*Alan Gow • Richard Hannah • Robert Jardine*

# WITHOUT FEAR

## WORLD WAR I STORIES OF THE MEN ON THE BO'NESS WAR MEMORIAL

THREE HUNDRED AND NINETY EIGHT local men are listed on the Bo'ness War Memorial as having fallen during World War One. As the years have passed so too have memories faded and, despite remembrance each year, little is known about these individuals. What was their family background? Where did they live and work? When did they join up and who with? Where did they fight? How and where did they die?

Now for the first time local researchers Alan Gow, Richard Hannah and Robert Jardine reveal the stories behind each of the names, uncovering tales of gallantry, unspeakable horror, family tragedy, strange coincidences, sheer bad luck and redemption. Unbelievable stories of working men from all backgrounds and ages. Men who grew up in the familiar streets of Bo'ness, from Furnace Row, Foundry Square and Foredale Terrace. Men who worked as coal miners, foundry moulders, dock labourers, merchant seamen, shop workers, woodyard workers, railwaymen, bakers and bankers. They fought in the infamous battles of Mons, Arras, the Somme, Passchendaele, in the mud-filled trenches of France and Flanders, and further afield in Germany, Gallipoli, Jerusalem, Baghdad and on the High Seas.

The result is a unique book that will help the local community and future generations to further understand that these soldiers, sailors and airmen were ordinary townsfolk that went through extraordinary circumstances to ensure our current freedoms. They were the embodiment of the Bo'ness town motto: *Sine Metu - Without Fear.*

# WITHOUT FEAR • THE BO'NESS WAR MEMORIAL

*Gow • Hannah • Jardine*

ALAN GOW (middle) RICHARD HANNAH (left) and ROBERT JARDINE (right) are three local men from Bo'ness who got together online due to a shared interest in local history. They are all members of Bo'ness Town Trust Association that was established in the early 1980s to safeguard, improve and promote an interest in the history and preservation of the buildings and amenities of Bo'ness. What started as a social media project soon grew arms and legs. A successful application for funding was made to the Heritage Fund's "First World War: then and now project" to make the idea for a book a reality. Their research made full use of modern genealogical and historical resources. Additional information, photos and family histories were obtained from the very generous people of Bo'ness, and from contributors throughout the world, who had a family connection to the men on the Bo'ness War Memorial.

The project website will be constantly updated with the latest research and can be found at www.bwm.scot

HERITAGE FUND

*Jacket design by* James Hutcheson

# WITHOUT FEAR

## WORLD WAR I STORIES OF THE MEN ON THE BO'NESS WAR MEMORIAL

This illustrated book tells the stories of the 398 men of Bo'ness who died on, or following, active service during World War One. Their fascinating stories are revealed including family background, employment history, enlistment, service record, circumstances of death and places of commemoration along with historical background information on the War and its local impact. The book reveals how the town motto, *Sine Metu - Without Fear*, became a fitting epithet for a lost generation.

ISBN 978-0-9560480-9-7

# Without Fear

*The World War I stories of*
*the men on the*
*Bo'ness War Memorial*

Alan Gow  Richard Hannah  Robert Jardine

BO'NESS TOWN TRUST ASSOCIATION

**Without Fear**

Published in 2019
by Bo'ness Town Trust Association

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# *IN MEMORIAM*

**Private Alexander Gow**
S/2918, Seaforth Highlanders

**Private James Gow**
276419, Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders

**Private Lawrence White**
992, Royal Scots

**Private Hugh Hannah**
1006, Royal Scots

**Gunner Robert Jardine**
175863, Royal Field Artillery

**Private Alexander Jack**
24074, North Staffordshire Regiment

# *Foreword*

The 100th anniversary of World War One has offered communities all over Britain the opportunity to reflect on that terrible conflict and the impact it had on the generations that followed. Every village and town in the country sent their sons to war in the confident expectation of a swift victory and a return to normality within a matter of months. But, as the hundreds of memorials testify, the reality was very different. In Falkirk district alone there are 17 of these commemorating more than 3000 men who died and every year they are remembered by new generations who honour the fallen and affirm that "At the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we will remember them".

The town of Bo'ness made a huge sacrifice with 398 names on the War Memorial which was unveiled on 12th July 1924 in the centre of the community overlooking the River Forth which was the gateway for many of them to the theatres of war in France, Turkey, Greece, Palestine and Egypt. A maritime community, Bo'ness sent hundreds of sailors to war and many were lost in the battle for control of the seas around our shores and beyond.

As part of the centenary three Bo'ness men with a deep interest in the story of the town's contribution, as well as family connections to some of the dead, decided to investigate the background of those whose names appear on the Memorial and the results of their considerable endeavours are recorded in this book. Alan Gow, Robert Jardine and Richard Hannah came together by the modern miracle of internet technology as each went hunting independently for information and it wasn't long before they were working as a team ploughing through military and family records, newspaper articles and obituaries, World War I websites and published accounts of regiments, battles and so on. It was an enormous undertaking as the size of this book testifies but they stayed the course and have produced a fantastic record which will be a true gift to future generations of Bo'ness folk.

It was certainly no easy task because after such a long passage of time records are often hard to find, scarce or missing altogether and frequently inaccurate or just plain wrong. The authors have been very tenacious in hunting down material and as a result have produced an account which follows the progress of the War from 1914 through the years of conflict placing the Bo'ness soldiers and sailors in the context of the places and battles where they died and are, for the most part, buried or commemorated. Where possible there are photographs of the soldiers mostly drawn from poor quality newspaper images but often the only record we have of the faces of the fallen.

As well as the stories from the battlefields the authors have included much additional information on the aftermath of war in the area, the building of the War Memorial, the prisoners of war and those awarded medals for distinguished service. They also provide information on other Bo'ness memorials in churches and schools.

This book has been published by Bo'ness Town Trust Association and funded by the Heritage Fund and both deserve the thanks of all of us. But the real debt we owe is to Alan Gow, Robert Jardine and Richard Hannah whose hard work and determination, mastery of the new information technology and ability to communicate their findings in a clear and readable way makes this a book that will stand the test of time and remain as a very fitting tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice a century ago.

Ian Scott
Chairman
Falkirk Local History Society

# *Introduction*

The World War One centenary commemorations of 2014 to 2019 have resulted in local communities throughout the United Kingdom reflecting on the sacrifices made. Whilst all communities were affected by the Great War some were hit particularly hard. The 398 names on the Bo'ness War Memorial, one of the biggest in Falkirk District, not only bear testament to the willingness and bravery of the Bo'ness people to serve, without fear, but also to the ultimate sacrifice made by those individuals and the wider unseen consequences for their families and friends.

It's easy to miss the names of those who fell in World War One as you pass by the Bo'ness War Memorial. The brass plate containing the names faces over the Forth on the north elevation of the 27 foot high granite cenotaph. From the road it is hidden. You need to walk around to that side to be able to make out the surprisingly small inscription. Although remembrance rightly occurs each year, in many ways the reasons for the names being there on the Memorial had somehow been forgotten. Other than the name on a brass plate, very little was known by the local community about the stories behind many of the names on the Memorial. We were determined to correct this by discovering the story of each individual, including family background, employment history, enlistment, service record and circumstances of death. A stated objective of our project was to determine the location of the last resting place of each individual or commemoration to those who were missing in action. We were asked to carry out this research by Bo'ness Town Trust Association (BTTA), established in the early 1980s to safeguard, improve and promote an interest in the history and preservation of the buildings and amenities of the town. Bo'ness has a rich heritage with important historical links to the Roman period. The town marks the eastern extent of the Antonine Wall, named as an extension to the Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site by UNESCO in July 2007. By the 18th century Bo'ness had become Scotland's second largest port after Leith. It had also become an important centre for the production of salt from seawater evaporated over coal fires, the production of pottery, distilling and coal mining. Recently the remarkable circular Hippodrome cinema built in 1911 has been restored,

and the work of the Scottish Railway Preservation Society continues to draw visitors to the Museum of Scottish Railways and the town centre itself. When we were considering a name for the project we had to look no further than the town coat of arms, based on the device on an old town crier's bell dated 1647, which is reputed to have belonged to the United General Sea Box Society of Borrowstounness. A three-masted ship, in full sail to denote prosperity, recalls the town's history as a major seaport. Underneath sits the latin phrase *Sine Metu* meaning "Without Fear".

We were very lucky to make a successful application for funding to the Heritage Fund's "First World War: then and now project" and we are very grateful to them for helping us make the project a reality. The research made full use of modern genealogical and historical resources. These included local and national archives, online records, contemporary local and national newspaper archives, service records, family history resources, personal and family papers, church records and more. Additional information on family histories was gathered from the very generous people of Bo'ness, and throughout the world, who had a family connection to the men. Within the small brass plate on the War Memorial we have discovered unbelievable tales of gallantry, including the humble hero from the Miller Pit who won the Distinguished Conduct Medal, stoically resisting the enemy but who succumbed to the flu on his return home. Tales of heroism such as the Bo'ness footballer who juggled German grenades and threw them back at the enemy. Of unspeakable horror such as wounded men bayoneted to death, or prisoners of war being kept in filthy conditions and dying of disease. Of the smiling Bo'ness miners who volunteered to become Navy stokers and who were lost at sea in the Battle of Jutland. The unbelievable story of two mothers from different sides connecting to return the lost possessions of a dead son. Of whole families wiped out. Of the only two British war graves in one cemetery - one from Bo'ness, one from Linlithgow - local lads resting together in a corner of France. Of strange coincidences and sheer bad luck. Of the unseen costs of war such as the wives, children, fathers & mothers who had to live with the loss of their loved ones. Stories spanning the globe from the mud-filled trenches of France & Flanders to Germany, Gallipoli, Jerusalem, Baghdad and the High Seas.

This project intended to address the existing knowledge gap and involved local people of all generations in shining a new light on the sacrifices made by each individual. We hope that the information obtained will help the local community to further understand that these individuals were ordinary townsfolk that went through extraordinary circumstances to ensure our current freedoms. When we set out we hoped that the project would help to promote local pride and identity, and provide an ongoing resource that can be shared with, and built upon, by future generations, also adding to the national collection of World War One research. In doing so, the information we have provided, and the uses it may be put to in future, will act as a reminder of the horror and futility of war and the importance of ensuring peace in our times.

# *About this book*

This is not a definitive history of World War One. It is the story of the so-called Great War as it relates to Bo'ness, giving an account of the most terrible of all wars through the lives and experiences of the local people that fought and died, and the families and friends they left behind. It is also very much the story of those who came back, who lived to tell the tale of their fallen comrades, and were witnesses to the horrors that unfolded in front of them. Due to lack of space there are necessarily many important campaigns, battles and actions omitted and readers will hopefully be encouraged to read further around wider events in the context of those involving the fallen of Bo'ness.

With regard to the layout of the book, the biographies of the men are entitled with the name that appears on the Bo'ness War Memorial. This can be slightly confusing as there were inscription errors, and the names in the biographies themselves are amended as appropriate. Use of the common Bo'ness surname Snedden/Sneddon is worth paying particular attention to. The text of the biographies contains information such as full name, date of birth, family information, addresses and marriage dates. Much of this information has been obtained from the official records rather than from newspaper or internet sources and therefore the reader may note some discrepancies. In relation to age we have used Commonwealth War Grave Commission (CWGC) information unless the birth certificate shows this is inaccurate.

Military information was obtained from service records where these are available. Unfortunately only about 40% of Army service records survived the Blitz during World War 2, when the building holding these records, the War Office Repository in Arnside Street, London, took a direct hit by incendiary bombs dropped by the Luftwaffe in September, 1940. Where there are no service records, CWGC information, medal records, effects records and battalion war diaries, battalion or regimental histories, many of which are available online, were the main sources. Where known, details of the last resting place of each individual is provided, with cemetery details and grave location. Where there is no known grave we have provided details of the memorial where the name of the casualty is commemorated. Occasionally this will say the man is commemorated on, for example, "Pozieres Memorial, panel 13 and 14". This is not a mistake, it reflects the fact that the man's regiment spans the two (or more) panels on the particular memorial, and his name may appear on either.

The local newspapers the Bo'ness Journal and the Linlithgowshire Gazette provided much of the remaining information through obituary notices and news articles, enabling us to give a rounder picture of the person's life and interests. In particular we were able to determine the occupation of most of the men prior to enlistment. This gives a vivid picture of the thriving industry and varied trade sectors in Bo'ness in 1914.

Reading the biographies in isolation may be fairly repetitive for the reader, but the information is laid out in this way to be of use to future researchers, whether looking at individual, family, local or military history. For each period of the war we have provided an opening narrative to try and give context to the theatre of war and location of where the individual, highlighted in bold, was fighting when they lost their life.

Although all of the names on the Memorial are those of men, this book is also about the sacrifices made by wives, girlfriends, mothers, sisters and daughters who had to deal with the loss of their loved ones, in some cases left to raise families on their own, or to deal with losing husbands, brothers, fathers and sons in the same family. When remembering the dead we must also remember those that suffered immeasurable loss and the associated health issues that were rarely spoken about one hundred years ago, and even up until recently.

Isabella and Neil Stanners with their child.
Neil was killed at Passchendaele, 1917

# *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 |
| Bgde | Brigade |
| 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 |
| CWGC | Commonwealth War Graves Commission |
| DCM | Distinguished Conduct Medal |
| Div | Division |
| Div Amm Col | Divisional Ammunition Column |
| DSO | Distinguished Service Order |
| Dvr | Driver |
| EEF | Egyptian Expeditionary Force |
| Fld Amb | Field Ambulance |
| Fusrs | Fusiliers |
| GH | General Hospital |
| GHQ | General Headquarters |
| GSW | Gunshot wound |
| Hdrs | Highlanders |
| HLI | Highland Light Infantry |
| HMS | His Majesty's Ship |
| HMHS | His Majesty's Hospital Ship |
| HMT | His Majesty's Transport |
| IEF | Indian Expeditionary Force |
| KORL | King's Own Royal Lancaster |
| KOSB | King's Own Scottish Borderers |
| KOYLI | King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry |
| LS | Leading Seaman |
| MC | Military Cross |
| MG | Machine gun |
| MGC | Machine Gun Corps/Company |
| MM | Military Medal |
| MMR | Mercantile Marine Reserve |
| MTB | Motor Torpedo Boat |
| NCO | Non-commissioned officer |
| OC | Officer Commanding |
| OR | Other ranks |
| POW | Prisoner of War |
| 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 |
| RN | Royal Navy |
| RND | Royal Naval Division |
| RNR | Royal Naval Reserve |
| RNVR | Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve |
| RFA | Royal Fleet Auxiliary |
| RMS | Royal Mail Ship/Steamship |
| RS | Royal Scots |
| RSF | Royal Scots Fusiliers |
| RSM | Regimental Sergeant-Major |
| RWF | Royal Welsh Fusiliers |
| SAA | Small Arms Ammunition |
| SMS | Seiner Majestät Schiff (HMS) |
| SS | Steam Ship |
| Sge Bty | Siege Battery |
| Sig | Signaller |
| TM | Trench Mortar |
| VAD | Voluntary Aid Detachment |
| VC | Victoria Cross |

# *British Army Chain of Command in WW1*

To help with the terminology used in this book, it is useful to give a brief overview of the chain of command within the British Army in WW1 starting with a single soldier in a Section:

**Section**

8 to 10 soldiers commanded by a Corporal or Lance Corporal.

**Platoon**

Four Sections, 40 soldiers, commanded by a Lieutenant or Second Lieutenant.

**Company**

Four Platoons, around 200 soldiers, commanded by a Major or Captain.

**Battalion**

Four Companies, around 900 to 1000 soldiers with Machine Gun Platoon, commanded by a Lieutenant-Colonel.

**Brigade**

Four Battalions, around 4000 soldiers, commanded by a Brigadier-General.

**Division**

Usually three Brigades, around 12000 soldiers, commanded by a Major-General.

**Corps**

Usually 3 or 4 Divisions, around 60000 soldiers, commanded by a Lieutenant-General.

**Army**

Usually 4 Corps, around 300000 soldiers, commanded by a General.

**Army Group**

Around 2000000 soldiers, commanded by a Field Marshal.

# *Acknowledgements*

Firstly, and most importantly, we wish to acknowledge the support given by the Heritage Fund, 'First World War: then and now' grant programme, without which this book, and the Without Fear project, would not have been realised. We are grateful to all staff at the Heritage Fund for their help and assistance.

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All other photos were taken by the authors, or are from free online sources.

## *Feedback*

With a project of this magnitude and a book containing years of research there will undoubtedly be inaccuracies, errors and omissions, and for these we would apologise in advance. We would also invite information in this regard to be submitted to us for future corrections to be made. We also hope that the information database can be added to in time by future research and new sources of information being made available. We would particularly welcome images of those men who are not photographed here, and information in relation to any other relevant material. Please contact us at our website www.bwm.scot

The Toll of War: Bo'ness Lads with the 9th Highland Light Infantry at Ripon. Back row (left to right): Ptes J. B. Haig, (Grahamsdyke Road); Robert Wilson (Braehead); Neil McCallum (Grange Loan). Front row - Ptes A. Thow (Corbiehall); B. King (Bonnytoun Terrace); J. White (Jane Terrace); and Robert Leishman (Union Terrace). Wilson and McCallum died at the Somme in 1916, Leishman was killed in action near Arras in 1917. The others survived.

## *Special thanks by the authors*

Alan Gow - "I would also like to thank Gillian McLean, Rachel Gow, all family and friends. This book is dedicated to my parents Bridget and John Gow".

Richard Hannah - "Thanks to my wife Elizabeth and son Cameron for their support throughout the project and to my late father William for his support and company on our trip to the Somme".

Robert Jardine - "I would like to say a general thanks to all family and friends for their encouragement and help, and a special thanks to Gail for her patience and understanding during the last two years".

# *A Lost Generation*

A familiar image of the Bo'ness Fair main characters from 1906 - only a few years later three of these boys would be killed during World War One. James Williamson, Yeoman of the Guard (first left) who died at Gallipoli; David Grant, Lord in Waiting (3rd from the right) who died from wounds at Arras in 1916 and Andrew Watters, Sword Bearer (2nd from right) who fell at Passchendaele.

James Williamson

David Grant

Andrew Watters

CHAPTER 1

# *Bo'ness in 1914*

In 1914, Bo'ness was a thriving industrial town. The 1911 census recorded a population of 14034 living in the burgh and parish.

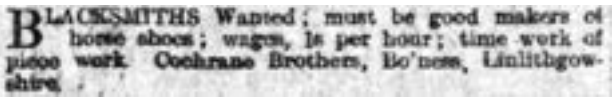
In the late 18th century Bo'ness was regarded as the second port in Scotland. These days were now gone but the important role that the sea still played was illustrated by the presence of consulates for Denmark, Netherlands, Russia, Sweden and Norway in the town.

Coal was King in Bo'ness and the dock allowed pitwood to be imported direct from Scandinavia. Pit prop yards stretched along the shore line to meet the demands of the Kinneil, Bridgeness and Carriden Coal Companies. Other timbers were also imported and there were many wood yards and sawmills. A timber basin stretched from the dock to Grangepans.

Coal was both exported and shipped elsewhere in Britain and ships were loaded by means of four coal hoists that stood on the edge of the dock. Pig-iron and general goods were also exported. Chief imports were timber, esparto grass, grain, iron ore, phosphate and bones.

From the harbour, the Carron Line ran a weekly steamer service to London. For those that wanted to travel, but a little closer to home, there was the railway station in Seaview Place. The branch line gave access to the main Edinburgh-Glasgow line at Manuel.

On 28th November 1914, the Admiralty closed Bo'ness dock till the end of the war. Around this time the Cochrane Brothers had taken over the old Seaview Foundry and opened a large scale horseshoe factory. To compensate for the dock closure, the Government would give a great deal of work to Bo'ness and the horseshoe factory was no exception. By February 1915 it employed 200 men and produced 20000 pairs per week supplying the home market and the military, who, over the war period, had one million horses in service. Before the war, Britain had bought most of its horseshoes from Germany.


BLACKSMITHS Wanted; must be good makers of horse shoes; wages, 8s per hour; time work of piece work. Cochrane Brothers, Bo'ness, Linlithgowshire.

The nearby Dock Foundry was owned by Bo'ness Iron Company who would go on to leave their name in many of Britain's streets on their famous manhole covers, or gundies are they are known locally. Further to the east, along Links Road beyond the Gas Works, was Ballantine's New Grange Foundry (pictured below), still going strong in 2019.

The West Lothian Pottery in Grangepans and nearby Bridgeness Pottery were in full production and they also benefitted from Government contracts. The war would soon give them a theme for a new range of wares in the form of patriotic bowls.

At the west end of Corbiehall stood Thomas Ovens and Sons' Chemical Manure Works. Bones were shipped in from Europe and ground into bone meal hence the locals' name for the place – the Bone Works. Opposite was Bo'ness Distillery (smoking chimney in photo on page 3) which was owned by James Calder & Co.

There was a wide variety of bustling trade in Bo'ness town centre before the war. Clothes shoppers were spoilt for choice with Ballantine's Drapery Stores at East Partings, Griffiths and Oliver's in South Street, W. Turnbull, St Andrew's Buildings, Edward B. McNaught, Outfitter, at 1 North Street, James Watt, The Speciality House at 85-87 South Street and John Peace at South Street (and Grangepans), who also sold furniture, beds and bedding. Bo'ness gentlemen could also visit Connacher's at Victoria House, where they could find all types of suits and overcoats made to measure, using the latest colourings and materials.

Based at 25 Kinneil Street, Neil McColl, cabinet maker, upholsterer and French polisher offered to repair blinds, lay carpets and linoleum and organise removals. John Robertson, Plumber and Sanitary Engineer, thanked customers for their past patronage from his recently occupied new premises at West Bog. There were at least three dentists in the town, John M. Rowe, East Partings, Mr. Ramage, 41 North Street and A.W. Young at 12 North Street. Robert Waddell & Sons at Meuse Lane were on hand as pawnbrokers and money lenders, offering good prices for gold and silver watches, silver plate and jewellery.

It was a fine summer in 1914 and during the jam making season Alexander Stores at 79 South Street was the place to pick up all your equipment, including brass jelly pans (12 inch version price 5 shillings and 3d), jelly bags (1s/11d) and 2lb jelly cans at 2s/3d per dozen. The Premier Dairy Co. at Commissioner's Buildings, North Street (also Main Street, Grangepans) was a registered retailer of sugar, margarine, butter and tea. High class teas, whiskies and wines were on offer at R. Renton, Grocer and Wine Merchant, whilst Bee Hive Stores, South Street claimed that the sterling value they offered was their best advertisement and encouraged everyone to come and see what was in their shop windows.

Even back then the utilities providers were vying for custom. At their showroom at 59 South Street, the Bo'ness Gas and Light Co., Ltd., were offering gas Boiling Rings and offered to fix them free of charge to customers. Meanwhile the National Electric Construction Co., Ltd., at Links Place, under the management of Mr. H. Roger, was encouraging householders to install electric light for the coming winter, promising "no smoke! no smell! no blackened ceilings!", and promising "smaller bills for house decoration in future". For those needing to travel further afield, Thomas Spowart and Sons were running a motor char-a-banc from Market Square to Linlithgow train station for the return fare of 1 shilling.

Other shops trading in 1914 included Bo'ness Co-operative Society, Charles Frank (pork butcher), Hastie & Co (baker), John Johnstone (baker), William Low (grocers) and William Ross (watch maker & jeweller). None of these businesses exist today but their names will be known by most people reading this book. So too will the names of many of the licensed establishments serving in the pre-war days, including the Turf Tavern, Cross Keys,

West Pier Tavern, Royal Tavern, Railway Tavern, Criterion Bar, Masonic Arms, Hamilton Arms at 66 North Street and just along the road the Anchor Tavern (above), one of the last remaining public houses in Bo'ness at the time of publication.

There were also three Hotels - the Douglas Hotel, North Street, and the Clydesdale Hotel (below) and Temperance Hotel, both in Seaview Place

Away from the town centre, the housing schemes of today were still years away. To the west beyond the distillery and bonded warehouses were the Furnace Rows (below) and Snab Rows, housing, amongst others, the workers from the Furnace Yard and Snab

Pits and up the hill the two storey rows at Castleloan were nearing completion. Newtown consisted of 4 rows of miners' cottages and further up the hill, a few houses were clustered around Borrowstoun School.

Along with the other surrounding villages, Grangepans had become part of Bo'ness twenty years previously and was a bustling community. To the east of Grangepans lay the village of Bridgeness, with its own harbour, and adjacent to the harbour was the Forth Ship Breaking Yard, where many ocean going vessels had been dismantled over the years. Next to the harbour was Thomson and Balfour's Victoria Sawmills.

Further east was Carriden with its new church that had opened in 1909. At the foot of Carriden Brae stood the old toll house (below) where travellers once had to pay to use the road to journey to Champany and beyond.

For the football fans there was a choice of teams to support. Bo'ness FC were playing Senior football at Newtown Park and in the Juniors, Bo'ness Our Boys and Kinneil Ramblers played at Castleloan Park and Townhead Park whilst Vale of Grange played at Drum Park. Vale of Forth were another popular team. Bo'ness Bowling Club was in Grange Terrace although the game of quoits was more popular with the miners in the town and there were quoiting greens next to the miners' rows at Castleloan and Newtown.

An evening's entertainment could be had at the Hippodrome in Hope Street and the Coliseum in Seaview Place. Both establishments staged a combination of live acts and the newly introduced so-called motion pictures.

On the 17th July the Bo'ness Children's Fair Festival was held in Glebe Park and Helen Grant of Bo'ness Academy was crowned Queen. The summer sun was definitely not gleaming that day as shortly after the procession arrived at Brewlands Park at Kinneil the afternoon's entertainment was cancelled due to heavy rain.

There would be no more Fair festivities in Bo'ness for a number of years. A darker storm was on the horizon.

Office staff of Messrs John Denholm & Co., Pitwood Importers, Bo'ness, photographed just before World War One. Andrew Adie (fifth from left), Tom Leishman (fourth from right) and Joseph McVeigh (third from right) were all killed in the War.

Bo'ness men of the 5th Royal Scots at Peebles, 1915. Five of the men were killed in the War: Privates G. Forbes, (back row, 1st left); T. Meldrum (second row, 3rd left); A. Forbes (second row, 4th left); L. White (second row, 6th left); and J. Jackson (front row, far right).

CHAPTER 2

# *1914*

# *War is Declared and Early Conflict*

**A Call to Arms**

Oh men of Bo'ness do be true,
Your King and Country need you so
Strike out now with noble heart
In this great war to do your part.

Just think of all that is at stake,
Don't put it off till it's too late;
For if you wait too long, 'tis true
Your comrades will look down on you.

Some say that there are lots of men,
To fight until the bitter end;
But still I think it is a shame,
If you don't come and play the game.

There are men who are unfit,
And those who have not got the grit;
But higher power which rules our life
Decides their place in this great strife.

*Private Neil Johnstone, 11th Royal Scots, 84 Furnace Row.*

# War is Declared and Early Conflict

Following the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand on 28th June 1914, a month of demands, proposals, counter-proposals and rejections passed before Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia on 28th July. The days that followed saw several countries declaring war on others culminating with Britain declaring war on Germany at 11.00 pm on 4th August 1914.

The local newspaper the Bo'ness Journal reported on 7th August, "Great Britain declared war on Germany at seven o'clock on Tuesday evening. This is the sequel to an ultimatum sent by the British Government to Berlin the same afternoon. All the military forces in Great Britain have been called out and the Government have taken over the railways".

There was intense excitement in the streets of Bo'ness. Newsagents were besieged by crowds eager to receive news, and supplies of newspapers disappeared as quickly as they came in. Groups gathered on street corners to discuss the implications with quiet contemplation and increasing anxiety.

Shipping at the docks was brought to a standstill. With the threat of a hostile German fleet somewhere in coastal waters, skippers considered it safer to keep their vessels in port. The last imported cargoes were discharged on the 6th August. The knock-on effect was that many Bo'ness businesses were brought to a standstill. With no pit wood arriving, the local woodyards reduced their staff to a minimum. Concern was raised over three local steamers that were on route to and from the Baltic, however, the SS Hunterfield had put into Stockholm, while the SS Lovart and SS Cumbrian were later found to be safely berthed in Finland. A Russian steamer, the Lennok, decided to head for Bo'ness on its way from Blyth to Russia with a cargo of coal. The ship was no stranger to Bo'ness and had recently had an overhaul by Messrs Cochrane Brothers. By the end of the week the Carron Company had suspended the sailings of its steamers SS Thames and SS Forth, the latter berthed safely in London. A small German ship, the Mentji, that had been lying off Bridgeness for some time was placed under arrest by the local authorities.

The local territorials, "B" Company of the Royal Scots, 1/10th (Cyclists) Battalion, were mobilised and ordered to the East Coast on 5th August. They had only returned from camp at Barassie the previous Sunday after a fortnight's training. There were busy scenes at the Drill Hall in Corbiehall where the men were mustering for departure. A considerable crowd had formed to see them off and the crowd were cheered to see a procession of iron moulders from the New Grange Foundry carrying a large red ensign at their head and large banners on which were chalked the words, "Rule Britannia", "Good Old Terries" and "No more German sausages". They had marched all the way from Grangepans and by making straight for the Drill Hall had assumed the role of would-be recruits. Half an hour later, however, they backed away toward South Street with lunch time approaching.

THE BO'NESS JOURNAL.—FRIDAY, AUGU

THE WAR.

EXCITEMENT IN BO'NESS.

THE TERRITORIALS CALLED OUT.

EFFECT ON TRADE AND PRICES.

The present week will long be regarded as the most eventful period in the history of Europe. In this country the opening days of the week were charged with anxiety and uncertainty. Nobody knew what had happened, was happening, or was likely to happen. The spectre of war brooded over the country;

had some difficulty in getting small change. The paying out of quarterly dividend by the Co-operative Society has had to be deferred, owing to the impossibility of obtaining sufficient cash. And people finding it necessary to cash cheques have been put to much inconvenience. This, however, will now be at an end, and it is hoped there will be no more

By the time the territorials were ready for departure at 2:30pm a massive crowd had formed, some of the moulders returned, this time with a side-drum and melodeon, and the main thoroughfare between the Drill Hall and the Railway Station was completely blocked requiring police intervention. The territorials, numbering around 60, were given a magnificent send-off by the people of Bo'ness.

Many of them would be killed in the coming conflict and never see the town again.

The staff of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) had been appointed on 4th August and three days later the first units of the BEF had landed in France. On the same date German troops attacked the Belgian city of Liege. There then followed a series of encounters by the French and Belgians against the Germans known collectively as the Battles of the Frontiers. One of the major Frontiers battles was the Battle of Mons, on 23rd August, and this was the first encounter between the BEF and Germany on the Western Front. The British were heavily outnumbered at Mons and, along with the French, retreated. Fighting a rearguard action during their withdrawal they fought in the Battle of Le Cateau on 26th August. **Private William Hunter**, Royal Scots, 2nd Battalion, had the unenviable distinction of becoming the first Bo'ness fatality of the war. Official records state that he died of wounds on 26th August probably sustained at the retreat from Mons, near the town of Le Cateau, however, due to lack of evidence he was not declared dead until January 1916. The family headstone shows the date of his death as 23rd August.

The Germans were advancing towards Paris and in early September the German First Army was only 30 miles from the capital. However, in the First Battle of the Marne (6th – 10th September) British and French counter-attacks and manoeuvres forced all the German forces into a fighting withdrawal and they retreated northwards. From 12th September, the German Army dug defensive trenches on the north bank of the river Aisne to secure their position. This was the beginning of trench warfare and the initial mobile war would give way to siege warfare as the trenches spread along the Western Front. In the First Battle of the Aisne (12th - 15th September) the Germans stood firm and the Allies were unable to dislodge them from their trenches. **Private Eneas McAllister**, Royal Scots, 2nd Bn, was reported missing at this time. Although assurances had been given to his wife that he had not been killed, official records now confirm that Eneas was killed in action on 14th September.

Despite the birth of trench warfare there continued a period of mobile fighting in a series of battles from late September to the end of November that became known as "The Race to the Sea". This was not an intentional race to reach the Belgian or French coast but with both armies continually outflanking each other and manoeuvring to stem advances there was a natural movement in a north-westerly direction towards the coast and Channel ports. Battles were being fought simultaneously with others following on almost as soon as the previous one had finished. This period saw the Battles of Picardy, Albert, Artois, La Bassée, Arras, Messines, Armentières and Yser. On 12th October, the British and French advanced on Croix Barbee and Pont du Hem. The Royal Scots went

on to capture Pont du Hem, but, on 15th October, **Lance Corporal John Currie**, Royal Scots, 2nd Bn, was killed in action.

Several of these battles merged into and became part of the First Battle of Ypres (19th October – 22nd November) which saw a rise in Bo'ness casualties. Within an eight day period**, Private James Harvey**, Royal Scots, 2nd Bn, **Private John Friars**, Scots Guards, 1st Bn, and **Private John Denton**, Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, 1st Bn, had all been killed in action.

The Battle of Nonne Bosschen (11th November) was the last major German attack on the British lines in the First Battle of Ypres. It was hoped that **Private Joseph Sheratt**, Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, 1st Bn, had been taken prisoner but it later transpired that he had been killed in action whilst attempting to repel the enemy.

**Private James Reilly**, Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), 2nd Bn, was wounded in the Battle of Armentières. He eventually died from these wounds on 22nd November. On 14th November, to the east of Kemmel, the French and British launched an attack with the aim of capturing Wytschaete and Petit Bois. **Private James McFarlane** died of wounds and **Private Robert McNaught** was killed in action. Both men were with the Royal Scots, 2nd Bn. Having survived the Wytschaete attack, **Private John Dunlevy**, Gordon Highlanders, 1st Bn, died on 22nd December, having been wounded in the trenches east of Kemmel three days previously. Finally **Private David Simpson,** (alias David Hunter), Royal Scots, 2nd Bn was killed in action by shrapnel near Kemmel on 29th December.

It was the end of 1914 and already Bo'ness had lost twelve of its sons. This was the war that was expected to be over by Christmas. This was not to be, and after the famous Christmas Day football matches, hostilities resumed on Boxing Day and the relentless slaughter would continue for the next four years.

The Princess Mary Gift Box is an embossed brass box that contained a variety of items including the greetings card above, tobacco and sweets. It was intended as a Christmas present to those serving on Christmas Day 1914. It was paid for by a public fund backed by Princess Mary, Princess Royal, daughter of King George V.

**William Hunter**

Private William John Hunter was a labourer when he enlisted, in Bo'ness, with the Militia on 20th May 1898. He joined the 3rd Royal Scots on 20th August 1898. He fought in the Second Boer War from March 1900 to May 1902 and held the South Africa Medal with Clasps for Cape Colony, Orange Free State and Transvaal. He enlisted into the Regular Army (Royal Scots) on 16th September 1902 and became an Army Reservist in September 1905.

William married Eliza Jane Daisy Owen Reilly, in Bo'ness, on 13th September 1907. Their daughter Sarah was born in December 1911. The family lived in Grieve's Close, South Street, Bo'ness.

Britain declared war on Germany on 4th August 1914. On 5th August, Private Hunter, service no: 8070, Royal Scots, 2nd Bn, was mobilised at Glencorse and five days later was in France with the BEF. On the 26th August 1914, he became the first Bo'ness fatality of the war, after he died of wounds sustained a few days earlier. His wife and family had to wait nearly eighteen months later for confirmation of his death.

Bo'ness Journal, January 1916:

'Missing' Mons Hero Now Reported Killed:

Official notice was received on Monday morning by Mrs Hunter, Grieves Close, stating that her husband, Private William Hunter, 2nd Royal Scots, was killed on 26th August 1914 at the battle of Mons.

Since the engagement at Mons, Private Hunter had been posted as "missing" and during the period which has elapsed, enquiries were made as to his whereabouts but the only decision come to by the War Office on 16th August last was that as no definite evidence of the death of this soldier had been received, he was still on the official list of "missing". The news to hand on Monday, however, is more definite and there can be no doubt that it has been supplied on the best authority.

According to a comrade of the late soldier, Pte. Hunter is said to have gone into battle at Mons on 23rd August 1914 and to have fallen two days later, having been struck by a piece of shrapnel.

Private Hunter, who has been a Special Reservist, fought at the Boer War along with his two brothers, James and Alexander, the former of whom is still in the fighting line. The youngest brother, Alexander, is now resident in Grangemouth. Deceased, who was a son of Mr James Hunter, Main Street, Grangepans was 36 years of age. He leaves a widow and a four year old child.

William Hunter is commemorated on the La Ferte-Sous-Jouarre Memorial in France and also remembered on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery. It reads, "William 2nd R.S., Killed in Action at Mons, 23rd Aug 1914, Aged 35", although he was only 34 years old when he died.

**Eneas McAllister**

The War was only 48 days old when Private Eneas McAllister, service no: 8598, Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 2nd Bn was killed. Eneas was born in Larne, County Antrim, the son of Eneas and Eliza Riley McAllister. He enlisted in the Royal Scots in Bo'ness on 23rd September 1903, and three years later was transferred to the Army Reserve on 23rd September 1906. Eneas married Mary Raycroft in Bo'ness on 26th June 1907. They had four children, Eneas born in Grangepans, 1908, Elizabeth born in Carriden, 1908, Ann Jane born in Cambuslang, 1912 and John born in Cambuslang, 1914 (8 days before Eneas was killed). He had been a miner before enlisting and returned to mining after his discharge. The family lived in Mayfield Terrace, Bo'ness and when they moved to Cambuslang, Eneas worked at the Dechmont Colliery in that town. Eneas was mobilised at Glencorse on 5th August 1914, and posted to the Royal Scots, 3rd Bn, on 6th August. He was then posted to the Royal Scots, 2nd Bn, and went to France with the BEF on 27th August.

Eighteen days later, 29 year old Eneas McAllister was killed in action in the Battle of Aisne. There was a great deal of uncertainty regarding the fate of Private McAllister. This lasted for some time and his wife's plight was reported in the Daily Record newspaper on 21st January 1915:

> A Wife's Suspense, Royal Scots Mysterious Disappearance: Mrs McAllister, 30 Buchanan Square, Silverbank, Cambuslang has been kept in a cruel state of suspense for fully four months regarding the fate of her husband, Private Innes McAllister, a reservist in the 1st Royal Scots, who was sent to the front on the outbreak of war.
>
> A letter received from a private in the Royal Scots states that Private McAllister was killed in September but Mrs McAllister has interviewed a wounded soldier in Stobhill Hospital, Glasgow who states that he was in her husband's company up till the end of November. The Commanding Officer of the regiment was communicated with and his reply was to the effect that while nothing was known as to Private McAllister's whereabouts, his wife could rest assured that he had neither been killed nor taken prisoner.
>
> The matter has now been taken up by the Rev. George Galbraith and the officials at Dechmont Colliery, Cambuslang, who have undertaken to make enquiries through the War Office and also through neutral countries.
>
> Private McAllister was born at Larne and was well known in Bo'ness before removing to Cambuslang three years ago. He has a family of four children, the eldest of whom is only seven years of age.

