke
October 9	L Cpl	J E GIBSON	8th A & S Hdrs
October 12	Pte	John DUFF	7th A & S Hdrs
October 14	Cpl	Francis CROMBIE	2nd/14th London Scottish
	Pte	Eben RENNIE, M.M.	5th Cameron Hdrs
October 16	Pte	William THOMPSON	Gordon Hdrs
	Pte	George TRAYNER	6th KOSB

1918 (continued)			
October 19	Gnr	Andrew McLURE	RGA 270 Siege Bty
October 23	Pte	James FERGUSON	1st Gordon Hdrs
October 26	Pte	Thomas COWAN, M.M.	4th Royal Scots
October 28	Spr	William REID	RE 219th Field Company
October 31	Pte	David GLANVILLE	2nd Black Watch
November 4	Pte	Arch LENNOX	16th HLI
November 22	Pte	Andrew GARDINER	MGC
December 7	AM	Graham THOMSON	RAF
1919			
February 17	AM	William KEMP	RAF 33rd Squadron
February 25	Pte	T F GALBRAITH	RGA 195th Sge Bty
July 10	AB	Alex BAIRD	RND Drake

Others: AB James Quin(n) RND not included

CALENDAR of DEATHS

Month	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918	1919	Totals
Jan		2	2	0	2	0	6
Feb		3	1	1	1	2	8
Mar		2	1	2	10	0	15
Apr		9	3	29	9	0	50
May		13	4	8	3	0	28
Jun		0	1	2	3	0	6
Jul		1	14	11	6	1	33
Aug	1	1	8	8	12		30
Sep	0	14	11	6	11		42
Oct	2	3	6	9	19		39
Nov	2	2	9	6	2		21
Dec	1	4	0	1	1		7
Totals	6	54	60	83	79	3	285

Note: The regiments, battalions and ranks are stated as at the date of death.

Larbert's Officers

Fifteen officers are named on Larbert War Memorial. The highest-ranking officer named on the war memorial was Major James Forbes Jones. Five others were captains and nine were lieutenants. Six belonged to the local battalion, the 7th Battalion of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders, while four were officers with different English battalions. One belonged to the Royal Army Medical Corps. Their average age at death was 28.2 years, which was clearly above the average for other ranks.

Two officers, Lieutenant A N Sherriff and Captain A R Orr, were commissioned into the Regular Army before the First World War. Alexander Sherriff, a younger son of a Larbert estate owner, had an English public school education, which was almost mandatory for a pre-war commission, and had graduated from Sandhurst Military College. He received his commission about six months before the war began. Similarly, Arthur Orr was also the son of a local estate owner. He was privately educated at Loretto School in Musselburgh and had gone to Sandhurst before being commissioned into the Scots Guards ten years before the First World War began.

The officers, who joined the local battalion about the time the war broke out when there was a very urgent need for additional officers, came from the most notable families in the area. They held professional or managerial positions and had previous experience with the Territorial Force or its predecessor the Volunteer Force or with the Officer Training Corps. The relationship between these officers and their men was praised by the Larbert & Stenhousemuir correspondent of the *Falkirk Herald* when he reported on the departure of twelve officers of the local battalion from Larbert Station in July 1915 to return to the Western Front:

> About half the battalion was down to see the officers away, and the scene was one of the greatest enthusiasm… Pipes were playing, men were singing and cheering alternately, and the departing officers must have felt gratified by the depth of sincerity by which the men made their presence known. It is this spirit of camaraderie between officers and men which astonishes the Huns. They cannot understand that 'the rank's but the guinea stamp!'

The officers from the local area who joined the army later in the war mostly had the same qualifications. Those who did not come originally from the local area included a trainee minister, attached to Larbert [Old] Parish Church, and a doctor who practised in Carronshore.

One officer who did not have the usual qualifications was Kenneth McCaskill, whose father's occupation in 1914 was given as a foreman grinder. Kenneth was an employee in Carron Company's Glasgow office. He received his commission in October 1915. His application contained the recommendation: "He travels for a large Glasgow firm, exhibits intelligence & keen to serve abroad. Very good physique."

Another exception was David Donley who rose through the ranks during the war but he had pre-war military service. His father was the chief manager of the Prudential Asssurance Company in Stirling.

Overall, what is most striking about the officers named on Larbert War Memorial is that, like the British Army officer class as a whole, they came from a narrow section of society, the upper and upper middle classes.

Lt A N Sherriff	1st Northampton Regt	Sandhurst; younger son of local landowner
Capt G H Wade	7th Argyll & Sutherland Hdrs	Lawyer; Volunteer Force Officer
Lt J G Sherriff	7th Argyll & Sutherland Hdrs	Oxford Univ; eldest son of local landowner
Lt Arch McLardie	5th Argyll & Sutherland Hdrs	Solicitor; TF experience
Maj J F Jones	7th Argyll & Sutherland Hdrs	Foundry Manager; VF & TF experience
Lt J A M Millar	7th Northumberland Fusrs	Trainee Minister
Capt J A S Burges	RAMC	Doctor
Lt M R Walker	7th Argyll & Sutherland Hdrs	Son of foundry co-owner

Lt	R G Hunter	7th Argyll & Sutherland Hdrs	Trainee lawyer; father is iron works owner; OTC experience;
Lt	D Donley	2nd East Lancs Regt	Through the ranks; father was manager of insurance company
Capt	A R Orr	2nd Scots Guards	Sandhurst and regular army; local landowner
Lt	G Reid	RFA 27th Bde	Schoolmaster; OTC exprerience
Capt	A S Hunter M.C.	7th Argyll & Sutherland Hdrs	VF commission; iron works manager.
Capt	S G Hague	2nd Bedford Regt	Company agent; son of Carron Co. manager; TF experience
Lt	K McCaskill	1st Gordon Hdrs	Carron Company employee

Capt A S Hunter M.C

Maj J F Jones

Lt R G Hunter

Lt M R Walker

Lt D Donley

Capt S G Hague

Capt J A S Burges

Lt K McCaskill

Lt G Reid

Lt A N Sherriff

Lt J A M Millar

Capt G H Wade

Lt J G Sherriff

Capt A R Orr

Larbert Soldiers: Morale and Discipline

Up to the beginning of 1916, the men of Larbert War Memorial, who served in the British Army, were volunteers. The Regular soldiers, except for those serving somewhere in the British Empire, set off for France and Belgium within a week of the declaration of war.

The local battalion, the 7th Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, was a Territorial Force battalion. Six weeks after war was declared, the battalion left for its training camp at Bedford. (See page??) By the middle of December the battalion was in France.

The men who answered the appeal of Lord Kitchener, the Secretary of State for War to enlist, joined the battalions of the New Army. Three 'Kitchener' Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders battalions were formed at Stirling in August and September 1914, the 10th, 11th and 12th. Their training as raw recruits meant that they took between 9 and 12 months to reach the Western Front.

The largest group of Larbert soldiers in one battalion was in the 7th Argylls; 'B' Company was recruited from Larbert and Denny. In every step of their journey to the front line, there is no mistaking their eagerness to fight in the war. These pre-war part-time soldiers, often called contemptuously "Saturday afternoon soldiers", were not required to serve abroad; their role was to help defend Britain from an invading army. But, when war broke ut, the Stirlingshire Territorials "almost to a man" agreed to foreign service. One reason for the strength of their commitment was that they had and were aware of the total support of the local community. When the train carrying the 7th Battalion on its journey from Stirling to Bedford travelled slowly through Larbert Station on the evening of September 16, there was "loud and prolonged" cheering from the large crowd which had gathered on the platform. The attitude of the crowd and of the soldiers towards the war was overwhelmingly enthusiastic and optimistic.

The 7th Argylls formed a very tightly-knit unit. They had spent the last two weeks of July at Macrihanish at the south end of the Mull of Kintyre at their annual summer training camp where they enjoyed their usual military routine, "holiday spirit and the jolly friendship of old friends".

The soldiers of the 7th Battalion, and in particular, 'B' Company, were men who lived in the same towns and villages. They worked in the same mines, foundries and offices and were members of the same bowling clubs and masonic lodges. They were artisans; that is, skilled workers, unlike the Regular Army's other ranks, who were unskilled and came from the bottom end of society.

But there were amongst the Territorial soldiers from the local area men who had professional occupations like James Dea. As a teacher at Larbert Central School since 1909, he would be well known to many of his fellow soldiers. There were, too, several young men who were to become officers later in the war. James Young, whose father was the headmaster of Larbert Central School, was an apprentice mining engineer with Carron Company; a huge number of the battalion had been employed at Carron. David Yellowlees, who was a bank employee, was the son of the minister of Carron UF Church. When David joined the battalion as an officer, Private William Brisbane, in a letter home to his mother in Stenhousemuir, told her that they had 'got another Larbert gentleman to look after our platoon. He is Mr Yellowlees, so we are all right for a good officer."

Their officers were men they knew; their employers, such as the officer commanding B Company, James Forbes Jones, the Managing Director of Torwood Foundry in Larbert. Other officers were their communities' leading figures or their sons. John Sherriff was the eldest son of the late George Sherriff of Carronvale and was a considerable landowner in the parish. The 7th Argylls were similar in their characteristics to the renowned Pals Battalions of the First World War, particularly in their local identity and social cohesiveness,. Another factor which enhanced the Argylls' sense of identity was that they had the distinctive trench experience of wearing the kilt. It was a type of military dress with several disadvantages, but it did earn the Scottish regiments the nickname 'ladies from hell' from the German soldiers. Though intended as an insult, it was also a kind of compliment. The kilt had to be discarded in 1917 when the German Army began using mustard gas, which tended to burn the sweatier parts of the male anatomy.

In December 1914 the Argylls sailed for France after three months' training. "The men gave no thought to the dangers ahead, they only felt that they were going to fight for their King and bonnie Scotland." Their morale was at a high level by the time they arrived at the trenches on the Western Front early in January 1915. The period between then and the middle of April was said to be "the happiest time the Battalion spent in France." But this blissful period, when they claimed that they had built "the finest trenches on the whole British front", came to a clattering end with the "dastardly" German gas attack beginning on April 22

at St Julien. The 7th Argylls were right in the thick of the action. This was a veritable baptism of fire. (See entry for James Dea, page 39) Captain J F Jones said that they had "performed magnificently" but at the end of the few days of action, there were over 300 casualties. The survivors then had to confront the loss of men they knew well. They were perhaps helped because the intense front line action continued for the battalion for the next month ending with another German assault using poison gas. A senior Divisional officer noted that the 7th Argylls had "proved themselves in every way worthy of the very high reputation they have won." Private William Brisbane's comment was pithier: "We are getting a great name out here, though I say it myself."