Official records now confirm that Pte. McAllister was killed in the Battle of Aisne on 14th September 1914. He is commemorated on the La Ferte-Sous-Jouarre Memorial in France. His name is on the same panel as that of his comrade and fellow Bo'nessian Private William Hunter.

**John Currie**

Lance Corporal John Mackie Currie, service no: 11462, Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 2nd Bn was 18 years old when he was killed in action on 15th October 1914. John, born in Bo'ness, the youngest of three brothers, was the son of Robert and Anne Currie, Calder's Buildings, Corbiehall, Bo'ness. His brothers were Graham and Robert.

John was a Special Reservist in the Royal Scots, 3rd Bn, Service No: 2579, and on 8th April 1913 enlisted into the Regular Army at Glencorse. He was stationed at Plymouth up to the outbreak of the war. On 26th June 1914 he was promoted from Private to Lance Corporal and was mobilised into the BEF on 10th August 1914.

The Bo'ness Journal, Friday 13th November 1914, reported his death with the following announcement:

> Killed in Action. Lance Corporal John Currie. A note of sorrow was struck locally when the news was received on Monday of the death of Lance-Corporal John Currie, 2nd Battalion Royal Scots, a Bo'ness lad, who was killed in action at Croix Barbee on 15th October. The deceased, who was only 18 years of age and who was probably the youngest regular soldier from the district was the third son of Mr Robert Currie, distillery worker, Calder's Buildings, Corbiehall. He was a native of Linlithgow, where for some time Mr Currie had a licensed grocery business, removing to Bo'ness some twelve years ago. After leaving school, Corporal Currie served for about 2 years in the Anchor Tavern, occupied by Mr Robert Courtney, and in January 1913 enlisted in the Royal Scots. The news of Lance-Corporal Currie's death was received from the War Office by Mr Currie on Monday morning. Accompanying it was the following Royal message of sympathy sent by Lord Kitchener: "The King commands me to assure you of the true sympathy of His Majesty and the Queen in your sorrow".

Lance Corporal John Currie is buried in Vieille-Chapelle New Military Cemetery, grave IV.A.8, Lacouture, France.

**James Harvey**

Private James Harvey, service no: 742, Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 2nd Bn was killed in action, as his battalion withdrew from the firing line to a prepared position, during the First Battle of Ypres, on 23rd October 1914. Eyewitnesses reported he had been fatally shot in the mouth.

James was a native of Falkirk district but had a long connection with Bo'ness. His parents who lived in the town had both died just before the war. He was a moulder to trade but latterly had worked in the woodyards, and was resident in the Workmen's Home. He was unmarried and his next of kin was given as his married sister Mrs Bell from Falkirk. He had previously served with the Army in South Africa during the Boer War. He was a reservist and was mobilised at the outbreak of war, arriving in France on 20th September, 1914.

In the First Battle of Ypres, 19th October-22nd November 1914, the British, French and Belgian troops were outnumbered by the Germans who were trying to get to the English Channel. The Allies were considered to have won the battle after 34 days of fighting, although the BEF suffered losses of 7960 men killed, 29563 wounded and 17873 missing.

Private Harvey, who was 41 years old, is remembered on the Le Touret Memorial, panel 4, in France. The Le Touret Memorial is located north west of Bethune. It commemorates over 13400 British soldiers who were killed in this sector of the Western Front from the beginning of October 1914 to the eve of the Battle of Loos in late September 1915 and who have no known grave.

**John Friars**

Private John Friars, service no: 8678, Scots Guards 1st Bn, was killed in action, in the First Battle of Ypres, on 26th October 1914. His death was reported in three national and two local newspapers.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 11th December 1914:

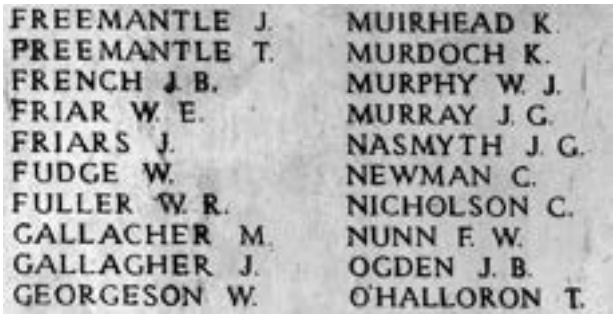
Scots Guard Killed in Action: Mr John Friars, Richmond Terrace, Bo'ness, on Wednesday morning received official notification of the death of his eldest son, Private John Friars, of the Scots Guards. Friars was killed in action in France on 26th October. He was born in Bo'ness 22 years ago and was educated at Bo'ness Public School. For seven years he was employed under his father at the chemical works at Corbiehall of Messrs Thomas Ovens and Sons. A strapping lad of about six feet, he enlisted at Linlithgow in the Scots Guards and prior to the outbreak of the war was stationed at Aldershot. He had only served a year in the guards when his regiment left for the front. The last letter received from him was from France. In it he said he was safe and well and the news of his death came as a surprise and was a great shock to his father and friends.

Bo'ness Journal, 11th December 1914:

Killed in Action – Private John Friars: On Wednesday morning, a War Office communication was received by Mr John Friars, 17 Richmond Terrace, to the effect that his son, Private John Friars, Scots Guards, has been killed in action on 26th October. Private Friars, who was only twenty-two years of age, and unmarried, enlisted in August 1913. Accompanying the note, which is signed by the Colonel in command, is a formal letter of condolence from their Majesties sent by Lord Kitchener.

Private Friars is commemorated on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, panel 11. This Memorial, often referred to simply as the Menin Gate, bears the names of more than 54000 soldiers who died before 16th August 1917, and have no known grave. Between October 1914 and September 1918 hundreds of thousands of servicemen of the British Empire marched through the Menin Gate on their way to the battlefields. The memorial now stands as a reminder of those who died who have no known grave and is perhaps one of the most recognised war memorials in the world.

John Friars is also remembered on the family headstone in Muiravonside Cemetery.



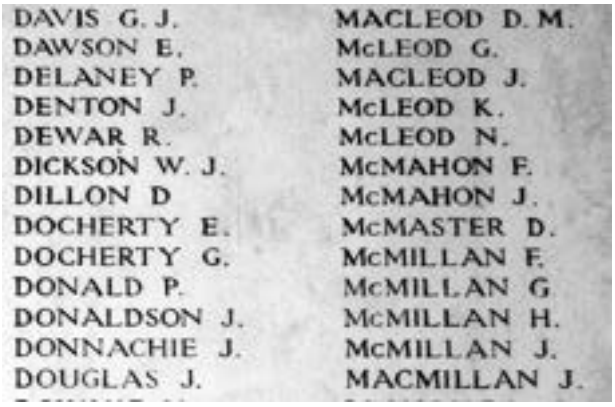
**J Denton**

Private John Denton, known as Jack, service no: 8547, Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders (formerly 1415, Royal Scots Lothian Regiment) was 23 years old when he was killed in action on 31st October 1914. Private Denton is commemorated on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, panel 38 and 40.

The Bo'ness Journal 13th November 1914 reported his death from information contained in a letter sent by Private Joseph Sheratt:

> Corporal J. Denton
> Word has been received this week from Private Joseph Sheratt, 1st Cameron Highlanders, that another Bo'ness Soldier in the person of Corporal Jack Denton has been killed on the fighting line. Corporal Denton was a regular soldier in the 2nd Battalion Cameron Highlanders, and for fully two years before his departure for the front a few weeks ago, he was stationed at the depot in Inverness. Corporal Denton, since going into active service had experienced some heavy fighting, and according to Private Sheratt, was hit twice before he finally gave in. Corporal Denton, who was an orphan and unmarried, formerly stayed with a relation at the Walker [Water] Inns, Grangemouth Road.

Despite the reference to Corporal in the letter above, all military records show that John (Jack) Denton's rank was Private. Two days before this letter was published, its writer, Private Joseph Sheratt, was himself killed in action.


DAVIS G. J.
DAWSON E.
DELANEY P.
DENTON J.
DEWAR R.
DICKSON W. J.
DILLON D
DOCHERTY E.
DOCHERTY G.
DONALD P.
DONALDSON J.
DONNACHIE J.
DOUGLAS J.
MACLEOD D. M.
McLEOD G.
MACLEOD J.
McLEOD K.
McLEOD N.
McMAHON F.
McMAHON J.
McMASTER D.
McMILLAN F.
McMILLAN G.
McMILLAN H.
McMILLAN J.
MACMILLAN J.

**Joseph Sheratt**

Private Joseph Sheratt or Sherratt, service no: 8070, Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders 1st Bn, was 32 years old when he was killed in action. He was killed on 11th November 1914, in the Battle of Nonne Bosschen which was part of the wider First Battle of Ypres. Joseph was born in Glasgow. He married Janet Snedden in Bo'ness in 1911. His sister, Mrs Mary Nisbet, lived in Bo'ness.

> Linlithgowshire Gazette 4th December 1914:
>
> Cameron Highlander Missing: Mrs Nisbet, who resides at Corbiehall, has just received information that her brother, Private Joseph Sherratt, 8070, 1st Battalion Cameron Highlanders, has been missing since 11th November. Two weeks ago Mrs Nisbet sent a parcel to the front addressed to her brother, along with an accompanying note. The parcel was opened by Captain Mathieson, who replied by return to the sender that private Sherratt was missing. The captain further stated that B Company, to which the private was attached, were all missing, the only two accounted for so far being the Captain himself and a solitary private. He hoped that nothing worse had happened than that they were prisoners. The Germans, on 11th November, he went on to say, attempted to break through the British lines at Ypres, but failed in their attempt. In repelling them the Camerons suffered heavily. Sherratt during his seven years' service in the army acted as an officer's servant.

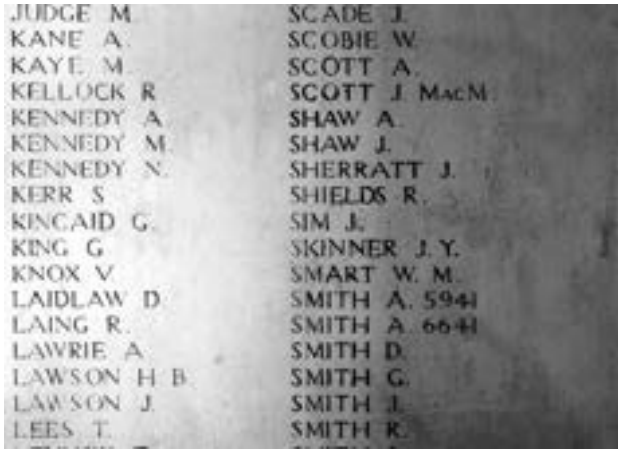
Joseph Sheratt's battalion was part of 1st Division, 1st Guards Brigade who, as part of the BEF holding the Ypres area, only numbered about 7850, including reserves. They were to face twenty-five battalions of the Kaiser's elite Prussian Guard, numbering 17500 men. The main assault came just north of the Menin Road and fell upon the Camerons, Black Watch, and Scots Guards.

The contemporary history of the Black Watch and other records describe the battle:

> Between 6.30am and 9am on 11 November, the heaviest bombardment so far experienced by the British forces broke out; as it lifted, a Division of the Prussian Guard, ordered by the Kaiser to break the British line at all costs, attacked the front. Under cover of the bombardment, a strong enemy force drove back D Company and the two platoons of A Company entrenched at the south west corner of Polygon Wood. C Company under the command of Lieutenant Anderson and in a strong point (point d'appui) 380 yards from the south and west corner of Polygon Wood held out firmly. This split the attack into small parties of 20–30 Prussians, many of whom were soon lost in the woods behind. As they emerged from the back of the woods the guns of 41 Brigade Royal Field Artillery, sited one thousand yards west of Nonne Bosschen Wood, opened direct fire on the enemy at a range of 300–400 yards.
>
> The effect was devastating and the German attack faltered. At 3pm a counter attack by the 2nd Battalion The Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, supported by the Royal Field Artillery, destroyed the remnants of the Prussian Guard and the line between the Menin Road and Polygon Wood was re-established. At 3.30pm three Companies of the 1st Battalion The Northamptonshire Regiment, supported by parties of The Black Watch and Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, advanced from Nonne Bosschen Wood to retake the south west corner of Polygon Wood. This corner was known on all later maps as Black Watch Corner. Originally, however, it was the C Company "strong point" south west of Polygon Wood which was given that name.

The day after the battle, the strength of the 1st Bn Cameron Highlanders had been reduced to 2 officers and 140 soldiers, the 1st Bn The Black Watch to 2 officers and 109 soldiers and the 1st Bn Scots Guards to 1 officer and 69 soldiers. The First Battle of Ypres was one of the most resolute and critical defensive battles fought by the BEF during WW1 and, along with the added support of French artillery batteries, the German attempt to break through to the Channel Ports was brought to an abrupt halt.

Private Joseph Sheratt is commemorated on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, panel 38 and 40.



**James Reilly**

Private James Reilly, service no: 1790, Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), 2nd Bn, died of wounds on 22nd November 1914. James was born in Coatbridge but lived in Bo'ness.

The Black Watch, 2nd Bn, was mobilised for war on 21st September 1914, and embarked for France at Karachi arriving in Marseilles on 12th October 1914. They were engaged in various actions on the Western Front including the Battles of La Bassee, 1st Messines, Armentieres and the Battle of Givenchy.

James was wounded in action during the Battle of Armentieres, 20th October – 2nd November.

Linlithgowshire Gazette 18th December 1914:

A Grangepans Soldier's Death: The War Office notified the parents at Bo'ness last Thursday of the death of Private James Reilly, of the Black Watch. The notification stated that he died from wounds on 22nd November and was buried at Merville Cemetery. He was born in Coatbridge in 1891 and enlisted in Bo'ness five years ago. Three out of the four years he spent with his regiment in India, going from there direct to the seat of war. An indifferent correspondent, Private Reilly while at the front only wrote once to his parents. In that communication he told them to expect a letter soon. Sad to relate, the letter they received a few days later was the one communicating the news of his death. It was a severe blow to the aged parents, who are devoted members of St Mary's Church, and reside at 14 Links Place, Grangepans.

James' death was also reported in the Edinburgh Evening News and Daily Record and additional information from these reports told us that James was 23 years old and the third youngest son of John Reilly.

Private James Reilly is buried in Merville Communal Cemetery, grave I.L.36, in France. Merville was the scene of fighting between the German, French and British cavalry early in October 1914 but from the 9th of that month to 11th April 1918, it remained in Allied hands. In October 1914, and in the autumn of 1915, the town was the headquarters of the Indian Corps. It was a railhead until May 1915, and a billeting and hospital centre from 1915-1918.

**James McFarlane**

Private James McFarlane, service no: 2383, enlisted as a Special Reservist with the Royal Scots on 1st April 1912. He was mobilised at Glencorse on 5th August 1914, with the Royal Scots 2nd Bn. James was born in Kilsyth. He came to Bo'ness in 1912, lived with his sister at 73 Castleloan, Bo'ness and was a coal miner at Kinneil Collieries. He was unmarried.

James was well known locally as an acrobat of considerable skill and had performed in the Hippodrome and Coliseum with a friend under the name of "Carl and Mac".

In a letter from Private James Stewart, Scots Guards, to his brother Andrew, (published in Linlithgowshire Gazette 29th January 1915) James said: "I regret to learn that James McFarlane has been killed in action. He was an amateur wrestler and went under the name of 'Mac' ".

At 3.00 a.m. on 14th December, Royal Scots, 2nd Bn, left Kemmel and by 7.45 a.m. they were part of the attack on Petit Bois. James was wounded during the engagement and died later in No. 7 Field Ambulance, Locre (now Loker). He was 22 years old. This letter was sent to James' sister:

> No. 7 Field Ambulance, 3rd Division, B.E.F. Dec. 16. 1914: Dear Miss McFarlane, I am sorry to have to write and tell you that your brother, J. McFarlane, No. 2383 2nd Royal Scots died yesterday from wounds received in action the previous evening.
>
> He was shot through his knee, the bullet coming out through the back part of the left thigh. Evidently he had lost a great deal of blood and so was very weak.
>
> All I could hear him say when I asked if I could write anything was that I should write to you. Everything was done to save his life but he passed away about 4 a.m. I spent a lot of time with him and was with him at the end.
>
> He was buried yesterday in Lochre Churchyard. This is about 3 miles from Bailleul in N.W. France, his grave is marked by a wooden cross with his name burned upon it.
>
> Among his papers you will find a little strip of paper assigning (I think) £3 to you and the rest to Mrs E McFarlane, Mitchell St. Musselburgh, Edinburgh.
>
> May I please be allowed to sympathise with you in your great loss and I pray that God may grant him everlasting rest.
>
> Yours Sincerely, Harold T. A. Peacey, Chaplain.
>
> May I suggest that if you are uncertain what to do upon receipt of this you go and see your local clergyman.

Private James McFarlane is buried in Loker Churchyard, grave II.E.18, Belgium.

James is also commemorated on the Kilsyth War Memorial.

**Robert McNaught**

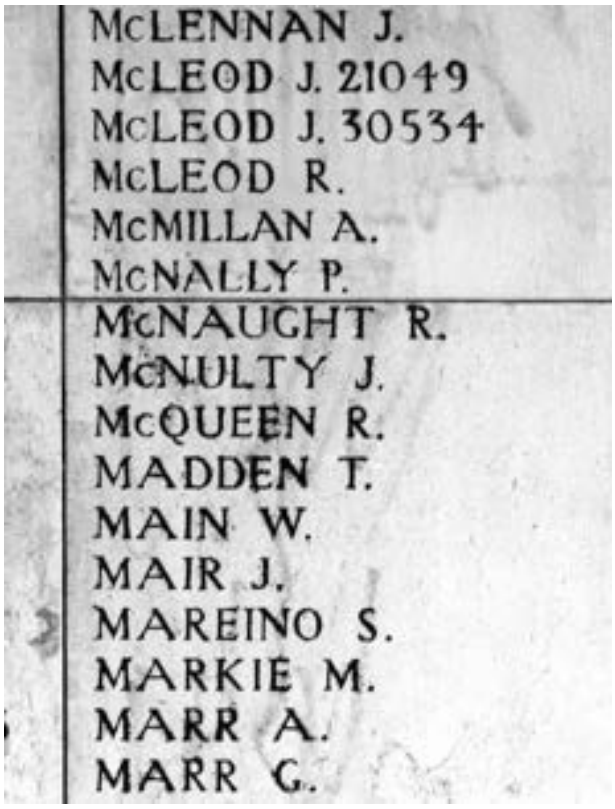
Private Robert McNaught, service no: 2496, Royal Scots, 2nd Bn was 19 years old when he was killed in action. He had been in the front line trenches for one day when he was killed at Petit Bois in the attack on Wytschaete on 14th December 1914.

Robert was born in Old Cumnock, Ayrshire. He lived in Bo'ness with his aunt, Mrs Agnes Struthers, and he worked as an iron moulder.

Linlithgowshire Gazette 8th January 1915:

Another Bo'ness Man Killed in Action: From information received yesterday morning we learn that Robert McNaught, 2496, 2nd Battalion Royal Scots, has been killed in action on December 14 last. McNaught was nineteen years of age and was a native of Ayrshire. He lost his father and mother when he was a child and latterly was brought up in Bo'ness by his aunt, Mrs John Struthers, 13 Richmond Terrace. It now transpires that McNaught was only one day in the trenches. From a letter to a friend a few days ago, he stated that he was going into the trenches on Sunday, 13th December and on the 14th, as we have already stated, he was killed. McNaught joined the Special Reserves two years ago. At the outbreak of the war he was drafted to Dorchester, where for a time previous to going to France he acted as guard over the German prisoners. From another letter we learn that he was guarding Germans at Rouen, France.

Private Robert McNaught is commemorated on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, panel 11.



**John Dunlevy**

Private John Dunlevy, service no: 6945, Gordon Highlanders 1st Bn, was 33 years old when he died of wounds on 22nd December 1914. John was the son of Patrick and Ann or Mary Ann Dunlevy (ms Devers), who were married in Linlithgow in 1877. John was born in Linlithgow in 1882. By the 1891 census, the family were living in Meuse Lane, Bo'ness. There are several variations of his surname in different records through this period, e.g. Dunlevey, Dunleavy, Donlevy. In later records from 1919, John's father was deceased and his mother, Mary Ann, lived at 253 High Street, Linlithgow. His married brother, Thomas, lived at Furnace Rows, Bo'ness and he had two married sisters, Bridget Thornton and Mary Bray. Military records show that he was a labourer and a member of the Militia with 3 Royal Scots when he enlisted in 1899. John enlisted with the Gordon Highlanders in Edinburgh on 30th October 1899, and served in the South African Campaign 1899-1902. He was awarded the Queen's South Africa Medal, with clasps for Cape Colony, Orange Free State, Transvaal, South Africa 1901 and South Africa 1902. Service Records show that he extended service to complete 8 years with the colours and on 9th December 1907, he was transferred to the Army Reserve. His transfer papers state that he was a 1st Class shot. He was re-engaged on 30th October 1911, and mobilized at Aberdeen on 5th August 1914. John Dunlevy was killed days after surviving the attack by 3rd Division at Wytschaete on 14th December, near Ypres, part of the Winter Operations 1914-15. He suffered a gunshot wound and compound fracture to the femur in trenches east of Kemmel on 19th December and he was admitted to 8th Clearance Hospital, Bailleul. He was evacuated to 13th General Hospital, Boulogne, and died there on 22nd December 1914.

Bo'ness Journal 8th January 1915

Gordon Highlander Killed: The wife of Thomas Dunlevy, 2nd Battalion Royal Scots, who resides in Bo'ness has received a letter from her husband at the front, stating that his brother John, of the Gordon Highlanders, was fatally wounded in action on 19th December. Thomas states that John and he went into the trenches together, and he never saw his brother again.

Private John Dunlevy is buried in Boulogne Eastern Cemetery, grave III.B.71, in France. His headstone was originally inscribed with the wrong year but has now been corrected.

However, John's story does not finish with his death.

Linlithgowshire Gazette 19th February 1915:

Married to a Bo'ness Gordon: Bigamy Charge against a Stirling Woman: Before Sheriff Laing at Aberdeen on Saturday, Jane Simpson or Wilson, Stirling, was charged with bigamy, the allegation being that, while the lawful wife of James Wilson, hawker, 10 Townhead, Auchterarder, she, on 25th September 1914, at 41½ Union Street, Aberdeen, bigamously married the now deceased John Dunlevy, private soldier, 3rd Battalion Gordon Highlanders, 8 St Mary's Wynd, Stirling, formerly of Bo'ness. She pleaded guilty. Her agent stated that it was fourteen years since she left her legal husband. After some years' residence in Stirling, she met Dunlevy, and cohabited with him for three years. On the outbreak of the war, Dunlevy joined the 3rd Battalion Gordon Highlanders. She went from Stirling to Aberdeen and was married to Dunlevy. On the day after the marriage she returned to Stirling and Dunlevy went with his regiment to France, where he died of wounds on December 22 last. She was getting a separation allowance of 12s 6d per week, and after Dunlevy's death she applied to the War Office for her widow's pension. The Sheriff passed sentence of six weeks' imprisonment.

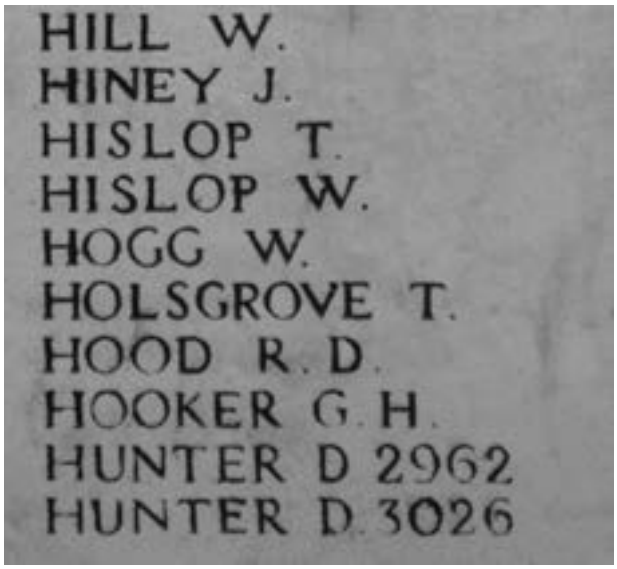
**David Simpson**

Private David Masterton Simpson was the son of Peter Simpson, baker, Broad Street, Alloa and Isabella Simpson. Both his parents had died before his own death. His brothers William and Alexander were known in Bo'ness, the latter residing at Forth Place. William had moved to live at 24 Cowgate, Edinburgh. He also had a sister Janet who had married and lived in Barnsley, England. David was 5'4" in height , weighed 134lbs, had hazel coloured eyes and brown hair. He had his wife's name Mary and a heart tattooed above his left wrist. Before enlisting he was employed at Bo'ness docks.

He joined up at the outbreak of war and enlisted at Edinburgh on 9th August with the Royal Scots, 2nd Battalion, service no: 3026. In doing so, he decided to use the alias "David Hunter". The reasons for this remain a mystery. He was posted to France on 22nd October 1914, where he came under the command of 3rd Division, 8th Brigade. He saw action at the First Battle of Ypres.

David was killed in action on 29th December 1914. He was fighting alongside Private Thomas Dunlevy in the same Battalion in trenches near Kemmel. In a letter to his wife at Pottery Barns in Bo'ness, Private Dunlevy stated that he and David Simpson were having a chat in their trench about Bo'ness when David was struck and fatally wounded by a piece of shrapnel from an exploding shell that only narrowly missed Thomas. David's body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, panel 11, under his alias "Hunter, D 3026". He had just turned 31 years old. Thomas Dunlevy's luck would hold out for the duration of the conflict.

David was married to Mary Simpson (ms Sellers) and the couple had two children, Thomas and Robert James Simpson. The family lived at the Belfast Bank buildings, 2 Donegall Street, Belfast. Sadly Mary died and after the War the children were left in the care of Mary's brother Thomas Sellers.



View of Kemmel before the war. The village was obliterated during the fighting.

CHAPTER 3

# *1915*
# *France and Flanders*

## Neuve Chapelle, Hill 60
## and the Second Battle of Ypres

**Bo'ness Lads in Flanders**

*From 4349 T.M.; 2989 W.F.**

Have ye heard the sound o' the Kaiser's guns,
As the shells come rattling frae the Huns,
And Wilhelm's troops wi' a goose step run,
Frae the Bo'ness lads in Flanders.

There came a letter frae ower the sea,
Asking how many men had we,
We answered back five hundred and three,
Tae hunt them oot o' Flanders.

O, beware ye Huns o' our maxim guns,
For here come the bravest o' Bo'ness sons,
When you see them come take the tip and run,
Frae the Bo'ness lads in Flanders.

At the break of day word came along,
That each Bo'ness lad would hold his own,
So over the parapet in mighty throng,
We charged them out o' Flanders.

Our brave Bo'ness lads fell here and there,
And the German dogs we didna spare,
But cleared the trenches out quite bare,
What was left o' the Bo'ness lads in Flanders.

*Frae an Old Townie of Bo'ness*

**2989 W.F. was Private William Falconer,*
*who later died of wounds at home in 1917*

# Neuve Chapelle, Hill 60 and the Second Battle of Ypres

The operations in 1914 had ended in stalemate and both armies were exhausted, running low on both ammunition and morale. The winter weather at the turn of the year exacerbated these problems and trench warfare became the favoured method of fighting during what is known as the Winter Operations of 1914-1915. The battles and mobile warfare of 1914 had ended with a front line stretching from the channel coast at Nieuport to the French border with Switzerland. The BEF were in action on two main fronts – in the Artois region around Neuve Chapelle, and further to the north, in the area of Ypres in Flanders.

On 25th January 1915 in the Artois region, an attack by the German 79th Brigade of VII Corps on British lines at Cuinchy, led to **Private Andrew McCleary**, Scots Guards, 1st Bn, being posted missing in action presumed dead, the first casualty of 1915 from Bo'ness. Also notified as having been wounded in action on the same date was **Private Walker Adams** (not Walter Adams as incorrectly inscribed on the Bo'ness War Memorial) of Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) 1st Bn. His family were subsequently notified that he had been found dead on the battlefield and his death recorded as 9th February 1915. Both men were part of the 1st Guards Division, 1st Brigade that saw action near La Bassee Canal.

**Private Harry Paul Hogg**, Highland Light Infantry, 9th Bn, was fighting for the 9th Division, 5th Brigade in the Festubert area. He was wounded in action on 31st March 1915. Harry Hogg's family received a letter from the front explaining how their son had been wounded. The letter, dated 31st March, was written by a comrade at the request of Harry himself. The writer said he regretted to inform the parents that their boy was wounded that morning while doing duty in the trenches. He was struck in the face by a bullet from a German sniper, but, supported by a comrade, he was able to walk to the rear of the firing line, where he was treated by nursing staff. The wound was not regarded at the time as being very serious, and Private Hogg was then quite conscious. He was removed to No:4 Casualty Clearing Station (4 CCS) at Lillers where he had to undergo what was described later as "a severe operation", the effects of which he was unable to withstand, and he passed away without regaining consciousness on 1st April 1915.

Early fighting in 1915 had settled into a siege warfare situation and this had shown the importance of artillery fire both in terms of quality and quantity. The first major offensive of 1915 in the Artois region was the Battle of Neuve Chapelle (10-13th March).The Allied objective was a raised area of land behind the German lines known as the Aubers Ridge that guarded La Bassee to the south west and Lille to the north east. The German line there formed a marked salient, or bulge, and an attack on the ridge if completely successful would test the security of Lille. Even if the attack was less successful it would still cut off La Bassee. In the end the battle largely failed in its intention to break the German lines, although the town of Neuve Chapelle itself was captured.

Royal Artillery troops with a special message for the enemy

A further attack to try and break through the enemy lines along a wider front was planned two months later on 9th May 1915. Known as the Battle of Aubers, the plan was to carry out a pincer attack against the German lines north and south of Neuve Chapelle. 1st Division were part of the southern pincer and as the attack proceeded 1st Brigade were soon ordered to take the place of a shattered 2nd Brigade. The official history of the Black Watch describes the scene:

> The companies advanced to the sound of the pipes-for the last time-since gas helmets were shortly to muffle the pipers. It was not possible to recognise 'Highland Laddie' [*Note: Prepare to Attack, in The Black Watch, would be signalled by the pipe tune The Campbells are Coming. The attack would be piped to the tune Highland Laddie, but played in double quick time]* in the noise of gunfire, but the pipes themselves could not be silenced,

> and there is no doubt that they raised the spirit of the attackers. As soon as our men topped the breastworks, they were met by a terrific rifle and machine gun fire, which seemed to come from every direction; machine guns were not only firing from the breastworks, but from tunnels cut underneath them.

With no ground and no tactical advantage gained, the battle was seen as disastrous and cost over 11000 British casualties. It claimed the lives of two local men who served in the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), 1st Bn, namely **Private William Brown** (the first of three men with the same name on the Bo'ness War Memorial) and **Private David Ferguson**.

The Second Battle of Artois (9th May - 18th June 1915) had begun and the Battle of Festubert followed on from the failed Battle of Aubers Ridge. A new tactic was employed by the Allies, replacing the previous short but intense shelling known as "hurricane bombardment" with slower, more deliberate artillery fire to pave the way for attack by infantry. The plan was to draw the Germans away from the French attack against Vimy Ridge near Arras by attacking a German salient along a 4.8km front between Neuve Chapelle to the north and Festubert to the south. **Private Thomas Knowles**, Highland Light Infantry, 2nd Bn, was killed in action on 16th May 1915, during heavy shelling of front line trenches near Rue Du Bois. The 2nd Division suffered 5000 casualties during this Battle. Minor Allied gains were made, and Festubert was eventually captured, but successes were again heavily outweighed by losses.

Further north at Ypres, Flanders the fighting of late 1914 had resulted in the Allies occupying a piece of land west of the town, a 35 mile long bulge in the Western Front jutting out about 6 miles into German-held territory. It was known as the Ypres Salient and would be a bloody theatre of war at the heart of the Great War for the next four years. During the early part of 1915 trench warfare skirmishes continued around Ypres and **Private Michael Hamilton**, Queens Own Cameron Highlanders, 2nd Bn, was wounded fighting for the 81st Brigade in 27th Division. He was removed for medical treatment to 14th General Hospital in Boulogne but later died of wounds received on 1st March 1915.

The 3rd Division were also in the Ypres area at this time and **Private David Tait**, Royal Scots, 2nd Bn, was killed whilst on lookout duty in front line trenches with the 8th Brigade. His death was described in a letter home from a comrade Private Tom Baillie who was in the same trench. He said,

> It was a clear moonlight night, and the Germans were firing all around us. Indeed you would have thought it was hailstones, so thick were the bullets coming from all directions. Poor David Tait got shot through the head. He is the first of our comrades to fall.

Another fellow Royal Scot Private Charles Neill wrote, "I am sorry we have lost Tait. He is the first break among our lot".

On the 17th April 1915 the 5th Division assaulted the German lines at a position known as Hill 60. This was a rather generous description of a large spoil heap on the east side of the cutting formed from the excavation material of the Ypres-Comines railway. On the opposite side, a long irregular mound was called the Caterpillar. Hill 60 had been held by the German 30th Division since November 1914, during the First Battle of Ypres. Although the 13th Brigade, 5th Division were successful in capturing their objective, the relieving 15th Brigade could not hold on to their positions in the face of sustained enemy fire from the adjacent Caterpillar, and chlorine gas attacks, and the Germans retook Hill 60 on the morning of 5th May 1915. That evening 13th Brigade, including the King's Own Scottish Borderers (KOSB), 2nd Bn, were ordered to retake the Hill but faced with fighting on broken ground littered with corpses of over a month's fighting, and in darkness, they were repulsed with heavy casualties. The 2nd KOSB battalion history describes the attack:

> C's attack was crushed instantaneously by heavy fire. D reached their objective, but were exposed to enfilade fire from the Caterpillar, and were also bombed from close. Both companies had to retire and occupy the trenches from which they started.

That day the 2nd KOSB suffered over 130 casualties with 4 officers and 15 other ranks killed, 51 missing and 64 wounded. The death toll included Bo'ness born **Private James Maxwell.** On the night of the 5th May, Hill 60 was back in German hands and the British were resigned to the unpalatable truth that the day's bloodshed had been all in vain.

The action on Hill 60 had been a prelude to the main German assault at the Second Battle of Ypres (22nd April - 25th May 1915). This battle is best remembered for the first large-scale use of poison gas on the Western Front. Around 5800 cylinders of chlorine gas were opened and dispersed on the prevailing wind towards the Allied lines. The gas reacted with lung and eyes to form acid, destroying

tissue and causing asphyxia. When the denser than air chlorine gas filled the trenches troops would flee in panic onto open ground and were met with a hail of enemy bullets. Large openings in the Allies front line were formed as a result, but the Germans failed to exploit these due to apprehensiveness and lack of reserves. German hopes of a breakthrough into the Ypres Salient had disappeared but the Second Battle of Ypres was not over. On 8th May 1915, in another attempt to break into the Salient, the Germans moved field artillery forward, placing three army corps opposite the 27th and 28th Divisions on the Frezenberg ridge, who would take the brunt of the attack. On the opening day of the Battle of Frezenberg the Germans were prevented from advancing further by a defining effort by Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (PPCLI) who held the line at great cost with their 700-strong force reduced to 150.

The next day the Germans turned their attention to shelling either side of the Menin Road in an area where the 80th and 81st Brigades were situated. Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders 1st Bn were called up in the afternoon from reserve to support the 2nd Camerons. They moved immediately to reinforce the front line near Hooge. The history of the 1st Argylls recorded that "their advance across an area of a mile in depth, swept by shell fire, was magnificently carried out. Casualties were few, due to the excellent formation of each company. No time was lost and discipline was perfect, it was an inspiring sight". Unfortunately two Bo'ness men lost their lives. **Private Hugh Campbell** was killed in action at Frezenberg on 10th May 1915. **Private William Campbel**l (no relation) was wounded in the same battle, and died at No:11 General Hospital, Boulogne on 12th May 1915. After a week of intense fighting the Germans has gained about 1200 yards. After further action at Bellewaarde the battle ended. The Germans had forced the front line further back towards Ypres but the town remained in Allied hands. They had failed to capitalise on the initial surprise of the gas attacks and a major chance of taking Ypres was lost.

The summer of 1915 was a relatively quiet period but minor attacks and counter-attacks continued, as did the death toll. **Private Robert Maines (Mains)** Army Cyclist Corps, 4th Div. Cyclist Company, was killed by one such German charge on 9th July 1915. **Private Edward Wright**, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders 10th Bn, was wounded on the 24th July 1915, whilst undertaking operations with 9th (Scottish) Division near Festubert. He was moved to No.5 Stationary Hospital, Abbeville, where he died of wounds received a month later. The continuing horrors of the conflict were captured in a letter home on 11th August 1915 from **Private Charles McCallum**, Royal Army Medical Corps, who was carrying out duties around Ypres with 44th Field Ambulance Division. He wrote,

Ruins of the Cloth Hall in Ypres

I thought you were going to lose me on Monday night. We were out to get in some wounded when the Germans spotted us and opened fire. God knows it was awful. We lay still on the ground and hundreds of bullets, and everything they could fire, were fired on us. I prayed to God I would be spared to see you and my children, and my prayer was answered. So I am the luckiest man in the world. We have another three days to spend in this "hell" before we get a rest. I have seen some awful sights of disfigured men. Words cannot express myself. We had one of our fellows killed and fourteen wounded while they were sleeping in a cellar…I wish it were Saturday until I get a rest as this would try the strongest hearts in the world. We have some brave lads amongst our ambulance men; they are afraid of no danger. Monday was the worst night we have had as I with others was cut off from our detachment. We came into safety half an hour after the rest who thought we had been killed. We met them coming to look for us. But my time had not come, and I am still here thank God. I will write again on Saturday if God spares me.

Sadly Private McCallum was not spared. He was killed by a shell the very next day while trying to retrieve buried comrades from under the ruins of the iconic Cloth Hall in Ypres that was devastated by German artillery.

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**Andrew McCleary**

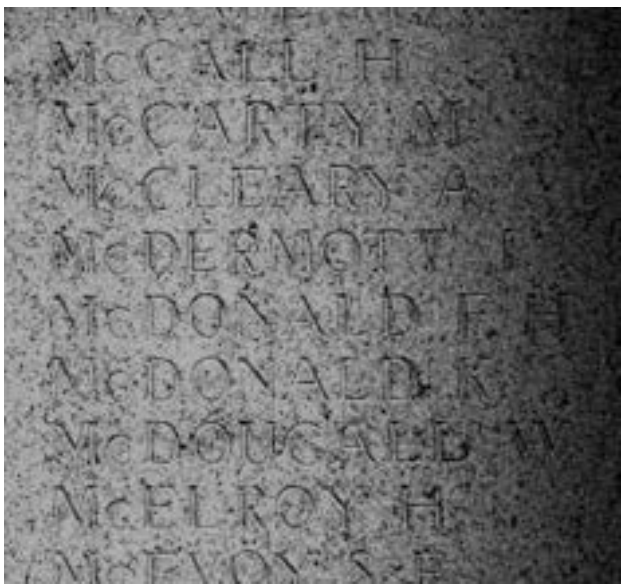
Private Andrew McCleary was born in Clough, County Antrim in 1883. He was the husband of Mrs. Annie McCleary (ms Sneddon), of 27 Mayfield Terrace, Bo'ness. They had three children, John, Andrina and George Sneddon McCleary. Andrew was a veteran of the Boer War in South Africa and as a private with the Scots Guards, Mounted Infantry, No:1 Coy, saw service from 26th November 1901, until 16th April, 1902, receiving the Queen's South African Medal, with three clasps for Cape Colony, South Africa 1901 & 1902. Before the War he was employed in the yard of the Forth Ship Breaking Company at Bridgeness.

At the outbreak of WW1 he enlisted at Bo'ness, again with the Scots Guards, 1st Bn, on 2nd December 1914, and was given service no: 12428. He arrived in France on 5th January 1915, as reinforcements for the 1st Division, 1st Guards Brigade during the Winter Operations of early 1915. He was reported missing, presumed killed in action on 25th January 1915. The Regimental War Diary outlines what happened that morning in the First Action of Givenchy:

At 6:30am a German deserter reported that an attack was going to be made in half an hour, bombardment first and then our trenches were to be blown in by previously made mines. After an hour all happened as deserter had said. SRF and 40 LF got away - their story is as follows - The Germans first shelled them, then got out of their trench and attacked half right then threw their bombs in, got to the lip of the parapet and shot down into the trenches. The Germans afterwards swarmed up to the "Keep" where Major Romilly was. There they were checked and held. Reinforcements came up and a counter attack was delivered at 1pm but did not make much ground. Battalion was relieved at 4pm by Sussex Regt.

Andrew McCleary, 31, was one of 393 Scots Guards 1st Bn killed, missing or wounded that day near Cuinchy. His body was never recovered and he is commemorated on Le Touret Memorial, panel 3 and 4. The Le Touret Memorial, near Aubers, commemorates over 13400 British soldiers who were killed in this sector of the Western Front from the beginning of October 1914 to the eve of the Battle of Loos in late September 1915 and who have no known grave. The Memorial takes the form of a loggia surrounding an open rectangular court. The names of those commemorated are listed on panels set into the walls of the court and the gallery, arranged by regiment, rank and alphabetically by surname within the rank. Andrew McCleary is also commemorated on the Ballymena War Memorial.

Sadly Mrs McCleary's heartache did not end with her husband's death. Her youngest child Andrina died in September 1915, aged 7 months.



**Walter Adams**

Private Walker (not Walter as incorrectly recorded on Memorial) McLay Adams was formerly a Special Reservist and re-enlisted with the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) 1st Bn at Stirling in August 1914 and given service no: 3/2714. He was the youngest of four sons, all serving in the Army, of the late John Adams, a potter from South Street, and for a long time was a coal miner at Kinneil Coal Company, latterly moving to work in Airth. He was twenty four years of age, and was married to Mary Seth at Carriden on 29th December 1911. They had one child, John Ralph, and lived at 22 Burnett's Buildings, Grangepans.

He had for a time had been stationed at Nigg, Ross-shire, before arriving in France on 12th January 1914 as reinforcements for the 1st Division, 1st Guards Brigade during the Winter Operations of early 1915. On 25th January 1915 Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) 1st Bn were ordered to the front line at Cuinchy where a German offensive was underway. During this operation the Battalion suffered 54 killed, 150 wounded and 7 missing in action, including Walker Adams.

Initially notified as wounded on the same date, subsequent notification by the Army stated that he was found dead on the battlefield, and was buried on 9th February 1915, having died from wounds, the time and place where he received his injury being unknown. The local press speculated that, should the first notification have been correct, that Private Adams had lain on the battlefield since receiving his wounds until his body was found a fortnight later. On his death, Private Adams' widow received £3, 11s, 8d as death payment and £3 as a war gratuity.

Private Walker Adams is commemorated on the Le Touret Memorial, panel 24 to 26. He also appears on the Airth War Memorial. As well as being the first man listed on the Bo'ness War Memorial, his name also has the dubious distinction of containing the first spelling error.

**Michael Hamilton**

Private Michael Hamilton was born in Newtown, Bo'ness. He was the youngest son of George (coal miner) and Catherine Hamilton, of 64 Castleloan, Bo'ness, who had four other sons serving - Charles, George and Robert, all Black Watch, and John Hamilton, who had served in the Seaforth Highlanders, but who had recently been discharged as medically unfit.

Michael Hamilton had served in the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, 2nd Bn, for 5 years and since 1912 had been stationed in Poona, India. His regimental number was 8929. He arrived at Le Havre, France on 19th December 1914, as part of 81st Brigade in 27th Division and moved up to the Ypres Salient in Flanders.

Sometime in the early morning of 16th February 1915, his Battalion was involved in a firefight with the enemy near Dickebusch, south of Ypres, at "Bus-House" trench, so-called because of two nearby broken-down motor buses on the Voormezeele to St Eloi Road. He sustained a serious gunshot wound to his right buttock and was evacuated to a battlefield Casualty Clearing Station.

He later died of wounds on 1st March 1915, at 14th General Hospital, Boulogne. He is buried in grave I.D.16 at Wimereux Communal Cemetery approximately 5km north of Boulogne. From October 1914 onwards, Boulogne and Wimereux formed an important hospital centre and until June 1918, the medical units at Wimereux used the communal cemetery for burials, the south-eastern

half having been set aside for Commonwealth graves. An unusual feature of this cemetery is that the headstones lie flat upon the graves due to the sandy nature of the soil in this area. Michael's headstone contains the inscription, "He Died That We Might Live".

**David Tait**

Private David Tait, was the son of Mr William Tait, and Margaret Tait (ms Weir). His father was a joiner and the family lived at Panacre Place, Bo'ness. He was 22 years old and unmarried. According to his medical records he was 5'5", weighed 153lbs and had brown hair. Prior to enlistment he was employed as a dock labourer at Bo'ness Docks.

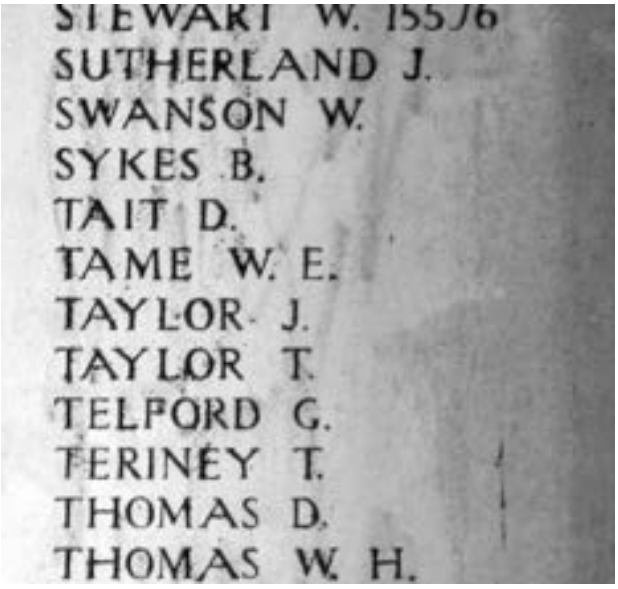
He enlisted with the Royal Scots at Linlithgow on the 13th August 1914 and was assigned service no: 2990. Initially he was with the 3rd Battalion Special Reserves but was posted abroad with the 2nd Battalion, as part of reinforcements for 3rd Division, 8th Brigade. He arrived in France on 28th November 1914, and moved up to the front line at the Ypres Salient soon after.

His father received various letters from David's comrades and also from one of the commanding officers that told him the circumstances of his son's death in a less than subtle manner,

> It is with great regret that I have to inform you that your son was killed by a bullet through the brain on the morning of the second inst. while doing his duty as a sentry in the trenches. I can sympathise deeply with your loss; I have lost a comrade and a brave man has died for his country. You have lost a son who was deeply respected by everyone who came into contact with him in the regiment. His loss is much regretted by my platoon who were his personal friends and comrades

David Tait was shot and killed in action on 1st March 1915, one of eight men killed in action on this and the following day, in the front line trenches at Veerstraat, Ypres. His total service was 213 days of which 106 were in France & Flanders. He has no known grave and is commemorated on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, bay 11 stone Y.

He had two brothers John (of Stewart Avenue) Joseph (Panacre Place) and a sister Mrs Margaret Learmonth, who lived at Muirhouses, Carriden. They each received 9 shillings 6 pence in war gratuities as a result of David's death, whilst his father William was given £4, 8 shillings and 6 pence.



**Harry Paul Hogg**

Private Harry Paul Hogg was the only son of James and Mary Hogg (ms Hastie), of Ellangowan, Bo'ness. James Hogg was a prominent figure in Bo'ness, acting as a Town Baillie and a partner in the firm of Messrs. Love, Stewart & Co., Shipowners and Brokers, Bo'ness. Harry was born 5th July 1894. He had three sisters - Helen, Jean and Allison Hogg.

He was educated at Bo'ness Academy and on leaving there entered the office of Messrs. Love, Stewart & Co., employed as a cashier. On the outbreak of war he enlisted in Glasgow, at the same time as several other young commercial men from the shipping offices. Harry enlisted on 1st September 1914, with the Highland Light Infantry, 9th Battalion, 'F' Coy and was latterly stationed in Dunfermline. He went to France on 22nd January 1915, as part of 5th Brigade in 2nd Division. In March 1915, the Bo'ness Journal reported that he was the first of the newly-enlisted Territorial Army to be sent to the trenches.

He was wounded in action at Festubert on 31st March 1915, and died the next day at 4 CCS in Lillers, aged 20. Harry Hogg was a likeable lad and extremely popular, though also modest and reserved. On hearing of his death a fellow soldier Thomas Thomason commented,

> I heard today that one of my pals H, who was wounded two days ago is dead. I can hardly realise it. Poor old Harry, one of the best. Can it possibly be true he is dead? My God this is terrible.

Another comrade, Lance Corporal Herbert Bain wrote,

> Ever since the day we joined the ranks, Harry and I have been together and in danger many times, and I could always look to him as a cheerful and bright comrade, optimistic at all times, and always looking on the sunny side. Hence he endeared himself to all those comrades with whom he came into contact.

Harry was also well-known in Bo'ness and Mr & Mrs Hogg received many messages of sympathy, from home and abroad, including two messages from Finland, one of them from Mr George Easton, the Finnish representative of Messrs Love, Stewart & Co, and the other from Captain Evans of the steamship SS Lovart of Bo'ness.

Harry Paul Hogg is buried about 15 km north-west of Bethune at Lillers Communal Cemetery, grave III. A. 19. Lillers was used for billets and headquarter offices from the autumn of 1914 to April 1918. During that time it was a hospital centre with various Casualty Clearing Stations in the town at one time or another. 4 CCS were located in Lillers from 2nd December 1914 - 14th June, 1915. The Cemetery contains 894 Commonwealth burials of the First World War, 67 of which are unidentified. There are also 15 German graves in the Commonwealth plots. Harry is also commemorated on the impressive family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery. His father James Hogg would go on to become the Town Provost in November 1919. Still grieving the loss of his son, he was a prime mover in the creation of the Bo'ness War Memorial. The scheme really took shape during the early reign of Provost Hogg, and he was one of the those who championed the erection of the War Memorial in its current location.

**James Maxwell**

Private James Maxwell was the youngest son of Mrs Margaret Maxwell (ms Gray) and Mr John Maxwell, late of 109 Furnace Row, and fireman in Kinneil Pit. He was born in Bo'ness but removed with his parents to Lochore, Fife, two years before enlisting, prior to which he was employed as a miner at Kinneil. He had two older brothers called Alexander and John and three sisters called Lillias, Janet and Margaret.

He was the husband of Mrs Mary Maxwell (ms Wells), and lived at the miner's cottages, 18 Peveril Place, Lochore. He married at the beginning of October 1914 and enlisted six weeks later at Cowdenbeath in the King's Own Scottish Borderers (KOSB), 2nd Bn. He was assigned service no: 16816, and arrived in France on 17th February 1915, where his Battalion joined the 13th Brigade, 5th Division.

James Maxwell was killed during the 13th Brigade's assault to try and recapture Hill 60, south west of Ypres, on 5th May 1915. Lieutenant A. Greg, 1st Cheshire Regiment witnessed the horror of the attack by the 2nd KOSB from his position in nearby Trench 40 and his account graphically describes the scene on Hill 60 that night:

> 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 crackle 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 and its continuation to the right.

James Maxwell is commemorated on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, panel 22. He was 21 years of age.

**William Brown** (1 of 3)

Private William Brown was the son of Mr George and Annie Brown, Waggon Road, Bo'ness. He was born and brought up in Bo'ness, but for a number of years resided with his wife Annie at 1 Scotstoun Place, Scotstoun, Glasgow. The couple had eight children.

Private Brown enlisted at the age of 17 years, and served for 13 years before leaving the army at the end of the Boer War, for which campaign he was awarded two medals and six clasps. At the outbreak of WW1 he re-enlisted with the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), 1st Bn, "A" Coy, service no: 3/3637. He arrived in France on 7th May 1915, as part of 1st Division, 1st Brigade, and took part in the Battle of Aubers, on 9th May 1915. In a cruel twist official notification by the War Office stating that he was killed in action on that date had been cancelled in July 1915, and William was officially posted as missing in action. The family desperate for news posted notices in various newspapers, such as the Dundee Courier in October 1915, seeking information on his whereabouts. Sadly his previous killed in action status was reinstated many months later, his date of death recorded as 9th May 1915. According to war diaries, William Brown was killed during the Battle of Aubers at a place called "Chocolate Menier Corner" (as shown in photo), so-called by the advert on the building. 475 men of the Black Watch 1st Bn died there on 9th May. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on Le Touret Memorial, panels 24 to 26.

Chocolate Menier Corner

1st Black Watch 9th May 1915 from the Illustrated London News

**David Ferguson**

Private David McGregor Ferguson was the son of Daniel Ferguson, a railway surfaceman, and Helen Ferguson of 75 High Street, Linlithgow, formerly of Joustinghaugh Cottage, Little Mill Road, Linlithgow Bridge. His mother Helen had died in 1907.

He had a number of brothers including Daniel, John, Peter, William, Arthur and James, and sisters Nellie and Elizabeth. Both his elder brothers were coal miners and the family would have had strong links to the mining community over the Flints in Bo'ness.

He enlisted with the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) 1st Bn at Linlithgow, service no: S/6956, and arrived in France on 22nd April 1915, as part of the 1st Division, 1st Brigade.

David Ferguson was killed in action, alongside William Brown, near "Chocolate Menier Corner" at the Battle of Aubers Ridge on 9th May 1915. He was only 17 years of age. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on Le Touret Memorial, panels 24 to 26.

**Hugh Campbell**

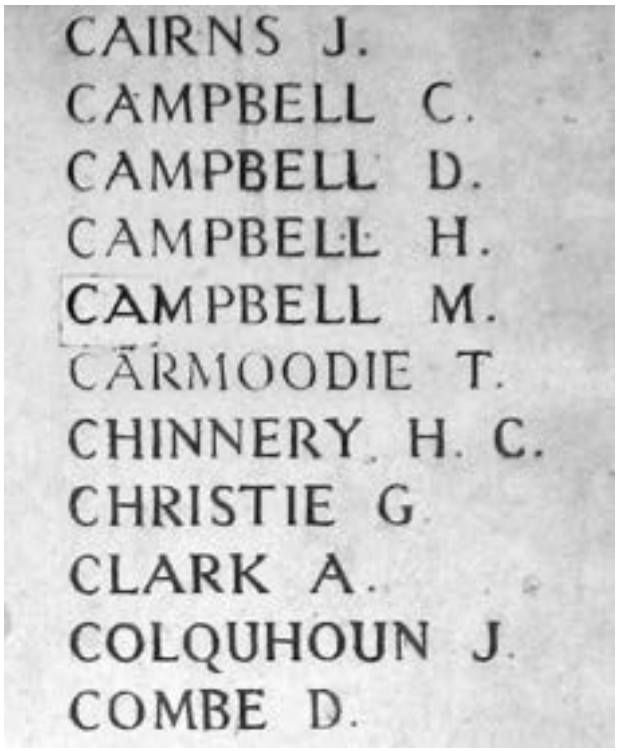
Private Hugh Campbell, aged 33, was the son of Elizabeth and the late John Campbell who resided at Castleloan, Bo'ness, and formerly at Gilburn. He was a native of Cloverhill, Dunbartonshire.

He was the husband of Annie Marshall Reilly (formerly Campbell), of 9 Argyle Lane, Maryhill, They were married in Maryhill, Glasgow on 12th April 1901, and had a daughter named Margaret Ann Bain Campbell, who was born in October 1914. The married couple came to Bo'ness about ten years previous to WW1. He was a coal miner and for many years was employed at Kinneil Colliery.

Hugh Campbell was 5'6" tall, weighed 118lbs, and was noted to have grey eyes, dark brown hair that was starting to grey and a fresh complexion

He enlisted in Bo'ness with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 1st Bn, service no: S/3373, and after a period of training he left Southampton for France, joining the 27th Division, 81st Infantry Brigade on 6th March 1915.

He was killed in action on 10th May 1915, during the 81st Infantry Bde's participation in the Battle of Frezenberg, a phase of the Second Battle of Ypres, that took place 22nd April – 25th May 1915. His body was not recovered and he is remembered on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, panel 42 and 44.




The notification of Hugh's death was conveyed to his mother on the back of a photograph which was sent home by an unnamed comrade. He had only served for 253 days in total before his death.

**William Campbell**

Born in Slamannan, Private William Campbell was the son of Walter and Elizabeth Shaw Campbell, of 9 Linlithgow Row, Newtown. His father Walter Campbell was a well-known centre-forward for Bo'ness Football Club in their early days. William had two sisters, Catherine and Minnie, and three younger brothers John, Thomas and Walter, the last of whom also served in WW1 with the Royal Scots, 5th Battalion.

William was married to Annie Campbell (ms Bell) in 1907 and lived at Furnace Row, Bo'ness. The couple had four children. He was 31 years of age, and was employed as a coal miner at Kinneil Colliery until 1912, when he left the district to work in Cowie, Stirlingshire, where he was well-known. While there he joined the Territorials, and soon after the outbreak of war he enlisted in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 1st Bn. Just prior to being sent to the Front he managed to return home to visit his family in Bo'ness. He left in January and arrived in France on 2nd February 1915.

He was wounded during the Battle of Frezenberg and evacuated from the battlefield to No.11 General Hospital, a Base Hospital at Boulogne, arriving on 12th May 1915. He died of wounds that night.

His wife was notified of his death by letter from the Hospital Matron who wrote, dated 13th May 1915, in the following terms:

> I am very sorry to tell you that your husband, 9690 Private William Campbell, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, was brought down here last evening at 7:50pm in an unconscious condition, suffering from a very dangerous wound in the head. He never recovered consciousness and died at 10 the same night without saying a word. It is most tragic for you, and I am very sorry for you in your great trouble.
>
> Yours sincerely,
> M. Lang, Matron.

William Campbell is buried in Boulogne Eastern Cemetery, at grave VIII. C. 33. His grave stone is inscribed with the epitaph,

"Blessed are they that mourn,
for they shall be comforted"

**Thomas Knowles**

Thomas Knowles was born on 31st January 1874, in Carriden, the son of Mr Thomas and Mrs Lizzie Knowles. He was a native of Bo'ness and well-known in the town, but he lived with his wife Helen and four children at 6 Upper Craig Terrace, Blackridge, West Lothian. The couple were married at Kirkliston on 22nd April 1904.

He enlisted in the Army on 29th November 1894, aged 20, and served in Crete and South Africa for two years in the Boer War. Later Thomas Knowles would comment that the Boer War was like a picnic compared with what he endured in the Great War.

At the commencement of WW1 he re-enlisted with the Highland Light Infantry, 2nd Bn. on 11th August 1914, and landed at Le Havre on the 18th December to join 2nd Division, 5th Brigade. On the 31st January 1915, a shell burst just in front of the trench Thomas was in near La Bassee. He did not know that a piece of shrapnel had hit him but when he recovered consciousness he was in hospital. Shortly afterwards he was invalided home. Private Knowles stated when he was home that the hardships endured by the men in the trenches were not over exaggerated as it was quite a common sight to see men standing up to their middle in water. He thought "the Gerries must have had pumps in their trenches as the Huns he had seen taken prisoner were always dry and clean".

After a short period of convalescence he returned to the trenches, and was only in action for a further few weeks when he was killed near Rue Du Bois at the Battle of Festubert on 16th May 1915. His brother Andrew Knowles, who resided at Foredale Terrace, Carriden, received news by letter that a shell had burst over Thomas's trench, and when he was dug out he only lived a further 10 minutes. He was one of 15 men of ordinary ranks killed and 97 wounded that day.

His wife also received the following letter from Private R. Blyth 1st Highland Light Infantry:

> Dear Madam,
>
> It is with great regret that I write these few lines to you to inform you of the death your husband, who was killed in action on the 16th, and was buried the day after. I wish to convey to you the deepest sympathy of all his old comrades in your bereavement. I hope it will be some comfort for you to know that he died without pain, and that he died serving his country. I enclose a photograph of yourself and family which your husband carried with him, and which we often admired. We feel that it is hard for such a young family to be deprived of their dad. I hope that you will bear up in your sad bereavement.

Thomas Knowles was buried close to where he fell and a cross erected. His body was exhumed in February 1920 and reburied at Guards Cemetery, Windy Corner, Cuinchy, at grave VIII. H. 39. The concentration of cemeteries in this manner allowed otherwise unmaintainable graves to be moved into established war grave cemeteries where the CWGC could ensure proper commemoration.

Thomas Knowles was a coal miner and employed at Blackrigg 3 Colliery. He also appears on The United Collieries Limited, active service roll 1914-19. He was also a popular member of Blackridge Pipe Band Committee.

**Robert Maines**

Private Robert Mains (surname incorrect on War Memorial) was born in Lugar, Ayrshire. He married Nellie McGuinness on 28th July 1905, in Bo'ness, and they had three children, Robert Simpson, Maggie and Nellie. The family lived at 10 Furnace Rows. He was well-known in Bo'ness and had worked for ten years as a shaftsman in No.1 Snab Pit, Kinneil Coal Company.

He joined Royal Scots, 10th (Cyclists) Battalion Territorials, "B" (Bo'ness) Company, in April 1914 having previously served with Seaforth Highlanders. On 17th December 1914 he enlisted with the Army Cyclist Corps, at East Linton, alongside another Bo'ness cyclist Private Andrew Devlin of 6 Scotland's Close. Robert was assigned service no: 626 and was sent to the Front as part of the first draft from the various cyclist battalions from the East Coast.

The formation of a specialist Army Cyclist Corps was authorised by Army Order 477, dated 7th November 1914. When the order came into effect, all men who were serving with the divisional cyclist companies, or who were in training as cyclists to provide drafts for those companies, would be transferred into the new corps. The men were given the new cap badge of the corps and were also renumbered in a new corps sequence. The order did not affect the territorial cyclist units or the men serving in them, as they kept their own regimental identities, but many men such as Robert Mains enlisted in the new Corps. Men being enlisted for the duration of the war could now be appointed directly to the new corps. The pay of the cyclists was to be the same as that of the infantry. Additional 'proficiency pay' would be given to men who qualified as a proficient cyclist and who had the necessary physical endurance.

Private Robert Mains sailed from Southampton and arrived in Le Havre on 14th January 1915, and was attached to 4th Division. While at the Front he acted as a despatch rider, and was reported to have had many miraculous escapes. He was wounded on 7th July 1915, during a charge made by the Germans. It was believed that he had been taken as a prisoner of war but official notification that he had been killed in action on 9th July 1915 was made in a letter to Mrs Mains from one of his comrades. He had served in the Army Cyclist Corps for 205 days. His body was never recovered and he is remembered on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, panel 56. Robert was 27 years old.

10th Cyclists Battalion on parade

**Charles McCallum**

Private Charles McCallum was the second son of Charles McCallum, Furnace Row, Kinneil (himself an ex-soldier), and was one of five brothers all of whom were in the Army, three of whom enlisted at the outbreak of hostilities. They were Pte. John McCallum, 2nd Royal Scots, Pte. Alexander McCallum, Pte. Archibald McCallum, both 1/10th Royal Scots, and Sapper Owen McCallum, Royal Engineers (formerly a private in the regular army in the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders who served in India).

Private McCallum was for many years a miner at Kinneil Colliery, before moving over to Fife with his wife Christina. They had six children and lived at 30 Montrose Street, Lochore. Whilst there he acquired a knowledge of ambulance work, which he put to practical use by enlisting at Lochgelly early in the war campaign with the Royal Army Medical Corps, service no: 32035. He arrived in France on 21st May 1915, and was assigned to 44th Field Ambulance. From 17th July 1915, the unit was at Ypres. The town was used extensively as a billeting place, and the Ramparts, Prison and Cloth Hall were always full of troops.

On 11th August 1915, Private McCallum wrote a letter to his wife detailing his horrific brushes with death. Sadly, the day after he wrote the letter, he was killed in action. The news of Private McCallum's death was confirmed in a letter received by his family in Bo'ness from his widow in Fife. She explained that the tragic message was delivered to her by a woman in Lochgelly whose husband was with Charles in France. The letter stated that he was killed by a shell about 9:00am on 12th August. Along with five others he was in an advance first aid post when they received word that a party of Scottish Rifles were buried under an area of the Cloth Hall, as a result of enemy shelling. Charles and his five comrades volunteered to go to their assistance but were caught in further shelling and he and two other RAMC men, lost their lives. The bodies of Privates McCallum and Vine were brought back for burial, but the body of their comrade Private Alf Williams was never found - only his arm with the brassard still on.

Private Charles McCallum was 38 years of age, and is buried in Poperinghe New Military Cemetery at grave I. G. 6. The town of Poperinghe was of great importance during the First World War because, although occasionally bombed or bombarded at long range, it was the nearest place to Ypres which was both considerable in size and reasonably safe. The New Military Cemetery was established in June 1915 and contains 677 Commonwealth burials of the First World War and 271 French war graves.

**Edward Wright**

Private Edward Wright was 31 years old and a native of Alloa, Clackmannanshire. He was the son of Alexander & Mary Wright, 8 Craigward Place, Alloa, but lived with his sister Mrs Isabella Gilmour at Victoria Terrace, Bo'ness. Two of his brothers, George and Alexander were Privates in the same regiment but invalided home to Edinburgh. He was well-known in the town, and was formerly employed for two years at Bo'ness Distillery, but latterly he worked as a labourer in the woodyard of Messrs Love & Stewart, Grangepans. He was unmarried, and a slightly built man, weighing 110 lbs and measuring 5'5" in height.

He was a reservist before the War and enlisted with Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders 10th Battalion at Stirling on 25th August 1914, service no: S/2286. He arrived in France on 11th May 1915, to join 27th Brigade in 9th (Scottish) Division. He was in the front line trenches near Festubert on 24th July 1915. During the early hours of the morning some heavy shelling took place during which one man was killed and 3 men of "D" Company were wounded. One of those wounded men was Edward Wright who was dangerously injured in the neck and spine, and he was evacuated to No.5 Stationary Hospital, Abbeville. For much of the First World War Abbeville was headquarters of the Commonwealth lines of communication and No.3 British Red Cross Society Hospital, No.5 and No.2 Stationary Hospitals were stationed there variously from October 1914 to January 1920.

Unfortunately Private Edward Wright died of his wounds a month later at 7:30am on 23rd August 1915, and official notification was sent to his sister. He had served with the Argylls for 364 days. He is buried in grave II. C. 7. at Abbeville Communal Cemetery, that was used for burials from the nearby hospitals from November 1914 to September 1916.

CHAPTER 4

# *1915*
# *Gallipoli*

**The Late Pte. William Hamilton**

The Dardanelles, the Dardanelles:
O, how my heart with sorrow swells,
For Hamilton;
Cut down in manhood's sturdy bloom,
Death's laid low in his early tomb,
Brave Scotia's son.

Farewell, erect and manly form,
Farewell, true heart, to friendship warm,
Beloved soul!
Through the unknown thou't taken thy flight,
Brave soldier spirit! To thy bright
And glorious goal.

Mourn with the parents, here bereft,
Mourn with the friends untimely left,
Mourn for the man!
Then back into the battle plunge;
We fear not death, but we'll avenge
What death began.

Soldiers! Remember whence ye come,
Remember Britain, and strike home!
God's will be done.
This Dardanelles - accursed shore!
Scotia, but my heart is sore
For Hamilton

*W. S. J., Bo'ness, 1915.*

# Gallipoli

In early 1915 a new plan was conceived by Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty, to break the attrition of the Western Front. The strategy was to engage the forces of the Ottoman First Army, essentially the German empire's main strategic reserves, thus preventing redeployment elsewhere. The goal of the naval and land operation was to open up the Dardanelles straits to allied shipping, capture Constantinople (modern Istanbul) and so link up with Russia. The straits themselves were heavily mined and were defended heavily on their western shore by Turkish coastal forts and gun batteries on the 50-mile Gallipoli peninsula.

The majority of Bo'ness men killed at Gallipoli were fighting in the Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 1/5th Battalion (Queen's Edinburgh Rifles)(referred to in this chapter as 5RS). In March 1915 5RS was posted to 88th Brigade of the regular British 29th Division. An earlier joint British and French Fleet had failed to force the Dardanelles in a disastrous naval operation when three ships - two British and one French - were sunk by mines. The 29th Division were part of a task force, along with Australian and New Zealand (ANZAC), and French forces, who were then sent to the area and tasked with landing on and capturing the Gallipoli peninsula.

The Battalion sailed on the SS Caledonia from Avonmouth on 20th March 1915 arriving at Alexandria on 2nd April. It sailed on from there on 11th April and reached the strategic island of Lemnos on the 13th, leaving for nearby Gallipoli in the assault fleet on the 24th. Two companies landed on 'W' Beach at about 12:30pm the next day without casualties and moved up to establish support trenches. 5RS took part in various assaults on the dominating feature of Achi Baba over the next two months showing bravery but with limited success. Writing back home to his mother at Snab Rows in Bo'ness, Private John Johnston, 5RS wrote,

> When we landed on Thursday morning the shells were flying all around us. I got up beside some of the Bo'ness chaps, and they told me that William Binnie had been killed. I hear that there is also a Bo'ness chap wounded. When we met the "boys" they had just come in from the firing line. We are all in the best of health.

The first Bo'ness casualty in the Gallipoli campaign was indeed **Private William Binnie**, 5RS, who was killed on 4th June 1915 by a sniper's bullet through the head whilst on lookout duties during the Third Battle

of Krithia. Another Bo'ness man, Private John Bishop, joined the 5RS in Edinburgh towards the end of 1914. His later draft consisted of 170 men, and they sailed from Plymouth to Alexandria on the SS Runic, a liner requisitioned from the White Star Company, then on to Lemnos. From there the men were packed like sardines into the hold of a trawler and sailed for seven hours to Gallipoli. Approaching a large collier, the "River Clyde", described as "the new Horse of Troy" and providing a bridgehead for landing at 'V' Beach, they tasted their first action as Turkish gunfire rained down. Luckily there were no casualties and upon landing the detachment moved up to their base half a mile away.

On 19th June the 5RS distinguished itself by recapturing, with a bayonet charge, a trench which had been lost by another unit to a Turkish counter-attack, but at a cost of 60 casualties. This was again described by John Bishop, who said,

> After three days rest, so-called, we were taken to the trenches. The first five days were quiet but on the fifth night… the Turks made a determined counter attack and got up to our wire entanglements. We fought for a solid ten hours and ultimately drove the Turks back with fearful slaughter. In our own little force we lost, between killed and wounded, about 100.

The SS River Clyde forming a beachhead at 'V' Beach where many Bo'ness men landed at Gallipoli.

It was in this fight that **Privates Peter Bell** and **William Hamilton** were killed. Both Privates Bell and Hamilton were shot in the head and fell close by John Bishop. For all three it was their baptism of fire. After his miraculous escape, and also suffering a gunshot wound in the knee acquired in a later battle, Bishop was evacuated from Gallipoli to recuperate in the South of England. Thereafter he came back to Bo'ness on seven days furlough to relate his exploits to the Bo'ness Journal. Sadly, his own luck would run out two years later at Passchendaele.

The next major advance was the Battle of Gully Ravine on 28th June 1915 in conjunction with the newly arrived 52nd (Lowland) Division, including Royal Scots 1/4th and 1/7th Battalions of 156th (Scottish Rifles) Brigade. This was part of the last major attempt to gain the peak of Achi Baba. The attack was planned for the left flank along Gully Spur, Gully Ravine and neighbouring Fir Tree Spur, as the wild and rough terrain in this area was more similar to that at ANZAC Cove than to the ground elsewhere at Helles. The British 29th Division and the 29th Indian Brigade were asked to attack along Gully Spur and the ravine while the 156th (Scottish Rifles) Brigade would attack along Fir Tree Spur.

As the battle commenced the general advance progressed steadily, however, on the right of the advance, along Fir Tree Spur, the battle did not go so well for the British. The inexperienced soldiers of the 156th Brigade lacked artillery support and were massacred by Ottoman machine guns and bayonet attacks. Despite the opposition, they were ordered to press the attack and so the support and reserve lines were sent forward but made no progress. By the time the attack was halted the Brigade was at half strength, having suffered casualties of which 800 had been killed. Some battalions were so depleted they had to be merged into composite formations. When the rest of the 52nd Division landed, the commanders were furious with the manner in which the 156th Brigade had been sacrificed.

Although 5RS achieved its immediate objective, without any artillery support, it was at a terrible cost of 34 killed, 156 wounded and 80 missing believed killed. The men killed included **Privates John Corbett, William M. Finlay, Herbert Fradley, Robert Hempstead, Adam Neill and James Williamson.**

**Private Cornelius Whitelaw** of the 1/7th Battalion Royal Scots (7RS) was also wounded by shrapnel to the right leg in this Battle, during the attack on Fir Tree Spur. He was transferred to Hospital Ship Neuralia but died of wounds on 2nd July 1915. In total 7RS lost 11 officers and 230 ordinary ranks killed, wounded or missing (presumed killed) during the Battle of Gully Ravine. Despite surviving this action, **Private William Forrest** of 7RS who, at not quite 17 years old, was

View across Gully Ravine.

the youngest man from Bo'ness killed in action when a bullet struck his temple at the next major offensive the Battle of Achi Baba Nullah (Bloody Valley). He died in the same Battle as **Private Alexander Cotton** of the Highland Light Infantry 6th (City of Glasgow) Bn, both men fighting for the 52nd (Lowland) Division, although in different Brigades.

The failure of the Allies to capture Krithia or make any progress on the Helles front, led to a new plan to secure the range of hills at the Battle of Sari Bair and capture high ground on Hill 971 in the Battle of Chunuk Bair. The Allies planned to land two fresh infantry divisions from IX Corps at Suvla, 8km north of ANZAC, followed by an advance on Sari Bair from the north-west. Meanwhile an ANZAC offensive would be made against the Sari Bair Range from the North. Initial successes were made in reaching the summit of the Chunuk Bair peak by allied forces. The first troops on the summit were decimated by Ottoman fire and were relieved at 10:30pm on 8th August by various forces including the New Zealanders of the Otago Infantry Battalion. During this battle **Private James McPherson McBlain** was severely wounded and evacuated from the battlefield to the Hospital Ship Neuralia and onto Alexandria in Egypt. He died of wounds there on 19th August 1915. The Otago Battalion held on for another long day of grim fighting. But within hours of being relieved by two British battalions from Suvla, a massive counterattack by thousands of Turkish infantrymen swept them from the summit. The final British attempts to resuscitate

Guns being towed to waiting ships on a raft during the evacuation of Suvla Bay, December 1915.

the offensive came on 21st August, in the Battle of Scimitar Hill and the Battle of Hill 60. Control of the hills would have united the ANZAC and Suvla fronts but the attacks failed.

**Private George R. Watt**, who left Bo'ness for Australia in 1910 to become a sheep farmer, had enlisted in the 13th Battalion Australian Imperial Force (AIF), and as part of the AIF 4th Brigade landed at ANZAC Cove on 25th April 1915. On 23rd August George suffered a gunshot wound to the abdomen during the Battle of Hill 60, the last major assault of the Gallipoli Campaign prior to the evacuation in December 1915. He was taken to 16th Casualty Clearing Station near No.2 Outpost but later died that day.

**Private John Hastings** of the 1st Scottish Horse, arrived in Gallipoli on 2nd September 1915 at Suvla Bay where the brigade came under orders of 2nd Mounted Division. He was wounded by shrapnel on 20th October and died of wounds two days later. He was the final Bo'ness man to die during the Gallipoli campaign.

Eventually it became clear that the campaign had reached a stalemate and would have to be abandoned. The evacuation of the peninsula began on 7th December 1915, and the last troops left the Helles peninsula on 9th January 1916. In all, some 480000 Allied forces took part in the Gallipoli campaign, at a cost of more than 250000 casualties, including some 46000 dead. On the Turkish side, the campaign also cost an estimated 250000 casualties, with 65000 killed.

The hope of victory at Gallipoli - the capture of Constantinople, the dreams of knocking Turkey out of the war, of giving "warm-water" access to Russia and a quick end to the war - was all over. Gallipoli is largely remembered as the campaign where both the Australian and New Zealand national identities were forged, linked to the notion of the qualities embodied in the ANZAC fighting spirit. It was also seen as the defining moment in the Turkish nation and produced a hero, Mustafa Kemel, who became the founder of the new state that emerged from WW1.

**William Binnie**

Private William Binnie, enlisted in the Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 1/5th Battalion (Queen's Edinburgh Rifles) in December 1914, service no: 2886. Prior to his enlistment, he worked in Messrs Kennedy & Co., woodyard, Kinneil. Unmarried, he lived at 6 Snab Row, Bo'ness and was the fourth son of Mr John Binnie of Bankhead, Bo'ness, head carter at Kinneil Collieries. He was 26 years old.

William Binnie's death in action was notified in a letter home to his brother in Bo'ness from a fellow recruit Private T. Ballantine (Corbiehall). Private Ballantine, who enlisted with "his chum" in December, was sorry to report that Private Binnie was killed by a sniper at 3:00am on the morning of Monday 7th June, while on the lookout. He did his best to attend to him, but his comrade, having been shot through the head, only survived for five minutes. This date of death is at odds with William's official date of death given by CWGC as 4th June 1915 which is used here.

William was a member of Craigmailen U.F. Church and his sacrifice was remembered in a special eulogy by Rev. D.G. Young on Sunday 27th June 1915. His name also appears on the Church WW1 War Memorial. He is remembered on the Helles Memorial, panel 26 to 30. The Helles Memorial serves the dual function of Commonwealth battle memorial for the whole Gallipoli campaign and

place of commemoration for many of those commonwealth servicemen who died there and have no known grave. The United Kingdom and Indian forces named on the memorial died in operations throughout the peninsula, the Australians at Helles. There are also panels for those who died or were buried at sea in Gallipoli waters. Over 20000 names are commemorated on this memorial.

William Binnie's war medals, along with those of his brother, were auctioned online on 7th August 2016 and fetched £211.54.