The death of officers – proportionally more officers than other ranks – were killed in the war – was a severe blow to their men. Private James Thomson of 'B' Company told his family that he was "very sorry that Lieutenant Sherriff has been killed [on 25 April 1915]. He was a very good sort, and always ready to help anyone." This comment reveals a great deal about the relationship between officers and men which was vital to good morale. James was expressing his respect for John Sherriff. The mention of Lieutenant Sherriff's willingness to "help anyone" shows one of the key characteristics of a First World War officer, his concern for his men. The historian, John Lewis-Stempel wrote in *Six Weeks The Short and Gallant Life of the British Officer in the First World War*: "The officer in the trenches was warrior and father… He was expected to care for his men… What really counted for the Other Ranks' morale and well-being was the little stuff officers did, day in and day out." When Corporal Henry Philip was killed in action, his company commander wrote to his mother that he was "like a son to me, as he was in my platoon when we came out to France, and has always been in my company." As this shows, a good officer's concern for his men had a paternal tone. This is epitomised in the poem *In Memoriam, Private D Sutherland* written by 2nd Lieutenant E Alan MacKintosh of the Seaforth Highlanders – he served alongside the 7th Argylls in the 51st Division:

Oh, I never will I forget you,
My men that trusted me,
More my sons than your fathers'
For they could only see
The helpless babies
And the young men in their pride.
They could not see you dying,
And hold you when you died.

Happy and young and gallant,
They saw their first-born go,
But not the strong limbs broken
And the beautiful men brought low,
The piteous writhing bodies,
They screamed 'Don't leave me, sir',
For they were only your fathers
But I was your officer.

During the Second Battle of Ypres, the 7th Argylls suffered 500 casualties, roughly 50% of its proper strength. These men had to be replaced. Firstly, the 1/9th Battalion of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, which had been formed at Dumbarton, was amalgamated with the 7th battalion. This arrangement lasted for only two months. The 7th battalion was then transferred to the much quieter Somme area. 250 soldiers were drafted into the battalion by the end of 1915. From this time on, new recruits were drafted into the regiments where reinforcements were required. During the "bloody and traumatic" year, 1916, the 7th Argylls received, between March and December the total number of reinforcements was 37 officers and 1,463 other ranks. In June 252 men were new arrivals into the battalion; in July 268.

Many reinforcements would be soldiers returning to their battalion after recovering from wounds and illness. The others would be men from different battalions of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, from different regiments and new recruits. The sheer number of reinforcements meant that the battalion ethos that existed in 1915 would have been severely eroded. As one historian concluded: "By 1917 the distinction between what had been regular, territorial and New Army units had blurred or disappeared."

By then there were considerable efforts to maintain good morale within battalions. Food, tobacco, drink and mail were recognised as essential requirements. Captain Alex Scott of the 7th Battalion of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders described the 'standard diet' of the front line soldier: "Our diet [was] bully-beef and biscuits, with tea in the evening or just before sunrise". Soldiers didn't starve but they hated the monotony of the food. The 14th Battalion of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, in which three soldiers named on Larbert War Memorial served, had their own trench alphabet in which "L was for Liar who says we're well fed".

Officers tried to ensure that their soldiers were fed even in what must have been very difficult circumstances. At 2 a.m. on 20 November 1917 the soldiers of the 6th Battalion of the Seaforth Highlanders, including Thomas Whittet, were given a hot meal (perhaps cooked on equipment manufactured in one of Larbert's foundries). The battalion then moved forward to their assembly position ready for

the start of the Battle of Cambrai. "At Zero (6.20 a.m.) plus 30 minutes all the men were given a good breakfast of porridge, bacon and tea." The first of the battalion's attacking waves set off at 7.50 a.m.

After three days of fighting in the same battle, the 6th Gordon Highlanders, to which George Steedman had belonged, "the Battalion… marched back to the Flesquieres area… A good hot meal and a rum ration was waiting the battalion when it marched in. The men rested in the shelters they had built the previous day and at 3.30 p.m. moved back to Metz. A halt was made near Havrincourt Wood for teas after which the march to Metz was resumed. They had to march in "pouring rain" to the railway station at Ytres where "a most miserable night was spent at the station where there was no cover from the hurricane of wind and rain… Fortunately dixies had been carried and it was possible to give the men tea which cheered them up a little."

The men were used to receiving their rum ration. In the front line rum was issued at dawn and at dusk. In a week a soldier would get one-third of a pint (200 mls). It was also given to soldiers before going over the top. The opinion of Captain Alexander Stewart of the Cameronians was that "The finest thing that ever happened in the trenches was the rum ration."

In the view of the distinguished historian, Niall Ferguson, the First World War could not have been fought without alcohol. He was referring to the "huge quantities of drink consumed when the men were not in the front line. Ordinary soldiers would get drunk at every opportunity; they had, as one officer in the HLI put it, 'a marvellous talent' for it." At first sight, the example of William Kerr, who was found to "drunk while on the line of march" in July 1917, might demonstrate Niall Ferguson's point, but there is evidence to suggest that this was a young soldier who was struggling to cope with front-line service. The sympathetic conclusion of the historian of the 51st (Highland) Division, to which many of Larbert's soldiers belonged, is that "Nerves were constantly under great strain and it was natural that the majority drank more than in peacetime." He explains that "if the men were occasionally drunk or indulged in irrational behaviour, it should be perceived as a form of escapism and of staying young in a world of premature ageing." He also makes the points that "Hard drinking was already common in pre-war Scotland" and that "Any man who did not participate in heavy drinking was suspected of being odd."

An essential requirement for good morale was tobacco. Major A H Mure thought that it was "tobacco more than anything else that made the trenches home to our soldiers". Another requirement was a speedy and efficient mail service for soldiers and their families. It was a German officer, Rudolf Binding, who succinctly expressed its importance. He wrote: "Wars are won or lost by letters home." Amazing quantities of mail were handled by the British Army's postal service. By the middle year of the war, 12.5 million letters and 875,000 parcels a week were being delivered; delivery time was two days. In total, 320,000 tons of mails were sent to the BEF between 1914 and 1918. Soldiers' morale certainly benefitted from the mail service. It meant that the bond between soldiers and their homes was maintained. Larbert's soldiers knew that they always had the full support of their local community. Furthermore, the soldiers' letters published in the *Falkirk Herald* meant that people knew very well what conditions faced the soldiers in the trenches and in battle. These points are demonstrated in a letter written by Norman Davidson of the RAMC in January 1916 thanking Larbert Parish Church for a Christmas parcel he received. He wrote that "it cheers us all up to know that the people of Larbert are thinking of us. The weather here is awful, nothing but rain and mud, but we are far from downhearted." Letters like this were important in ensuring the commitment of the local community to the war effort.

Leave was another vital component of good morale. It is mentioned fairly often in connection with Larbert's soldiers but it is impossible to tell whether they were treated more or less generously than other soldiers. When compassionate leave was required for soldiers' relatives, that was granted. Abner Borthwick returned home after his daughter's death and Douglas Dobbie for his father's death. The general situation regarding leave was not generous to ordinary soldiers. They were fortunate if they got leave once a year. Officers were given leave every 16 – 20 weeks. By 1917 100,000 soldiers had not had leave for 18 months.

Lieutenant K J Box summed up the attitude of the soldiers to the main components of morale, commenting that "If mail, food and cigarettes were available, the war was going well."

1917 was "the darkest year of the war". Large-scale reinforcement was often required. The war diary of the 7th Argylls recorded the numerical effects of losses followed by reinforcements. In April 1917 at the Battle of Arras, the battalion casualties numbered 1600. On April 30, battalion strength stood at 25 officers and 605 other ranks; by June 30 it was 32 officers and 1,004 other ranks. The casualties incurred during the Battle of Passchendaele meant that when the battalion assembled for the first day of the Battle of Cambrai, November 20, "in full fighting kit ready to go into action" it numbered 17 officers and 586 other ranks. Within three days, there had been 156 casualties. The 6th Gordon Highlanders suffered 143 casualties on November 23; the Commanding Officer commented

with great feeling: "one of the worst days I have ever spent, we lost many a good lad to no purpose whatever. It's a sad and weary business, this war, to those who are in personal touch with the sacrificed."

The manpower losses of 1916 and 1917 were severe. The comment of Colonel A K Reid of the 9th Battalion of the Highland Light Infantry was all too often appropriate: "The proportion of loss to numbers engaged was exceptionally high and was far beyond what in other wars was regarded as the strain which troops could endure without serious loss of morale." Often soldiers were affected by the loss of comrades but at least Colonel Reid could say of his battalion: "Our men had stood the strain."

1.3 million conscripts served in the war. When they began to arrive in significant numbers at the front in 1916, they were usually regarded as being inferior in physique, ability and commitment. In these circumstances, many battalions tried to keep their distinctive identity and retain a strong fighting spirit while assimilating the conscripts. When out of the front lines, this was attempted through various forms of recreation. For example, while the 7th Battalion of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders was in training for an extended period from April 26 to July 8, 1917 their activities included:

Bathing parade (this was the very first activity)
Resting, Refitting & Equipping & Organising Companies
Inter-Battalion Sports with the 4th Seaforths
Rifle competitions for NCOs and men
An evening performance by the 51st Division Balmorals (a music hall party) and Band
Church parades (the most frequent type of activity)

November 13 was the first anniversary of Beaumont Hamel Day, an important commemoration for the whole of 51st (Highland) Division for it was that day that secured for the Division its "first place in Germany's catalogue of her most formidable opponents". The men were granted a holiday. The battalion war diary of the 7th Argylls also reported that there was a 154th Brigade Sports Day during which the battalion won the Tug-o'-War and the 5-a-side Football.