**Peter Bell**

Private Peter Bell, aged 31, was a native of Grangepans and lived at 10 Forthbank Terrace, Bridgeness. He was married to Helen and had three children, Janet, Margaret and George. He was a coal miner to trade and worked for the Bridgeness Coal Company. He enlisted alongside William Hamilton in the Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 1/5th Battalion (Queen's Edinburgh Rifles) on 2nd December 1914, service no: 2829, and arrived at Gallipoli on 10th May 1915. He was killed in action on 19th June 1915 and his death was reported in the Bo'ness Journal on Friday 9th July 1915. He was also a member of Craigmailen U.F. Church congregation, where for a time he acted as Beadle, and he is commemorated on their WW1 Church Memorial.

Just eight days before his death Private Bell had written to his wife at 4 Forthbank Terrace, Grangepans saying,

> I am keeping well. As soon as we landed we were sent straight to the trenches. We were in them for nearly a week, but we have now been drawn back to the rest trench. Our battalion got a cutting up. When we came from the firing line I met several Bo'ness chaps, and among them was my brother-in-law, Tom Simpson. The weather here is very hot through the day-time and very cold at night.

He is buried at Twelve Tree Copse Cemetery, grave ref: I. F. 11. Unfortunately his headstone is wrongly marked "C. Bell".

**William Hamilton**

Private William Hamilton, 30, enlisted in Bo'ness at the same time as Peter Bell with Royal Scots, 5th Battalion, in December 1914, service no: 2826, and arrived in Gallipoli on 24th May 1915. He resided at Craigfoot Terrace, Grangepans and was the second son of Mr Thomas Hamilton, woodyard worker. He was unmarried and one of three brothers who enlisted in the 5RS. The photo shows (left to right) William, Richard and Thomas. Soon after William's death the brothers, who were still on active service, wrote home to their parents informing them that William had been shot in the head and died almost immediately. The news of William Hamilton and Peter Bell's deaths were painfully received in Grangepans where both men were extremely well known, especially in sporting circles. A poem was written for him in remembrance and published in the Bo'ness Journal. It appears at the beginning of this chapter. William is also remembered on the WW1 memorial in Carriden Church.

He is buried at Twelve Tree Copse Cemetery, grave ref: I. B. 6

Another soldier Private James Adams, 5RS, from Rattray Street, Bo'ness wrote home to describe the fateful charge in which Ptes Hamilton and Bell lost their lives.

> It was a terrible charge. I never experienced anything like it in all my life and I hope and trust to God I never will again. The shells and bullets were flying over our heads like anything, and I was very nearly away myself, two comrades having fallen on either side of me. I feel very sorry for Tom and Dick Hamilton…they are very downhearted, and when Dick was told about his brother's death he fainted. I was just speaking to William five minutes before the engagement and he said "I am going down Jim" and that was the next thing I heard about an hour later.

Adams survived the war as did William Hamilton's brothers Richard and Thomas.

**William M. Finlay**

William Miller Finlay was born on 13th June 1878 at Dark Close, Bo'ness. He was 36 when he enlisted with the Royal Scots, 5th Bn, at Bo'ness on the 2nd December 1914, the same date as Peter Bell, Robert Hempstead and many of the other Bo'ness men. He was assigned service no: 2838. He was married, to Annie, and lived at Foredale Terrace, Carriden. He had seven children, one of which William John Finlay would also be killed in action in Flanders in 1918 and appears alongside his father on the Bo'ness War Memorial.

He also had three brothers, David, Robert and Frank and two sisters, Mary and Margaret, all living in Bo'ness. He was 5'9" in height and weighed 161lbs on enlistment. Before enlistment in November 1914, Pte. Finlay was employed as a coal miner at No.6. Grange Pit.

William arrived in Gallipoli on 10th May 1915. His service had lasted 209 days in total, only 50 days of which were in the battlefield. William Miller Finlay was killed in action during the Battle of Gully Ravine (Achi Baba), Gallipoli on 28th June 1915. He is commemorated on the Helles Memorial, panel 26 to 30.

William Finlay has many descendants and family relations still residing in Bo'ness.

**John Corbett**

Private John Corbett, aged 28, enlisted with the Royal Scots, 5th Bn, on the 1st December 1914 in Bo'ness. He was assigned service no: 2788. His address was given as 98 Main Street, Grangepans. Prior to enlistment he worked in the woodyard of Messrs. Love, Stewart & Co. Ltd, Pitwood Importers, Grangepans. He was unmarried, was 5'4" tall and weighed 132lbs. John was the son of the late Peter Corbett and Catherine Corbett of Reid's Crescent, Grangepans, and had two brothers and four sisters. Having initially been reported as wounded on the 28th June 1915, this was supplemented in October with the news that he was officially "missing". His mother, presumably along with other local families frantic with worry, contacted various organisations to find out the whereabouts of her son and his comrades. A reply was received from the British Red Cross and Order of St John in December 1915. After stating that no trace of Pte. Corbett, her son, could be found, the letter went on to say:

> At mid-day on the 28th June an attack was delivered against Hill 12, which is on the left of Crithia. The attack was made by 1/4th and the 1/7th Royal Scots, the 1/5th being in the fourth line of supports. They had a long spell in the firing line and were told they would probably not be needed that day. However, at 12:30pm they were moved up into the second line, and at about 4 o'clock, they were ordered to charge. By this time the Turks had brought into position many machine guns, to say nothing for the larger forms of artillery, and the 1/5th were literally wiped out. The distance they had to go averaged about 230 yards though it appears to have differed considerably in different places. From our line the ground sloped up, and Hill 12 was "somewhere" on the other side of the slope. When they got to the top of the slope they might have had to go "half right or half left". As soon as they got to the top they were killed, and the next morning the ground was simply covered with dead. Most of the wounded who were brought in had been hit in two or three places, and it is believed that the enemy's machine guns had been trained at different heights – the head, body and legs. The rest camp, from which this information is gleaned consisted of about 130 men – all that are left of the 1/5th Royal Scots. Of these, only six were in the charge of 28th June, and they know nothing of individual cases. It will be difficult to get individual reports of those missing on this date, and it will be surprising if any of them turn up alive. Most of the 1/5th Royal Scots who remained were drafted up after the 28th June although there were several in hospital who had been in the engagement: but even these are unlikely to be able to give much information for two reasons: first, that the battalion received very considerable drafts shortly before the engagement and was not very familiar with these men, and did not know their names: and secondly, because it was dark during most of the engagement which lasted from 4 p.m., till 3 a.m.

John Corbett's death was eventually confirmed in March 1916. His service had lasted 210 days in total, only 36 days of which were in the battlefield. John was killed in action during the Battle of Gully Ravine (Achi Baba) on 28th June 1915. He is commemorated on the Helles Memorial, panel 26-30

**Robert Hempstead**

Private Robert Hempstead, 28, lived at 31 Furnace Rows, Bo'ness. He was a coal miner to trade and worked at nearby Kinneil Coal Company. He enlisted with Royal Scots, 5th Bn, at Bo'ness on 2nd December 1914 and was assigned service no: 2816. Robert was unmarried, his next of kin given as his mother Annie Hempstead, 74 Kinneil Road, Bo'ness. He had a number of sisters - Mary Hempstead, who at the time was working and residing at Horton War Hospital, Surrey, and John, Lizzie and Susan who all resided with their mother at 74 Kinneil Road.

He also had two brothers - William Hempstead, 63 Snab Row, Bo'ness, who served with the Army Service Corps, and John Hempstead, 74 Kinneil Road, who served with the Black Watch. Both survived the War.

His service records show that he was 5'8" tall and weighed 168lbs on enlistment. Like many of the Bo'ness men who served in Gallipoli, Robert Hempstead only served for a ridiculously short time. He entered the Gallipoli theatre on 24th May 1915. He saw action and was wounded, rejoining his Unit on 21st June, one week before he was killed in

action. His service lasted 209 days in total, only 36 days of which were in the battlefield.

He is remembered on the Helles Memorial, panel 26 to 30. His family had to wait until March 1916 before receiving official notification of his death.

**Herbert Fradley**

Herbert Fradley was born on 30th June 1894 in Alloa. He was the son of Herbert and Helen Fradley of 4 East Bog, Bo'ness and latterly Ann Terrace, Bo'ness. Although he was born in Scotland his family had connections with Hanley in Staffordshire and his father worked in the pottery trade as a Pottery Fireman. This is probably how the family came to reside in Bo'ness.

He enlisted in the Royal Scots, 5th Bn, in December 1914 and he arrived in Gallipoli on 25th April 1915. His service number was 3061. Prior to enlisting Herbert was a coal miner and worked in one of the Grange coal pits.

The family was hit particularly badly from early on in the War. Sadly, Herbert's brother, Corporal Henry Victor Fradley, was among the first Bo'ness soldiers killed, dying from wounds received at the front in France on 25th October 1914. He also appears on the Bo'ness War Memorial. We also think that a younger brother Albert, a volunteer soldier, who died in 1918 may also be listed on the Memorial, albeit his name inscribed incorrectly as Albert Hanley.

Herbert Fradley was killed in action, aged 20, during the Battle of Gully Ravine (Achi Baba), Gallipoli on 28th June 1915. He is commemorated on the Helles Memorial, panel 26 to 30. His family had to wait until March 1916 before receiving official notification of his death.

**Adam Neill**

Private Adam Walker Neill, aged 32, enlisted with Royal Scots, 5th Bn, on 1st December 1914 at Bo'ness and was assigned service number 2790. He was 5'7' and weighed 156lbs on enlistment.

Before enlisting, Private Neill was employed in the woodyard of Messrs. Love, Stewart & Co., Bo'ness. He was a native of Bo'ness and lived at Burnett's Buildings, Grangepans with his wife Grace, and their three children, John, Janet and Grace. He was the son of the late John Neill, coal trimmer, and Janet Neill, West Bog, Bo'ness.

Private Neill was one of four brothers serving with the colours. The three others were listed as Private William Neill, 2nd Royal Scots (who was wounded in the face in France and discharged); Private John Neill, of the Royal Scots, who served in a machine gun section in France; and Private Andrew Neill, 2/5th Royal Scots, who at the time of his brother's death was in training at Leven. Adam Walker Neill was killed in action during the Battle of Gully Ravine (Achi Baba), Gallipoli on 28th June 1915. He is commemorated on the Helles Memorial, panel 26 to 31. Initially posted as missing in action, his family had to wait until five months later before official notification of his death was received from the authorities.

**James Williamson**

Private James Williamson, aged 22, also enlisted with Royal Scots, 5th Bn, at Bo'ness on 6th December 1914. He was given service number 2941. Prior to enlisting he worked at Messrs James Calder & Co. Ltd, Distillers, Bo'ness. He was the son of George and Mary Williamson and had two brothers, Thomas and George, and two sisters, Lizzie and Dora Williamson. He was unmarried and lived with the family at 10 School Brae, Bo'ness.

He arrived in the Dardanelles on 24th May 1915. Private James Williamson was killed in action during the Battle of Gully Ravine (Achi Baba), Gallipoli on 28th June 1915.

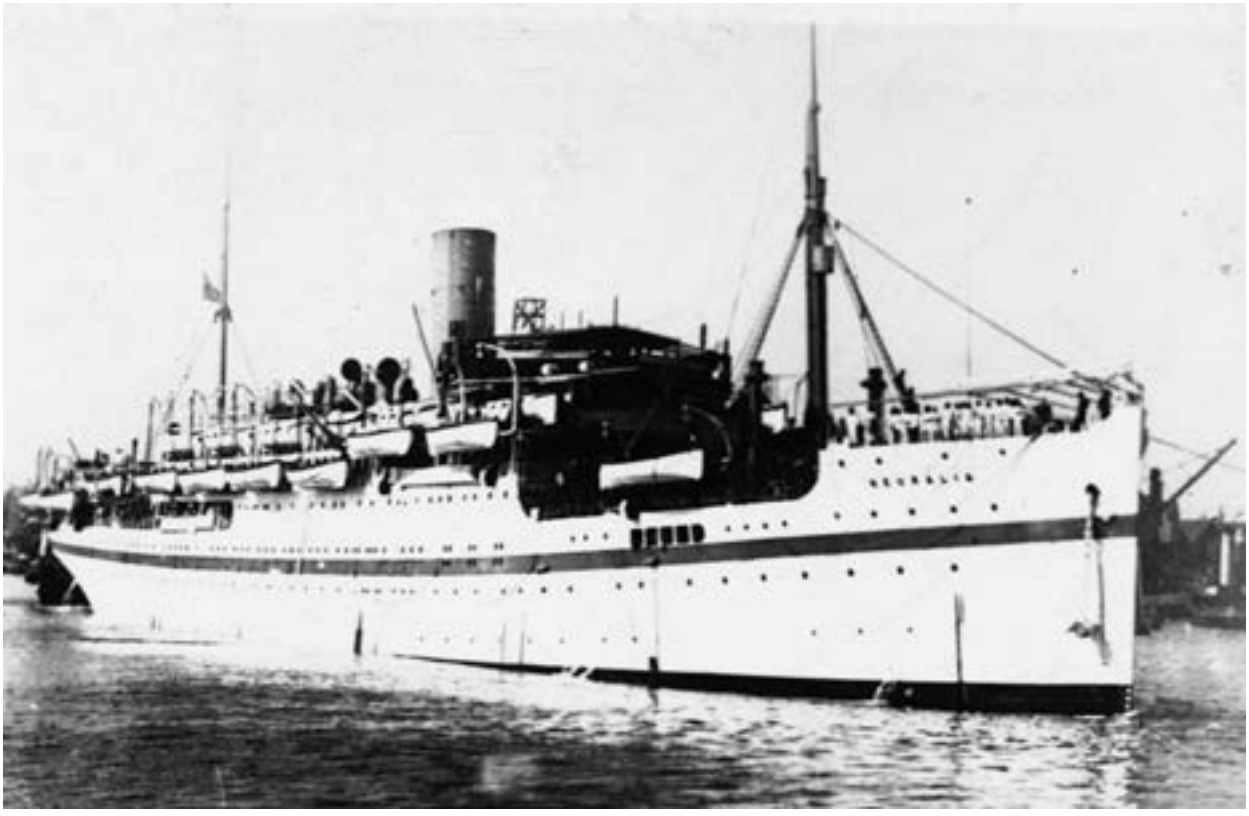
James is also commemorated on the Helles Memorial, panel 26 to 30. Like many of the others his family also had to wait until March 1916 before receiving official notification of his death. He is also commemorated on the large family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery.

**Cornelius Whitelaw**

Private Cornelius Whitelaw, aged 42, had previously served with the Royal Scots, 1st Battalion, and was a veteran of the Boer War. He re-enlisted at the start of WW1 on 1st September 1914 at Leith. He was assigned to the territorial Royal Scots, 1/7th Bn, and was given service no: 1863. A plate layer by trade, before going on active service Whitelaw worked at Messrs James Calder & Co. Ltd, Bo'ness Distillery. He was 5'6", weighed 140lbs had blue eyes and auburn hair.

He was the husband of Jessie or Mary Whitelaw. In 1901 the family were living at 59 Furnace Row, Bo'ness but later moved to 3 Crown Place, Leith, Edinburgh. He had two sons - James A. Whitelaw, service no: 22579, Royal Scots, who also fell, and is also commemorated on the Bo'ness War Memorial. His other son Lance-Corpl Cornelius (Neil) Whitelaw, King's Own Scottish Borderers, 6th Bn, won the Military Medal in 1916, and the information was relayed to his mother's sisters who were still resident in Bo'ness. Cornelius and Jessie also had two daughters, Jenny and Mary.

Cornelius Whitelaw was wounded by shrapnel to the right leg during the attack on Fir Tree Spur on 28th June 1915. He was transferred to the Hospital Ship Neuralia (below) but died of wounds on 2nd July 1915. According to contemporary newspaper reports he was buried at sea. His service lasted 305 days, 42 of which were in the MEF, and only 21 days in the Gallipoli battlefield itself. His death is commemorated on the Helles Memorial, panel 26 to 31. He is also commemorated on Leith Roll of Honour, created by a resolution of the Leith Town Council in 1920, that lists the 2206 officers and men who were killed in WW1.



**William Forrest**

Private William Forrest was a few days short of his sixteenth birthday when he enlisted with Royal Scots 1/7th Bn at Blackness Castle on 11th November 1914. He was assigned service no: 2510.

He was the son of Mr George Forrest, formerly employed at Bo'ness Gas Works and latterly resident at Goff's Land, Redding, Polmont. He had one sister Alice who resided at 18 Mayfield Terrace, Edinburgh. Prior to enlistment William resided with Mrs John Aitken, The Tower, Bridgeness.

William Forrest was killed in action on 12th July 1915 at the Battle of Achi Baba Nullah (Bloody Valley) when a bullet struck his temple. His death was instantaneous. His service records note that his service lasted 244 days, 52 of which were in the MEF, and only 31 days in the Gallipoli battlefield itself.

In a letter to his mother Mrs Helen Forrest, conveying the news of her son's death the 7RS chaplain, Rev. J.A. Tweedie, said:

> Though I am a stranger to you, I would like to send you a message of sympathy from the front. Your son was killed in action on 12th inst., and it may be some little consolation to you to know that he did not suffer, but being struck in the temple died immediately. The Colonel and officers of the regiment send you their sincere sympathy. They are proud of the way all their men behaved and your son died doing a soldier's duty bravely. I trust that in your sorrow you and all the members of the home circle who mourn his loss will be greatly strengthened by God's presence and blessing.

William Forrest is commemorated on the Helles Memorial, panel 26 to 30. He is also remembered on Brightons and Reddingmuirhead War Memorial. At the age of 16 years and 7 months when he was killed, William is the youngest man listed on the Bo'ness War Memorial.

**Alexander Cotton**

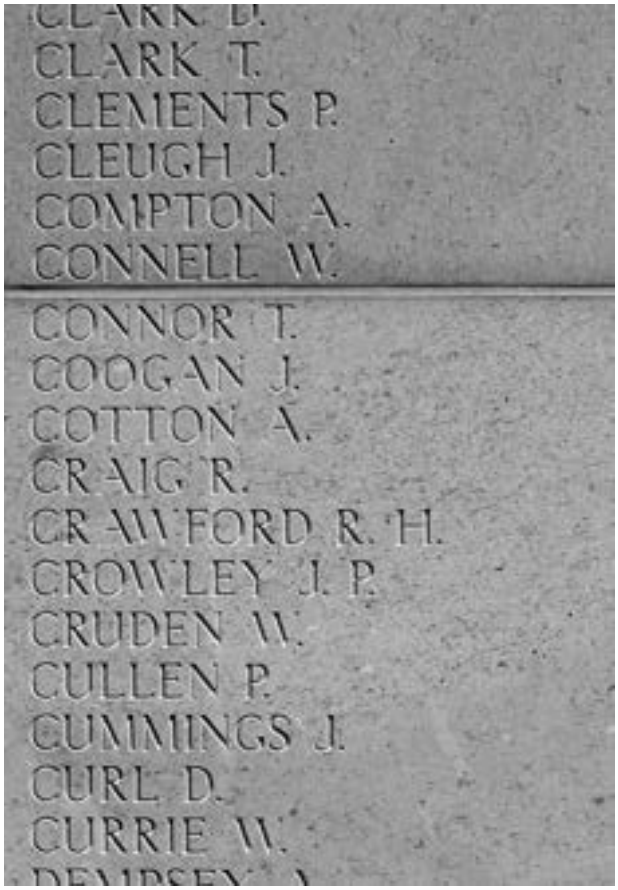
Private Alexander Cotton, aged 34, enlisted with the Highland Light Infantry, 1/6th (City of Glasgow) Bn, service no: 2348. He was married to his wife Mary Munro in Port Dundas, Glasgow in 1903. He was latterly employed as a dock labourer at Bo'ness Docks.

He was the son of John Cotton, 42 South Street, Bo'ness who was a pottery labourer. His brother John Cotton was a Private in the Royal Scots, 3rd Bn. Following evacuation from France after receiving a gunshot wound, he would die of illness in 1917 and also appears on the Bo'ness War Memorial alongside his brother.

Highland Light Infantry 1/6th Bn, was ordered to mobilise on 4th August 1914. After a few days at its Headquarters at 172 Yorkhill Street, Glasgow, receiving and issuing mobilisation equipment, the battalion was moved to Dunfermline. It continued at various places in Fife until proceeding overseas on 24th May 1915.

After a three week stay at Aboukir, Egypt, the Bn was ordered to the Gallipoli peninsula with the other Battalions of the 157th Brigade, to join the remainder of the 52nd (Lowland) Division, which had preceded the Brigade. The Brigade landed at Cape Helles on the night of 2nd July 1915.

On 12th July 1915 the Brigade attacked the Ottoman forces on a line east and west of Achi Baba Nullah. A series of six Turkish trenches was the objective of the Battalion, and these were successfully taken after hand-to-hand fighting, and resolutely held in spite of repeated counter-attacks.




Severe shelling and machine gun fire led to heavy casualties - 12 officers and 300 NCOs and men being killed, wounded or missing including Alexander Cotton. He had only been in the battlefield for 5 days.

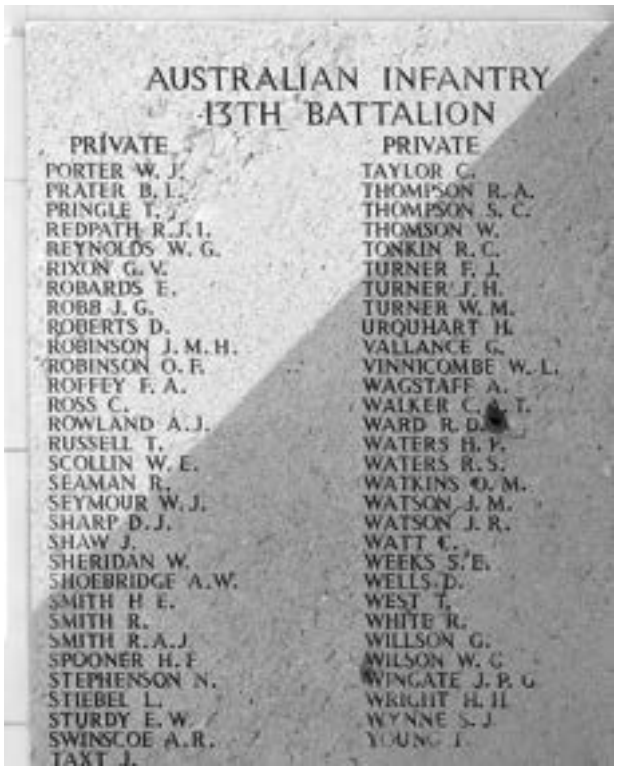
Alexander Cotton is commemorated on the Helles Memorial, panel 173 to 177.

**James McP. McBlain**

Private James McPherson McBlain was born on 11th December 1885 in Linlithgow but lived at Ivy Cottage, Muirhouses, Carriden, for much of his life. He was the son of Andrew and Ellen McBlain. He was 5'9" in height, weighed 156lbs, had a fair complexion, blue eyes, and fair hair. As a young man he worked in the sawmills of Messrs Thomson & Balfour, Bo'ness but left to find work in Australia in 1912, finally settling in Greenvale, Waikaka, New Zealand where he was a farm labourer. On the outbreak of war he enlisted at Sullivan's Dam, Leith Valley, Dunedin, in the Otago Infantry Regiment, D company, part of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force. He was assigned service no: 8/1774. The Otago Infantry Regiment was one of four regional infantry groupings (along with Auckland, Wellington, and Canterbury) which made up the bulk of New Zealand's infantry forces during the First World War.

On the 17th April 1915 he left for Gallipoli, via Suez, Egypt as part of the NZEF 4th Reinforcements. They arrived at ANZAC Cove in Gallipoli on 7th June. During the Battle of Chunuk Bair on 9th August 1915, James received a severe gun shot wound to his right calf. He was evacuated from the battlefield to the Hospital Ship Neuralia, which lay in anchor just off the coast. He was then transported to 15th General Hospital, Alexandria, Egypt where, despite medical attention received, he died of wounds on 19th August 1915. He was 29 years old. His death was communicated by telegram to his parents in Bo'ness. James McBlain is buried in the Alexandria (Chatby) Military and War Memorial Cemetery (below), grave K. 17.

**George R. Watt**




Private George Redpath Watt was the son of William and Jessie Ann Watt, of 7 Avonmuir Cottages, Bo'ness. Latterly the family lived at 82 South Street, Bo'ness. He had worked for Bo'ness Co-operative Society for 12 years, for 5½ of which he was engaged as cashier. He left for Australia in 1910, where he followed the vocation of sheep farming until the outbreak of war when he enlisted with the Australian Imperial Force, 13th Infantry Battalion, "F" Company on 14th September 1914. He was assigned service no: 693. His service records show that on enlistment he was 5'5" in height, weighed 145 lbs, had a dark complexion, brown eyes and brown hair. The 13th Battalion AIF was raised from September 1914, six weeks after the outbreak of the First World War. The battalion was recruited in New South Wales, and with the 14th, 15th and 16th Battalions formed the 4th Brigade, commanded by Colonel John Monash. On the 22nd December 1914 George Watt left Melbourne, Australia aboard His Majesty's Australian Transport (HMAT) Ulysses destined for Gallipoli. HMAT Ulysses weighed 14499 tons with an average cruise speed of 14 knots or 25.92 kmph. It was owned by the China Mutual SN Co, London, and leased by the Commonwealth until 15 August 1917. Launched in 1913, the HMAT Ulysses was the largest ship to serve as a troop carrier and not unexpectedly the one that carried the most passengers. After a brief stop in Albany, Western Australia, it proceeded to Egypt, arriving in early February 1915. Australia already had an AIF division there, the 1st. When the 4th Brigade arrived in Egypt it became part of the New Zealand and Australian Division. The 4th Brigade landed at ANZAC Cove late in the afternoon of 25 April 1915.

George Watt was erroneously reported as wounded in action on the 27th June 1915 but wrote home to his mother to tell her on 3rd August to tell his mother this was a mistake and that he was fine. His luck, however, would only last for another 20 days. He suffered a gunshot wound to the abdomen during the Australian 4th Division's participation in the Battle of Hill 60, the last major assault of the Gallipoli Campaign prior to the evacuation in December 1915. He was taken to 16th Casualty Clearing Station (CCS) near No.2 Outpost ANZAC Beach on 23rd August 1915 but died later that day. He was 31 years old. George Watt is commemorated on Lone Pine Memorial, panel 39. He has no known grave but he could be one of the 66 unidentified casualties in No.2 Outpost Cemetery that was used for other burials from 16th CCS in August 1915. He is also remembered on Watt family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery.

**John Hastings**

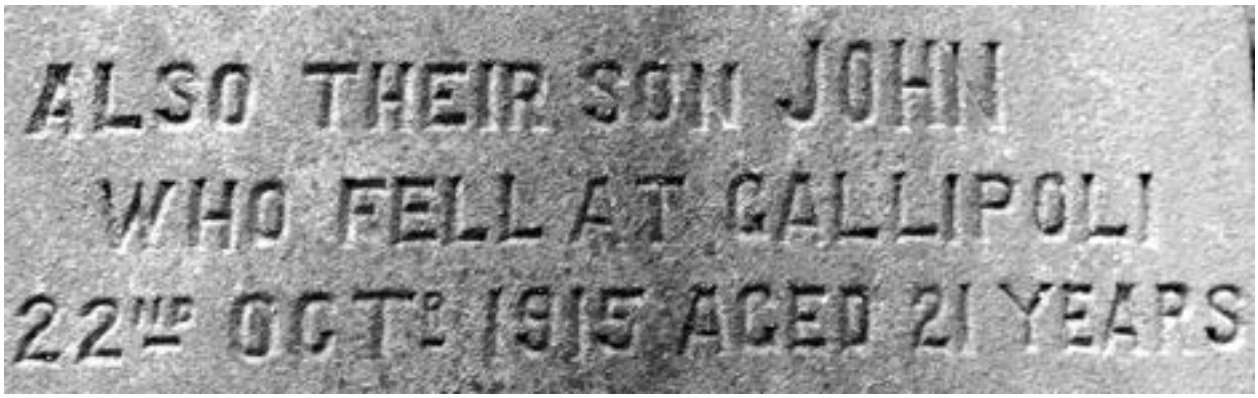
Trooper John Hastings, age 21, was the youngest son of the late Mary Allan Hastings and William Hastings, land steward to Mr H. M. Cadell of the Grange. He was born at the farm of Viewfield, New Galloway, Kirkcudbrightshire. After completing his schooling at Bo'ness Academy, he entered the office of the Bo'ness Iron Company and filled the position of despatch clerk. Soon after the war broke out the young man joined the Scottish Horse, where, described as a tall strapping youth, he cut a fine figure in his regimentals. He was assigned service no: 3896.

Hastings was one of half a dozen young men belonging to the town who left good situations in commercial offices to join this famous Scottish regiment. They received their training at Dunkeld and Kettering, and Trooper Hastings was the first of this group to be killed. John Hastings was described as an exemplary young man, and was extremely popular in the town. Fond of sport, he followed football very closely, and was a playing member of Bo'ness Amateurs.

John Hastings died of wounds received on the 20th October 1915 at Gallipoli. The information was conveyed in a letter from Major Cecil G. Rice, of the 1st Scottish Horse. The Major stated that Trooper Hastings was hit by a shrapnel bullet, and died peacefully in hospital two days later.

He is buried at Lala Baba Cemetery, grave ref: I. A. 6. The cemetery was formed after the Armistice by the concentration of nine smaller cemeteries and a few isolated graves from the surrounding area. There are now 216 servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in this cemetery.

John Hastings is also commemorated on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery.



CHAPTER 5

# *1915*
# *France and Flanders*

The Great Advance at Loos

**When you see millions of the mouthless dead**

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

*Charles Hamilton Sorley*
*(killed in action at the Battle of Loos, 1915, aged 20)*

# The Great Advance at Loos

The actions at Aubers Ridge and Festubert earlier in 1915 had been disastrous but plans were already being made for an autumn offensive in the Artois region. The French Commander-in-Chief of the Western Front General Joffre had a new strategy in mind of disrupting defences rather than overwhelming the enemy with the intention of forcing them to retreat. He intended to strike at the right flank of the German lines with his French troops, with Vimy Ridge a major objective. At the same time the BEF was to undertake a supporting strike at the town of Loos, south west of Lens. The BEF commanders French and Haig were initially opposed to the plan. The area around Loos would have been very familiar-looking to the Bo'ness men. It was a typical coal mining landscape, with pitheads, and bings prominent on an otherwise "flat as a pancake" landscape. Principal mines were known as "Fosses" and auxiliary shafts as "Puits". Each had pithead winding towers that were ideal for looking out over the battlefield. The most prominent was the double pithead tower just beyond the village of Loos that, with a bit of imagination, resembled Tower Bridge in London. Another feature just beyond this landmark was the Double Crassier (a large slagheap or bing) that also provided excellent observational possibilities.

The familiar mining landscape provided cover for heavily fortified defensive positions who then had the ability to sweep the battlefield with machine gun fire - a devastating combination. It was feared that it would be very difficult terrain in which to make significant headway. But Haig's decision to proceed was helped by the promise of significant additional troop reserves, to ensure numerical superiority, and the go-ahead of his First Army commanders to use poisonous chlorine gas against the Germans. The Battle of Loos, "the great advance", was set for the morning of 25th September 1915. In the days leading up to the attack the usual intense period of heavy artillery bombardment, involving a quarter of a million shells, and inevitable counter-shelling by the Germans, took place. On the afternoon of 23rd September 1915, **Private Walter Baikie**, Gordon Highlanders 8th Bn, was killed when a German shell exploded into his dug-out whilst in front line trenches near Vermelles. He was buried alive along with one of his comrades.

Further to the north, the Second Army under the command of Plumer were ordered to undertake a simultaneous attack at the Menin Road, Ypres, also on the morning of the 25th September 1915. The aim was to act as a diversionary attack, and to limit German reinforcements being sent south to defend the main offensive at Loos. Known as the Second Attack at Bellewaarde, the 3rd Division were asked to attack a front one mile long from Bellewaarde Lake to Sanctuary Wood. A number of Scots Regiments in 8th Brigade were involved, with 1/4th Gordon Highlanders, 1st Royal Scots Fusiliers and 2nd Royal Scots bearing the brunt of the fighting, and all suffering very heavy casualties.

Tower Bridge and the Double Crassier at Loos

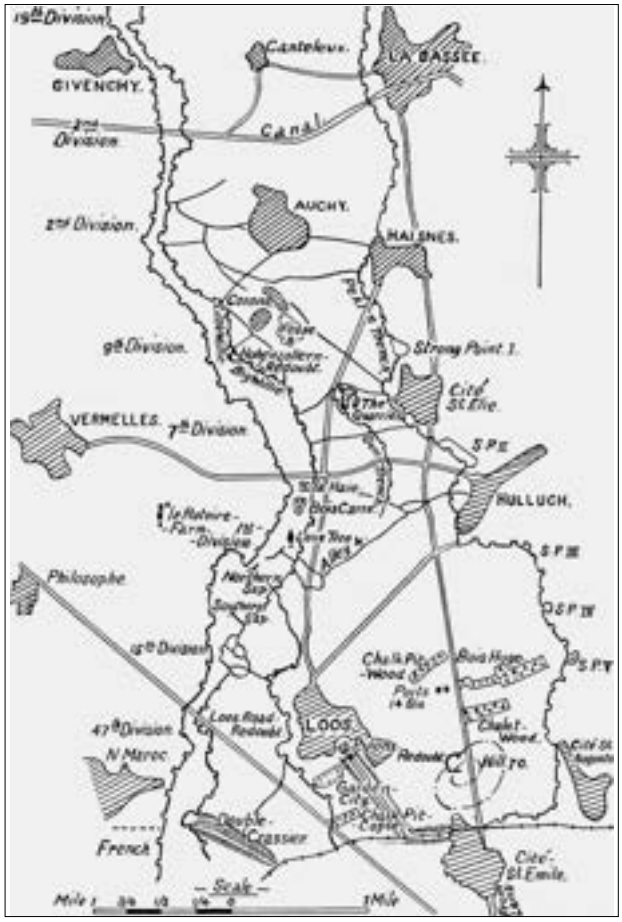
Writing later to his wife at Pottery Barns, Bo'ness, Private Alex Brown, Royal Scots 2nd Battalion described the advance at Ypres on 25th September, with particular reference to the fate of several Bo'ness men. He wrote,

> We are still in the trenches, and have had a hard time of it during the past fortnight. But I am lucky to be alive, as I have lost nearly all my mates. I never expected to come out of the big attack on the 25th. We went up to the trenches in the night of the 23rd and we all knew what we had to do. We had a rest on the following day and got tea about 12 o'clock on the night of the 24th. Then at 3 o'clock on the morning (Saturday 25th) the guns commenced to roar. You never heard anything like it in all your life. The ground was trembling and trees were falling around us. We could not hear one another speak. At 3:45am we got the sign to jump the trench and make for the Germans, so over we went the best way we could. Daylight was just breaking, and the ground was wet. There were many holes on the ground which was strewn with broken barbed wire. I don't know how many times I fell going over the parapet, but I got over alright. We did not lose many men going into the first German trench, and the Germans who were in it threw up their hands. The first I saw of our wounded was Charlie Neill (Hamilton Lane) who, having been struck while approaching the German trench, ran back towards our line, but he collapsed when half-way. As I was returning for bombs, I pulled him into a hole and bandaged him. He had a hole right through his body, below his shoulder blade. By that time, the German prisoners were beginning to be led in. They were quite a fresh-looking lot of men, and all had good clothes and equipment. While I was returning to the German line I saw a shell burst beside Tom Barbour, and he dropped, so I ran over and pulled him in, but he was severely wounded in three places, and he said to me: "Never mind, Sandy; leave me, I'm done for" - and he died shortly afterwards. Tom was always joking and was well liked in the company.

Private Brown was referring to **Private Thomas Barbour,** Royal Scots 2nd Bn, a native of Bo'ness who had moved with his mother to live and work in Armadale, West Lothian. Private Brown went onto say how he had fared himself in the battle saying,

> I felt a pain in my head and there was a loud report. I fell unconscious for a time, and then I felt as if I were choking, and I struggled from below the parapet and discovered I was alone with another six, but three were killed and the other three were wounded, and my clothes were torn and bloodstained. I ran along the line and told the Sergeant what had happened. The shelling became worse and I could hear nothing, and my mouth parched with smoke and powder. The trench was knocked in on me four times, and I lost my rifle three times, but it was easy to get another one as our fellows were falling fast. The regiment on our left retired and the Germans got in behind us with bombs, so we had to fight our way back. In doing so I had some more holes knocked in my clothing but that was all.

The luck was on his side that day, and for a long time after, as Private Brown survived the war. But the BEF suffered some 4000 dead and wounded during the attack, with no gains to show for their efforts. There was little evidence that German reinforcements were diverted from Loos.




The Battle of Loos

Early in the morning of the 25th September 1915 Haig gave the orders for the 5000 chlorine gas cylinders to be manually opened at 5:50am and artillery and machine gun fire to be increased. With the main infantry attack of six divisions starting at "zero hour", 6:30am, the Battle of Loos, or "the great advance", was finally about to commence

In the right hand areas of the attacking front, the chlorine gas cloud moved with the wind towards the German trenches as planned and the 47th (2nd

London) Division captured most of their objectives. On the left hand side of the Division, however, the London Regiment, 1/19th Battalion suffered many casualties from machine gun fire and this left the area of the Loos Crassier largely undefended, which was to prove critical.

This was the area adjacent to the centre attack by the 15th (Scottish Division). This centre Divisional front was some 1500 yards in length, running north from the Quality Street-Lens road, with the 44th Brigade, containing Bo'ness men in the 9th Black Watch and 8th Seaforths on the right and 46th Brigade on the left, with the 45th in reserve. The 44th Brigade had the immediate objective of attacking the Lens Road Redoubt, the location today of the Loos Memorial.

Although initially slowed by clouds of chlorine gas hanging in the air in this area the objective was quickly achieved and by 8:20am, Loos village had been taken, and the 9th Black Watch Brigade were already advancing up the slopes of the stronghold of nearby Hill 70, together with the Seaforths, Camerons and Gordon Highlanders, who had been sent up as reserve from Loos. All four battalions had become mixed up following the fighting in Loos, and there was a lack of commanding officers to organise properly. Seeing the Germans retreating in apparent disarray, a huge mass of around 1500 kilted Scotsmen swept over Hill 70 in unison and down the far slope surging towards the German front line. On the left of the Brigade, the 46th had had equal success and had maintained the divisional front. Both Brigades, however, were now some way to the right of their original objective of Cité St Auguste, and they found themselves in a precarious position.

Both flanks were exposed, for the 1st Division on the left of the 46th Brigade had been held up at the outset by uncut barbed wire due to ineffectual artillery bombardment, and there was still no sign of the 1/19th London Regiment on the right who had been held up by machine gun fire mentioned earlier.