In February 1918 the battalion moved into CINEMA CAMP at Lebucquiere near Bapaume. Two days later the battalion football team won a Divisonal cup-tie 5 – 0. On the same day the men saw the first performance of the 'Toories', a battalion pierrot troupe. These were the activities that were used to develop what one officer called "esprit de battalion". Yet it was at least as equally important that there should be established a growing sense of comradeship based on shared dangers, hardships and duties at the front; in short, a brotherhood of the trenches. Ultimately, soldiers were to achieve the kind of bond described in Gaelic on the 51st (Highland) Division Memorial, Beaumont Hamel, translated as 'Friends are Good on the Day of Battle'.

The German Spring Offensive of 1918 and the Allied Advance to Victory both involved some of the fiercest fighting of the war and placed the BEF under tremendous strain. The strength of the BEF's morale was shown when the German Offensive was fought to a standstill. In the case of the 7th Battalion of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, it "had to fight for its very existence" in March; in six days of fighting the battalion lost 326 casualties. On April 7th 412 reinforcements joined the Argylls. From April 9th, it faced for four days the brunt of the second phase of the German offensive. A subsequent draft of 5 officers and 210 other ranks began a period of recovery which lasted until the third week in July. From then until the Armistice was signed, it played its part in contributing to the various attacks that eventually brought an end to the war. The arduous nature of the fighting during the last four months of the war should not be under-estimated, as shown by the 7th Argylls' casualties in the two major attacks in which they were involved; in July 312, in October 303. Commenting on the battalion's attack of October 12 – 14, in which there were 189 casualties, the Commanding Officer emphasised "The great importance of Esprit de Section" which meant that "Each man should know his Section Commander and all the men of his section and realise that the Section is a compact little force which will have to fight its own battle unaided". The battalion kept going until November 11. The battalion war diary for that date simply recorded "Armistice holiday. Hostilities ceased."

The fighting of July to November showed that the morale of the 7th Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders remained resilient and sound until the end of the war. The verdict of most historians is that the British army's morale did remain substantially intact throughout the war. This was due, to a large extent, to the role played by its officer class. According to one historian, many officers conceived "an affection and concern for the disadvantaged which would eventually fuel that transformation of middle-class attitudes to the poor which has been the most important social trend of twentieth century Britain." In at least one aspect, the opinion of the Major James Forbes Jones of the 7th Argylls until his death in March 1917, was similar. He said that "after the war was over, we could not do enough for the brave men who had stood in the trenches knee deep in mud and were under fire."

Discipline

This assessment of the standard of discipline demonstrated by Larbert's soldiers is based on the evidence coming from the soldiers' Service Records. Because of the destruction of the majority of these records in 1940 (See page 13), there are only Service Records for 79 of the soldiers named on Larbert War Memorial. Of these, 55 (70%) of the records are for soldiers who served in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and of these, 24 (30%) belonged to the 7th Battalion.

Compared to the Regular Army battalions, the standard of discipline of Territorial Force and New Army battalions, like the Argylls' 7th and the 11th Battalions, was "less strict and formal and characterised by a greater reliance on self-discipline," according to the historian, Gary Sheffield. There is, however, general agreement that discipline throughout the British Army was harsh and has even been called "severe".

The aims of army discipline was to "promote unit cohesion and military efficiency by producing obedient men who took a pride in developing soldierly skills and who did not give way to fear in battle." The experience of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders in battle suggests that these aims were achieved satisfactorily. Critics of the harsh nature of military discipline pointed out that it "produced a sort of military robot", who was over-dependent on his officers and lacked initiative in combat situations. On the other hand, historians agree that the working class in Scotland and in the whole of the UK was generally deferential and accepted obedience to the 'leaders' of society as part of the natural order of things. This would appear to be true of Larbert and district.

It is well-known that the British Army applied capital punishment for military offences. Over 3,000 soldiers were sentenced to death by British Army courts-martial. Only 11% of these death sentences were carried out. 291 British soldiers were executed during the war, including one soldier from the 1/9th Battalion of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. He was a young soldier from Clydebank.

2,700 death sentences were commuted. This total includes 33 soldiers belonging to the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders but none belonged to the 7th Battalion. So far as can be ascertained, therefore, no Larbert soldier had any involvement in any cases which might have carried the death penalty.

By far the most common military offence for which men were executed was desertion – 75% of cases.. There were instances where soldiers from the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders were absent without leave which might possibly have been treated as desertion but were not, as in the case of Thomas Foote. After being sentenced to detention, he served part of his sentence and then went to France. This is probably an example of the army ensuring that those who were guilty of desertion or absence were not able to avoid front line service.

When soldiers went to the Western Front early in the war they were given a leaflet containing Lord Kitchener's Guidance to British Troops. He identified two particular problems: "In this new experience you may find temptations both in wine and women. You must entirely resist both temptations." Kitchener's advice was , not unexpectedly, ignored.

A particularly difficult disciplinary problem for the British Army was the incidence of venereal disease, as sexually transmitted disease was called then. VD was at "near epidemic" level according to one historian. In 1916 20% of all British Army hospital admissions were for venereal disease. It is estimated that 5% of all men who enlisted for the British Army during the First World War became infected with either gonorrhoea or syphilis. It was not a military offence to become infected with venereal disease. It was, though, if the soldier concealed the fact that he had been infected. In addition, there were, until October 1917, "hospital stoppages". This meant that a soldier had his pay stopped while he was in hospital for treatment which took about 4 to 8 weeks. His next of kin was also usually informed. He could be put to the bottom of the leave roster or leave was stopped altogether.

In roughly half of all cases of VD, the infection was contracted during the soldier's overseas service. Frank Richards of the 2nd Royal Welsh Fusiliers described in his memoir *Old Soldiers Never Die* the sordid situation in Bethune on the evening of 24 September 1915.

The Battle of Loos began the next day. It is often known at the 'Scottish battle'. 36 of the 72 infantry battalions involved in the first phase of the battle were Scottish – approximately 30,000 Scottish soldiers. Frank Richards' battalion was to be in support to the 2nd Battalion of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. He wrote:

> The Old Soldier [Private Isaac Parry] said, "Let's go out and have a beano as it's probably the last day we will spend on this Ball of Clay". Bethune was congested with troops. There was a Red Lamp [brothel specifically for other ranks] in Bethune situated about five yards off the main street. Only once had I been in it: the first time we were in Bethune the three of us had walked in there one evening to have a look around. There were four women on the stairs and if a man wanted to go with one of them he paid two francs to the landlord behind the bar.

We had a drink and left at once, the Old Soldier remarking that if we three old birds couldn't find find something better than this it was about time we packed our traps and went West…

Passing through the town, we saw stretching from the Red Lamp and down the street about three hundred men in a queue, all waiting their turns to go in the Red Lamp, the majority being mere lads. Duffy said, "I expect they are determined to have a short time before they go West tomorrow." We very nearly had a fight with some of them through the Old Soldier stopping and telling them that it would pay them better if they jumped in the canal and had a swim around to cool themselves. The Old Soldier was very indignant at the men in the queue, as he considered they were showing up the British Army. When I remarked that they were no different to us, he looked at me in disgust and told me I was fast developing into a bloody Bible-puncher.

Clearly the British Army was tolerating this situation. Soldiers were not barred from going to 'licensed' brothels until March 1918. By then there were 137 of these in 35 towns in France.

There were four soldiers named on Larbert War Memorial who were treated for venereal disease. Three of these men were sent back from the Western Front to Britain for treatment in specialist hospitals. One of these was at Portobello in Dublin, another was Brighton Grove Hospital in Newcastle. One soldier was treated for three months in a hospital in Manchester. The fourth soldier, who served with the Royal Naval Division in France in 1916, was treated at one of the hospitals in Le Havre. There was possibly a fifth soldier who was infected. In this particular case, one of the causes of the death of his baby daughter was recorded as congenital syphilis but it is impossible to say definitely that he was the carrier.

Since there are Service Records for only about one in three of the soldiers on Larbert War Memorial, it is likely that, rather than just the four or five cases of venereal disease, there were 12 – 15 soldiers who contracted VD during their war service. This equates to an incidence of 4 - 5% of the men on the War Memorial, about the national average. While the conduct of the men who contracted VD can be readily explained, they were "medically unserviceable," the term used in the Service Record of the RND soldier. As one general commented, "venereal disease removes men from the firing line." By 1918 the number of soldiers so removed was said to be the equivalent of one division – 20,000 men and this was at a crucial time in the war when every soldier was needed. The fact that hospital admissions for venereal disease rose from 24,000 in 1916 to 60,000 two years later shows that the British Army failed to solve a major disciplinary problem before the war ended. It is also the case, as the historian Joanna Bourke makes clear, that "the majority of British servicemen never had casual sex with any woman during their active military service." Furthermore, the opinion of Lieutenant Arthur Beecroft of the Royal Engineers in his memoir seems very fair: "considering the loosening of restraint, and wartime temptation, I think that the British soldier kept a marvellously tight hold of himself."

Despite Kitchener's guidance relating to the other temptation "wine", drunkenness "remained relatively high in the British Army throughout the war." In the Larbert soldiers' Service Records, drunkenness is infrequently mentioned in their conduct sheets. This suggests that their behaviour fits in with the conclusion of the historian Craig French, who said that "excessive consumption was usually confined to such periods as units were out of the line." A distinction was drawn between "ordinary drunkenness" and "drunkenness on duty". William Kerr was found "drunk while on line of march" and quite severely punished whereas a non-commissioned officer was described as "very sober" despite two cases of ordinary drunkenness. When Abner Borthwick was guilty of drunkenness, he was fined 5/- (25p)

Lieutenant Douglas Gillespie of the 2nd Battalion of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders was an officer acquainted with Falkirk and district. His parents lived in Linlithgow while he was being educated in Edinburgh. He wrote many letters to his "Home People" which were published in 1916, a few months after his death on the first day of the Battle of Loos. Most of the men in his battalion were from "Glasgow, Falkirk and thereabouts"; in one letter he revealed that he "always thought that Falkirk had more public houses than any other place." In another letter he said about his platoon that "most of them are good honest fellows," though he did say that the men did not always behave themselves. He then wrote: "The finest officers and training couldn't make saints of men straight from the Falkirk High Street and south side of Glasgow".

But, if his comment was true, was it also true of the men straight from the Main Street in Larbert, Stenhousemuir or Carronshore? The disciplinary records of 79 of the Larbert soldiers named on the war memorial show that for 58 (73%) of these soldiers, their records do not contain any reference to military offences. 22 of these soldiers with seemingly unblemished records belonged to the 7th Battalion of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. There were only two soldiers of the 7th Battalion whose records did have blemishes. This suggests that the 7th Argylls was a well-disciplined battalion whose conduct was highly satisfactory. However, too much emphasis cannot be placed on the evidence from the Service Records as it is impossible to be sure that the full

records are intact after so many of the records were destroyed in the fire of 1940.

The surviving Service Records show that there were 4 soldiers whose disciplinary record may well have been judged unsatisfactory and 3 soldiers whose record may have been rated only 'fair'. Of those with the worst records two were soldiers who served in the 7th Battalion of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. For one of these men, his Conduct Sheet records 12 offences ranging from Behaving in a Disorderly Manner in Dining Hall to Inattention on Parade. For his offences he was Confined to Barracks for 19 days and Confined to Camp for 12 days. In addition, he was a patient in Brighton Grove Hospital, Newcastle for a total of 101 days in the winter of 1917 – 1918.

The military misdemeanours of the other soldier belonging to the 7th Argylls were related to the basic disciplinary principles of punctuality and cleanliness. The first offence in his record was "Dirty on Parade" and the third "Unshaven and Untidy on Parade". On 28 February 1917 within three days of arriving in France, he was admitted to hospital in Camiers with scabies. Two weeks later he was diagnosed with impetigo and invalided to Britain. He returned to the Western Front in June 1917. His ill-health and ill-discipline continued: in January 1918 he was Confined to Camp for 10 days for being Dirty on Parade and for being in a verminous condition.

A few months before he joined up, the oldest soldier on Larbert War Memorial pled guilty when charged with keeping his house in a dirty, unwholesome and unhealthy condition. His offences are not stated on his Conduct Sheet but his hefty punishments, indicating serious breaches of army discipline, were – 21 days and 28 days Field Punishment No 1.

Thomas Foote's offences were much more serious in nature. He was declared a deserter from the 2nd Battalion of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders but he was eventually tried for the unusual offence of "Fraudulent Enlistment", but his enlistment probably saved him from the much more serious charge of desertion. At the same time he was charged with the Loss by Neglect, one waistbelt valued at 2/1½ d (11p). For these offences he was sentenced to 28 days detention, the heaviest punishment imposed on any of the Larbert soldiers.

These solders might have been the men that "the finest officers and training could not make saints of". It is much more important to say that, like the other men whose Service Records happen to survive and whose Service Records may indicate they were "the good, honest fellows" Lieutenant Gillespie mentioned, they all made the supreme sacrifice.

The standard of discipline of Australian soldiers was considered to be significantly worse than that of the British Army. The Australian Imperial Force's reputation was that it was "unamenable to strict discipline." Yet, the Scottish soldier was thought to be the nearest in character to the Australian. One historian's view was that "Whereas the Anzacs were contemptuous and pitying towards the [English] 'Tommy', (his attitude was seen as 'curiously bovine'), they admired the 'Jocks' and recognized a 'kinship' with them." Charles Bean, Australia's Official Historian admired Scottish soldiers' "independent stalwart outlook". The people of Larbert and district were similarly described, being noted for their "thrifty independent stamp".

In more general terms, the 7th Battalion of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, earned a fine record, demonstrating a high standard of discipline and respectful relationships between officers and men. The regiment as a whole ended the Great War, it seems, with a quiet reputation for the soundness of its standard of discipline and morale.

The contribution of Scottish regiments to the Great War has been described as "often distinctive and never less than considerable". They enjoyed "undoubtedly good morale," whilst Scottish soldiers typically had earned a good conceit of themselves.

Larbert War Memorial

In May 1919 the task of providing a war memorial for Larbert and district began. At a public meeting in the Dobbie Hall a committee was set up, headed by George Pate of Carron Company. The other committee members were William Braidwood, chairman of Larbert Parish Council, J C Walker, Reverend John Fairley of Larbert Parish Church, T Callander Wade, William F Morrison of the Crown Inn, Peter McLachlan of J J & P MacLachlan, building contractors, T B Jones of James Jones & Sons and J Dickson. Already there were some utilitarian suggestions such as public baths or steam wash-houses. But George Pate said that any memorial had to be a "sacred emblem" as it would "represent the finest qualities of humanity, self-sacrifice to the utmost degree, love of country, of home, of freedom". A member of the audience, Thomas Fenwick, outlined what he thought was required: "a fine figure of heroic size, by a good artist, well-pedestalled". He proposed that it should be placed in the grounds of the Dobbie Hall and surrounded by a railing to make it seem like a "shrine". The committee was charged with the task of obtaining "competitive designs with cost".

Progress seemed to be slow. On 10 January 1920 the *Falkirk Herald*'s correspondent wrote in the Larbert & Stenhousemuir Jottings that the members of the War Memorial Committee "seemed to have demobilised themselves pretty early, for not a whisper has been heard of it for months." Such acerbic criticism rarely appeared in the Jottings.

It was to be the end of July 1920, fourteen months after it was set up, before the committee was ready to put forward its ideas to a public meeting. Three sites had been considered. One was in front of the Dobbie Hall, another was at the Plough Hotel and the third was at the western end of the playground of Larbert Central School. The site at the Plough Hotel was recommended and accepted.

Alexander Carrick's 'Justice Guiding Valour', for Fraserburgh War Memorial, unveiled in 1923, has some similarities with the one he proposed for Larbert.

Models of three different designs for the memorial were displayed. It was the task of the meeting to choose the design. The unanimous choice was a statue of a "very simple design" in bronze and granite. It was to be "symbolic of peace" and represent "justice for future generations". The design was the work of the sculptor, Alexander Carrick, who has been recognised as one of "Scotland's great monument sculptors." He was to be responsible for over a dozen war memorials in Scotland, including outstanding examples at Dornoch, Killin, and Oban.

The monument he proposed was to be of "heroic size" and occupy a space of about 25 square feet and would be 15 feet high. The top part, in bronze, would be a group of statuary and would represent Justice bearing a sword in her right hand while her left arm would be round a child looking to her "for that justice for which the men who fell in the great war gave their lives."

The statuary plus plinth would be six feet six inches high (1.83 metres). There would be three bronze panels at the front and sides of the pedestal. The panels would have space for 200 names. The cost of the memorial was estimated at £1500. The decision to proceed with its erection was "enthusiastically carried."

George Pate recommended to the meeting that £2000 should be raised to cover the cost. He said that "it was the sacred obligation of everyone to come forward and pay a debt which was long overdue, and which they would never be able to liquidate."

He went on to say that he didn't think that there would be any difficulty in raising the money required and this was the general view.

The model of the memorial was put on display in a shop window and aroused "much interest". Yet within six weeks interest in the project was "far from being

healthy" and the response to the appeal for subscriptions was "disappointing". Only a little over £1000 had been promised to the committee. There was outrage amongst committee members. To George Pate it was "an eternal disgrace". He revealed that Carron Company employees were to contribute £225, while those of Jones & Campbell promised £17, those of James Jones & Sons £10 and those of Dobbie, Forbes & Company had refused to agree to a works collection. The Rev David Merrow of Stenhouse Church concluded there was "little doubt but that the bulk of the people in the parish did not wish a memorial".

The committee decided to hold a door-to-door collection from every home in the parish. A group of 50-60 ladies was enlisted to organise and carry out the collection in October. It was not considered a success. The ladies had to thole "the boorishness of the unwilling". In one unnamed district in the parish, where most men were in work, 180 calls were made and 133 refused to make any contribution. The other 47 gave £7; an average of 3 shillings (15p) each. In some districts the average contribution was 5 shillings (25p) and one district gave the highest average contribution of 6 shillings and 8 pence (33p).

In total, taking into account all promises, only £1000 could be raised. George Pate resigned as committee chairman in disgust. He complained about the "apathy" of the soldiers who had survived the war; they had not made appropriate contributions. He also criticised the "many who were high and dry during the time when others were nobly defending the Empire even with their life-blood". Many of these "many" would be employees of Carron Company or of the other local industries which were required to support the war effort.

Several other reasons were put forward to explain why sufficient funds could not be raised. Some people criticised the location chosen; some criticised the design of the memorial – it was too figurative. The *Falkirk Herald*'s local correspondent had stated at the start of the project that there was "a natural tendency against following the custom of the past and sprinkling broadcast over the country unsightly masses of masonry". He also said that "the parish is short of rich uncles". The total cost and the size of the individual contribution that was required or expected was an obvious objection. It may be that the difficulties of post-war labour relations made workers reluctant to contribute to what was seen as a grandiose scheme promoted by their employers.

William Young, headmaster of Larbert Central School, became chairman of the War Memorial Committee at the next public meeting. It was agreed that the original scheme could not be paid for and it was abandoned. The committee was to prepare a modified scheme. At one point the suggestion of a public clock as a memorial was gaining some support.

In March 1921 a new Executive Committee was appointed and it included a representative of each district in the parish. Only three of the original committee continued as members and four ladies joined the committee. Within three months this committee had decided on a new site and design whose cost would be within its budget of £1300.

Sir George Washington Browne

The new site was to be at the front of the Dobbie Hall. The new design was by an Edinburgh architect, George Washington Browne who was the designer of eight other war memorials in Scotland. Finalising the details took some time. For example, the architect, George Washington Browne, "paid a flying visit" to Larbert one Monday in October to bring "an improved design of the structure, along with estimates of the cost". Eventually, the Executive Committee's proposals were presented to a public meeting in November and approved. "At long last is the community's honourable debt to be redeemed."

The memorial is in the form of a cenotaph enclosed in a quadrant. There were some "disgruntled critics" of the cenotaph design. It was "uncommon" and not what the "average citizen" might expect a war memorial to be. But the *Falkirk* Herald's comment was that it had a "severe and simple dignity".

The Cenotaph in Whitehall in London was erected in July 1919 for the Peace celebrations. It was a wood and plaster construction as it was a last-minute suggestion from Prime Minister David Lloyd George. It met with such public approval that it was built as a permanent memorial in Portland stone in time for the Armistice Day, 1920. The inscription reads "The Glorious Dead"; Larbert's memorial had a slight but important change to these words in its inscription.