The German retreat had been only temporary and they were able to concentrate machine gun fire from both sides of Hill 70 forcing the halt of any further progress by the 15th (Scottish) Division who were forced to retreat and dig in awaiting reinforcements and ammunition. Many casualties were sustained by the 44th Brigade on Hill 70 and these included Bo'ness men **Private Gordon Hossack** and **Lance-Corporal James Morgan**, both 9th Black Watch, and **Private Alexander Lumsden**, 8th Seaforths.

In late afternoon, support eventually arrived on both flanks from the 1st Division and the 47th Division but it was too little too late and reinforcements were taking too long to move up from reserve, a crucial failing. By this time the Germans had regained control of Hill 70 and the sacrifices of many men had been in vain. By now the 44th and 46th Brigades had been fighting continuously for twelve hours, had taken and relinquished four German lines and lost about 75% of their fighting strength.

Orders were received at midnight that the Brigade would be withdrawn on relief by the 21st Division. This took place during the early hours of September 26th

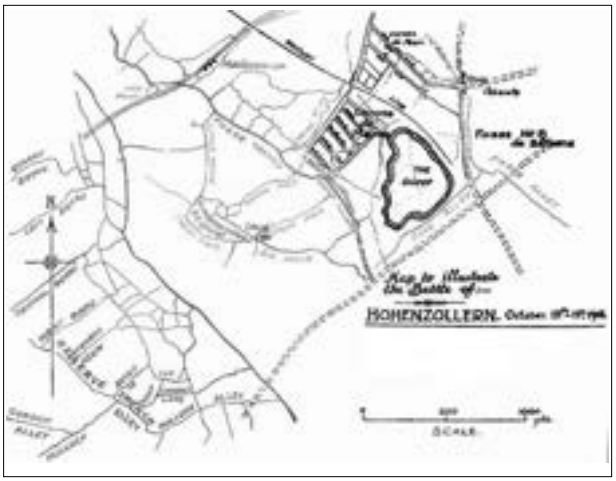
Contemporary illustration showing British forces advancing at Loos

when the 9th Black Watch was relieved and marched back to Philosophe, arriving there at 3.30am. During the Battle of Loos the 9th Black Watch suffered more than most, with 680 casualties of which 20 were officers.

A particularly tragic tale involved a group of employees of the Forth Shipbreaking Company, Bridgeness. Many of the Bo'ness shipbreakers had signed up with the 9th Black Watch at Glencorse in September 1914. They were pictured together at their shipbreaking yard in Bo'ness before enlisting. They are surrounded by flags, barrels, tarpaulins, sails and ropes salvaged from the many ocean liners and merchant vessels that were scrapped at the yard. Smiling faces suggest that the men appear to be relaxed and joking amongst each other.

Later that year, in November 1914, ten of the same men were pictured in the uniform of the 9th Black Watch in training at Aldershot. Their faces are more solemn, perhaps with the realisation that they would soon be setting sail for France, and the horrors that awaited. Their fears were justified. Of the ten men pictured, two were killed on the 25th September 1915, **Lance Corporals Anthony Weir** (Wear)and **Private William Snedden. Lance-Corporal Robert Clark** was wounded and evacuated to Bethune, but died the following day. Pals from the Shipbreaking who had arrived in France together, fought together in the 44th Brigade and died together at Loos.

Other Bo'ness men listed as missing in action on the opening day of the Battle of Loos included **Lance Corporal David Glen** and **Private William Kindred,** both of 9th Black Watch, **Private Richard Malarky** of 9th Gordon Highlanders, 1st Machine Gun Section and 19 year old **Private Charles Downie** of 10th Gordon Highlanders. Their bodies were not recovered, and buried somewhere around Loos, alongside over 20000 other soldiers who have no known grave. **Private Charles Hamilton,** 9th Black Watch also later died of wounds after being removed from the battlefield to a nearby field ambulance station.




Hohenzollern Redoubt October 1915

In the sector of the battlefront north of Vermelles, the 9th (Scottish) Division had the objectives of attacking both the formidable Hohenzollern Redoubt and Fosse 8, a five metre high raised area above the main battlefield and the location of the main German observation posts. These objectives were achieved with relative ease by the 26th Brigade. The 27th Brigade, including 11th and 12th Royal Scots, were called up from Divisional reserve with specific orders to reinforce the advance on Haisnes. Frustratingly, they found their way blocked by stretcher parties, stragglers and returning wounded. Not only were the men exhausted with the slow progress but they suffered heavily from enemy shelling. About 11:00am, the 11th and 12th Royal Scots passed through the 8th Gordons and advanced on Haisnes, but they were mown down by rifle and machine gun fire, and could only make progress by short, sharp rushes. They were numbed by cold and rain and continued to be harried by enfilade fire from Haisnes. They were forced to withdraw in late afternoon to the line of Pekin Trench.

At some time during this assault, **Private Michael J. Johnston** of the 12th Royal Scots lost his life. As the day progressed the German artillery ranged in on Pekin Trench whilst the German infantry bombed their way along the Trench from both ends using superior stick grenades. By 5:00pm the Trench had been reclaimed and the defenders had to fall back to Fosse Alley, the new British front line. Once again lack of fresh reserves at the critical time had been crucial to the success of the attack.

The 2nd Division were in the sector of the battlefront further north of the 9th (Scottish) Division, next to La Bassee Canal. 19th Brigade, containing the 2nd Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders, were the most southerly of the three brigades in line. They were in the first wave of soldiers to go over the top but the ground conditions, pitted with craters from exploded mines, uncut barbed wire and the presence of chlorine gas that had not dispersed so easily in this sector, meant the attack went wrong from the start. The order was given to retreat with no progress, but this failed attack had already cost the lives of two Bo'ness men, **Private David Robertson** and **Private William Stevenson**, both of the 2nd Argylls.

**Corporal John Wardrope** of the same battalion is also recorded as having died on this date, although his body was subsequently recovered from behind German lines, suggesting he may have been captured and died of wounds some time later. In the following days further attempts to advance by the British at Loos were easily repulsed by a German force that had

recovered ground and reinforced their defensive positions. **Private John Gardner,** 11th Royal Scots and **Private David P. McKay**, 8th Gordon Highlanders were also recorded as having died in the subsequent action.

While **Private James McCarroll**, 2nd Royal Scots, was resting the day after the advance, he wrote the following letter to his mother:

> You will see by this that I am not very well. The side of my trench was blown out on to my shoulder, which was bruised. Charles Neil has been wounded in the shoulder, and Thomas Barbour was killed, but David Martin is keeping all right. I know nothing about the rest of the Bo'ness chaps; I can't say whether they are prisoners or not. It was an awful sight. There was nothing but wounded and dead men lying about.

Sadly James's own body would be lying in the mud near Hooge only four days later, another local name to add to the mounting casualty list of 1915.

The Battle officially ended in mid-October but in fact minor skirmishes continued throughout the autumn and winter of 1915. **Private Thomas Cullen,** 5th Cameron Highlanders and **Private William K. Eriksen,** 7th King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment) were both unfortunate victims of snipers' bullets as the year drew to close.

The British casualties figure was over 50000 in the Battle of Loos and another 11000 in subsidiary attacks, with over 7700 killed. The Scots battalions were particularly hard hit, with the 15th Division suffering 6896 casualties and the 9th Division suffering 6058 casualties. With a significant number of these casualties being from the pre-war regular army, including a large percentage of officers, the loss of experience was a significant blow to the BEF command. Use of the New Army battalions for the first time in the field had proven essential but their willingness to fight was matched by sputtering cold lead from the machine guns of the German front lines.

Brigadier-General H.F. Thuillier, who would later command the 15th Division, observed the mass of dead Highlanders in Black Watch tartan, just below the crest of Hill 70. He later wrote, "As I looked on the smashed and riven ground…I was amazed when I thought of the unconquerable, irresistible spirit which those new raised units of the New Armies must possess to enable them to continue their advance after sustaining such losses".

In the final analysis of the Battle of Loos, a key factor was that the faster implementation of the reserve troops could have swung the day in favour of the British. By the time they arrived, the following day, the Germans had reorganised and reinforced and were able to repulse any attacks with ease. In the after-analysis of the battle, this was found to be a critical failure of the British strategy. The result was that Commander-in-Chief French was recalled leaving Haig in overall command. But lessons had not been learnt and similar mistakes in military strategy would again be made at the Somme in 1916, at the cost of many more lives.

Aftermath of the battle of Loos with Tower Bridge in the background

Image showing the first detachment of Shipbreakers from Forth Shipbreaking Company who enlisted in 1914. Many of the men joined the Black Watch, 9th Battalion.

Later image of several of the same shipbreakers in the Black Watch, 9th Bn at Aldershot, November 1914. Four of the men were killed or wounded on the opening day of the Battle of Loos. Back Row (L-R) - William Snedden (Killed), Allan Black, Robert Clark (wounded, died on 26th September), Matthew Wright. Front Row - Robert McClure (wounded but survived), Anthony Wear (Killed), James Smith, Duncan Munro, James Cruickshanks

**Walter Baikie**

Private Walter Baikie, aged 28, was the third son of Mr Daniel Baikie, mason, who was a native of Castletown, Caithness. He was employed as a bricklayer by his father's employer Messrs John Hardie & Sons, Builder. He married his wife Jessie (ms McNeill) on 30th July 1913 and lived at Hardie's Buildings, Corbiehall. She was the daughter of Mr Archiblad McNeill, caretaker of the Conservative Club premises at Corbiehall. Jessie and Walter had one daughter named Jessie McNaughton Baikie. He enlisted on 9th December 1914, at Bo'ness with Gordon Highlanders 8th Bn, and was given service no: S/7975. His brother David also enlisted at the same time and for a while both brothers fought side-by-side in the same platoon. The battalion came under orders of 26th Brigade in 9th (Scottish) Division. They moved to Hampshire and in February 1915 went to Bordon Camp, that was used as a staging post for "under-fire" troop training in WW I. Walter Baikie finally arrived in Boulogne, France, on 10th May 1915. He was killed in action on 23rd September 1915 during the heavy artillery shelling that acted as prelude to the Battle of Loos. The unfortunate circumstances of Private Baikie's death were told in a letter his wife received from Lieut. H.D. Rodger, of the same platoon.

> Dear Mrs Baikie it is with great regret that I have to write to you this letter telling you of your husband's death… His death occurred about 3:45pm, today (23rd September). We had been shelling the Germans heavily, and your husband and a comrade were sitting in their "dug-out" when one of the German Shells landed on top of it and buried them both, also wounding a Sergeant. The other men immediately started to dig them out but they were too late. We tried all possible means to restore life but without success. He died serving his King and country. What more could a man wish for?

Walter was killed alongside his comrade from "B" Coy, Private Benjamin Curtis, S/6622, son of William and Helen Curtis, Scotlandwell, Fife. Both men were buried at Vermelles British Cemetery, Walter at grave VI. D. 23. Sadly there was more grief to come for the Baikie family as Walter's father was also killed in an industrial accident whilst building an extension at Bo'ness Electricity Works, Links Place in August 1916. He suffered a fractured skull after being hit by a falling crane jib and, despite being taken to Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, died four hours after the accident. There was better news, however, as Walter's brother David survived the conflict.

**Thomas Barbour**

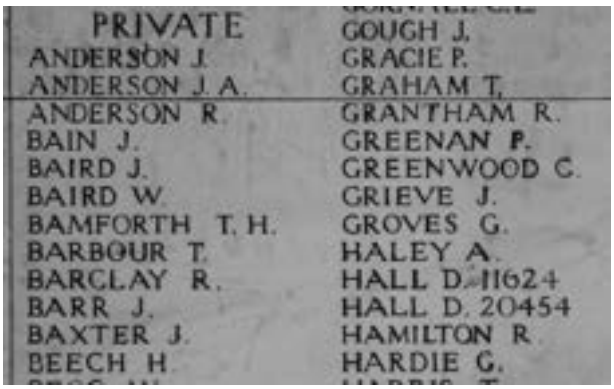
Although Private Thomas Barbour, aged 41, was born in Barrhead, Renfrewshire, he very much belonged to Bo'ness arriving with his family when he was 14 years old. For about 18 months prior to enlistment, however, he followed his occupation that of an iron moulder at Armadale, West Lothian, where he lived with his mother Mrs. Jane Barbour at 91 West Main Street in the town. He was 5'4" in height, weighed 129lbs and was unmarried. Thomas was a Reservist and came through the Boer War, for which he was awarded the Queen's South Africa Medal with three bars, the King's South Africa Medal with two bars, and held the rank of Corporal. Upon the outbreak of the Great War, he re-enlisted in the Army at Edinburgh on 12th August 1914, and joined the Royal Scots, 2nd Battalion. He arrived in France on the 28th November 1914, as part of 8th Brigade, 3rd Division.

In a letter home, another Armadale soldier serving with the 2nd Royal Scots in France mentioned one of Private Barbour's skills that was invaluable to his comrades. He said,

> I might say our last experience has been the worst we have had yet. In our ease trenches we had a hot time from trench Mortars. At night the Germans would put them over at the same time as a star shell to make you think it was light that was coming. But every time our sentry - Pte T Barbour - spotted them, and he gave his comrades timely warning to clear out.

He was killed by an artillery shell on 25th May 1915, during the 3rd Division's crucial participation in the Second Attack on Bellewaarde. He had been in service for 1 year and 45 days. His wife received intimation of his death on 15th October 1915. His body was never recovered and he is commemorated on the Ypres

(Menin Gate) Memorial, panel 11. He is also commemorated on the Armadale War Memorial and on the Armadale Parish Church WW1 Memorial.



| PRIVATE | |
|---|---|
| ANDERSON J. | GOUGH J. |
| ANDERSON J. A. | GRACIE P. |
| ANDERSON R. | GRAHAM T. |
| BAIN J. | GRANTHAM R. |
| BAIRD J. | GREENAN P. |
| BAIRD W. | GREENWOOD C. |
| BAMFORTH T. H. | GRIEVE J. |
| BARBOUR T. | GROVES G. |
| BARCLAY R. | HALEY A. |
| BARR J. | HALL D. 11624 |
| BAXTER J. | HALL D. 20454 |
| BEECH H. | HAMILTON R. |
| | HARDIE G. |

Bellewaarde Wood

**Gordon Hossack**

Private Gordon Hossack was born in Old Machar, Aberdeenshire, the son of James Hossack and Mary Ann McIntosh. He was married in Aberdeen on 14th August 1911, to Jeannie Trainer and the couple had two children, James Gordon and Robert McKinley Hossack. The family moved to Bo'ness and lived at 58 Furnace Row, Kinneil. Hossack was a talented footballer and played for Bo'ness Football Club. He had been transferred from St Bernard's of Edinburgh who had signed him along with a few other notable Aberdonians during a northern tour in 1903 after he had impressed while playing for the famous junior team of the north, Muggiemoss. His footballing prowess was described in a newspaper article in 1910: "A nippy, tenacious half-back, Gordon knows his place and work as few do. He is not only a "demon" in defence, but keeps his wings going, and it's their fault if goals are not forthcoming. Gordon never appears on the field of play without his cap…one of his most precious possessions." He enlisted at Glencorse, Midlothian and joined the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), 9th Battalion, service number S/4251. He arrived in France on 14th July 1915, and came under command of 15th (Scottish) Division, 44th Brigade. On a visit home to Bo'ness on furlough early in 1916 Private John Hammond, 10th Black Watch, recounted his vivid experiences of the Battle of Loos. Of the many individual instances of heroism, he particularly mentioned the outstanding deeds of Gordon Hossack, who he said, was one of the bombers or "suicide club" and his figure was conspicuously always in the forefront of battle. When his grenades eventually gave out he was seen, said Hammond, to act "like a wicket-keeper or goalkeeper, to catch the German grenades before they landed and heave them back amongst the Huns, there to do their deadly work". Highlighting his resourcefulness in the face of incredible adversity, Hammond went on to say of Hossack, "Coming across a party of Germans killing British wounded, he was heard to shout - "That is murder, not war, ye brutes" and he assisted all in his power to drive away the Huns. Poor Gordon never returned. He lies on the eastern side of Hill 70, but his end was glorious".

Sergeant Isaac Green, 9th Black Watch, Old Kilpatrick's first winner of the Distinguished Conduct Medal also witnessed Private Hossack's bravery first hand and stated that had he lived, Hossack would certainly been awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions on 25th September 1915. Private Gordon Hossack was killed in action at the Battle of Loos on 25th September 1915. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Loos Memorial, panel 78 to 83.

Bo'ness Football Club in Season 1910-1911. Gordon Hossack is sitting in the front row, second left wearing a cap.

**James Morgan**

Lance-Corporal James Morgan was the son of Mrs Mary McIntyre, 2 Greenvale Street, Stranraer, although he was born and lived in Bo'ness. He was a coal miner and worked in Kinneil Colliery. He enlisted at Glencorse, Midlothian at the start of the war with the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), 9th Bn, service no. S/4255.

After training in England at Aldershot, Liss, Chiseldon, and Tidworth he arrived in France on 14th July 1915, and his battalion came under command of 15th (Scottish) Division, 44th Brigade.

After the opening day of the Battle of Loos on 25th September 1915, he was reported missing in action following the 44th Brigade's attack on Hill 70. It wasn't until late August 1917, over two years later, that he was officially notified as killed in action. He was 29 years of age. James Morgan is commemorated on the Loos Memorial, panel 78 to 83. The Loos Memorial forms the sides and back of Dud Corner Cemetery. This stands on the site of a German strong point, the Lens Road Redoubt that was captured by the 15th (Scottish) Division on the first day of the Battle of Loos. The Loos Memorial commemorates over 20000 men who have no known grave who fell in this area. The name 'Dud Corner' is thought to be due to the large number of unexploded ordnance found in the vicinity after the Armistice.

Stranraer Burgh War Memorial

James Morgan is also commemorated on the Stranraer Burgh War Memorial.

**Alexander Lumsden**

Private Alexander (Sandy) Lumsden was born on 11th January 1870, and was a native of the village of Slamannan, Falkirk. He was the son of David and Helen Lumsden (ms Thomson) and had a number of brothers and sisters. One brother David Lumsden, stayed at 25 High Street, Airdrie, Lanarkshire. Alexander was a coal miner and worked for a while in the Monklands coalfields, then at the Banknock Colliery, where he played in the Banknock Colliery Brass Band. After moving to Bo'ness he had been employed in No. 2 Grange Pit, Bridgeness Coal Company. He was unmarried and had stayed in Bo'ness with one of his sisters and her husband at Craigfoot Terrace for two and a half years prior to enlisting at Bo'ness in December 1914.

He joined up with the Seaforth Highlanders, 8th Battalion, service number S/6532. His training took him to Chiseldon Camp, Salisbury Plain, in February 1915, then Tidworth in May. He landed in Boulogne, France on 9th July 1915, coming under the command of 15th (Scottish) Division, 44th Brigade.

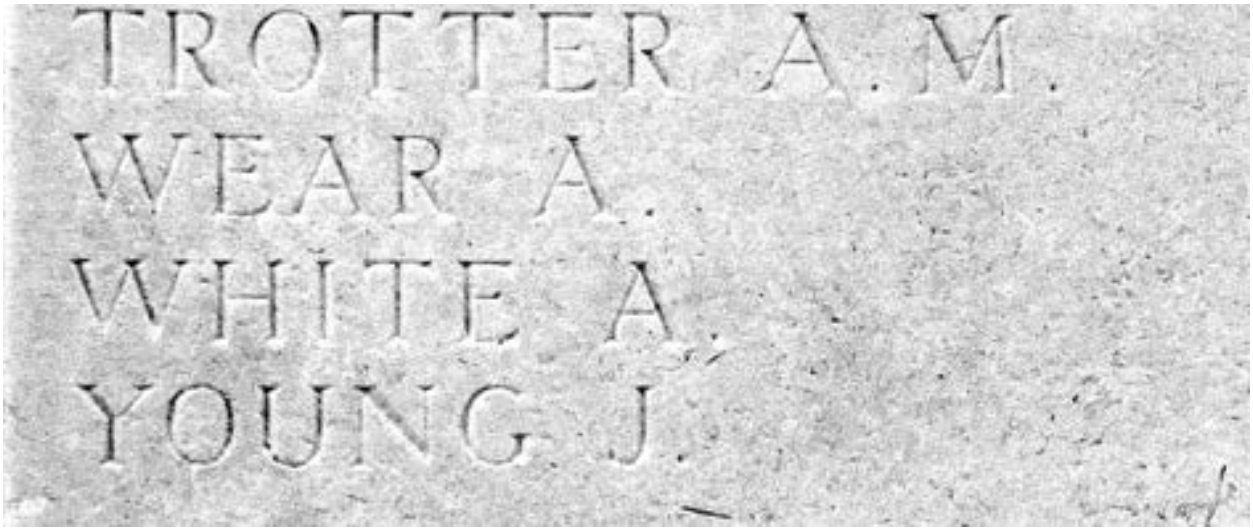
He was killed on the 25th September 1915, the opening day of the Battle of Loos. He was aged 45 years old. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Loos Memorial panel 112 to 115. A few weeks later, his sister, Mrs Gray, received a letter from a comrade at the Front informing her of the circumstances of Alexander's death. The writer, Private McIntyre, stated that Private Lumsden and himself were advancing together with their battalion in the attack around Hill 70 when they had to lie on the ground to escape the hail of bullets. "Sandy", he said, "went about five yards more than I, when he was struck by a bullet. He just gave two moans. A comrade asked him further down the line if he was much hurt but got no reply. As it was our time to retire, I had to leave my dear old chum lying dead".

**Anthony Weir**

Lance-Corporal Anthony Wear (surname incorrectly spelled as "Weir" on War Memorial) was the son of Anthony and Martha Wear, of 6 Thornton Road, Thornhill Lees, Dewsbury, Yorkshire. He was born in Workington, Cumberland, England and came from a large family with six brothers, Joseph, John W., Albert, George, Walter and Daniel Clark and five sisters, namely Ada J., Mary Holiday, Martha, Elizabeth Ann and Annie Wear. According to census records, in 1901 the family were living in Workington but, by 1911, half the family were living in Bo'ness with their father and half were living in Dewsbury.

Anthony Wear found work as a shipbreaker and was a member of the group of employees of the Forth Shipbreaking Company that enlisted in the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) 9th Battalion at the outbreak of the war. He enlisted at Glencorse, Midlothian, in "C" Company and was given service number S/4209, a similar number to his shipbreaker comrades who signed up at the same time.

He arrived in France on 14th July 1915, after a period of training in the South of England, and his battalion came under command of 15th (Scottish) Division, 44th Brigade. He was notified as missing in action on the first day of the Battle of Loos, the 25th September 1915, alongside his two colleagues William Sneddon and Robert Clark. In October 1915 he was officially notified as killed in action on that date. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Loos Memorial panel 78 to 83.



**Robert Clark**

Lance-Corporal Robert Clark was the son of James and Helen Aitken Clark (nee Mundell), of Craig's Cottages, Polmont, Stirlingshire. He was born in Airth, but latterly lived at Muirhouses, Bo'ness. He had three younger brothers William, James and Thomas, and three sisters Agnes, Mary and Georgina. Robert was unmarried.

Robert Clark was employed as a craneman, and was another member of the group of employees of the Forth Shipbreaking Company, Bridgeness that enlisted in the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) 9th Battalion. He enlisted at Glencorse, Midlothian in September 1914 and was given service number S/4174, again, a similar number to his shipbreaker comrades who signed up at the same time.

He arrived in France on 14th July 1915, along with many of the other Bo'ness men who enlisted in the same battalion, and they came under command of 15th (Scottish) Division, 44th Brigade. He was wounded on the opening day of the Battle of Loos and he was evacuated to either 18 Casualty Clearing Station (CCS) near Lapugnoy, or 23 CCS near Lozinghem, both west of Bethune. He died of wounds sustained on 26th September 1915, and is buried in Lapugnoy Military Cemetery, grave ref: I. C. 39. He was 22 years old. He is also commemorated on the family headstone in Grandsable Cemetery, Polmont, near Falkirk. Sadly his mother, Helen, died on 24th June 1918.

**William Snedden**

Private William Snedden was the son of James Snedden, ex-Baillie of Bo'ness. His mother was Margaret Sneddon and he resided with his parents at Cowdenhill Road, Grangepans. He was 24 years of age, unmarried and a shipbreaker by trade. He was one of the 14 workers from the Forth Shipbreaking Company, Bridgeness Road who enlisted with the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) 9th Battalion at the same time just after the outbreak of the War. His service number, S/4212, was in close sequence to many of his work colleagues.

After training in England with the other Bo'ness men in the ranks he arrived in France on 14th July 1915 and his battalion came under command of 15th (Scottish) Division, 44th Brigade. He was notified as missing in action on the first day of the Battle of Loos, the 25th September 1915. Notification of William's death on that date wasn't received by his father until October 1915 in correspondence from one of his son's officers. In the letter, as well as offering his heartfelt sympathy to the family, the officer described how William had "died fighting like a lion around Loos". His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Loos Memorial panel 78 to 83.

**David Glen**

Lance-Corporal David Glen was the son the late John Glen and Mary Glen, 68 Sunnyside Street, Camelon, Falkirk. He was married in 1914 to Margaret Mackie (ms Meikle) at Carriden Manse on 27th June 1914, and resided at Thirlestane Terrace, Grangepans. He learned his trade as an iron moulder at Sunnyside Foundry in Camelon, although at the time of enlisting he worked in the woodyard of Messrs Love and Stewart, Grangepans.

He joined up at the outbreak of war at Glencorse, Midlothian, with the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) 9th Bn. After completing his training, he was sent to France with a draft alongside a number of the employees of the Forth Shipbreaking Company whose names also appear on the Memorial. He arrived in France on 14th July 1915.

David Glen was killed in action on 25th September 1915, at the Battle of Loos, although, after an agonising wait, it wasn't until October 1916 that his wife was officially notified of his death. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Loos Memorial, panel 78 to 83. He was 31 years old.

David Glen is also commemorated on the WW1 Memorial in St John's Church, Camelon, Falkirk. Coincidentally, his name appears directly above Private Alexander Gow, the Great Great Uncle of Alan Gow one of our co-authors.

He is also listed on the Camelon War Memorial (below) which was unveiled in 2016.

**William Kindred**

Private William Kindred was born in Bo'ness, the son of Mr. William and Mrs Agnes Kindred (ms Mackie) who were married in Bo'ness in 1882. Mr Kindred senior was a Pottery Fireman, and worked in Messrs. C.W. McNay and Sons, Bridgeness Pottery alongside his son William, and two of his other children Mary and Alexander, with James and Joan the other members of the family. In 1911 the family were living at 15 William Street ("The Buckie"), Bo'ness, but by 1915 they had moved to 16 Mayfield Terrace.

Private Kindred, aged 24, enlisted at Glencorse, Midlothian, in the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), 9th Battalion, service no: S/4200. He arrived in Boulogne, France on 14th July 1915, and came under the command of 15th (Scottish) Division, 44th Brigade.

He was reported as missing in action on 25th September 1915, on the opening day of the Battle of Loos. His parents were officially notified that William was declared dead more than a year later in October 1916.

His body was not found and he is remembered on the Loos Memorial, panel 78 to 83.

William Kindred is the second cousin of John Kindred who also appears on Bo'ness War Memorial.

The Loos Memorial Cemetery

**Richard Malarky**

Private Richard Malarky (or Malarkie) was born in Carriden in 1892. He was known as Dick to his family. His surname appears in two different forms in various records. His birth record reads "Malarky" whilst his family are recorded in the 1901 census as "Malarkie" and 1911 Census as "Malarky". He was the son of James and Mary (ms Cant), 29 Ann Terrace, Bo'ness. Ann Terrace was a large tenement building near to the bottom of Philpingstone Road, on the west side of Philpingstone Lane. It was knocked down in the 1960's and replaced with more modern housing. The family had previously stayed at Kinglassie Terrace, and Market Square in the town centre. His parents were well known in the town and are buried in Bo'ness Cemetery. Dick had two brothers Patrick and Robert, and four sisters, Christina Cant, Magdalene, Mary Cant, and Annie. He was unmarried. He was a grinder and polisher to trade, having served his apprenticeship with Messrs. A. Ballantine and Sons, New Grange Foundry. Before the war he worked in Leeds and on his return home he was engaged as a temporary postman at Bo'ness for about a month prior to enlistment.

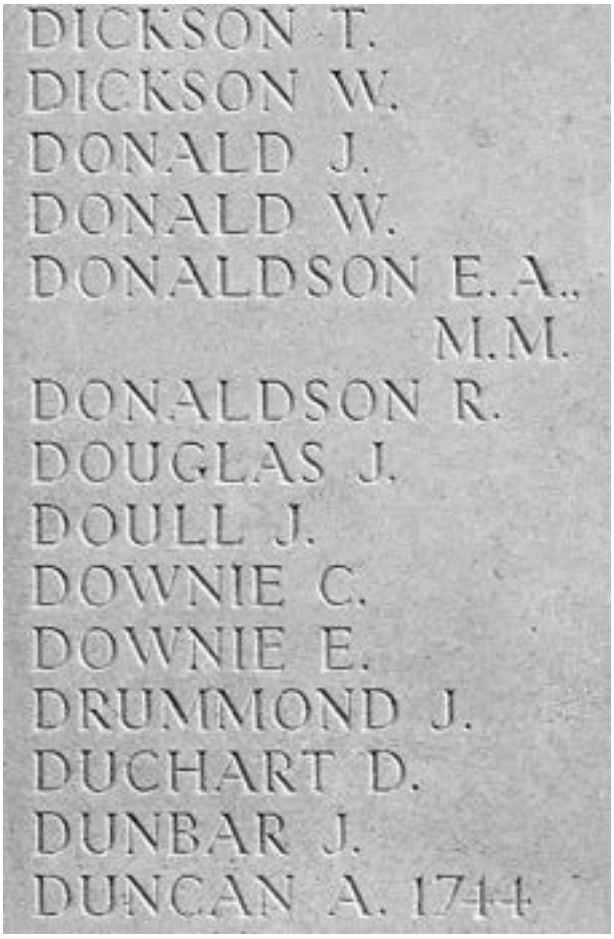
Richard enlisted as a machine-gunner with the Gordon Highlanders, 9th Battalion, 1st Machine Gun Section, service no: S/4168, and arrived in France on 9th July 1915. He came under the orders of 15th (Scottish) Division, 44th Brigade. He was reported missing in action on the opening day of the Battle of Loos, 25th September 1915. In late November 1915, his father James was officially notified that he had actually been killed on that date. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Loos Memorial, panel 115 to 119. He was 23 years old.

The ruins of Loos after the battle

**Charles Downie**

According to his service records, Private Charles Downie was from Uddingston, Lanarkshire, although his birth certificate states that he was actually born in Dechmont, Linlithgowshire. He was the son of Alexander and Catherine Downie, formerly of 48 St. Leonard Street, Lanark. The family moved from Lanarkshire to 24 Bellford Place, Bo'ness, just before the outbreak of war and Mr. Downie senior worked in Cochrane Brothers Limited horseshoe factory. In April 1918, the family moved again to 25 Rosebank Street, Dennistoun, Glasgow.

Charles was one of six brothers that signed up to fight in the War. The others were Alexander, Veterinary Corps; James and George, both Army Service Corps (horse-shoeing); John (unknown regiment); and Victor Downie, Highland Light Infantry, 8th Battalion. Charles was 5' 9" tall, weighed 136 lbs and prior to enlistment worked a chauffeur.



He enlisted in Hamilton on 16th November 1914, with the Gordon Highlanders, 10th Battalion, service number S/7232, and he arrived in France on 9th July 1915. There he came under the command of 15th (Scottish) Division, 44th Brigade.

Charles Downie was reported as missing in action on 25th September 1915, during the Battle of Loos. His body was never found and his name is commemorated on the Loos Memorial, panel 115 to 119. His total service lasted 314 days in the Army. He was 19 years of age.

It was only on 4th September 1916, more than a year after his actual death, that he was regarded for official purposes to have died in service that date. Sadly this was also around the date his brother Victor Downie was also killed in action. Both brother's names appear side-by-side on the Bo'ness War Memorial. He is also commemorated on the family headstone in Lanark Cemetery.

**Charles Hamilton**

Private Charles Hamilton was the son of George Hamilton, who was a coal miner, and Catherine Hamilton, of 64 Castleloan, Bo'ness. Charles was one of five brothers serving with the British Expeditionary Force during WW1 - George and Robert, both Black Watch, John Hamilton, who was with the Seaforth Highlanders, but who had been discharged as medically unfit, and Michael Hamilton, 8929, Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, 2nd Bn. Sadly Michael had died of wounds sustained at Ypres earlier in the year. His name appears near to that of his brother on the War Memorial. There were also three sisters, Jane, Catherine and Jessie. Charles was married to Ellen Brown (formerly Hamilton) of 44 Furnace Row, Bo'ness and they had three children. He was also a coal miner and worked at Kinneil Colliery.

Along with a number of other Kinneil miners, he enlisted at Glencorse, Midlothian with the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), 9th Bn, service number S/4259. After training in the South of England he arrived in France on 14th July 1915, with many of the other Bo'ness men in the 9th Black Watch, coming under the orders of the 15th (Scottish) Division, 44th Brigade. He was wounded on the opening day of the Battle of Loos and removed from the battlefield to a field ambulance station near Noeux-les-Mines, south of Bethune. He died of wounds a day later on the 26th September 1915, and is buried in Noeux-les-Mines Communal Cemetery, at grave I. B. 19. This cemetery

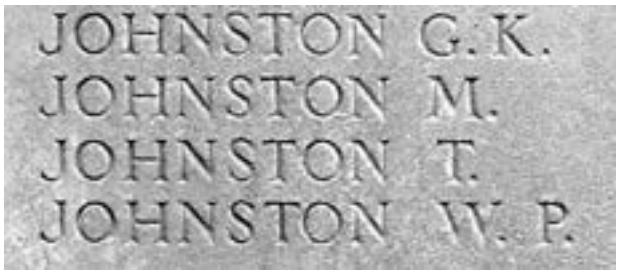
was used by the Commonwealth forces (in succession to the French) from June 1915 to August 1917. It contains 980 Commonwealth burials of the First World War. Burials here in July 1915 were carried out by units and field ambulances.

**Michael J. Johnston**

Private Michael John Johnstone (according to his birth certificate) was born in 1897 and brought up in Bo'ness, the son of Mrs Jane Johnston, Rankin's Close, 14 South Street, Bo'ness. His late father was Samuel Johnston, formerly one of the Bo'ness burgh cleansing staff. Being only 18 years old he was slightly built - 5'3" in height and weighed 109lbs. Prior to enlistment he was employed as a labourer at Rosyth Naval Base. Michael was unmarried.

He enlisted at Linlithgow on 14th August 1914, with the Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 12th Battalion and assigned service number 3023. He underwent training in England for the next twelve months and arrived in France on 12th August 1915, attached to 27th Brigade, 9th (Scottish) Division.

Michael was recorded as missing in action on the 25th September 1915 at the Battle of Loos. His mother, frantic with worry put notices in local newspapers seeking any information on the fate of her son. She had to wait another year for Michael to be officially recorded as dead in September 1916 and he is commemorated on the Loos Memorial, panel 10 to 13. His total service had lasted 1 year and 43 days.



Royal Scots in the trenches

**David Robertson**

Private David Robertson, aged 37 years, was the son of Margaret Robertson, of 21 Carson Square, Kirkcaldy. He was born in Dreghorn, Ayrshire, but had lived and worked in Bo'ness up until 1907 so was well-known locally. He was unmarried. He was one of three brothers serving with the colours in France. His other brothers were Daniel, attached to the Royal Field Artillery, and Robert, with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.

He was a special reservist and served for a time with his regiment in India. On his return he joined the Mercantile Marine, and for a time was employed as a fireman on the SS Hunterfield. This ship was a steel screw steamer built by the Ailsa Shipbuilding Company, Ayr, weighing 1454 tons and launched on 19th March 1903. It was owned and operated out of Bo'ness by the Lovart Steamship Company Ltd, 140 Hope Street, Glasgow, owned by Messrs Love and Stewart Ltd, and carried general cargo. When called up at the outbreak of war, David was employed on a White Star liner trading between Hull and America.

David enlisted with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 2nd Bn, service no: 9220. He arrived in France on 11th November 1914, in one of the first drafts to arrive, where he came under orders of 6th Division, 19th Infantry Brigade. The 19th Infantry Brigade joined the 27th Division on 31st May 1915, but left to go to 2nd Division on 19th August 1915. Because of his early entry into the theatre of war David was also awarded the 1914 Star with clasp, albeit posthumously.

David was killed in action on 25th September 1915, near La Bassee Canal, during the 2nd Division's participation in the Battle of Loos. His body was recovered, and he was buried in Cambrin Churchyard Extension Cemetery, at grave C. 5., not far back from the front line trenches. This cemetery is remarkable for the very large number of graves grouped by battalion, the most striking being the 79 graves of the 2nd Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders in Row C.

David's old ship the SS Hunterfield also had an interesting history and fate. It was seized from Italy by the Germans in 1942, before being torpedoed and sunk by the Royal Navy Submarine HMS Untiring on 12th April 1944, off the coast of Southern Italy during World War Two.

David Robertson, second from the right

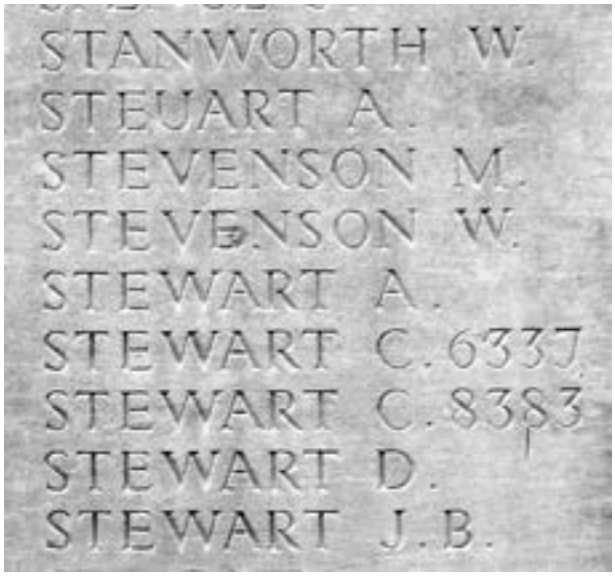
**W. F. Stevenson**

Private William Cairns Stevenson (we believe that "STEVENSON, W.F" is a transcription error on the Bo'ness War Memorial - the name should read "STEVENSON, W.C.") was born in Carriden on 19th July 1886, the son of James and Annie Stevenson (ms Cairns). He had three brothers, James, John and Alexander, and three sisters, Margaret, Annie and Janet. The family home was at Mitchell Square, Grangepans. He enlisted at Stirling on 15th August 1914, shortly after the outbreak of hostilities. Prior to that, he was employed as a dock labourer in Grangemouth. He was 26 years of age and unmarried. He was a 5'3" in height and weighed 10st 11lbs. He had a dark complexion, brown eyes, and dark brown hair.

He enlisted with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 2nd Bn, service no: 3/7853. He left Southampton and arrived in France on 11th November 1914, one of the first drafts to arrive, where he came under orders of 6th Division, 19th Infantry Brigade. The 19th Infantry Brigade joined the 27th Division on 31st May 1915, but left to go to 2nd Division on 19th August 1915.