Glasgow's War Memorial in George Square also features a cenotaph, designed by Sir John James Burnet (who was the architect of Stenhouse Church and also of the controversial Grangemouth War Memorial). The Larbert memorial was built of Culaloe stone and erected by J J & P McLachlan builders, Stenhousemuir at a cost of £1200. On the walls of the quadrant framing the cenotaph were six bronze panels which were made by Carron Company. These panels contained the names of the men commemorated by the memorial. On the centrepiece of the cenotaph was the inscription Our Glorious Dead.The War Memorial Committee had carried out its task, within budget, and even with £150 - £170 left over. This was partly used to pay for the addition of a bronze wreath and the dates 1914-1918 on the rear of the cenotaph, which was done in November 1923. A £50 donation was made to Larbert Parish Council specifically for work to be done on the cenotaph and a similar donation to Falkirk Infirmary for a bed to be named the Larbert War Memorial Bed.

The unveiling ceremony took place on Sunday September 24, 1922. It began at 3 o'clock with a service in Larbert Parish Church which was "filled to overflowing". Then the pipe band of the 7th Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders led a slow march to the Dobbie Hall. The cenotaph was draped with the Union Jack and the Belgian Tricolour. A crowd estimated to be up to 5,000 people observed the ceremony in "somewhat unfavourable weather".

The Memorial was unveiled by Lieutenant-Colonel Alan Stein of the 7th Battalion of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. He was introduced by James Jones, the founder and head of James Jones and Sons, sawmillers, and also of Jones & Campbell, ironfounders, both based in Larbert. He said that Colonel Stein had reached the highest rank in his battalion because of "his indomitable courage, fearless courage and bravery in all emergencies". The memorial was unveiled and then formally dedicated by the Very Reverend J A McClymont, who, in 1921, had been the Moderator of the Church of Scotland. Three volleys were

Lieutenant-Colonel Alan Stein

fired over the memorial by a detachment of Territorial soldiers. The Last Post was played, followed by 'The Flowers of the Forest'. Wreaths were laid by relatives of the men named on the memorial. The ceremony ended with the singing of the paraphrase 'Oh God of Bethel', which was thought of then as Scotland's unofficial national anthem, and then the benediction.

Twenty- five years later, another committee had the task of finding a way of adding the names of 80 local men and one woman who "made the supreme sacrifice" during the second world war.

THE FALKIRK HERALD, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1922.

LARBERT'S TRIBUTE TO THE FALLEN.

UNVEILING OF IMPOSING CENOTAPH AND QUADRANT.

Impressive Ceremony Performed by Lieut.-Col. Stein.

THE UNVEILING CEREMONY

Appendix: The Men of Larbert War Memorial, 1914-1918: An Analysis

According to a contemporary estimate, 1,600 men from Larbert and district served in Britain's armed forces during the First World War. By comparison, a Falkirk councillor in 1920 said that the names of 1800 men from Falkirk who had served in the war were known, though he was sure that was "only about half of the burgh's quota to the forces". Larbert War Memorial records the death of 285 men, or approximately 18% of those who served. Where did the men named on the memorial live when they joined up?

	NUMBER	% OF TOTAL
Larbert	57	20.0
Stenhousemuir	92	32.3
Torwood	2	0.7
Carron	41	14.4
Carronshore	27	9.5
Bothkennar	4	1.4
Longdyke	2	0.7
Kinnaird	1	0.4
Falkirk	16	5.6
Denny	1	0.4
Elsewhere in Scotland	22	7.7
England	10	3.5
Canada	8	2.8
Australia	2	0.7
TOTAL	285	

226 of the men were resident in the parish when they enlisted. The 59 non-residents (21% of the total) had links with the locality of varying strength. For example, Sydney White moved to Birmingham in 1915 and then joined the army. But in another example, the only local connection that two men seemed to have had was that they were the sons-in-law of Mrs Hodge who lived in the Wheatsheaf Buildings at Larbert Cross. One of these men was born in Bonhill and resided in Alexandria, Dunbartonshire while the other was born in Selkirk and living in Barnsley before he joined up. There are, also, at least 80 other men with some local connection whose names do not appear on Larbert War Memorial. Some of these had a limited link to Larbert and district while others were resident and working in the area like James Honey or Simon Ross and fully deserved to have their names commemorated on the memorial. Was Eric Sinclair a "Larbert soldier"? His name is not on the war memorial but in 1916 he came from Australia to Scotland at the age of 19 to enlist in the local regiment, the

7th Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. His uncle, Thomas Callander Wade and his aunt, Margaret Callander Wade, lived in Larbert (but did not put his name forward for inclusion on the memorial). Given these difficulties, it is not possible, therefore, to give an exact answer to the question: how many men from the parish of Larbert died in the First World War.

Similarly, but more importantly, it is impossible to say accurately how many Scots were killed during the First World War. Just after the end of the war, the number was given as 74,000. This was calculated as a proportion of Britain's deaths. This seemed "far too low", given the number of Scotsmen who served in the war and given the severe losses some Scottish regiments suffered. Therefore, the number of deaths of Scotsmen was revised to 100 - 110,000. The revision of numbers continued. In his Preface to *Scotland's First World War*, Trevor Royle, writing in 2014, states that "the Scottish casualty list was over 148,000". This appears to come from the number of names recorded on the Scottish National War Memorial at Edinburgh Castle. The number seems to be inflated by including those of Scottish origin who served in the Australian, Canadian, New Zealand or South African forces. A figure of 182,222 Scottish deaths has also been put forward. This is derived from the calculation that "the total Scottish casualties as a percentage of those mobilised was 26.4 per cent". In Trevor Royle's opinion, 182,000 is "clearly too high".

The table below gives a comparison of populations and war deaths between the parish of Larbert and local parishes of a similar size and also a random selection of Scottish parishes with populations of 10-15,000

PARISH	POPULATION in 1911	MALES aged 15-49	WAR DEATHS	DEATHS as % of Males aged 15-49
LARBERT	12,984	3,594	285	7.9
KILSYTH	11,052	2,878	227	7.9
DENNY & DUNIPACE	11,102	2,949	154	5.2
BO'NESS	14,034	3,779	396	10.5
ELGIN	10,375	2,207	461	20.9
ARDROSSAN	11,720	2,686	150	5.6
LESMAHAGOW	11,990	3,015	149	4.9
WICK	12,587	2,752	293	10.6
MONTROSE	14,669	2,729	325	11.9
GALASHIELS	14,917	3,698	638	17.3
BLAIRGOWRIE & RATTRAY	6,479	1,348	175	13.0
FRASERBURGH	11,151	2,569	399	15.0
ALLOA	17,130	3,204	386	12.8
AIRDRIE	38,116	9,946	515	5.2
GREENOCK	74,294	20,066	1448	7.2
BRITAIN & IRELAND	45,154,399	11,407,577	722,785	6.3
SCOTLAND	4,760,904	1,193,404	74,000	6.2
			110,000	9.2
			148,218	12.4
			182,222	15.3

The number of deaths for each parish is taken from the parish war memorial. The compilation of names for these war memorials was not done in any systematic way, and, therefore, these memorials give only a rough indication of the number of war deaths in each parish. While the percentage of males aged 15 – 49 in these parishes, according to the 1911 census, is always around 50% of the male population, there is a wide variation in the percentage of the age-group killed in the war, as shown by the comparison of Lesmahagow and Galashiels, or Ardrossan and Elgin. Undoubtedly, there will be factors to explain these wide fluctuations.

Larbert's percentage of deaths is not particularly high, though greater than the average for Britain. Even at 7.9%, this means that roughly one man in twelve aged 15 – 49 who joined up from the local area died in the war. It is more than likely that the proportion of Larbert's male population employed in war industries meant that many did not join the armed forces, even after conscription was introduced in 1916. Only 14.6% of Scotland's male population aged 15 – 49 were conscripted, (as against the 27% who volunteered in the first two years of the war or the 22% of the age-group conscripted in England and Wales.) Conscription exempted a relatively high proportion of Scotland's workers.

The men who are named on Larbert War Memorial (apart from the officers) belonged overwhelmingly to the industrial working class. The occupations of 247 of the men and the 15 officers are known. 7 of the officers worked in the foundry industry. 149 men worked in Larbert's foundries; that's 60% of those whose occupations are known. At least 68 of those named on the memorial worked for Carron Company, 29 for Dobbie, Forbes and Company and 12 for Jones & Campbell.

The most common job was that of a moulder - 46 men worked as moulders, that's nearly 20% of the men whose jobs are known. There were 28 miners, 15 clerks and 7 were bakers. 13 of the men were regular soldiers, which may seem surprising, since the pre-war British soldier was considered amongst the lowest of the low, with pay and conditions worse than the lowest paid farm labourer or factory worker. Yet, nearly all these pre-war regular soldiers gave exemplary service during the war. Despite the number of farms in the parish, only 3 men who were farm labourers joined up. There was, apparently, a general suspicion in Scotland that those working in agriculture evaded military service. Those who served in the ranks and who had non-manual occupations were too few to make a difference to the social profile. They numbered 3 teachers, 1 doctor, 1 bank accountant, 1 apprentice bank clerk, and 1 apprentice architect/surveyor.

Clearly, the occupational profile of the men of Larbert War Memorial shows that these men to a very large extent shared the same economic and, therefore, social status.

The men of Larbert War Memorial were young and they were unmarried. 35% of the men on the memorial were aged 22 or under when they died. 75% were aged 29 or under. The First World War was a young man's war. Of those who were under 30 years old, only 28 were married, which was 10% of the men on the memorial. By contrast, 15% of the men in the same age-group in the parish of Larbert in 1911 were married.

These then were the men whose names were recorded on Larbert War Memorial.

Abbreviations

A & S Hdrs	Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders
AB	Able Seaman
AIF	Australian Imperial Force
ANZAC	Australian and New Zealand Army Corps
Battn/Bn	Battalion
BEF	British Expeditionary Force
BSM	Battalion Sergeant-Major
Bty	Battery
CCS	Casualty Clearing Station
CEF	Canadian Expeditionary Force
Chf S	Chief Steward
CO	Commanding Officer
Coy	company
CSM	Company Sergeant-Major
Div	Division
Div Amm Col	Divisional Ammunition Column
DSO	Distinguished Service Order
Dvr	Driver
Fld Amb	Field Ambulance
Fusrs	Fusiliers
GHQ	General Headquarters
GSW	gunshot wound
Hdrs	Highlanders
HLI	Highland Light Infantry
KORL	King's Own Royal Lancaster
KOSB	King's Own Scottish Borderers
KOYLI	King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry
LS	Leading Seaman
MG	machine gun
MGC	Machine Gun Corps/Company
NCO	Non-commissioned officer
OC	Officer Commanding
OR/ORK	Other ranks
RAMC	Royal Army Medical Corps
RASC	Royal Army Service Corps
RE	Royal Engineers
Regt	Regiment
RFA	Royal Field Artillery
RFC	Royal Flying Corps
RGA	Royal Garrison Artillery
RM/RMLI	Royal Marine Light Infantry
RND	Royal Naval Division
RNVR	Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve
RSF	Royal Scots Fusiliers
RSM	Regimental Sergeant-Major
RWF	Royal Welsh Fusiliers
SAA	Small Arms Ammunition
Sge Bty	Siege Battery
Sig	Signaller
TM	Trench Mortar
UF	United Free

Glossary

Attest	to declare on oath willingness toserve in the armed forces
Barrage	a type of continuous intense artillery attack using guns firing high explosive or shrapnel shells; usually of relatively short duration before an infantry attack
Battalion	an army unit which consisted of 30 officers and 1,000 men
Bombardment	an artillery attack using long-range guns during heavy shells; it was intended to destroy the enemy defences and soldiers prior to an infantry attack
Bomber	an infantry bomber was a soldier specially trained in the use of grenades such as Mills bombs
Brigade	an army unit which consisted of about 5,000 soldiers; four battalions made a brigade but in February 1918 this was reduced to three

Company an army unit which consisted of about 225 soldiers; four sections formed a platoon; four platoons formed one company; four companies formed a battalion and were usually lettered A – D

Corps an army unit which consisted of about 50,000 soldiers; two divisions made a corps;also used of army units formed for specific purposes such as the Royal Army Medical Corps

Creeping barrage involved artillery fire moving forward in stages just ahead of the advancing infantry

Division an army unit which consisted of about 20,000; four brigades formed a division

Dixies large metal pots for food and drink

Enfilade to fire at an enemy from the side; to direct gunfire along the length of a target

Field Punishment No 1 Field Punishment No 1 was introduced after flogging was banned as a punishment in the British Army in 1881. A soldier was placed in fetters or other restraints and, while standing, was tied to a post or gun wheel for two hours a day for up to 21 days. This punishment was imposed 60,000 times during the war. .It was a severe physical and psychological ordeal. The term "crucifixion" was often used when the soldier being punished had his arms extended and tied, and his legs tied together.

Field Punishment No 2 This was similar to Field Punishment No 1 except the man was shackled but not fixed to anything for up to 21 days; it was a form of hard labour

Fosse ditch

Howitzer A type of cannon with a short barrel which fired a shell with a high trajectory and a steep descent

Minenwerfer a mine launcher; a short range mortar which was used to clear obstacles such as barbed wire,

Other ranks all the soldiers below the rank of an officer

Platoon consisted of about 50 men; four platoons made up a company

Redoubt an area, usually of earthworks, used to protect to soldiers when they are under attack and are outside the main defensive line

Section consisted of about 50 men; four sections formed a platoon

Stand to a duty whereby soldiers were to be ready for a possible enemy attack by taking up position on the trench fire step, rifle loaded, and bayonet fixed; this was done every day either just before dawn or just after dusk, the two most likely times for attack

Subaltern a junior officer below the rank of captain, especially a second lieutenant.

Trench mortar a type of gun with a short, broad barrel; it fired its shells at a steep angle so that they fell straight down on the enemy in their trenches

Bibliography

ADIE, Kate, Fighting on the Home Front The Legacy of Women in World War One (2013)

ALEXANDER, Jack, McCrae's Battalion The Story of the 16th Royal Scots (2003)

ATKINSON, C T, Devonshire Regiment, 1914 – 1918 (1926)

BECKETT, Ian, Home Front 1914 – 1918 How Britain survived the Great War (2006)

BECKETT, Ian, BOWMAN, Timothy and CONNOLLY, Mark, The British Army and the First World War (2017)

BEECROFT, Arthur, Gallipoli A Soldier's Story (2015)

BERRY, Peter Sain ley, The Ill-Fated Battalion The Story of the 7th (Leith) Royal Scots at Quintinshill and Gallipoli, 1915 (2013)

BIRD, Derek, The Spirit of the Troops is Excellent The 6th (Morayshire) Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders in the Great War 1914 – 1919 (2014)

BORASTON, J H & BAX, Cyril E O, The Eighth Division in War, 1914-1918 (1926)

BROWN, Alan, World War One and Scottish Football (2014)

BUCHAN, John, The History of the South African Forces in France (1920)

BUCHAN, John, The History of the Royal Scots Fusiliers (1678-1918) 1925

BUCHANAN, Sir George, The Tragedy of Mesopotamia (1928)

CAMPBELL, Colin, Engine of Destruction The 51st Highland Division in the Great War (2013)

CHARMAN, Terry, The First World War on the Home Front (2015)

CHERRY, Bruce, They Didn't Want to Die Virgins Sex and Morale in the British Army on the Western Front 1914 – 1918 (2016)

COLEMAN, E C, Khaki Jack The Royal Naval Division in the First World War (2014)

COOPER, John, It Might Hae Been Worse The Experiences of a Private Soldier During the Latter Half of the Great War (2015)

DE GROOT, Back in Blighty The British at Home in World War I (2014)

DICKSON, John, Heroes Departed Falkirk District during the First World War (1994)

DIXON, John, Magnificent But Not War The Battle for Ypres 1915 (2003)

DOYLE, Peter, Loos 1915 (2012)

DUNCAN, Robert, Pubs and Patriots: the drink crisis in Britain during World War One (2013)

ELLIOT, G F Scott, War History of the 5th Battalion King's Own Scottish Borderers (1928)

FALLS, Cyril, The Gordon Highlanders in the First World War 1914 – 1919 (1958)

FERGUSON, Niall, The Pity of War 1914 – 1918 (1998)

FLETCHER, Anthony, Life, Death and Growing Up on the Western Front (2013)

FOX, Colin et al, Arras to Cambrai: the Kitchener Battalions of the Royal Berkshire Regiment, 1917 (1997)

FOX, Colin et al, Their Duty Done : the Kitchener Battalions of the Royal Berkshire Regiment, 1918 (1998)

FRENCH, Craig, Friends Are Good on the Day of Battle The 51st (Highland) Division during the First World War (2017)

GILBERT, Adrian, Challenge of Battle The Real Story of the British Army in 1914 (2013)

GILLESPIE, A D 2nd Lieut, Letter from Flanders to His Home People (1916)

GILLON, Stair, The KOSB in the Great War (1930)

GRAHAM, H W Capt, The Life of a Tunnelling Company (1927)

GREENAWAY, John, Drink and British politics since 1830 (2003)

HALDANE, M M Lt-Col, A History of the Fourth Battalion The Seaforth Highlanders (1927)

HARRIS, J P & BARR, Niall, Amiens to the Armistice The BEF in the Hundred days' Campaign 8 August – 11 November 1918 (1998)

HART Peter Voices from the Front, An Oral History of the Great War (2015)

HARTLEY, John, Bully Beef and Biscuits (2015)

HOGG, T, The 7th Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders in France (1916)

HOLMES, Richard, The Western Front (1999)

HOWARD, Michael, A Part of History Aspects of the British Experience of the First World War (2008)

HUSSEY, A H & INMAN, D S, The Fifth Division in the Great War (1921)

HUTCHISON, Lt-Col G S, Machine Guns Their History and Tactical Development (Being also a History of the machine Gun Corps, 1916 – 1922), (1938)

JONES, Heather, Violence Against Prisoners of War Britain, France and Germany 1914 – 1920 (2011)

KEEGAN, John The First World War (2014)

LEE, Arthur Gould, No Parachute (2013 edition)

LEWIS-STEMPEL, John, Six Weeks The Short and Gallant Life of the British Officer in the First World War (2010)

LEWIS-STEMPEL, John, The War behind the Wire The Life, Death and Glory of British Prisoners of War 1914 – 1918 (2014)

LLOYD, Mark, The London Scottish in the Great War (2001)

LLOYD, Nick, Hundred Days The End of the Great War (2013)

LLOYD, Nick, Loos 1915 (2006)

LLOYD, Nick, Passchendaele A New History (2017)

MacDONALD, Lyn, Somme (2013)

MARDEN, Thomas Owen, A Short History of the 6th Division Aug 1914 – March 1919, (1919)

McDONALD, Catriona M M & McFARLAND, Scotland and the Great WaR (1999)

McNAB, Chris, Cambrai 1917 (2012)

MELVILLE, Michael Leslie, The Story of the Lovat Scouts 1900 – 1980 (2004)

MESSENGER, Charles, Call To Arms The British Army 1914 – 1918 (2005)

MORRISON, A D, To the Undying Memory of the officers, non-commissioned officers, and men who fell in the Great War (1925)

MOSIER, John, The Myth of the Great War A New Military History of World War One (2001)

MUNRO, Kevin, Scotland's First World War (2014)

MURE, Major A H, This Bloody Place With the Incomparable 29th (1919)

MUNBY, Lt-Col J E, A History of the 38th (Welsh) Division (1920)

MURRAY, Joseph, Gallipoli As I Saw It (1965)

NICOLSON, Juliet, The Great Silence 1918 – 1920 Living in the Shadow of the Great War (2009)

NICHOLLS, Jonathan, Cheerful Sacrifice The Battle of Arras 1917 (2005)

NICHOLSON, Sir C Lothian & MacMULLEN, H T, History of the East Lancashire Regiment in the Great War 1914 – 1918 (1936)

OATTS, Lt-Col L B, Proud Heritage The Story of the Highland Light Infantry 1882 – 1918 (1961)

ORAM, Gerard, Death Sentences passed by military courts of the British Army 1914 – 1924 (2005)

PARKER, Peter, The Last Veteran Harry Patch and the Legacy of War (2010)

PETRE, F Loraine, EWART, Wilfrid & LOWTHER, Maj-Gen Sir Cecil, The Scots Guards in the Great War (1925)

PITT, Barrie, 1918 The Last Act (1962)