William Stevenson was reported as missing on 25th September 1915, near La Bassee Canal, during the 2nd Division's participation in the Battle of Loos. It wasn't until a year later that his family were officially notified of his death on that date. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Loos Memorial, panel 125 to 127.

William Stevenson was awarded the 1914 Star with clasp. It was issued to his elder brother Mr James Stevenson, 20 Mayfield Terrace, Bridgeness on 6th December 1920. A clasp was instituted in 1919, as published in Army Order no. 361 of 16th October 1919. The clasp, together with two small silver roses, was awarded to those who had served under fire or who had operated within range of enemy mobile artillery in France or Belgium during the period between 5th August and 22nd November 1914. Altogether 365622 medals were awarded. The exact number of 1914 Stars awarded with a clasp is unknown since the clasp had to be claimed personally by the recipients, of whom a large number had either died before 1919 or neglected to apply. Approximately 145000 clasps were awarded.



**John Wardrope**

Corporal John Wardrope was born at Carriden, the son of the late David Wardrope, who died in 1915, and Ellen Wardrope of 288 Thornhill Road, Falkirk. He had three brothers Andrew, David and Robert, as well as four sisters, Nellie, who lived in Canada, Maggie, Janet and Lizzie. He was 5'5" tall, weighed 115lbs, and was described as having a fresh complexion, brown eyes and dark brown hair. His first marriage was to Annie Lapsley and they had one child, Janet Annie Henderson Wardrope. Sadly Annie died of typhoid soon after the baby was born in 1908 and he then married Margaret Robertson, on the 13th July 1914, at Bo'ness. He had a further child with Margaret called David Wardrope. The family home was at 80 Park View, Grangepans. John was employed as an ironmoulder. He had enlisted in the Regular Army at Falkirk on 19th September, 1899 and, prior to WW1, John had also served with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 2nd Bn, in South Africa and India. For his service in South Africa he was awarded the Queen's South Africa Medal with clasps for Cape Colony, Orange Free State & Transvaal. He was also awarded the King's South Africa Medal with clasps for 1901 and 1902.

He arrived in France as one of the first drafts of soldiers in the British Expeditionary Force. The 2nd Battalion came under orders of the 19th Infantry Brigade, successively under 6th Division, 27th Division, and finally 2nd Division. He was another soldier who saw early action and received the 1914 Star Medal with clasp. He was promoted to rank of Corporal on 7th April 1915. John Wardrope was fighting on the front line in trenches near Cambrin, during the 2nd Division's participation in the Battle of Loos 1915. His body was found some 45km away from this battlefield in an area near Genech, well into German held territory. He had presumably been wounded, captured by the German Army and sent back from the German lines to a Casualty Clearing Station. He died soon after and would have been buried nearby. Whether or not John actually died on 25th September 1915, is open to question but official notification of his date on that date was received by his wife. In 1927, his body was identified from his clothing, boots, kilt and damaged identity discs. The body was exhumed and moved to its present resting place in Bailleul Road East Cemetery, St Laurent-Blangy, grave ref: II. F. 41. When he died, Corporal John Wardrope was 34 years of age and had undertaken 16 years and 7 days service with the Army. His son David was killed in Second World War on 23rd May 1944, and also appears on the Bo'ness War Memorial WW2 panel.

**John Gardner**

Private John Gardner was the son of John and Alexina Gardner (nee Gibb), of Scotlands Close, Bo'ness, West Lothian, who were married in Bo'ness in 1871. He had three brothers George, Alexander and Andrew, who was married to Bridget Gardner. Although we don't know which, it was reported that two of John's brothers were also in the armed forces during the First World War but thankfully survived.

Private Gardner, who was 30 years of age and unmarried, was a native of Edinburgh, but he resided in Bo'ness, where he had been exceptionally well-known, since he was a lad of sixteen. He worked as a labourer in the Pitwood Yard. He was an old regular soldier, having taken part in the Boer War. He enlisted in Bo'ness with the Royal Scots 11th Battalion, service no: 12020. He was attached to 27th Brigade, 9th (Scottish) Division and, after only arriving in France on 11th May 1915, John Gardner was cut down by machine gun fire and killed in action on 26th September 1915 during an attack on Hohenzollern Redoubt and Fosse 8.

The information of John Gardner's death was contained in a letter to his mother from a comrade Corporal F.H. Lawson of 11th Royal Scots, whose home was at Forth Place. He said that on reading the Bo'ness casualty list in the local paper, he failed to see the death of his comrade, John Gardner. He stated that Gardner was among the first to fall in the course of the British advance and he died like a true British soldier facing the enemy. He further stated that Gardner last spoke to him on the night before the charge, saying, "Cheer up Lawson, we will soon be back in Bo'ness again". Sadly, that sentiment never came to pass.

His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Loos Memorial, panel 10 to 13

**David P. McKay**

Private David Proven McKay was born at Snab Rows, Bo'ness on 6th May 1884. He was the son of Robert McKay and Elizabeth McKay (ms Proven) who were married in Bo'ness in 1879. His father was a forester and the family lived for a while on the Kinneil Estate, where Robert was employed, before relocating to Forth View Cottage, Dunmore Village, near Airth. David came from a large family, with four brothers, John, George, Robert and Alexander, and three sisters Jeanie, Agnes and Janet. He was also described as the half-brother of local restauranteur Miss Bell. David was a tall lad, 5'10" in height, weighed 147lbs, and had a fresh complexion with brown hair and brown eyes.

He was a described as a "crack-shot" with the miniature rifle, and was member of Falkirk and District Miniature Rifle Club. He was employed as a bricklayer prior to enlistment at Leith, Edinburgh on 24th October 1914. He joined the Gordon Highlanders, 8th Battalion, formed in Aberdeen, and he was appointed Acting Piper on 12th November 1914, attached to the Regimental Pipe Band. The battalion moved to Aldershot, and in February 1915 went to Bordon.

He arrived in France, at Boulogne, on 10th May 1915, and came under the orders of the 9th (Scottish) Division, 26th Brigade. During the Battle of Loos, he was wounded in action with first reports arriving back home suggesting he had been wounded in the hip. He was reported as wounded and missing some time between the 25th and 27th September 1915. In September 1916, a year later, he was regarded for official purposes as having died on, or since 25th/27th. The CWGC have recorded his death date as 27th September 1915. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Loos Memorial, panel 115 to 119.

Before his death David's thoughts were very much on those back home in Bo'ness. His will stated, "In the event of my death I give £20 to my sweetheart Miss Agnes H. McNeill, 15 Corbiehall, Bo'ness", as well as leaving the remaining money to his sister in Grangemouth, and his father. His father retained a sense of pride in his son's sacrifice and in a letter to the authorities dated May 1921 he enquired,

> Sir - am I at liberty to wear my son's medals any time I wish to do so, an early reply will oblige. Yours respectfully, R. McKay

**James McCarroll**

Private James McCarrol, with only one "l", was the son of Thomas McCarrol and Helen McCarrol, previously of North Street, East Bog, Bo'ness. He was aged 24 years old and unmarried. He was one of four brothers who enlisted in the Army at the outbreak of war - Private George McCarrol, Royal Scots, 1st Battalion, Private Michael McCarrol, Army Service Corps (Transports) and Private John McCarrol, Royal Scots, 2nd Bn who had been previously wounded in the groin.

He also enlisted with the Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 2nd Bn, alongside his brother John. James was a special reservist and was stationed at Glencorse when the war broke out. He arrived in France on 23rd October 1914, and came under the orders of 3rd Division, 8th Brigade. He was slightly wounded in the neck in February, 1915, but continued to fight on with his battalion. He saw action around Hooge when for the first time the German Army used flamethrowers, or "liquid fire", to devastating effect. His luck ran out, however, when he was killed in action at 4:00pm on the afternoon of 30th September 1915, near the town of Hooge during the Second Attack on Bellewaarde. News of his death was conveyed in a letter dated 2nd October from a comrade, Private David Martin, Machine Gun Section, 2nd Royal Scots, who was formerly a dock worker at Bo'ness, to James's mother who by now was living at Syme's Land, South Street, Bo'ness. In the letter Private Martin wrote,

> We came out of the charge 25th September all right, and had only been free for two days, when we had to go back and take a trench which had been lost in the interval. We had a very hard time of it. I am very sorry to tell you that James was killed with a shell during a counter-attack. We took the trench twice before that but we were bombed out. McCarrol was close beside his captain when he was struck, and was buried just close beside him, six miles behind the firing line.

He went on to say, "I have come through the hardest fighting that has yet occurred around this district. Our casualties are over 600".

In October 1924, James McCarrol's body was identified in an unmarked grave just west of Sanctuary Wood, near Hooge. He was identified by his Gas Helmet Satchel which was marked with his service number and initials, "2274 J.M.C.". His body was exhumed and reburied at Railway Dugouts Burial Ground (Transport Farm), grave: IV. K. 7. The concentration of bodies in this manner allowed otherwise unmaintainable graves to be moved into established war cemeteries where the CWGC could ensure proper commemoration.

**Thomas Cullen**

Private Thomas Cullen was born in Linlithgow, the son of Patrick (also known as Peter) and Catherine Cullen, Inver Cottage, Baker Street, Newtown, Bo'ness. He was aged 20 years old and unmarried. His father, an Irish coal miner, had died earlier in 1915 following an operation. He also had three sisters, Mary, Catherine and Roseanne. Before enlistment, he was employed at the still house of Messrs. James Calder and Co., Ltd., Bo'ness Distillery. In terms of his physical appearance he was 5' 6"in height, and weighed 130lbs.

He enlisted at Bo'ness on 5th June 1915, with the Cameron Highlanders, 5th Battalion, service number S/18635, joining them at Inverness two days later. He arrived in France on 1st October 1915, and came under the command of 9th Division, 26th Infantry Brigade.

In what was otherwise a quiet day, with no shelling from either side, Thomas was killed by a rogue sniper's bullet in the front line trenches near an area called Bedford House, Blauwepoort Farm, 2km south east of Ypres, on 7th December 1915. News of his death was received by his mother from an Army chaplain who wrote, under the date of 6th December,

> He was shot by a sniper yesterday in a trench where snipers had been busy of late. It was the same spot that the Earl of Seafield was hit. We got his body out and buried him last night in a small burial place about two miles from Ypres. I shall see a Cross erected. I deeply sympathise with you in your sorrow and loss. These are hard days for many, and I hope you will be strengthened and comforted by God.

Thomas was buried at Railway Dugouts Burial Ground (Transport Farm), grave: I. C. 32. The cemetery now contains 2459 Commonwealth burials and commemorations of the First World War.

**William Kinloch Eriksen**

Private William Kinloch Eriksen was the only son of Janet or Nettie Eriksen (ms Kinloch) and Marinius Gottfried Eriksen, a shipbroker from Kristiania (now Oslo), Norway. They were married in Bo'ness in 1888 and soon after the family moved to live at Tulketh Brow, Ashton-on-Ribble, Lancashire, England. William was born in July 1893 at 12 London Street, Fleetwood, Lancashire. He had two older sisters Margaret Inga and Dora Kinloch.

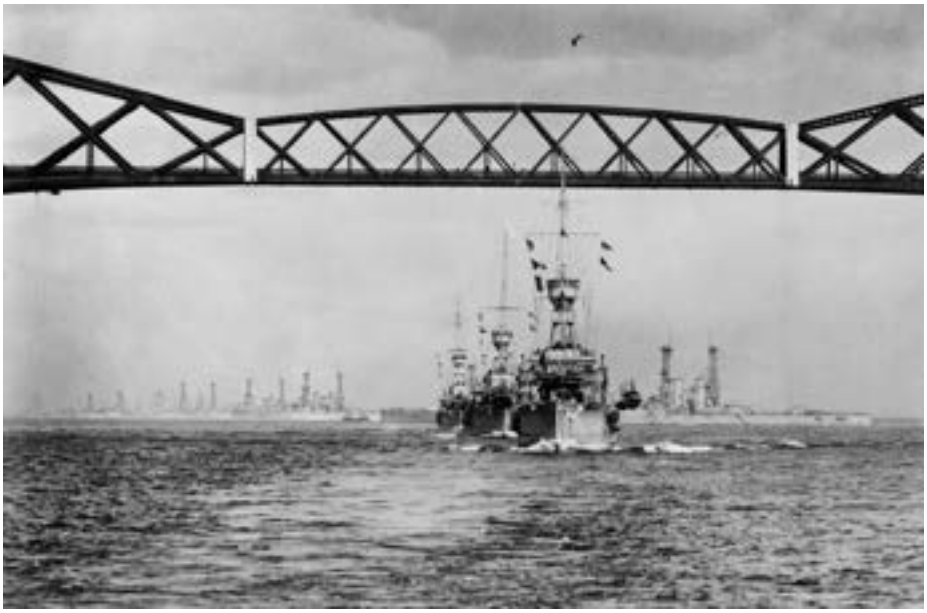
Marinius passed away on 8th February 1900 in Preston, Lancashire, at the age of 40. At this time Nettie was unhoused, and the family were sent to live with different Kinloch relatives in Bo'ness and Carriden. In 1901, William, aged 8, was staying at 19 North Street, Bo'ness with his grandparents William and Margaret. The family were reunited soon after and in 1911 were resident at 28 Bridge Road, Ashton, near Preston. A young William had found work as a grocer's assistant, whilst his two sisters worked in the local cotton mills. They then moved to 6 Fox Street, Preston.

He enlisted in September 1915 with the King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment), 7th Battalion, service no: 14269, and came under command of 19th (Western) Division, 56th Brigade. The units of the Division initially concentrated at Bulford, Tidworth, Ludgershall and Grately. The battalions moved into billets for the winter, in Andover, Whitchurch, Basingstoke and Weston-super-Mare. In March 1915 all units concentrated near Tidworth. The Division was inspected by King George V on 23rd June 1915. Advanced parties left for France on 11th July and the main body crossed the English Channel between 16th to 21st July. William himself arrived on 17th July. Units initially moved to the point of assembly near St Omer.

His Division participated in the Action of Pietre, a diversionary action during the Battle of Loos, and William survived. Minor skirmishes continued until the end of the year, and it was whilst serving in the front line trenches near Richebourg that William Eriksen was struck by an explosive bullet fired by a sniper and died instantly. His body was buried in nearby St. Vaast Post Military Cemetery, Richebourg L'Avoué grave: 11. F. 8.

CHAPTER 6

# *1914-1919*
# *At Sea*



**The Verdicts (Jutland) 1916**

Not in the thick of the fight,
Not in the press of the odds,
Do the heroes come to their height,
Or we know the demi-gods.

That stands over till peace.
We can only perceive
Men returned from the seas,
Very grateful for leave.

They grant us sudden days
Snatched from their business of war;
But we are too close to appraise
What manner of men they are.

And, whether their names go down
With age-kept victories,
Or whether they battle and drown
Unreckoned, is hid from our eyes.

They are too near to be great,
But our children shall understand
When and how our fate
Was changed, and by whose hand.

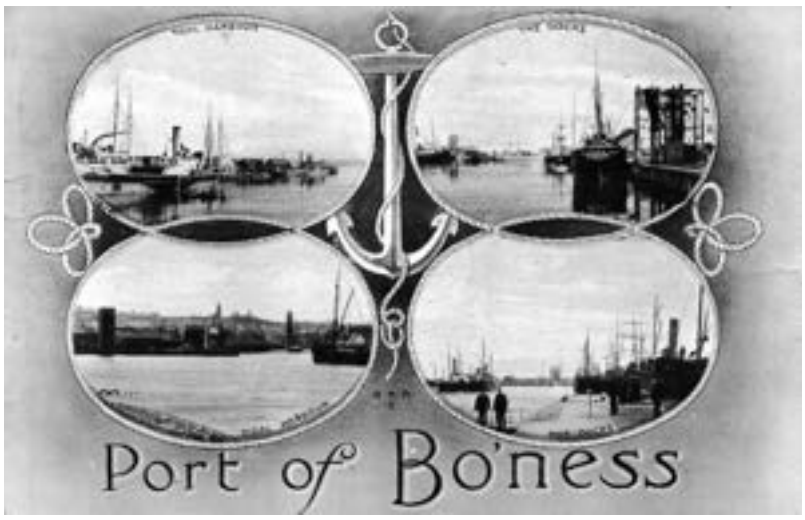
Our children shall measure their worth.
We are content to be blind . . .
But we know that we walk on a new-born earth
With the saviours of mankind.

*Rudyard Kipling, 1916*

# *At Sea*

The town of Bo'ness was at one time a thriving, bustling port, the second most important in Scotland after Leith, when many local ships traded with the continent carrying away coal, salt and other raw materials and returned with timber from Scandinavia, cloth from the Low Countries and fine French wines. Bo'ness was first recognised as a port in 1601. The historic United General Sea Box of Borrowtounness Society was formed in 1634, with only the Aberdeen version appearing earlier. Over 120 members – owners, skippers and seamen – signed up so from the very first it was a body of great financial power and influence. The sea box itself was just that, a wooden sea chest into which each member put in an agreed percentage of the value of the ship, its cargo or their wages, on the understanding that any future losses would be compensated from the box. One of the chests belonging to the Bo'ness society has survived along with the earliest written records and it is to be found in Kinneil Museum. It has two keys to ensure that no individual could empty the box and that at least two 'key masters' were present whenever it was opened which was quarterly. There was help for the poor especially if they had suffered from the effects of shipwreck or the actions of brigands. Widows and orphans of lost sailors were given small pensions and there is a payment recorded in the Sea Box accounts from 1649 "to a distressed Seaman robbed by Irish Men of Warre" and in 1749 a payment "to William McPherson and two others whose tongues were cut out by the Turks of Algiers". For many years the port was full of international seafarers, and they too were offered charity, including "five poor Frenchmen of St. Malo, taken by Ostenders". The Seabox Society still operates in Bo'ness today.

For many years the port of Bo'ness retained its importance and at the beginning of the 18th century, it was considered a promotion for a customs officer to be transferred from Glasgow to the town. In 1725 Daniel Defoe, the author of "Robinson Crusoe", described the sailors of Bo'ness as "the best seamen in the firth and are very good pilots for the coast of Holland, the Baltic and the coast of Norway". Towards the end of the century there was a downturn in fortunes, mainly resulting from trade from the west being lost due to the termination of the Forth and Clyde Canal at Grangemouth. Things looked brighter in the 19th century, however, due to the importation of pit props from Scandinavia for the thriving mining industry. In 1900 the North British Railway Company took over the docks.




With its long seafaring history and tradition it is little wonder that many Bo'ness men chose to join the maritime forces during the First World War. Another reason was undoubtedly the effective closure of the port in November 1914, when the Admiralty ordered the closing of the upper Forth ports to merchant shipping until the end of the war, and the port of

Bo'ness was used as a naval base. This meant many seaman and dock workers were struggling for work. Some joined the Army, and others chose to move to Granton, Leith and other ports, uprooting their families, but continuing to work with the merchant fleet. At the outbreak of war many merchant seamen had enlisted with the Royal Navy, or were members of the Royal Naval Reserve (RNR), made up of some 30,000 professional seamen from the merchant navy and fishing fleets, who could be called up at times of war. Many fishermen served with the RNR Trawler service, with boats specially adapted for minesweeping duties around the coast and off foreign shores, suffering heavy casualties in the process. The Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (RNVR) was a much larger reserve, made up of civilian volunteers. Both RNR and RNVR ratings also could be drafted ashore to fight with the Royal Naval Division, and many saw action at Gallipoli and the Western Front.

An early maritime engagement occurred at Heligoland Bight on 28th August 1914, when successful battlecruiser support of light forces based at Harwich resulted in the sinking of three Imperial German Navy ships. On 1st November 1914, at the Battle of Coronel off the coast of Chile, the Germans were victorious, destroying the armoured cruisers HMS Monmouth and HMS Good Hope. Upon returning to wild celebrations by the Germans in Valaparaiso, however, the commander of the German navy Vice-Admiral Graf Maximillian von Spee refused to celebrate. When given a flower bouquet as tribute he responded gruffly, "these will do nicely for my grave". His thoughts were prescient - he would die with most of his crew one month later at the Battle of the Falkland Islands on 8th December 1914.

**Stoker John McGurk**, from Bo'ness was serving with the Royal Navy on board HMS Invincible at the time and took part in this engagement. He wrote back to his parents in Grangemouth Road on 11th December with a graphic account of the battle:

> The German ships fled, but going at 28 knots, the Invincible soon caught up and disabled the three smaller of the enemy's vessels. They then caught up the two larger German cruisers and the excitement began. We were struck thirty-five times before we sank the two cruisers. One of them was the crack shot of the German Navy but Britain came out top. We had the two of them to ourselves most of the time, till the Inflexible came up".

Speaking of the damage inflicted on his own ship he went on,

> The canteen, the prison, and most of the officers' cabins were blown up and there was a hole about four feet in the ship's side. Most of our life boats and two of our funnels were full of holes. There is also a hole in the bunker and a hole in my stokehole. One of the guns was broken in two. We are also to have the ship's bottom examined here. Our water mains were blown away, and there was about two feet of water on the mess deck. Some parts of the mess deck are like a riddle.

He added,

> We sank the one cruiser (the Scharnhorst) ourselves, then sank the other cruiser with the help of the Inflexible. Our other cruisers sank the two smallest German cruisers, but the Dresden escaped and we are hunting for her now.

He had a narrow escape saying,

> I came off watch at midday and went to my action station, which was at the hand-steering wheel. A shell passed through the chamber I was in and slightly cut two of the men with splinters but nothing to speak off.

Commenting on casualties, he said,

> I saw hundreds of dead when the last German ship went down; the sea was black with the live and dead. I will never forget the sight. We put out what boats we had and saved 106 German prisoners, but 15 died from exposure and wounds. I was at their burial the next day at 9am, when after the pastor had read the service, three volleys were fired and the last post sounded. The bodies of the Germans were sewn up in canvas and having been covered by a German flag were lowered into the sea. I could write a book on the sights I saw that day.

He ended by saying,

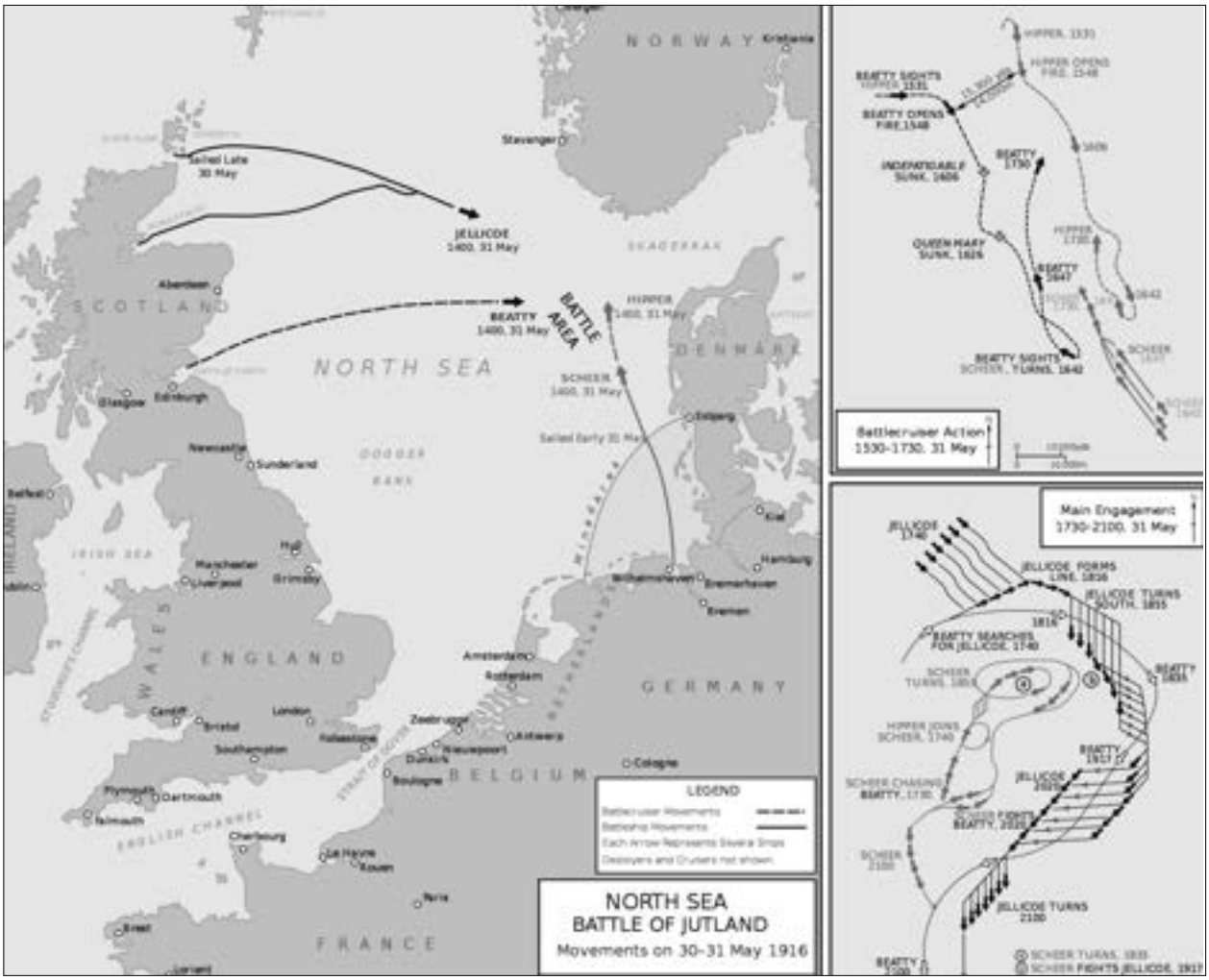
> I hope to have a week's leave. We all deserve it for we are on a ship which is now the pride of the British Navy. We have avenged the Monmouth and Good Hope, and no mistake.

The Dresden was eventually hunted down and sunk in March, 1915.

The German Navy had shelled the English coast late in 1914 causing many casualties, panic in the streets and consternation amongst the Admiralty, with Admiral John Jellicoe's Grand Fleet far to the north at Scapa Flow. It was then decided to use the still unfinished dockyard at Rosyth on the Forth as the base for five new battle cruisers under the command of Vice Admiral David Beatty. Beatty's

ships engaged with the Germans at the Battle of Dogger Bank early in 1915, and sunk the armoured cruiser SMS Blucher, but semaphore issues led to confusion and a missed opportunity to inflict serious damage. Minor operations around the coast continued, and an early maritime casualty was 25 year old **Able Seaman Robert M. Nimmo**, service no: 6221A (Po), from South Street, Bo'ness. He had joined the Royal Naval Reserve just after the outbreak of war, and was part of the crew of HM Trawler Merlin, one of hundreds of small fishing vessels requisitioned for naval service in World War 1. Their main task was to carry out minesweeping. The minesweeping system used principally throughout the War was the "A" sweep, consisting of a single 2½ inch wire towed between two ships steaming 500 yards apart, with its depth regulated by a one ton water-kite 12 feet long. The kite was lowered from the sweeper by means of the pulley on the gallows at the stern. The towed wire would come into violent contact with the mooring-cable of a mine, which generally snapped, causing the mine to come to the surface. In 1916 serrated wire was introduced rendering the cutting of the mooring-cable more certain even when the "sweep" was towed no faster than the rate of a trawler (4 to 5 knots). At the Armistice there were 726 mine-sweepers in British home waters. During the war, 23873 mines were destroyed at home and abroad by British vessels. It was dangerous work and 214 minesweeping vessels were sunk or damaged by mines. During minesweeping and anti-submarine operations in the English Channel on the night of 13th January 1915, AB Robert Nimmo was lost overboard in unknown circumstances and drowned. His body was lost to the sea.

A few days later Germany declared unrestricted submarine warfare in the seas around Britain, and that any ships trading with Britain were also justifiable targets. The most infamous episode in this period was the sinking of the passenger liner RMS Lusitania by German submarine U-20 off the coast of southern Ireland on 7th May 1915. The ship was on a voyage from New York to Liverpool and carried 1962 passengers with 1198 losing their lives. There were a number of high profile Americans on board and there was outrage in the United States as well as in Britain. Despite pointing to the fact that the ship was carrying war munitions and was therefore a justified target the



Admiral Sir John Jellicoe
Commander in Chief of the Grand Fleet

Admiral Reinhard Scheer
Imperial German Navy High Seas Fleet

Vice Admiral Sir David Richard Beatty

Vice Admiral Franz von Hipper

Destruction of the battle cruiser HMS Queen Mary at the Battle of Jutland

Germans decided in September, 1915, to limit their submarine attacks with no further attacks on passenger liners.

After two years of cautious minor engagements, with both sides unwilling to take the risk in a major sea battle, the opportunity to defeat the entire German Navy presented itself to the British in the early summer of 1916. It was to become the last great naval battle in world history - the Battle of Jutland. Intelligence had been received on 28th May that Admiral Reinhard Scheer, the new Commander in Chief of the German High Seas Fleet, was planning a sortie into the North Sea. Scheer's plan was to lure the Grand Fleet into open water by sending out a fleet of battlecruisers into the North Sea under the command of Admiral Franz Hipper and then to bring the main High Seas Fleet into action in a surprise attack.

The British had a similar plan with Beatty leaving the Forth on 30th May with 52 ships including six battlecruisers and four Queen Elizabeth class battleships. His intention was to engage with the Germans and lure them onto the massive firepower of Jellicoe's Grand Fleet arriving from the North. Beatty's fleet encountered the Germans earlier than they had expected and at 2:28pm HMS Galatea a light cruiser in Beatty's fleet fired the opening shots of the battle towards two German light cruisers, although return fire by the German ship SMS Elbing scored a direct hit on nearby HMS Phaeton. Beatty immediately chased Hipper's scouting group but signalling failures meant that the Queen Elizabeths were left 10 miles behind. The fleet were cruising into a trap without their main firepower. The duel between Beatty and Hipper ended with the British sustaining greater losses. After a 12 inch shell from the SMS Lützow caused severe damage to HMS Lion, HMS Indefatigable was destroyed by an explosion in her magazine after taking direct hits from SMS Vonn Der Tann. She sank immediately with the loss of 1019 crew and two survivors.

Worse was to come with HMS Queen Mary hit by the combined firepower of SMS Derfflinger and SMS Seydlitz, causing both forward magazines to explode and the ship to sink immediately with 1266 crew lost and only 18 survivors. Among the dead were **Private Thomas Howie**, Royal Marine Light Infantry, who was serving as a gunner on board the ship.

At 4:40pm Beatty gave the order for his battlecruiser fleet to turn around to draw the German High Seas Fleet up to the awaiting Grand Fleet 50 miles to the north. At the far southwest of the Jellicoe's fleet further

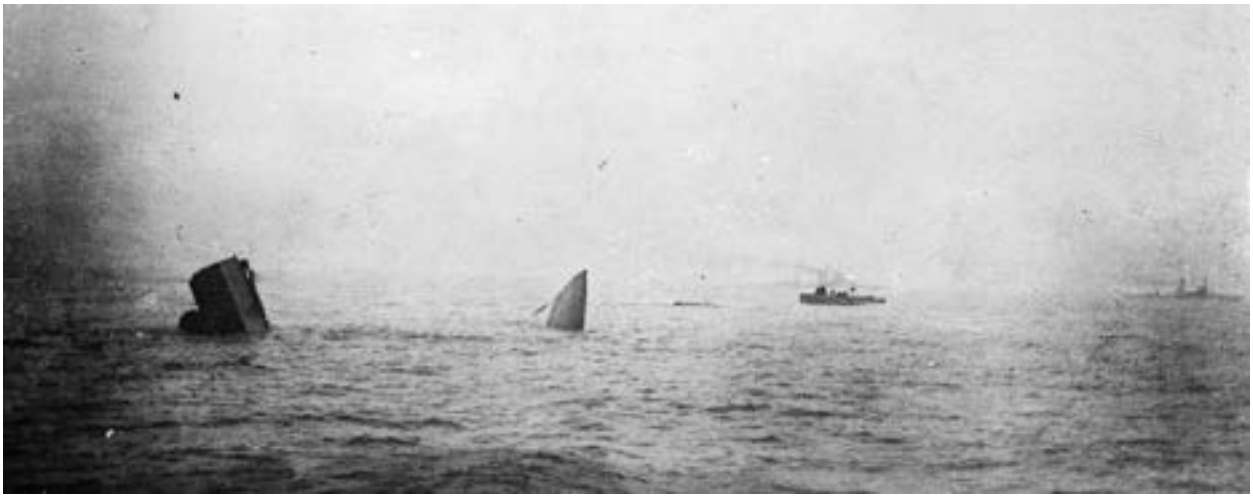
HMS Black Prince

north, the Duke of Edinburgh-class armoured cruiser HMS Black Prince was in position with 1st Cruiser Squadron under Rear Admiral Sir Robert Arbuthnot. The ship was built at the Thames Ironworks, London in 1903 and launched a year later. It was armed with six 9.2 inch guns, 10 six-inch guns, twenty Vickers 3 pounders and three submerged 18-inch torpedo tubes. The ship measured 154.1m in length, had a beam of 22.4m, and was powered by four-cylinder triple expansion steam engines, giving a maximum speed of 23 knots. The engines were powered by 20 Babcock & Wilcox water tube boilers, and six cylindrical boilers. The ship carried a maximum of 2180 tons of coal and an additional 610 tons of fuel oil that was sprayed on the coal to increase its burn rate. It all required a lot of hard graft by the crew to shovel the coal into the furnaces. This was the domain of the stoker, who worked in appalling and terrifying conditions in the bowels of the ship. It is hard to imagine it now, moving and handling tons of coal in stifling heat, the atmosphere full of coal dust, with the furnaces roaring and assaulting the ears, in a rolling and pitching vessel, in full knowledge that you were under the water line and that a torpedo or heavy shell could obliterate you at any moment. On board HMS Black Prince were seven Bo'ness coal miners who had enlisted as stokers with the Royal Naval Reserve soon after the outbreak of war. They were **Stoker Richard Cowan**, **Stoker George Ford**, **Stoker Richard Hamilton**, **Stoker Peter McGillivray**, **Stoker James Robertson**, **Stoker Thomas Rooney** and **Stoker Alexander Neish.**

At 17:33pm, HMS Falmouth, which was ahead of Beatty's battlecruiser fleet spotted HMS Black Prince and the two fleets were ready to converge and turn the tables on the Germans. As Beatty pulled away eastwards Admiral Jellicoe magnificently brought the Grand Fleet square on to the advancing German dreadnoughts in a tactic known as "crossing the enemy T" bringing the full might of his 200 guns to bear. Scheer immediately reversed course and ordered his destroyers to launch their torpedoes. Rather than leave dodging the torpedoes to chance, Jellicoe turned away, a decision that has been fiercely debated by naval historians since, and one that allowed the Germans to make their escape rather than face annihilation.

At 6:30pm in the ensuing melee the battlecruiser HMS Invincible, was hit by three salvoes each from Hipper's flagship SMS Lützow and the battlecruiser SMS Derfflinger. The Invincible was blown in two by a magazine explosion and sank in 90 seconds. A total of 1026 crew were killed including Rear-Admiral Horace Hood, **Stoker John McGurk** still serving on board, and fellow crew mate **Stoker David Bell**, Royal Naval Reserve, from Carriden. There were only six survivors.

HMS Black Prince, was sunk later in the evening, after becoming separated from the rest of the British fleet. The ship was destroyed by at least twelve heavy shells from six German destroyers firing at point blank



HMS Invincible wreckage

Stokers pictured aboard HMS Black Prince. George Ford is standing in the middle with his arms folded

range. All 857 crew were lost, including the seven Bo'ness stokers. After further skirmishing into the night the Battle of Jutland was over as Scheer's High Seas Fleet fortuitously evaded the Royal Navy and slipped back to Wilhelmshaven, whilst the British ships headed back to Scapa Flow and Rosyth. In the final analysis of Jutland the British had certainly sustained more losses in terms of ships and crew, however, it was a strategic victory. The Grand Fleet remained as the guarantor of the nation's security, and the Germans realised they could never venture into the North Sea again during WW1 without a major risk of defeat. Instead they would return again to their submarines, with further unrestricted warfare using torpedoes and mines, and the results of these tactics were seen almost immediately.

HMS Hampshire was ordered to deliver Lord Kitchener to Russia on a diplomatic mission. On 5th June 1916, when sailing in stormy seas off Marwick Head, Orkney Islands, the ship was struck by a mine that had been laid in the area by submarine U-75. She sank in under 15 mins by the bow and of the 655 crewmen and 7 passengers aboard, only 12 crew managed to survive. Kitchener and his staff were lost, along with **Stoker Robert Brown**, Royal Navy, a miner from Castleloan.

**Stoker John Hardie**, Royal Naval Reserve, service no: 5754/S, was already widely recognised in Bo'ness for his heroic actions in saving his crew mates on the SS Scotsdyke, when it went on fire in the English Channel in 1913. He was badly burned in the incident and still bore the scars. While recovering at the Sailor's Home in Leman Street, London, he was interviewed by the Fleet Street press. He gave an account of his heroism, saying,

> shortly before half-past eleven I noticed smoke issuing from the main hold. Knowing that my mate, Spitri, who was to have relieved me at midnight, and another man were below, I dashed down to call them. The fire, which seemed to be coming from the cargo, was thicker than I thought at first, and I found myself with flames all around me, whilst I could hardly breathe for the smoke. My singlet caught fire and the tongues of fire were licking my face. I called to Spitri and his companion, and then made my way back. It was terrible job, I can tell you for the vessel was burning like matchwood around me.

The report went on to say that, "His hair was badly singed, whilst his moustache was almost burned off. His scarred face also bearing evidence as to the sufferings he had endured".

Three years later he was serving aboard HMS Eden on 17th June 1916, when it was involved in a collision in the English Channel with HM Troopship France, whose steering gear had failed. HMT France was a much larger four-funnelled former ocean liner. Consequently, HMS Eden was cut in two and sank with the loss of 43 crew including John Hardie and the commander Lieutenant A.C.N. Farquhar. It was also feared that John's crew mate David Reedie from Bo'ness had perished but he was later found amongst the survivors, much to the relief of his parents. Both men had been on shore leave to Bo'ness only four days earlier.

Nineteen year old **Telegraphist James Brandon**, service no: Z/9554, was the son of a well-known Forth shipping pilot, who had for many years worked out of the port of Bo'ness. He had joined the RNVR Tyneside Division as soon as he had turned 18 years old in May 1916. He was on board the hired trawler HMT Christopher on 30th March 1917 when it was sunk by a moored mine off the coast of Suffolk. James and four other crew members were killed. Leading Seaman Robert Hume Rutherford and Deckhand John Robert White were killed alongside James in the explosion. Trimmer Robert Campbell, was subsequently drowned, whilst Deckhand Louis Victor Welham died of his injuries on shore. The subsequent Court of Enquiry, held on 19th April 1917, gave a

Bo'ness Men on the "Eden."

DAVID REEDIE. JOHN HARDIE.

Newspaper article on the sinking of HMS Eden. David Reedie survived.

revealing insight not only to the incident itself but the constant danger the minesweeper crews found themselves facing on a daily basis.