PUTKOWSKI, Julian & SYKES, Julian, Shot At Dawn: executions in World War One by authority of the British Army Act (1998)

REID, Walter, Masterton, Gordon and Birch, Paul, Supreme Sacrifice A Small Village and the Great War (2016)

ROBERTS, Andrew, Elegy The First Day on the Somme, (2015)

ROBINSON, Philip, and CAVE, Nigel, The Underground War: Vimy Ridge to Arras (2014)

ROYLE, Trevor, The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (2008)

SEBAG-MONTEFIORE, Hugo, Somme Into the Breach (2016)

SHEFFIELD, Gary, The Chief Douglas Haig and the British Army (2011)

SHEFFIELD, Gary, Leadership in the Trenches: Officer-man relations, morale and discipline in the British Army in the era of the First World War (2000)

SIMKINS, Peter, Kitchener's Army The Raising of the New Armies 1914 – 1916 (2007)

SOTHEBY, Lt-Col Herbert G, The 10th Battalion Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders, 1914 – 1919 (1931)

SMITH, James, History of the 206th Field Company (1st Glasgow) Royal Engineers, 1915 – 1919 (1931)

SPIERS, Edward, The Scottish Soldier at War, (in Facing Armageddon: The First World War Experienced, Hugh Cecil & Peter Liddle, 1996)

STANLEY, Peter, Bad Characters Sex, Crime, Murder and Mutiny in the Great War (2012)

STEVENSON, David, 1914 – 1918 The History of the First World War (2004)

STONE, Norman, WORLD WAR ONE A Short History (2007)

STORY, Col H H, History of the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) 1910 – 1933 (1961)

STRACHAN, Hew, The First World War (2003)

STRATHBLANE First World War Project, A Village Remembers 1914 – 1919 (2014)

SUTHERLAND, D, War Diary of the Fifth Seaforth Highlanders (1920)

TALLETT, Kyle & TASKER, Trevor, Gavrelle (2000)

TAYLOR, A J P, The First World War An Illustrated History (1966)

THOMPSON, R R, The 52nd (Lowland) Division, 1914 – 1918 (1923)

TOWNSHEND, Charles, When God Made Hell The British Invasion of Mesopotamia and the Creation of Iraq 1914 – 1921, (2010)

VAN EMDEN, Richard, The Quick and the Dead Fallen Soldiers and Their Families in the Great War (2011)

WAKEFIELD, Alan & MOODY, Simon, Under the Devil's Eye The British Military Experience in Macedonia 1915 – 1918 (2011)

WARRINGTON, Peter, For Bravery in the Field Great War British Army Recipients of the Military Medal 1914 – 1920 A Register (2014)

WAUCHOPE, Maj-Gen A G, A History of the Black Watch [Royal Highlanders] in the Great War, 1914-1918 (1925)

WEIR, Alex, Come On, Highlanders Glasgow Territorials in the Great War (2005)

WEIR, Captain Neil, Mud and Bodies The War Diaries and Letrs of Captain N A C Weir, 1914-1920 Edited by Saul David (2013)

WESTLAKE, Roy, Tracing British Battalions on the Somme (2009)

WESTLAKE, Ray, British Battalions in France & Belgium 1914 (1997)

WHITE, Michael The One Direction Falkirk FC during World War One (1914)

WHITMORE, Lt-Col F H D C, The 10th (PWO) Royal Hussars and the Essex Yeomanry during the European War, 1914 – 1918 (1920)

WYLLY, Colonel H C, The Border Regiment in the Great War (1924)

YARNALL, John, Barbed Wire Disease British & German Prisoners of War, 1914-19 (2011)

YOUNG, Derek, Forgotten Scottish Voices from the Great War (20016)

Index of Soldiers on the Memorial

ADAM, John Pte 15, 232, 236, 252
AITKEN, Andrew Pte 15, 227, 242, 256
AITKEN, Daniel Pte 16, 221, 234, 250
ALLAN, John Pte 17, 227, 242, 256
ANDERSON, John Pte 17, 227, 235, 251
ANDERSON, William Cpl 17, 229, 245, 251
ARMIT, William Pte 18, 221, 238, 253
BAIRD, Alex AB 19, 231, 242, 257
BAIRD, James Pte 20, 221, 241, 255
BALFOUR, Joseph Dvr 20, 230, 247, 251
BINNIE, Alex Pte 20, 228, 236, 252
BINNIE, James Pte 21, 223, 237, 253
BINNIE, J A Pte 22, 223, 244, 255
BLAIR, Joseph Pte 23, 228, 239, 254
BORTHWICK, Abner L Cpl 23, 223, 236, 252
BROCK, G F Pte 24, 223, 241, 255
BROUGH, George Cpl 25, 230, 236, 252
BROWN, Allan AB 25, 231, 238, 253
BROWN, Frank Pte 26, 223, 244, 256
BROWN, Robert Pte 26, 232, 237, 252
BUCHANAN, Daniel Gnr 27, 229, 236, 252
BUIST, Alex Pte 27, 223, 235, 250
BURGES, J A S Lt 29, 228, 238, 253
CAMPBELL, James Pte 30, 232, 239, 254
CARMICHAEL, J A Pte 30, 232, 237, 252
CHESNEY, A K Pte 30, 223, 243, 250
CLARK, John A S 31, 226, 244, 256
COCKBURN, John Pte 31, 230, 236, 252
COOK, Alex Pte 32, 226, 242, 256
COOK, James Pte 32, 232, 243, 250
COWAN, James Pte 4, 33, 223, 242, 256
COWAN M.M., Thomas Pte 14, 34, 232, 245, 257
CROMBIE, Francis Cpl 35, 227, 243, 256
CUNNINGHAM, A B Pte 36, 228, 243, 251
CUNNINGHAM Robert Pte 36, 223, 238, 253
DALGETTY, Ross Pte 37, 232, 241, 255
DAVIE, John AB 38, 231, 244, 254
DAVIE, Peter Pte 6, 14, 38, 230, 246, 251
DEA, James Pte 14, 39, 223, 234, 250
DICK, Andrew L Cpl 40, 221, 239, 254
DICK, John Pte 14, 41, 223, 246, 254
DICK, William CSM 41, 221, 246, 256
DICKMAN, William L Cpl 42, 227, 235, 251
DOBBIE, Douglas Pte 43, 223, 243, 251
DOBBIE, R S Sgt 43, 229, 241, 256
DONLEY, David Lt 44, 227, 244, 254
DONOGHUE, James Pte 46, 223, 239, 254
DOUGLAS, A G AB 14, 46, 231, 247, 255
DOUGLAS, Thomas Pte 47, 227, 242, 256
DUFF, J C Pte 48, 225, 242, 256
DUNCAN, James Pte 49, 233, 238, 253
DUNCAN, James Pte 49, 226, 244, 256
DUNCAN, John Pte 50, 232, 239, 254
EASTON, Edward Pte 50, 223, 244, 254
EDGAR, Robert Pte 51, 226, 240, 254
ESSLEMONT, Alex Pte 51, 223, 244, 254
EWING, David Spr 52, 229, 244, 255
FAIR, Archibald Pte 53, 232, 247, 255
FERGUSON, James Pte 54, 227, 243, 257
FERGUSON, J A AB 54, 231, 244, 252
FERGUSON, William Pte 54, 232, 235, 251
FINLAY, Andrew L Sgt 14, 55, 221, 235, 251
FLEMING, Robert Pte 57, 232, 236, 252
FLEMING, Thomas Pte 58, 232, 244, 254
FLEMING, William Pte 59, 223, 238, 253
FOOTE, Thomas Pte 60, 223, 244, 254
FORRESTER, Thomas Pte 61, 228, 247, 250
FORSYTH, William Pte 61, 226, 236, 252
GALBRAITH, James Gnr 62, 229, 242, 256
GALBRAITH, T F Pte 62, 229, 245, 257
GARDINER, Andrew Pte 62, 228, 247, 257
GARDNER, James Pte 4, 14, 63, 226, 241, 255
GARDNER, Thomas Pte 64, 231, 239, 254
GENTLES, Alex Pte 65, 230, 246, 254
GIBB, Alex AB 65, 231, 238, 253
GIBSON, J E L Cpl 66, 221, 242, 256
GIBSON, W E Gnr 66, 229, 238, 253
GILLESPIE, Fulton Chf S 67, 231, 247, 255
GLANVILLE, David Pte 67, 230, 246, 257
GLEGG, John Pte 68, 226, 237, 252
GODSON, W I Spr 70, 229, 244, 252
GOOD, William Pte 71, 232, 243, 252
GORRIE, James Pte 71, 233, 239, 254
GRAHAM, Alick Pte 72, 233, 239, 254
GRAHAM, George L Cpl 72, 227, 235, 250
GRAHAM, James Pte 73, 223, 234, 250
GRANT, Francis Pte 73, 227, 243, 250
GRANT, John L Cpl 74, 227, 242, 256
GRAY, Samuel Pte 75, 232, 235, 251
HAGUE, C P L Cpl 76, 225, 242, 251
HAGUE, M.M., S G Lt 77, 232, 235, 256
HAIRE, William Pte 78, 230, 235, 251