The skipper George Bennett, RNR, outlined what he witnessed saying,

> I was patrolling the War Channel, with HMT 'Jay' following in the rear. I was steering South South West when I noticed a merchant steamer to the Eastward of me blowing his whistle. This vessel was about 1 mile distant an appeared to be stopped. I put my stern 'Hard a' Starboard' and went at full speed towards him. On approaching to within speaking distance of him, he communicated to me by semaphore being unable to speak to me owing to his blowing off steam. He made the signal, 'Floating mine on my Starboard quarter bearing North by West close to my stern'. I moved my engines slow ahead and shortly afterwards saw a mine float about 700 yards away. I blew my whistle, put up flags, in order to caution passing shipping. I ordered the rifle on deck, and the W/T Operator [*James Brandon*] to his post to make the following signal to Lowestoft 'Floating mines in the War Channel. Just outwith the Stanford Channel'. I was in the act of stopping the engines when the explosion occurred. On opening the Wheelhouse door after the explosion I saw three men get life-belts and jump overboard - they cried 'Come on

skipper'. These men were picked up later by the 'Jay'. Five hands and myself then launched the lifeboat. Most of the crew got into the boat. Deckhand Welham being brought in by the two mates. I was the last to leave the ship. I did not see anything of the W/T Operator after the explosion occurred. The life-boat was picked up by Drifter 'Chris" and brought into harbour. When I last saw her 'Christopher' was afloat, with a hard list to port, and she was gradually sinking by the head.

The Court of Enquiry found no blame attributable to anyone on board.

**Second Engineer John Drummond** had learned his trade on the many steamers working out of Bo'ness, including the SS Lovart. He had already had a lucky escape just after the outbreak of war when he was on board the SS Baron Innerdale, sunk in the Red Sea after a collision with the SS African Monarch on 27th October 1914. He joined the Cardiff registered cargo steamer SS Great City in 1915 as Second Engineer. On 19th June 1917, he was killed along with three other crew members, when the ship was torpedoed by a German submarine. The torpedo hit the steamer's boiler room, and all the engine room staff on duty at the time lost their lives. The steamer was able to be towed into port for repairs and continued in service. After the war the ship was sold to various owners, ultimately with German company of W. Kunstmann, Stettin, and renamed the SS Dora Frtizen. In a strange twist of fate, near the end of World War 2, the ship was torpedoed and sunk in Stavfjord, Norway, on 6th January 1945, by the former Royal Navy Motor Torpedo Boat MTB 722, operated by the Royal Norwegian Navy. This MTB was built at Thomson & Balfour, Bo'ness.

On 1st November 1917, John's elder brother **First Engineer William Drummond** was part of the mercantile marine crew of SS Jessie, a Grangemouth registered cargo steamer. Whilst on a voyage from Calais to Middlesbrough, the ship was attacked from behind by gun fire from a German submarine UB-35, when 3 miles north of Flamborough Head. The Master John O'Gorman ordered the vessel hard to port attempting to make for the shore, then along with William Drummond and two seamen took to one of the lifeboats. As the ship's engines were still engaged and the vessel still making way, the lifeboat capsized in the launch attempt, drowning the four men. The enemy submarine continued to fire at the Jessie which was hit several times whilst the Second Engineer

SS Great City

managed to stop the ship's engines within a mile of the shore. He and the rest of the crew got away in the other lifeboat, the crew rowing to Filey, Yorkshire as they watched the Jessie drift ashore and beach herself, eventually becoming a total loss. William's body was recovered and he was sent home to Bo'ness for burial in Bo'ness Cemetery. He was the third of three Drummond brothers to die during the war. Frederick Drummond had died of wounds in December 1916, fighting with the Royal Warwickshire Regiment 2nd/8th Bn on the Western Front. To complete the Drummond story, another seafaring brother, Robert Drummond, also appears on our Memorial by mistake. Thankfully he survived the war, but the Drummond family had already had more than their fair share of tragedy.

Glasgow-born **Second Mate Alexander Chisholm** had come to Bo'ness to work as an officer on board various steamers owned by the Carron Company. He had transferred to the Newcastle registered vessel SS Grenadier when it sank on 23rd February 1917, after striking a mine laid by German submarine in the North Sea off Harwich, Essex. The ship was sailing from Rotterdam to Newcastle. Alexander, who was 43 years old, and seven crew members were killed, including the ship's Master, John Richard Aubin. In a letter to the managing director of the ship's owners, the Secretary of the Admiralty War Staff perhaps summed up the feelings of gratitude to the Mercantile Marine service during the war. He wrote, "The way in which the Grenadier, in common with many other British ships, has kept going splendidly in face of such grave risks is beyond all praise and I am more grieved than I can say that the loss of the ship has been attended by such serious loss of life, and particularly that the captain, who has done so well and run his ship so magnificently throughout the period of the war, should be among those who have lost their lives. It can truly be said that all these men have given their lives for their country in the true sense of the word, and I hope and think this may be some consolation".

**Second Engineer James Walker** came from a seafaring family, his stepfather being a Chief Engineer on boats working out of the port of Leith. James had himself worked on various merchant vessels during the war when in 1917 he transferred as Second Engineer to the Clyde-built cargo steamer SS Brodstone, formerly called the SS Indraghiri. On the 15th August 1917, whilst sailing from Cardiff to Zarate in the Argentine Republic with a cargo of coal she was torpedoed and sunk by a German submarine in the Atlantic 95 miles west of Ouessant, France. James and four other crew members were lost and their bodies were not recovered from the water. His brother William would suffer a similar fate in World War 2 when the ship he was serving on was also torpedoed and sunk by a German submarine in 1941. At 65 years old, **Sailor William Goodall** was a well-known 'old salt' in Bo'ness and had come out of retirement at the outbreak of war to help the war effort. In June 1916, he joined the crew as a sailor of the Newcastle registered steamer SS Heatherside. The ship was sailing to Malta with a cargo of coal when it was torpedoed and sunk on 25th August 1917, in the Bay of Biscay northwest of Cape Ortega, northern Spain. All 27 persons on board were lost, including William Goodall and 17-year old **Fireman Alexander Bell** from Grangepans. One of the oldest and one of the youngest casualties on the Bo'ness War Memorial had died in the same attack.

**Signalman Thomas Malrine** (actually Mulrine), Royal Naval Reserve, enlisted on 21st July 1916, service no: Clyde Z/8260. He joined the crew of the armed merchant vessel HMS Mechanician and was on board when the ship was attacked in the English Channel near the Isle of Wight on 20th January 1918. Under the command of Captain James Nicholson the ship was sailing to Plymouth from the Thames estuary when she was torpedoed by a German submarine at 2.50 am. It was hit by two torpedoes thirty minutes apart the first exploding against number six hold, which caused the stokehold to flood, and the second hit the boiler room. The ship sunk with the loss of 13 crew including Thomas. His body was washed up a few days later on the Isle of Wight and was returned to Bo'ness for burial. Almost as soon as the war began Bo'ness dock gateman **Leading Seaman Robert Sinclair** had joined the Royal Naval Reserve, service no: 7739A (Po). Originally from the Orkney Islands, he was a member of the crew on the merchant steamer SS Ventmoor, when on 14th February 1918, the ship was sunk by mines from a German submarine in the Aegean Sea. Robert and 20 crew members, were lost including the ship's Master, H.B. Winlo.

**Fireman Hamilton Ogg** was a member of the Mercantile Marine, and was a crew member on board the SS Thames, owned by the Carron Company, Grangemouth. She was sunk on 26th May 1918, by a torpedo fired by German submarine off the coast of Durham when sailing from London to Leith with a general cargo. Two explosions almost simultaneously ripped through the aft section of the ship at 10.45 am, blowing her entire stern-end off, killing the Chief Officer, one Able Seaman and Fireman Ogg, while the Master, Captain W. A. McPhail, who was attempting to destroy the code book and confidential papers, also went down with the ship. The ship was abandoned within four minutes and she sank at 10.52 am. The twenty four surviving crew members were picked up by a Royal Navy patrol vessel soon after.

Poster for the Carron Line

The Carron Company had earlier lost another two ships in WW1. On the 9th April 1916, SS Avon was sunk when it struck a mine laid by German submarine UC-7, commanded by Oblt. Georg Haag, off the mouth of the River Thames, 2½ miles southeast by south from the Tongue Lightvessel. Two crew members were killed. Hamilton Ogg and Alexander Chisholm had both also served on another ill-fated vessel, the SS Forth, before it was sunk on 9th December 1916. This occurred in the North Sea off

Harwich, Essex, again on a voyage from London to Leith with a general cargo. The explosion was caused by a mine laid by the German submarine UC-17, commanded by Oblt. Benno von Ditfurth. There were no casualties and all the crew were rescued.

Hamilton Ogg's fellow crew member on SS Thames was **Fireman Forbes Snedden**. He had a lucky escape in surviving the attack on the ship. Only a few days later he joined the crew of the Newcastle-registered SS Cairnmona, but his luck was about to run out. On 15th June 1918, the ship was torpedoed by a German submarine off the Northumberland coast as it was sailing from Leith to Newcastle. The ship was not sunk but Forbes and two crew members were drowned below decks by inrushing water. His body was taken back to his home town for burial in Bo'ness Cemetery.

A final attack in October 1918 by German submarine UB-116 to attack the Grand Fleet at Scapa Flow was foiled by hydrophone and depth charges. Indeed Beatty had already transferred the fleet to the Forth. With the situation on the Western Front looking increasingly desperate, the German high command gave the naval order at Wilhelmshaven on 24th October to sail out for one last almost suicidal battle with the Grand Fleet, mostly for political bargaining reasons. This caused mutiny amongst the war-weary veteran sailors and the order was rescinded. The war at sea was over.

The day after the Armistice on the Western Front, orders were sent to Germany for the surrender of the High Seas Fleet. On 15th November 1918, Beatty met Rear-Admiral Hugo Meurer, sent by von Hipper, on board HMS Queen Elizabeth. Beatty's terms required the U-boats to surrender at Harwich, whilst the ships were to sail to the Firth of Forth and surrender to Beatty. They would then be led to Scapa Flow, Orkney pending a decision on their disposal.

The U-boats began arriving at Harwich on 20th November. During the war years, U-boats had sunk over 5000 ships. Of the 375 built for the German Imperial Navy during WW1, 170 were surrendered to the British, and 10 found their way to the ship breaking yard at Bridgeness. They were U-62, U-70, U-94, UB-28, UB-92, UC-59, U-90, UB-96, U-96 and UB-111. Some had seen little or no action, however, U-70 had operated from 1916-1918 and sunk 53 ships, a total of 137774 tons, including one warship HMS Rhododendron in 1917.

Led by Rear Admiral Ludwig von Reuter, after von Hipper refused, the High Seas Fleet were met by HMS Cardiff on the morning of 21st November in the North Sea. There were 70 German ships in the convoy, although two were left behind due to engine trouble, and one struck a mine during the crossing and sank. They were met with a total of 370 ships of the Grand Fleet and other allied navies, and escorted into the Firth of Forth, where they dropped anchor. The signal was then made by Beatty: "The German flag will be hauled down at sunset today and will not be hoisted again without permission".

Later in November the German ships were escorted to Scapa Flow where von Reuter and crews were interred. There they remained until the following year. When it became apparent to Reuter that the ships would be seized by the British, as part of the Treaty of Versailles, he gave the following order on 21st June 1919:

> To all Commanding Officers and the Leader of the Torpedo Boats. Paragraph Eleven of to-day's date. Acknowledge. Chief of the Interned Squadron

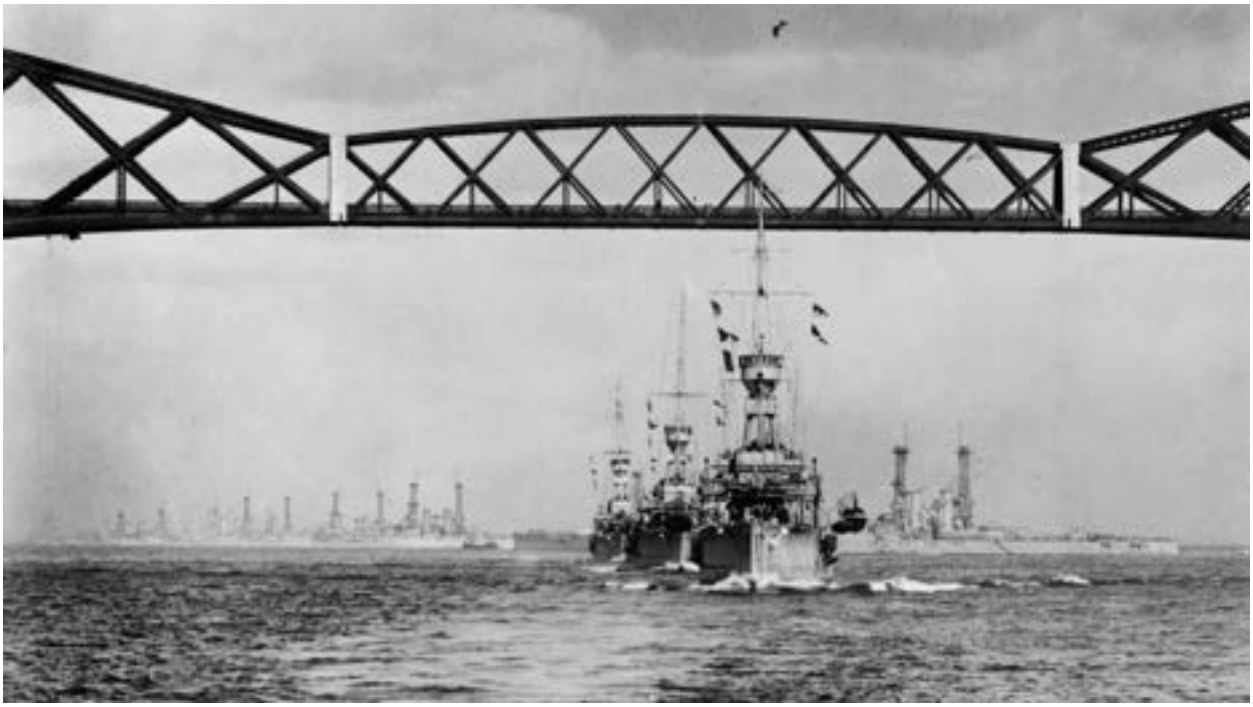
This was a signal to scuttle the fleet by opening seacocks, valves and any other means of water ingress. Although Scheer rejoiced back in Germany, it was one last act of defiance for an otherwise utterly defeated German Navy.

**Stoker John McVeigh** was the final maritime casualty to appear on the Memorial. After the armistice of 11th November 1918, tensions were still running high throughout Europe and further afield. He had enlisted with the RNVR during the war and was part of the Royal Navy crew aboard HMS Gentian sent with a task force of 22 ships to the Baltic Sea on 20th November 1918, to controversially intervene in the Russian Civil War. Code-named Operation Red Trek, the aim was to protect British interests in the area, limit the movement of the Russian Baltic Fleet by blocking the naval base at Kronstadt, and keeping the rise of Bolshevism in check. On the 15th July 1919, HMS Gentian was mined and sunk whilst in the company of her sister ship HMS Myrtle in the Gulf of Finland. Six lives were lost including John McVeigh. The British naval force left in December 1919, with most objectives being met, although the operation failed to assist White Russian forces to capture Petrograd. The operation did play a significant part in the establishment of the independent states of Estonia and Latvia.

After the war an Admiralty committee recommended that the three manning ports in Great Britain - Chatham, Plymouth and Portsmouth - should each have an identical memorial of unmistakable naval form, an obelisk, which would serve as a leading mark for shipping. Most of the Royal Navy, RNR and RNVR casualties from Bo'ness are remembered on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial, standing on Southsea Common overlooking the promenade in Portsmouth, Hampshire. It commemorates nearly 10000 naval

U-Boats at Bridgeness after the war

The Grand Fleet in the Forth taken from an Airship



British Light Cruisers of the Arethusa Class in the Firth of Forth

personnel of the First World War and almost 15000 of the Second World War who were lost or buried at sea and who have no grave.

A few Bo'ness men are also named on the Chatham Naval Memorial, sited on a hill overlooking the town of Chatham in Kent. It commemorates more than 8500 Royal Navy personnel of the First World War and over 10000 of the Second World War who were lost or buried at sea. It is made of Portland stone with bronze plaques.

Merchant Navy and Fishing Fleets who have no grave but the sea, are commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial standing on the south side of the gardens of Trinity Square, London, close to the Tower of London. It commemorates more than 50700 Commonwealth merchant seamen who lost their lives in the two world wars. The Tower Hill Memorial commemorates more than 35800 casualties who have no known grave, including several from Bo'ness.

In playing their part in the defeat of the German Navy and other naval enemies around the coast of Britain, in the South Atlantic, the Aegean Sea, at Jutland, and in the Baltic, the seafarers of Bo'ness, many of whom had made the ultimate sacrifice, had reinforced the proud maritime history of the port during WW1.

Portsmouth Naval Memorial

Chatham Naval Memorial

Tower Hill Memorial

**Robert M. Nimmo**

Seaman Robert Malcolm Nimmo was born on 30th April 1888 at Bo'ness, the only son of William Nimmo, a crane operator originally from Falkirk and Williamina (Minnie) Nimmo (ms Ross) of 18 South Street, Bo'ness. His parents had been married in Bo'ness in 1884. Robert had an elder brother William who sadly died in 1888, aged only 4. Robert was 5'6" with light brown eyes and a fresh complexion.

He was an able seaman in the merchant shipping service when he enlisted with the Royal Naval Reserve, service no: 6221A (Po), just after the outbreak of war on 29th September 1914. After a period of training he was put aboard HM Trawler Merlin that was built in Goole on the Humber in 1906, weighing 172 grt. It was registered in Hull and owned by Kelsall Brothers & Beeching Ltd, Hull, but taken into naval service in October 1914 as a minesweeper, assigned Admiralty Number: 374, and armed with one 6 pounder gun. The armed trawler was engaged in minesweeping and anti-submarine operations in the English Channel. The Merlin had a crew of four Naval Ratings and a number of fishermen. On 13th January Robert Nimmo was lost overboard in somewhat mysterious circumstances and drowned. His parents received a telegram on 13th January from the commanding officer of HMS Victory, the shore establishment in Portsmouth, informing them of the circumstances. Robert was 25 years old. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial, panel 10.

He was well-known in Bo'ness having been brought up in the town and news of his death so early in the war was greeted with huge sympathy. Sadly his father William died one month later on 20th February 1915, aged 60 years. Robert is also commemorated on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery, that carries the moving inscription,

Safe at last the harbour passed, safe in his Father's home.

**Thomas Howie**

Private Thomas Howie was born on 14th November 1883 in Bo'ness. He was the son of John Howie, a sawyer and woodyard labourer, and Jessie Howie (ms Brown). His parents had married on 2nd June 1882 in Bo'ness. He had one brother John and three sisters Rachel, Dorothy and Jemima. Sadly his mother died of tuberculosis on 29th September 1887. His father went on to remarry Isabella Ramsay, and the couple had four children, John (who sadly died, aged 6 weeks), Roseanne, Isabella and Dorothy. The family lived at Dark Close, 83 South Street, and then 14 Gilburn Place, Kinneil. Thomas was 5'6" in height, had brown hair, brown eyes, a fresh complexion, and a number of tattoos on his arms.

Prior to enlisting he was a seaman by trade and he had been with the Royal Marine Light Infantry, service no: 12716, since 10th November 1902, joining up at Hull. In a distinguished career he had served on a number of ships including HMS Alacrity, HMS King Alfred, HMS Ariadne and the battlecruiser HMS Indefatigable, which would also later be sunk at the Battle of Jutland. In his spare time he was a keen footballer, and played for the Indefatigable's first eleven.

He joined the battlecruiser HMS Queen Mary on 25th April 1915 as a Gunner.

On the 31st May 1916, he was on board the ship as part of the Grand Fleet during the Battle of Jutland when it was hit by two shells from the German battlecruiser Derfflinger causing a massive explosion and the ship to sink soon after. 1266 crew were lost, with only 18 survivors. His body was not recovered and he is remembered on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial, panel 22. Thomas was 32 years old when he died.

HMS Queen Mary on the Tyne

**John McGurk**

Stoker John McGurk was the eldest son of Peter McGurk, a mason's labourer with Bo'ness Town Council, and Agnes McGurk (ms Miller), who were married in 1889 in the Duddingston and Portobello Parish of Edinburgh. John was born on 9th December 1889 in Bo'ness. He had three brothers, James, Peter and William McGurk. The family had lived at Church Wynd, but were latterly living at Natrona Cottage, Grangemouth Road, Bo'ness. John measured 5'4" in height, had blue eyes and a fair complexion. He had a tattoo of two flags, an anchor and a heart on his right arm. John adopted a sailing career early and worked as a marine fireman. He served with the Royal Naval Reserve before the war, joining on 25th January 1910, service no: 1515.S.(Po) and served on a number of merchant vessels. He was the first of the naval reservists to be called up in Bo'ness, and on 15th August 1914 he found himself serving as a Stoker on HMS Invincible at Portsmouth.

He almost immediately served at the Battle of Heligoland Bight, the first naval battle of the war, that took place on 28th August and in the Battle of the Falkland Islands on 8th December, two British victories. In May 1916, John returned to Bo'ness on leave to see his family for one last time. Later that month, he rejoined his ship, which now formed a significant part of the Grand Fleet during the Battle of Jutland. HMS Invincible was the flagship of the 3rd Battlecruiser Squadron. At 6:30pm, the ship was hit by shells from two German ships, the Lützow and Derfflinger, that penetrated the deck and turret armour entering the magazines and causing a devastating explosion. The ship sunk within 90 seconds, with 1026 crew killed and only 6 survivors.

John's body was not recovered and he is remembered on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial, panel 23. He was 26 years old when he died. He is also commemorated on the large family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery. His parents were officially notified of the loss of their son on 8th June 1916 by the Admiralty. They were prepared for the news, however, as reports had made it clear there were very few survivors out of the many men who served on board HMS Invincible.

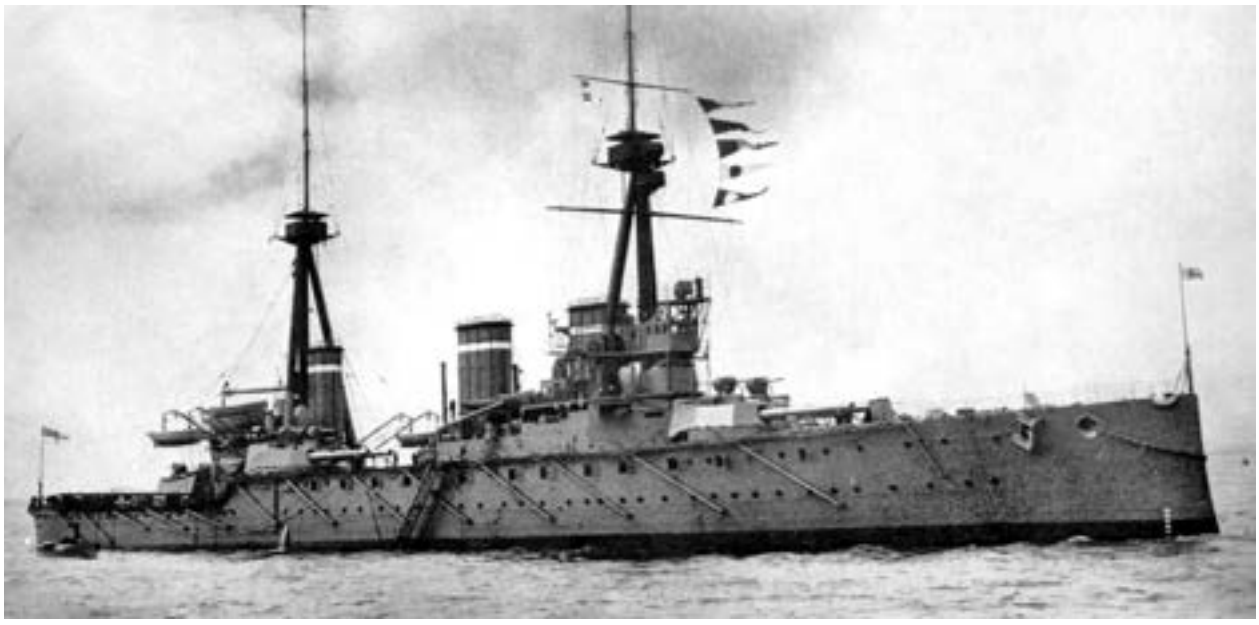
Two of his brothers were also in the armed forces. James was also in the Navy, engaged in minesweeping, whilst Peter was fighting in Salonika with the Royal Scots. Both survived the war.

**David McKenzie Bell**

Stoker David McKenzie Bell was born in 1892 in Carriden. He was the son of Adam Ronald Bell, a dock labourer originally from Grangepans, and Catherine Bell (ms MacKenzie), who were married in Auchterderran in Fife in 1885. David stood six feet tall exactly, had hazel-coloured eyes and a fair complexion. He had five sisters Janet, Maggie, Catherine, Violet and Elizabeth (Bessie), and two brothers John and Hector. His address on enlistment was the same as his sister Elizabeth Bell, 62 Main Street, Bo'ness although his parents lived at 29 Waggon Road, Bo'ness. Prior to enlisting he also worked as a dock labourer at Bo'ness docks.

He enlisted on the 12th January 1915, with the Royal Naval Reserve, service no: 5738.S.(Po). After a period of serving at HMS Attentive II, the shore base for the Dover Patrol, he joined the crew of HMS Invincible as a Stoker on 29th December 1915. On the 31st May 1916, he was on board the ship as part of the Grand Fleet during the Battle of Jutland. HMS Invincible was the flagship of the 3rd Battlecruiser Squadron. At 6:30pm, the ship was hit by shells from two German ships, the Lützow and Derfflinger, that penetrated the deck and turret armour entering the magazines and causing a devastating explosion. The ship sunk within 90 seconds, with 1026 crew killed and only 6 survivors.

David Bell's body was not recovered and he is remembered on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial, panel 23. He was 24 years old when he died.



HMS Invincible

**Richard Cowan**

Stoker Richard Cowan was born on 5th February 1891 in Slamannan, Stirlingshire, the son of William Rowan Cowan, a coal miner, and Mary Cowan (ms McCoag). His parents were married in Bo'ness on 1st January 1883. He had five brothers Samuel, Alexander, George, Robert and John, and three sisters Lizzie, Christina and Maggie. Richard was unmarried and lived with the family at 134 Castleloan, Bo'ness. Prior to enlisting he followed the family tradition and worked alongside his father and brothers as a coal miner at Kinneil. He was 5'6", had brown hair, grey eyes and a fresh complexion.

Along with six other Bo'ness miners he enlisted on 26th January 1915, with the Royal Navy as a stoker and assigned service no: K.24045. After a short period of training he joined the crew of HMS Black Prince on 7th June 1915 and attained the rank of Stoker First Class. On the 31st May 1916, he was on board HMS Black Prince as part of the Grand Fleet during the Battle of Jutland when it was sunk by shells fired from several German battleships.

All 857 crew were lost. His body was not recovered and he is remembered on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial, panel 17. He was 25 years of age.

His parents were one of the first families in Bo'ness to be officially notified by telegram from the Admiralty that their son had been killed at sea. They received the grim news on 7th June. Two of Richard's brothers, George and Robert, both Privates in the Royal Scots, were held as prisoners of war in Germany but were liberated and returned safely to Bo'ness after the war.

**George Ford**

Stoker George Ford was born on 28th August 1891 in Bo'ness, the fifth son of William Ford, a Bo'ness-born coal miner, and Elizabeth Ford (ms McDade). His parents had been married on 8th July 1880 in the town. He came from a large family, with five brothers William T, Joseph, James, Robert G, Walter G, and six sisters Jessie, Margaret, Bethia G, Mary and Euphemia Ford. The family had lived at 34 Furnace Row, and Mains Cottage, but then moved up to 140 Castleloan, Bo'ness. George also worked as a coal miner before enlisting. He was 5'9" tall, had hazel eyes and a fresh complexion.

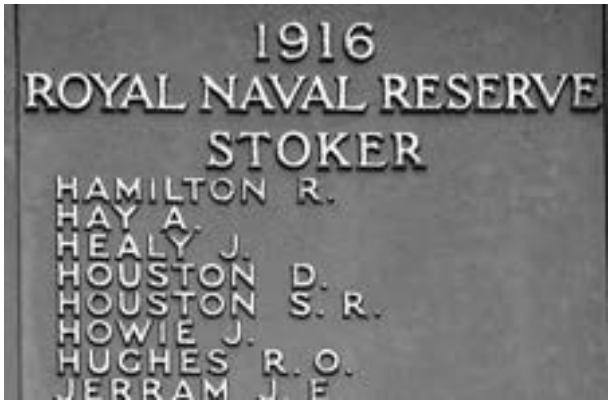
George joined the Royal Naval Reserve on 2nd December 1914, service no: 4453.S. (Po). After a short period of training he joined the crew of HMS Black Prince as stoker. On the 31st May 1916, he was on board HMS Black Prince as part of the Grand Fleet during the Battle of Jutland when it was sunk by shells fired from several German battleships. All 857 crew were lost. His body was not recovered and he is remembered on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial, panel 23. He was 24 years old.

George Ford (standing on the right) and some crew mates on HMS Black Prince

**Richard Hamilton**

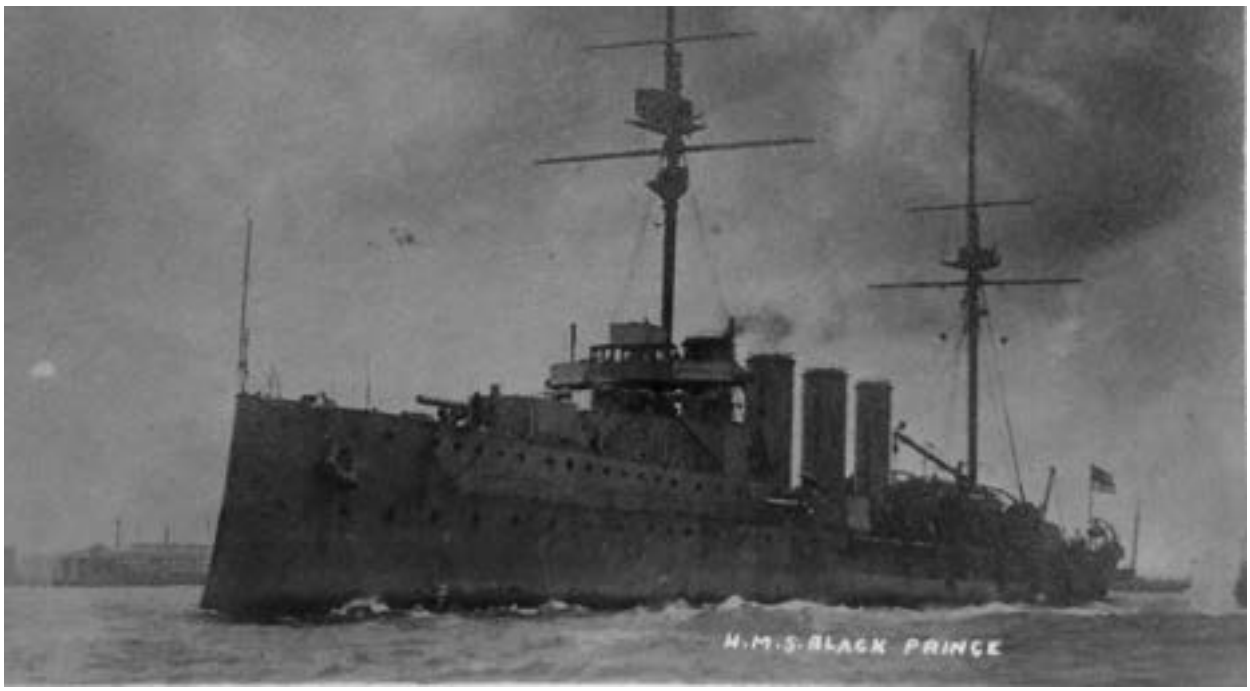
Stoker Richard Hamilton was born in Bo'ness on 29th December 1893, the son of John Hamilton, a coal miner from Bo'ness, and Maggie Hamilton (ms Aitken). His parents had been married at Carriden in 1897. He had two sisters Mary and Maggie, and three brothers Thomas, Charles, and John Hamilton. The family had lived for many years in Grangepans but had moved to 92 Corbiehall prior to the war. Richard followed in his father's footsteps and worked as a coal miner. He was 5'8", had hazel-coloured eyes and a fair complexion.

He enlisted as a Stoker with the Royal Naval Reserve on 2nd December 1914 and after a short period of training was sent to become part of the crew on HMS Black Prince. On the 31st May 1916, he was on board HMS Black Prince as part of the Grand Fleet during the Battle of Jutland when it




was sunk by shells fired from several German battleships. All 857 crew were lost. His body was not recovered and he is remembered on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial, panel 23. He was 22 years old.

His father John had also enlisted, and at the time of Richard's death he was serving with the Naval Labour Company at Le Havre.




Contemporary Postcard of HMS Black Prince

**Peter McGillvary**

Stoker Peter McGillivray (name is incorrect on Memorial) was born in Bo'ness on 8th August 1893, the son of Archibald McGillivray and Joan McGillivray (ms Waugh), who had been married in Bo'ness on 20th February 1880. His father was an iron moulder from Glasgow, but had latterly been working as a dock labourer. He had a number of brothers and sisters including Alexander, Archibald, Catherine, Isabella and Janet. The family lived at 44 Foundry Square, Grangepans. Peter was working as a coal miner before enlisting. He was 5'7" in height, had grey eyes and a fair complexion.

He enlisted as a Stoker with the Royal Naval Reserve on 14th January, 1915, service no: 5894.S. (Po). He initially served at HMS Attentive II, the shore base for the Dover Patrol, a separate unit of the Royal Navy charged with preventing German shipping, especially submarines, from entering the Atlantic by way of the English Channel. The aim was to ensure the German Navy had to travel via the much longer northern route around Scotland, which was itself covered by the Northern Patrol. The Dover Patrol was formed from a number of near obsolete destroyers and smaller ships, supplemented by twelve Tribal-class destroyers that had arrived in July 1914. Peter had served aboard one of these ships, HMS Tartar. The Dover Patrol was commanded by Rear-Admiral Horace L. A. Hood, who would play a major part in the Battle of Jutland.

Navy Stokers at work

Peter was transferred to HMS Black Prince on the 2nd December 1915. On the 31st May 1916, he was on board HMS Black Prince as part of the Grand Fleet during the Battle of Jutland when it was sunk by shells fired from several German battleships. All 857 crew were lost. His body was not recovered and he is remembered on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial, panel 23. He was 22 years old.

**Thomas Rooney**

Stoker Thomas Rooney was born in Bo'ness on 4th June 1892, the son of Robert Rooney, an Irish coal miner, and Ann Rooney (ms Bell). His parents were married in Bo'ness in 1875. He had five brothers James, Alexander, Robert, John, William and Charles and one sister Agnes. The family lived in the Snab area for many years and prior to the war had moved to 90 Furnace Row, Bo'ness. Thomas was 5'3" in height, had hazel eyes and a fresh complexion. Prior to enlisting he worked as a coal miner in Kinneil pit.

He enlisted on 2nd December 1914 as a Stoker with the Royal Naval Reserve, service no: 4455.S.(Po). His elder brother William Rooney also signed up at the same time, but was discharged soon after as medically unfit for service. After a period of training he joined the crew of HMS Black Prince in March 1915.

On the 31st May 1916, Thomas was on board HMS Black Prince as part of the Grand Fleet during the Battle of Jutland when it was sunk by direct hits from several German battleships. All 857 crew were lost. His body was not recovered and he is remembered on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial, panel 23. He was 23 years old.

The broadside guns of HMS Black Prince

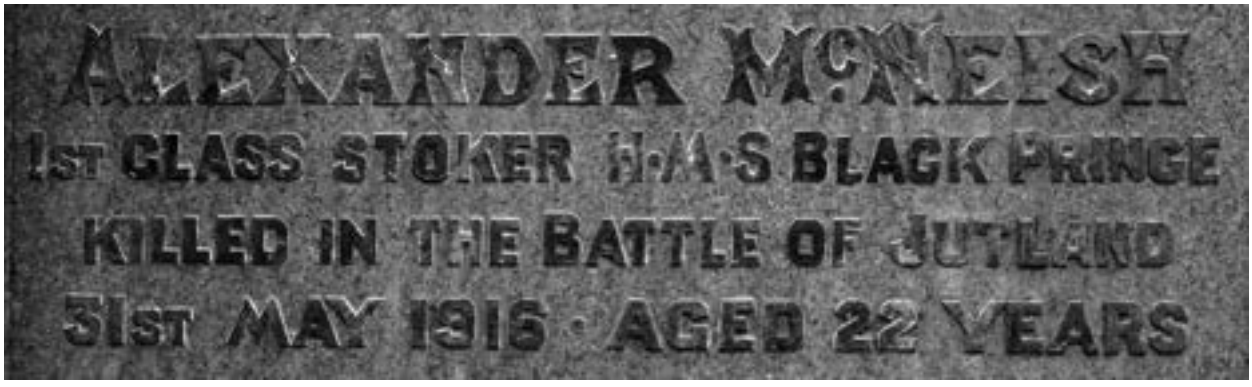
**Alexander Neish**

Stoker Alexander Neish (or McNeish) was the son of Alexander McNeish and Agnes McNeish (ms Dawson). He was born on 31st March 1894 in Airdrie Lanarkshire. His parents had married there on 27th September 1889. His father was a coal miner, originally from County Antrim, and had brought his family to Bo'ness in the 1890s following the work in the pits. He had four brothers James, Emerson, John (who died in infancy) and Samuel, and one sister called Agnes. The family lived at 99 Castleloan, Bo'ness. Alexander was 5' 8" tall, had brown hair, grey eyes and a fresh complexion. Prior to enlisting he also worked as a coal miner at Kinneil.

He enlisted with the Royal Navy as a Stoker on 26th January 1915, service no: K.24046. (Po). After a period of training at the shore based naval establishment HMS Victory II in Portsmouth, he was transferred to the crew of HMS Black Prince on 7th June 1915. He was promoted to First Class Stoker on 26th January 1916.

On the 31st May 1916, he was on board HMS Black Prince as part of the Grand Fleet during the Battle of Jutland when it was sunk by heavy calibre shells fired from several German battleships. All 857 crew were lost. His body was not recovered and he is remembered on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial, panel 19. He had just turned 22 years old. He is also commemorated on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery.

His brother Emerson Neish signed for St Mirren FC in August 1913 from Bo'ness, playing 5 times for their first eleven before joining Clydebank FC in June 1914, and playing for them into the early 1920s.



**James M. Robertson**

Stoker James Robertson was born in Bo'ness on 3rd December 1894, the son of William and Jessie Robertson (ms Mitchell), who were married in Bo'ness in 1883. He had three brothers, Dugald, William and John and three sisters named Jeanie, Agnes and Isabella, and the family stayed at 96 Furnace Row, Bo'ness. James was 5'8" tall, had blue eyes and a fresh complexion. Prior to enlisting, just like his father, he worked as a coal miner at Kinneil pit.