HAMILL, Edward AB 78, 231, 238, 253
HAMILTON, Hugh Pte 79, 233, 236, 252
HAMILTON, John Pte 80, 233, 241, 255
HAMILTON, William Pte 81, 223, 235, 251
HANNAH, Thomas Pte 81, 230, 245, 251
HARLEY, John Pte 82, 223, 235, 251
HASTINGS, Alex Cpl 83, 221, 243, 251
HASTINGS, John L Cpl 83, 228, 238, 253
HEAVER, F J Pte 84, 223, 238, 253
HEGGISON, Robert Pte 84, 227, 243, 251
HENDERSON, Peter Gnr 84, 229, 237, 252
HILL, Alex BSM 85, 230, 245, 250
HILL, James Gnr 85, 230, 236, 252
HILL, Robert AB 86, 231, 237, 253
HILL, Rowland L Cpl 86, 221, 235, 251
HODGE, Frank Cpl 88, 227, 247, 254
HODGE, Robert Pte 89, 226, 236, 252
HODGE, R T AB 89, 231, 237, 253
HOTSON, Walter L Cpl 90, 228, 243, 252
HUNTER, A S MC Capt 91, 221, 241, 256
HUNTER, R G Lt 8, 14, 91, 221, 238, 253
HUNTER, William Pte 92, 228, 239, 254
HUSKIE, David Gnr 93, 230, 246, 256
HUSKIE, James L Cpl 93, 221, 234, 250
HUTTON, Cornelius Pte 94, 228, 236, 252
INGLIS, Thomas CSM 94, 221, 236, 252
INGLIS, Thomas Cpl 95, 221, 238, 253
JARDINE, Thomas Pte 96, 232, 237, 252
JARVIE, William Pte 96, 223, 236, 252
JENKINS, Donald Pte 97, 223, 244, 254
JOHNMAN, David Pte 97, 223, 234, 250
JOHNSTON, Andrew Pte 98, 223, 240, 254
JOHNSTON, George Pte 99, 230, 242, 256
JOHNSTONE, Charles Pte 100, 230, 244, 254
JOINER, J M Pte 101, 225, 236, 252
JONES, J F Maj 102, 221, 245, 253
KEMP, A R Pte 103, 223, 241, 256
KEMP, Daniel AB 103, 231, 237, 253
KEMP, William AM 104, 229, 247, 257
KERR, William L Cpl 104, 223, 244, 255
LAING, David Pte 105, 227, 235, 250
LAING, J H Pte 106, 223, 238, 253
LAIRD, Charles Pte 107, 223, 234, 250
LAIRD, M.M., Malcolm Pte 107, 223, 238, 253
LANGLANDS, David Pte 108, 233, 239, 254
LAPSLEY, Samuel Pte 109, 227, 244, 255
LAVERIE, John L Cpl 109, 226, 234, 250
LENNOX, Arch Pte 110, 226, 243, 257
LEWIS, Joseph Pte 111, 226, 235, 251
LEWIS, William Cpl 111, 232, 246, 256
LOGAN, Alex Pte 111, 229, 246, 256
LORN, Francis Pte 14, 112, 223, 246, 254
MAITLAND, Charles Pte 113, 226, 240, 255
MALCOLM, Alexander AB 113, 231, 244, 254
MARR, Robert Pte 114, 232, 238, 244, 255
MARTIN, Hugh Pte 3, 14, 115, 223, 238, 253
MENZIES, J E Pte 116, 223, 245, 250
MENZIES, Thomas L Cpl 116, 227, 235, 250
MILLAR, Henry Pte 117, 233, 239, 254
MILLER, J A M Lt 117, 229, 238, 253
MILLER, Thomas Pte 119, 223, 239, 254
MILNE, A D Pte 119, 227, 244, 254
MITCHELL, George Sgt 120, 226, 244, 254
MITCHELL, M.M., Jas LS 120, 231, 242, 256
MONTEITH, M.C., Robt RSM 121, 221, 241, 256
MORRISON, John L Cpl 122, 221, 242, 256
MUNN, David Pte 123, 226, 240, 255
MURRAY, Robert L Cpl 124, 221, 234, 250
McARTHUR, A F Gnr 125, 230, 236, 252
McCAIG, Robert AB 125, 231, 245, 251
McCASKILL, Kenneth Lt 126, 227, 242, 256
McCOWAN, Andrew Pte 126, 221, 241, 256
McCULLOCH, Alex Pte 127, 223, 242, 256
McCULLOCH, R F Pte 127, 223, 238, 253
McDONALD, John Pte 129, 225, 235, 250
McDONALD, William Pte 129, 233, 240, 254
McDOUGAL(L), George Pte 130, 226, 237, 252
McEWAN, David Pte 131, 225, 244, 253
McEWAN, John Pte 131, 230, 235, 251
McEWEN, William Pte 132, 225, 240, 254
McFARLANE, George P-Maj 135, 230, 247, 250
McFARLANE, John Pte 135, 230, 241, 255
McGREGOR, Robert Dvr 135, 230, 242, 256
McGREGOR, William Pte 135, 225, 238, 253
McILROY, J B Pte 136, 229, 238, 253
McKENDRICK, Andrew Pte 3, 14, 136, 230, 239, 254
MacKENZIE, Alex AB 136, 231, 237, 253
McLACHLAN, Duncan Pte 138, 225, 234, 250
McLARDIE, Arch Lt 138, 221, 245, 251
McLAREN, John Pte 139, 232, 244, 252
McLEOD, Donald Gnr 140, 230, 240, 254
McLUCKIE, David Pte 142, 228, 234, 250
McLUCKIE, John Pte 142, 228, 241, 255
McLURE, Andrew Gnr 143, 230, 243, 256
McNICOL, Matthew Pte 144, 225, 239, 254
McPHAIL, Hector AB 4, 14, 145, 231, 241, 255
NISBET, Colin L Cpl 146, 221, 238, 253
ORR, A R Capt 146, 232, 235, 251
OSBORNE, William Pte 147, 225, 242, 256
PARKER, Robert L Cpl 148, 227, 242, 256

PATERSON, Richard Pte 149, 227, 241, 256
PENMAN, James Pte 149, 225, 244, 255
PENMAN, Peter Pte 150, 225, 235, 251
PENMAN, Thomas Cpl 151, 232, 235, 252
PENMAN, William Pte 152, 232, 235, 250
PHILIP, Henry Cpl 152, 221, 244, 252
PHILIP, William Pte 153, 225, 245, 251
PHILP, Andrew Sig 3, 154, 231, 247, 253
PHILP, Robert L Cpl 155, 232, 240, 255
PRESTON, Harry AB 155, 231, 237, 253
PROVAN, James Pte 156, 228, 241, 256
QUIN(N), James AB 157, 231,
RAE, Thomas LS 158, 231, 241, 255
RAE, Thomas Pte 159,232, 240, 254
RAMSAY, John Pte 160, 230, 244, 255
RANKINE, Dugald Pte 160, 233, 241, 256
RANKINE, N D Pte 161, 232, 234, 250
REID, Arthur AB 14, 161, 231, 245, 251
REID, Ebenezer AB 162, 231, 242, 256
REID, Fred Sgt 163, 221, 238, 253
REID, George Lt 164, 229, 242, 256
REID, Robert Pte 164, 232, 236, 251
REID, William Pte 165, 230, 238, 253
REID, William AB 166, 231, 242, 256
REID, William Spr 167, 229, 243, 257
REILLY, Joseph Gnr 168, 230, 241, 256
RENNIE, M.M., Eben Pte 169, 226, 243, 256
RITCHIE, George L Cpl 169, 227, 241, 256
ROBB, Thomas Cpl 170, 221, 246, 252
ROBERTSON, Alex Pte 3, 14, 171, 225, 237, 253
ROBERTSON, J H Cpl 172, 221, 244, 255
ROBERTSON, James Pte 173, 232, 247, 250
ROBERTSON, William Pte 175, 226, 239, 254
RUNCIMAN, David Pte 175, 233, 241, 255
RUSSELL, D W Pte 175, 230, 237, 252
SCOTT, James Pte 176, 225, 234, 250
SCOTT, James Pte 177, 225, 235, 251
SCOTT, James Pte 177, 227, 242, 256
SCOTT, John Pte 178, 225, 240, 255
SCOTT, Walter Pte 178, 228, 238, 254
SCOTT, William Pte 180, 232, 236, 252
SHERRIFF, A N Lt 181, 228, 234, 250
SHERRIFF, J G Lt 182, 221, 234, 250
SHIRRA, James Pte 183, 228, 243, 251
SILCOCK, Robert Sgt 183, 221, 236, 252
SIM, James Cpl 184, 221, 247, 252
SINCLAIR, William AB 185, 231, 245, 250
SMITH, James Pte 185, 225, 244, 255
SMITH, Robert Pte 186, 225, 237, 253
SMITH, William Pte 187, 226, 234, 250
SMITH, William Gnr 188, 230, 239, 254
SNEDDON, John Pte 188, 225, 244, 255
SPENCE, Alex Sgt 189, 227, 239, 254
STARK, Robert Pte 189, 232, 243, 252
STEEDMAN, George L Cpl 190, 225, 240, 255
STEELE, James L Cpl 191, 221, 240, 255
STEVENSON, Andrew Pte 191, 225, 243, 251
STEWART, Robert Pte 192, 225, 241, 255
STEWART, William Pte 193, 226, 236, 252
STODDART, J W Pte 193, 225, 246, 255
SYMON, Alex Pte 194, 227, 235, 251
TASKER, Alex Sgt 195, 221, 236, 252
TASKER, William AB 195, 231, 238, 253
TAYLOR, John Sgt 196, 226, 238, 254
TAYLOR, John Pte 197, 233, 241, 255
TAYLOR, Robert Pte 198, 225, 236, 252
TAYLOR, William L Sgt 198, 221, 236, 252
TAYLOR, William Pte 199, 225, 245, 250
THOMPSON, William Pte 199, 227, 243, 256
THOMSON, Graham AM 200, 229, 247, 257
THOMSON, Henry Pte 200, 233, 243, 250
THOMSON, John Sgt 201, 221, 235, 251
THURSBY, Robert Pte 202, 226, 238, 253
TOUGH, Thomas Pte 2, 14, 203, 226, 236, 252
TRAYNER, George Pte 204, 228, 243, 256
WADE, Grahame H Capt 205, 221, 234, 250
WALKER, Alex Pte 206, 227, 245, 251
WALKER, George Pte 206, 227, 234, 250
WALKER, Malcolm R Lt 207, 221, 238, 253
WALLACE, George AB 208, 231, 237, 253
WATSON, George Pte 209, 226, 237, 252
WATSON, J F AB 209, 231, 238, 253
WATSON, M.M., Peter Pte 210, 225, 238, 253
WATSON, M.M., Robt L Cpl 211, 233, 241, 255
WAUGH, Robert Cpl 211, 232, 241, 255
WAUGH, William Pte 212, 228, 241, 255
WHITE, Daniel Pte 213, 225, 235, 251
WHITE S A Pte 214, 229, 241, 255
WHITTET, Thomas Pte 3, 14, 215, 233, 240, 255
WHYTE, George Pte 216, 232, 238, 253
WHYTE, Henry Cpl 216, 221, 237, 252
WILSON, David AB 217, 231, 244, 254
WILSON, D F Pte 218, 225, 234, 250
WOOD, John Pte 218, 233, 246, 254