He enlisted on 2nd December 1914 with the Royal Naval Reserve, service no: 4456.S.(Po). After a short period of training he was transferred to HMS Black Prince on 6th March 1915. On the 31st May 1916, he was on board HMS Black Prince as part of the Grand Fleet during the Battle of Jutland when it was sunk by heavy shellfire from several German battleships. All 857 crew were lost. His body was not recovered and he is remembered on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial, panel 23. He was 21 years of age.

Portsmouth Naval Memorial

**Robert Brown**

Stoker Robert Brown was born on 18th June 1893, in Redhall, Stirling, the son of Henry Brown, a coal miner originally from Currie in Midlothian, and Elizabeth Bingham Brown (ms Stevenson), who were married in Linlithgow on the 10th December 1892. He came from another large family, with brothers William, John and Thomas, and sisters Margaret, Helen, Bella and Elizabeth. The family lived at 64 Castleloan, Bo'ness. Like his father Robert he was employed as a coal miner with Kinneil Coal Company Ltd, Kinneil Colliery. He was unmarried.

Robert was fair haired, had grey eyes and a fresh complexion. He was 5'6" in height and had a 38" chest. He had a tattoo on his right forearm with the letters "R.B.". He enlisted with the Royal Navy, service no: K. 24050 (Po) on 26th January 1915. After a short period of training at the shore establishment Victory II in Portsmouth, he joined the crew of HMS Hampshire on 13th June the same year, eventually becoming Stoker First Class on 23rd December.

Robert Brown was on board HMS Hampshire during the Battle of Jutland on 31st May 1916 with the 2nd Cruiser Squadron, but the ship saw little action and returned to port unscathed. Immediately after the battle, she was ordered to carry Lord Kitchener from Scapa Flow on a diplomatic mission to Russia via the port of Arkhangelsk. The ship was off Marwick Head, Orkney on 5th June when she was hit by a German mine and sank 15 minutes later. Of the 655 crewmen and 7 passengers aboard, only 12 crew managed to survive. Kitchener and his staff were lost.

It was thought that Robert had survived the disaster. His family received false hope after the incident on Wednesday previous, when to their surprise they received a letter from their son, saying that he had been injured while playing football, and had been unable to sail with the ship. This might have been true at some point previous but unfortunately Robert was indeed confirmed amongst the casualties of the fateful sinking. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial, panel 23.

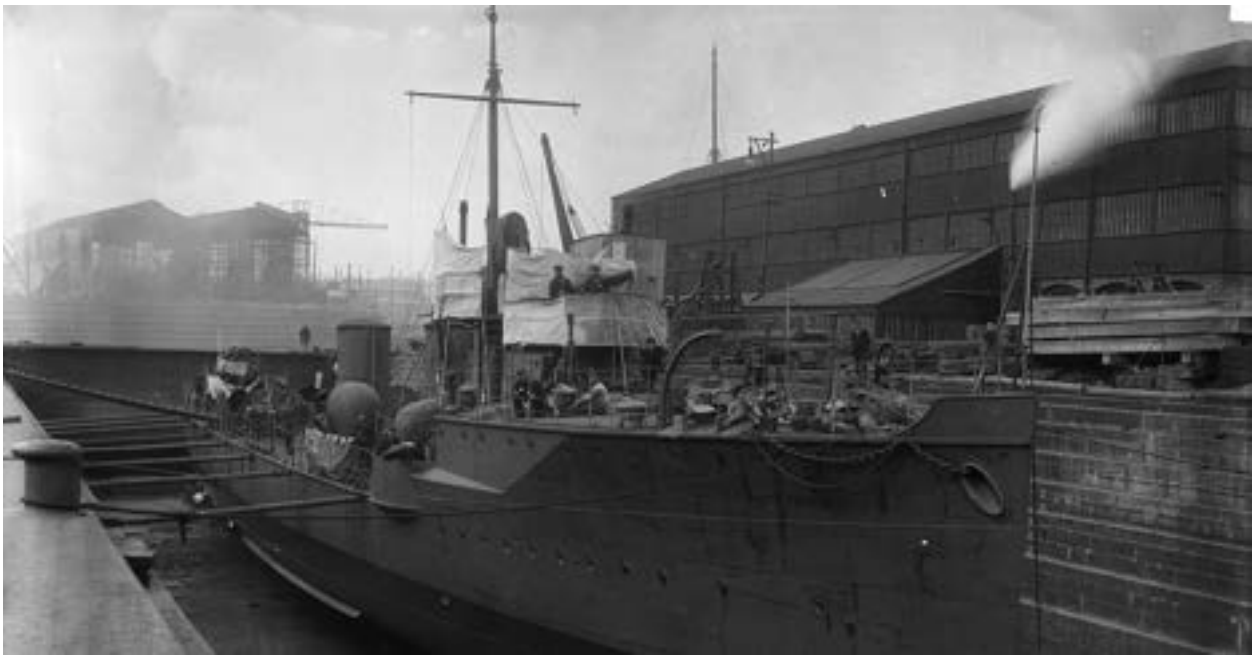
This was just one episode in a series of tragic events for the unfortunate father Henry Brown. Just before the war started his wife Elizabeth had been found dead in sad circumstances. Then, Robert's brother William Brown, Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, was killed in action on 5th October 1918, just one month before the end of the war. Both brothers appear on the War Memorial.

**John M. Hardie**

John Mills Hardie was born in 1881 in Bo'ness, the son of Robert and Jane Hardie of Corbiehall. His father was a former soldier himself, serving with the Scots Greys in Crimea. He died just before the war in January 1914, in his eighties. John was the husband of Elizabeth Hardie, ms McKenna. The couple had married in Bo'ness in 1906. They had three young children and lived at Pottery Barns, Bo'ness. John had four sisters, Bella, Maggie, Janet, Nelly, and three brothers, John, George, and William. He was 5'6" in height, had blue eyes and a fair complexion. John was an expert swimmer and an amateur boxer of some repute, and was best known in Bo'ness by the nickname "Cock" Hardie. Before the war he was employed for a considerable time at Grangemouth Docks, where he was a member of the National Union of Dock Labourers. He was then a Marine Fireman in the Mercantile Marine, before joining the Royal Naval Reserve on 28th April 1908, service no: S. 746. He served on a number of ships during that period until he was discharged just before the war in April 1913, at the end of his five year term of service.

Later in 1913 he was described as a hero for rescuing his crewmates on board the Glasgow-owned steamship SS Scotsdyke as it caught fire off the Isle of Wight in the English Channel. While the fire was raging, John plunged through the flames and smoke to give warning to his comrades below deck. He was badly burned in the incident. As the local press stated at the time, "Truly he lives up to the motto of the burgh, *Sine Metu*, as his bravery on the burning ship and elsewhere strikingly exemplifies".

At the outbreak of war he rejoined the Royal Naval Reserve, service no: 5754/S, as a Stoker and was serving aboard HMS Eden. The ship was a built by R. & W. Hawthorn Leslie and Company, Limited, Hebburn-on-Tyne, and launched in 1903. He was on board on 17th June 1916 when it was involved in a collision with HMT France, whose steering gear had failed. The Eden was cut in two and sank, with the loss of 43 crew, including John Hardie. His body was recovered and was buried at Ste. Marie Cemetery, Le Havre, grave ref: Div. 19. FF. 3.



HMS Eden in dry dock

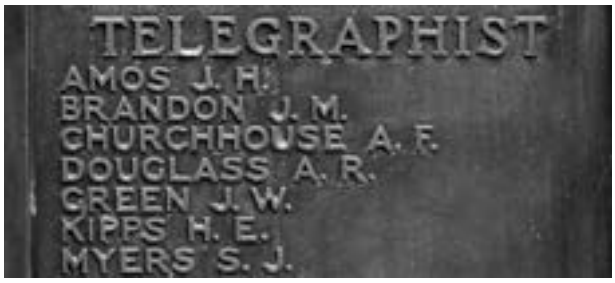
**James Brandon**

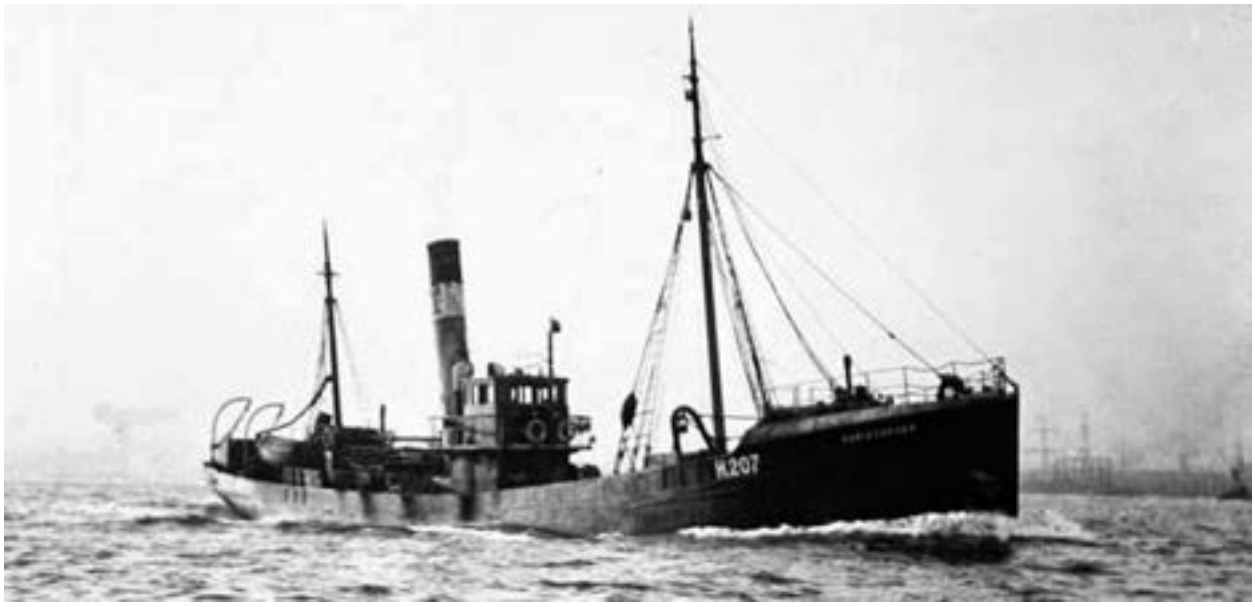
James Marshall Brandon was born on 13th January 1898, in Falkirk, the only son of James Brandon, who was a pilot of shipping on the River Forth and for many years worked in the port of Bo'ness. He lived at 97 North Street, Bo'ness, but some time before the war had moved down the Forth to live at Bentfield, Burntisland, Fife, where he also became a ship's pilot in the Firth of Forth. He was 5'8" tall, with a 34" chest, dark brown hair, brown eyes and a fresh complexion. Young James was trained as a wireless operator and he joined the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, Tyneside Division, on 6th May 1916, service no: Z/9554, just after he had turned 18 years of age.

He spent 7 months training on shore as a Telegraphist before being transferred to the crew of HMT Christopher on 29th December 1916. The Christopher was a 316 tons hired trawler from Hull, Admiralty no: 1502, built in 1911 by Cook, Welton & Gemmell, Ltd., Beverley. Prior to the war it was operated by Pickering & Haldane's Steam Trawling Co., Ltd., Hull. Following requisition, it was armed with one 12 pounder gun, and was used for minesweeping operations.

On March 30th 1917, HMT Christopher was sunk by a mine from the German submarine UC-14 (captained by Oblt. Ulrich Pilzecker) while minesweeping the area around Southwold, Suffolk. 5 crew were killed, including James Brandon.

His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Chatham Naval Memorial, Panel 27. He is also commemorated on Burntisland War Memorial.



HMT Christopher

**John Drummond**

Second Engineer John Drummond was the son of Robert Drummond, a blacksmith/engineer who hailed from Kinbuck, near Dunblane, and Annie Isabella Drummond (ms Bowie). His parents were married at Camlachie, Lanarkshire on 8th June 1875. The family lived for many years at Old Burnshot in Carriden, on the road to Blackness, and indeed this is where John was born in 1891. He had seven brothers Robert, David, William, Thomas, James, Charles and Peter Frederick, as well as three sisters Catherine, Annie, and Elizabeth Drummond. Later the family stayed at Braeside, 40A Dean Road and Marchlands Terrace. Sadly his mother Annie died of cancer on 9th March 1910, at the age of 56. His father Robert was a larger than life figure, standing 6'4" tall, and along with his eldest son, also called Robert, between them built the first bus to run a service between Bo'ness and Philpstoun.

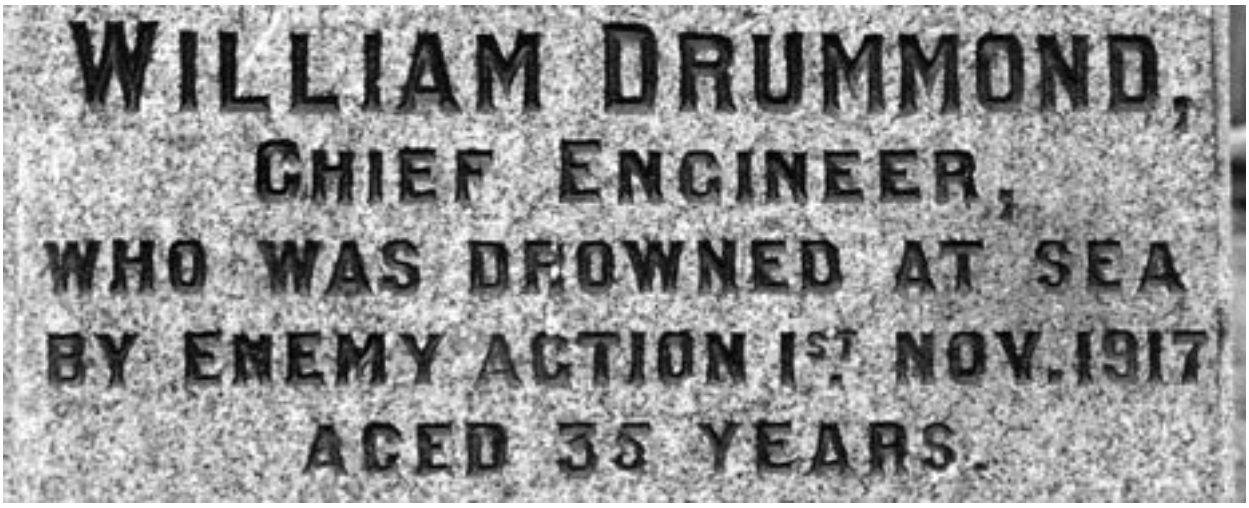
John was educated at Carriden School, and served his apprenticeship as an engineer in the engineering shop of Carriden Coal Company. He briefly worked with Messrs Marshall and Duguid, engineers, Bo'ness, but his heart was set on becoming a marine engineer. His first experience of such was on board the SS Lovart, of Bo'ness. Just after the outbreak of the war John sat and passed his Board of Trade examination to become a Second Engineer, at the same time as his brother Charles. He joined the Glasgow Steamer Baron Innerdale, but on the outward leg of a journey from Port Said, Egypt to Calcutta, India, with a cargo of salt, the boat sank after a collision with the SS African Monarch in the Red Sea on 27th October 1914. Fortunately the whole crew were saved. He joined the Cardiff steamer SS Great City in 1915, and was soon promoted to Second Engineer. SS Great City was a 5,525 grt steam cargo ship completed in 1914 by Ropner & Sons, Ltd, Stockton, for the Great City Steamship Co. Ltd. and managed by W. Reardon Smith & Sons. It was John's intention on arrival in port to leave the ship and study for the chief's certificate, but all hopes would be dashed on 19th June 1917, when the SS Great City was torpedoed and damaged by the German submarine UC-47, captained by KptLt Paul Hundius, 30 miles west of Bishop's Rock, Isles of Scilly. Four crew members were killed including John Drummond. The ship's owners wrote to John's father deploring the loss of the brave young officer, and, pertinently, then added that men going to sea during the war years, especially those in the engine room, were doing their bit just as well as the soldiers in France and elsewhere. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial. He is also commemorated on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery. John Drummond was 25 years old. John was the second of three Drummond brothers to die during the war. Frederick, Royal Warwickshire Regiment, 2nd/8th Bn, had died of wounds only months earlier in December 1916. Further tragedy was to arrive with the loss of brother William Drummond, when his ship the SS Jessie was attacked in November 1917. All the brothers are commemorated on the War Memorial.

**William Drummond**

First Engineer William Drummond was born in Grangemouth, Stirlingshire in 1893 the son of Robert Drummond, a blacksmith/engineer who hailed from Kinbuck, near Dunblane, and Annie Isabella Drummond (ms Bowie). His parents were married at Camlachie, Lanarkshire on 8th June 1875. He had seven brothers Robert, David, John, Thomas, James, Charles and Peter Frederick, as well as three sisters Catherine, Annie, and Elizabeth Drummond.

The family lived for many years at Old Burnshot in Carriden, on the road to Blackness, then Braeside, 40A Dean Road and Marchlands Terrace. Sadly his mother Annie died of cancer on 9th March 1910, at the age of 56. The same year William married Fleming Forgie Burns in Bo'ness. She was the daughter of Andrew Burns, East Bog. The couple had three children together, and lived at Forth Place, Bo'ness.

William was a merchant seaman and sailed for many years on various ships out of Grangemouth and Bo'ness. He eventually became First Engineer on the SS Jessie. This was a 364 grt compound-engined cargo ship completed in 1901 by S. McKnight & Co. Ltd. From 1911 she was owned by Shield Steamship Co. Ltd. for Wm. Rowland and managed by Walker & Bain, Grangemouth. After the calling at Bridlington whilst on passage from Calais to Middlesbrough, when 3 miles north of Flamborough Head and making eight knots, at 4:00 am on 1st November 1917, the SS Jessie was attacked from behind by gun fire from the German submarine UB-35 (commanded by Oblt. Karl Stöter). Four crew members, including William and the Captain of the vessel, John O'Gorman, were drowned when a lifeboat capsized. William's body was washed ashore on the English coast soon after. The body was sent by rail to Bo'ness, where it arrived on 6th November 1917 and a private family funeral took place at Bo'ness Cemetery the following day. The numerous wreaths placed on the grave bore ample testimony to the esteem in which William was held in the community. As well as being commemorated on his family headstone at Bo'ness Cemetery, William's name also appears on the Tower Hill Memorial. William Drummond was 35 years old. He was the third of three Drummond brothers to die during the war. Frederick, Royal Warwickshire Regiment, 2nd/8th Bn, had died of wounds in December 1916, and John was lost at sea, when his ship the SS Great City was torpedoed in June 1917. All three brothers are commemorated on the War Memorial.



**Alexander Chisholm**

Second Mate Alexander Chisholm was the son of Duncan Chisholm, a stone mason from Glenelg, Inverness and Margaret Chisholm (ms Cameron). His parents were married in Milton, Glasgow on 17th November 1871, and Alexander was born there in 1873.

He was married to Mary Falconer in Kelvin, Glasgow in 1902. He began life as a ship's carpenter on the MacBrayne steamers. He then became a merchant seaman and before the war worked as an officer on board the Carron Company's steamers including SS Forth, serving alongside Fireman Hamilton Ogg and Captain W.A. McPhail who would later perish on board sister ship SS Thames in May 1918. He came to live at Marchlands Terrace, Bo'ness in 1914, and had lived there for several years. The couple had three children.

He had left the SS Forth before it was sunk by a German mine off Harwich, Essex, on a voyage from London to Leith in December 1916. He was later serving as Second Mate on the SS Grenadier, a 1,004 grt steam passenger/cargo ship completed in 1895 by Wigham Richardson & Company, operated by the Tyne-Tees Steam Shipping Company, Newcastle. He sailed as Second Mate although he held his Captain's certificate.

He was on board the ship when it sank on 23rd February 1917, after striking a mine laid by German submarine UC-4 (commanded by Oblt. Georg Reimarus) approximately 6 nautical miles east-north-east of the Shipwash light vessel, off Harwich. She was en route from Rotterdam to Newcastle with a general cargo. 8 crew were lost including Alexander Chisholm, and the Master, John Richard Aubin. In a twist of fate this was very near to the location of the sinking of SS Forth. His wife Mary was notified by telegram that her husband was one of those lost at sea, presumed dead. He was 43 years old.

His body was not recovered from the sea and he is commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial. He is also commemorated on the family headstone in Sighthill Cemetery, Glasgow. As a local press report stated, "Mr Chisholm was a typical British seaman, whose brave conduct throughout these perilous months at sea won for him the admiration and esteem of all who knew him".

**James Walker**

Second Engineer James Carlaw Walker was the son of Agnes Gollan, of 6 Taylor Gardens, Leith. He was the step son of William Peter Gollan, Chief Engineer of the Leith registered SS Benrinnes. His parents had married in Kelvin, Glasgow in 1892. He had two brothers, Charles and William Peter McGregor, and a sister Margaret.

Previously he had served on the SS Wanderer and SS Inkosi, the latter as Fourth Engineer. In 1917 he transferred as Second Engineer to the cargo steamer SS Brodstone. The ship was 4927 tons and built in 1896 by Charles Connell & Company, Scotstoun, yard no: 225, on the Clyde. It was built for the Indraghiri Steamship Co. Ltd., Liverpool as the SS Indraghiri. Her engines were manufactured by David Rowan & Co., Glasgow. In 1910 she was sold to the Brodstone Steamship Co Ltd, Liverpool, and renamed SS Brodstone. In 1912 the management was transferred to The Blue Star Line Ltd.

On the 15th August 1917 whilst on a voyage from Cardiff, Wales, to Zarate in the Argentine Republic with a cargo of coal SS Brodstone was torpedoed and sunk by German submarine UB-40. The SS Brodstone was 95 miles west of Ushant (now Ouessant), France. 5 members of her crew were lost, including James Walker. He was 30 years old. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on Tower Hill Memorial. The submarine UB-40 was captained by Oblt. Hans Howaldt, who survived the war and lived until 1970.

One of James Walker's previous ships, SS Inkosi, was also sunk off Burrow Head, south west Scotland on passage from Liverpool to Lamlash, Arran and Pernambuco, Brazil, with a general cargo and coal. It was torpedoed by the German submarine U-96 on 28 March 1918.

His brother Chief Officer William Gollan would also join the Merchant Navy and meet a similar fate. He was killed in April 1941 on board SS Benwyvis, during World War 2. This ship was also torpedoed and sunk by a German submarine.

SS Brodstone (formerly SS Indraghiri)

**William Goodall**

William Dunlop Goodall was the son of William Goodall, a seaman, and Jane Goodall (ms Dunlop), who were married in South Leith, Midlothian on 3rd August 1847. William was born on 18th November 1852 in the same parish. He had two brothers, Robert and John, born in Carriden and Bo'ness respectively. Sadly brother John died in 1869 of typhoid fever, aged 11 years old, at the family home in Grangepans. William married Helen, or Ellen, Fraser on 31st December 1883, in Carriden. They had four sons William, James, Robert, John and three daughters, Helen, Jemima and Janet. The family lived at Grange Road, 21 Pierhead Road and then 31 Ann Terrace, Bridgeness.

Like his father, he went to sea and became Able Seaman in the Merchant Navy. After a long career he retired in 1902, but at the outbreak of was he was "anxious to do his bit" and returned to his old calling when most men would have sunk into retirement. A keen yachtsman, he owned the pleasure boat Roseberry, on which he went cruising on the Forth during his spare time.

It was said that no-one knew the ropes better, and with Willie Goodall as skipper the best was taken out of any craft, old or new, either in a race or while out on pleasure. At social functions, the "old salt" was a host in himself, and his favourite recitation, "Only a Common Sailor", was in great demand and caught on immensely.

In June 1916, he joined the crew as a sailor on the steamer SS Heatherside, a 2767 grt steam cargo ship completed in 1909 by Short Bros. Ltd. for Charlton Steam Shipping Co Ltd., Newcastle, and managed by Charlton, McAllum & Co. The ship was on a voyage from Newport via Milford Haven to Malta with a cargo of coal when it was attacked and sunk on 25th August 1917, by a torpedo fired by German submarine U-93 commanded by KptLt Helmut Gerlach in the Bay of Biscay northwest of Cape Ortega, northern Spain. All 27 persons on board were lost, including William Goodall and Fireman Alexander Bell from Grangepans. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial. The reported date of sinking suggests that William's date of death is recorded incorrectly by CWGC.

His son James Goodall was wounded on 8th October 1917, during Passchendaele. He had emigrated to Australia in 1913, and was fighting with the Australian Infantry, 1st Battalion. He was removed to hospital and whilst there he asked a Nurse to write a letter for him to send to his father. She wrote, "on the afternoon of his death he asked me if I would write to you for him. He had the highest regard for you and he said to me, "He's such a fine fellow-and 68 years of age". Tragically, William Goodall did not get the chance to read the contents of his son's last letter. Both father and son appear on the Bo'ness War Memorial. Both his son and CWGC have William's age wrong - he was actually 64 years old when he was killed, one of the oldest men on the Bo'ness War Memorial.

**Alexander Bell**

Fireman & Trimmer Alexander Bell was born at Carriden in 1900, the son of John Ramsay Bell and Martha Bell (ms Adams). His parents had been married at Carriden in 1897. His father was an iron moulder by trade, working nearby in Messrs A. Ballantine & Sons, New Grange Foundry. He had one brother, John Bell and the family lived at 1 Thirlestane, then 53 Foundry Square, Grangepans.

In June 1916, and aged only 16, he joined the Mercantile Marine crew, as a Fireman & Trimmer, of the Newcastle registered steamer SS Heatherside that had been anchored off Bo'ness for some time before the war. SS Heatherside was a 2767 grt steam cargo ship completed in 1909 by Short Bros. Ltd. for Charlton Steam Shipping Co Ltd., Newcastle, and managed by Charlton, McAllum & Co. The ship was on a voyage from Newport via Milford Haven to Malta with a cargo of coal when it was attacked and sunk on 25th August 1917. This was as a result of a torpedo fired by German submarine U-93 commanded by KptLt Helmut Gerlach in the Bay of Biscay northwest of Cape Ortega, northern Spain. All 27 persons on board were lost, including Alexander and William Goodall, an "old salt" from Bridgeness. Alexander's body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial. The reported date of sinking suggests that Alexander's date of death is recorded incorrectly by CWGC. Alexander was 17 years old when he was killed, one of the youngest men on the Bo'ness War memorial. The photo shows two of Alexander Bell's WW1 medals. On the left, the British War Medal and on the right, the Mercantile Marine Medal, 1914-1918

**Thomas Joseph Malrine**

Signalman Thomas Joseph Mulrine (spelling is incorrect on Memorial) was born in Bo'ness on 10th May 1897. He was the youngest son of James Mulrine, an iron moulder by trade, and Mary Ann Mulrine (ms Cooper). His parents were married in Linlithgow in 1884, but had lived at Society Wynd, 21 South Street, Long Stair Lane and Braeside, Bo'ness. He had four brothers James, Patrick Anthony and John, and two sisters, Margaret and Lily.

He was an excellent pupil at Bo'ness Academy until his family left Bo'ness to live in Blantyre in 1913. He then went on to higher educational achievement as a teaching student at St. Mungo's College. His parents later left for America, residing at 80 Van Scilen Avenue, Brooklyn, New York, NY. Thomas was 5'8" in height, had a 33 inch chest, dark brown hair, brown eyes and a fresh complexion.

He joined the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve as a Signalman on 21st July 1916, service no: Clyde Z/8260. After a period of shore-based training he joined HMS Mechanician on 20th July 1917. HMS

Mechanician was an escort ship, grt 9004 tons, built in 1900 by Workman, Clark & Co., Ltd., Belfast. The vessel was owned by the Charente Steamship Co., Ltd. (T. & J. Harrison), Liverpool, and was requisitioned by the Admiralty as an armed merchant ship.

On the 20th January 1918, HMS Mechanician was torpedoed and sunk in the English Channel 8 nautical miles (15 km) west of St. Catherine's Point, Isle of Wight by the German submarine UB-35 (captained by Oblt. Karl Stöter). This was the same U-Boat that had sunk SS Jessie in November 1917 and had claimed the life of William Drummond. Thirteen of her crew were lost including Joseph Mulrine. He was 20 years of age. Six days later UB-35 was herself sunk by depth charges fired by HMS Leven in the English Channel with all hands lost.

Thomas Mulrine's body was washed up a few days later on the Isle of Wight and was returned to Bo'ness for burial. A quiet funeral was held by the family on 15th February 1918 at Bo'ness Cemetery, grave F. 2008, in the presence of Father Foley and a few family friends from Bo'ness and Hamilton. Two of his brothers were still serving with the forces at the time of his death.

**Robert Sinclair**

Leading Seaman Robert Sinclair was born on 28th December 1886, the son of Robert Sinclair and Barbara Sinclair (ms Leslie). His parents were from the island of Westray in the Orkney Islands, and were married there on 20th December 1887. He had three brothers Thomas Leslie, John, George Leslie, and two sisters Margaret Ann Drever and Mary Jane Sinclair.

Robert Sinclair was well-known in Bo'ness having lived there for 12 years. His father was better known as Captain Robert Sinclair of the Kirkwall Ketch Mountaineer, which had traded between Kirkwall and Bridgeness for a long time. Before the war he was employed as a gateman at Bo'ness docks, and had lived at Craigview, Grangepans. He was married to Mary Ann Harcus in the Orkney Islands in 1917. She was a daughter of Captain Harcus, another Kirkwall skipper, master of the *Narcissus*. They moved there and lived at 22 Shore Street, Kirkwall.

He joined the Royal Naval Reserve, service no: 7739A (Po), at the outbreak of war, and after a period of training at HMS Excellent, the gunnery school at Portsmouth, he moved to HMS Cormorant, the naval base at Gibraltar serving on board HM Yacht Sapphire II and latterly as Leading Seaman on the merchantman SS Ventmoor. This ship was a steamer of 3456 tons, built by Ropner & Son, Stockton in 1900 and owned at the time of her loss by North Moor Steamships, Ltd. (W. Runciman & Co.), London. On 14th February 1918, SS Ventmoor was on a voyage from Mudros, Lemnos to Sfax, Tunisia, in ballast. The ship was sunk

by the German coastal minelayer submarine UC-37 (commanded by Oblt. Otto Kümpel), 8 miles southwest of Skyros lighthouse, in the Aegean Sea. 21 persons were lost including Robert and the ship's Master, H.B. Winlo. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Portsmouth War Memorial, M. R. 03 panel 31. He was 31 years old.

Robert Sinclair appears on 4 war memorials - he is also commemorated on the Kirkwall War Memorial, Orkney (below), and Tower Hill Memorial, London.

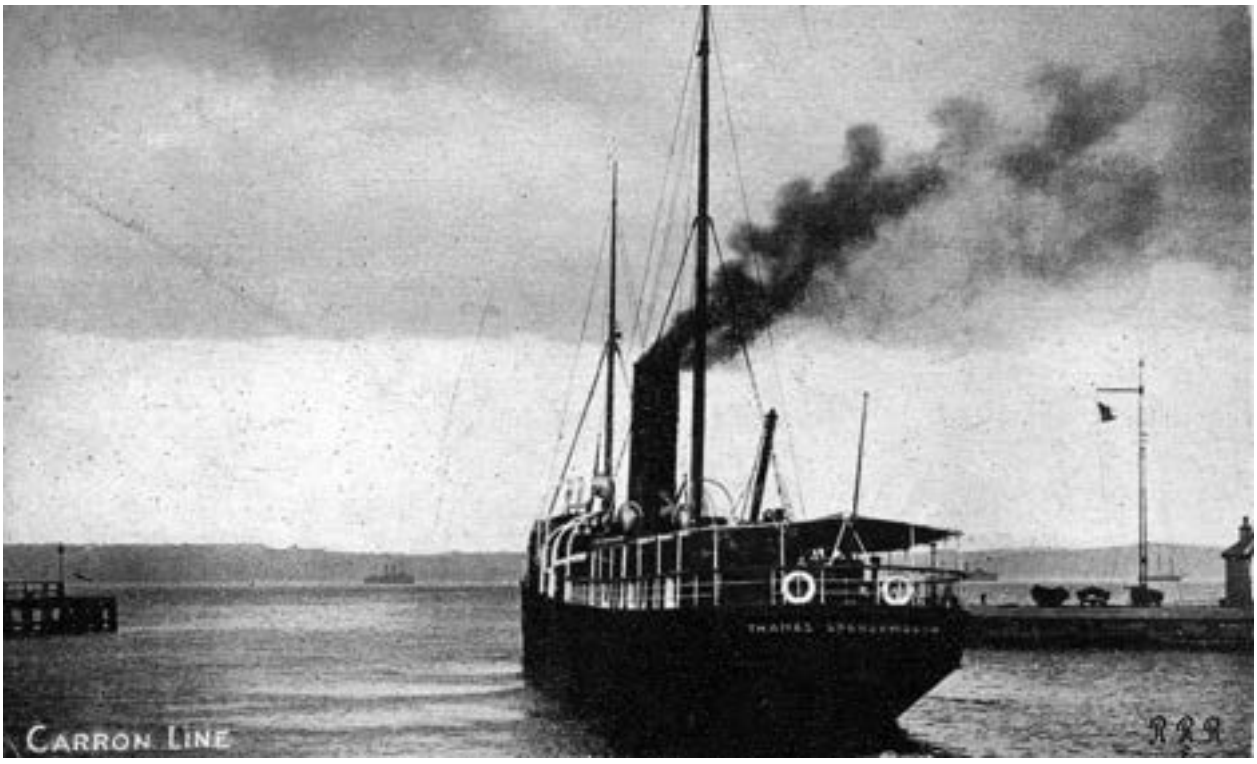
**Hamilton Ogg**

Fireman Hamilton Strachan Corbet Ogg was the son of John Lowson Ogg, and Helen Ritchie Ogg (ms Dick). His family resided in Barry, near Carnoustie, Forfarshire, and Hamilton had been born there on 21st September 1881. His parents had been married in Dundee on Hogmanay 1874. His father was a power loom tenter, a mechanic who fixed looms in the textile industry. Hamilton had four sisters, Margaret, Helen, Jane, Mary and four brothers Christopher, John, Lawson Scott and William Mann. Sadly his mother Helen died on 23rd August 1911.

For a number of years after the turn of the century, he worked as a railway porter and ticket collector at Bo'ness Train Station, then as a railway shunter driver in Fife. He married Janet Mitchell from Bo'ness on 27th January 1905 in Polmont. They lived in Grangepans and then at 4A Ella Street, Leith. They had a family, including a son also called Hamilton Ogg who was born on 7th August 1918 in Leith. Janet's parents still lived at Argyll Cottage, Bo'ness, and after the war Janet returned to stay at Catherine Place, Corbiehall.

After the outbreak of war Hamilton Ogg was a member of the Mercantile Marine, and was working as a Fireman on board the SS Thames, a 930 grt steam passenger/cargo ship completed in 1887 by A. & J. Inglis for Carron Company. She was sunk on 26th May 1918, by a torpedo fired by German submarine UC-17 (commanded by Oblt. Freiherr Nikolaus von Lyncker) approximately 6 nautical miles south east by south of Seaham Harbour, off the coast of Durham. The ship was sailing from London to Leith with a general cargo. 4 persons were lost, including Hamilton Ogg and Captain W. A. McPhail. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial. He is also commemorated on Arbroath War Memorial.

Remarkably, his father John Lowson Ogg also enlisted with the Royal Garrison Artillery just after the outbreak of war. This was after having served with the Forfar Volunteer Artillery, 1st Battalion, No: 6 Battery for 29 years. He was 60 years old, and went on to serve for nearly three years, attaining rank of Corporal, only being discharged on medical grounds in August 1917.




SS Thames leaving Bo'ness

**Forbes Snedden**

Fireman Forbes Sneddon, was born in Carriden in 1888. He was the son of Henry Sneddon, colliery fireman, and Janet (Jenny) Williamson Sneddon (ms Aitken). He had two brothers, John and Thomas and four sisters, Jane, Janet, Mary and Christina Sneddon. The family moved to Airdrie for a while but returned to Bo'ness and lived at 12 Society Wynd.

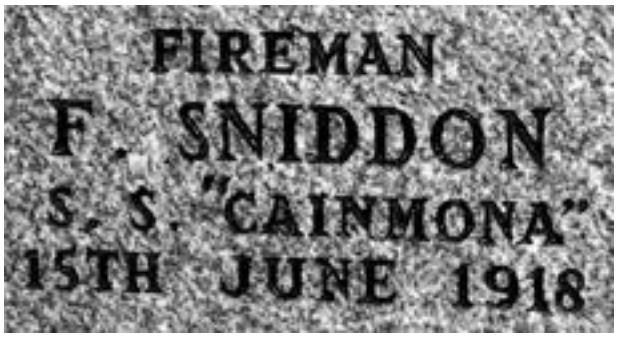
He married Catherine Brown in Bo'ness on 19th April 1910, and formerly resided at Kirk's Close, South Street, where the couple had one child. Just before the war, however, they had moved to 12 Bowling Green Street, Leith. Forbes was a merchant seaman and plied his trade on the numerous boats sailing out of Bo'ness and Leith.

In May 1918, Forbes had a lucky escape when he was on board the Carron Company's steamer SS Thames when it was torpedoed and sunk off Seaham. He managed to survive but his shipmate and fellow Fireman from Bo'ness, Hamilton Ogg, perished in this attack.

A few days later he joined the crew of the SS Cairnmona, a 4666 grt steam cargo ship completed in 1918 by Sunderland Shipbuilding Company for Cairn Line of Steamships Ltd. and managed by Cairns, Noble & Co., Newcastle.

She was torpedoed and damaged (not sunk) on 15th June 1918, nearly 4 nautical miles east of the Coquet Islands, off Northumberland, by the German submarine UC-40 under the command of Kplt. Hermann Menzel. The ship was sailing from Leith to Newcastle in ballast, when the attack occurred. Sneddon and two shipmates were below at the time, and were prevented by the inrush of water from the reaching the upper deck, and all three were drowned. His body was recovered and taken back to his home town for burial at Bo'ness Cemetery, grave B. 338.

Now to the matter of spelling his surname. His name is listed on the Bo'ness War Memorial as "Forbes Snedden", as it does on his marriage certificate. Forbes appears twice on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission site - firstly as "F. Sneddon", buried in Bo'ness Cemetery and secondly as "Forbes Sniddon", commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London. On his CWGC headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery his name is actually inscribed as "F. Sniddon". Three different spellings, and all three are apparently wrong. On his birth certificate he was registered as "Forbes Snadden". If that wasn't enough, SS Cainmona (on headstone) is also wrong - it should read SS Cairnmona. The ill-fated SS Cairnmona was eventually torpedoed and sunk in 1939 during WW2.

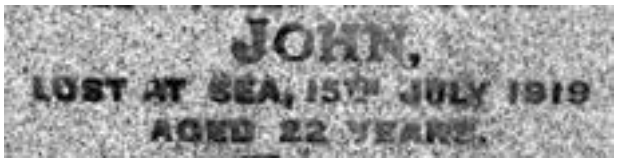


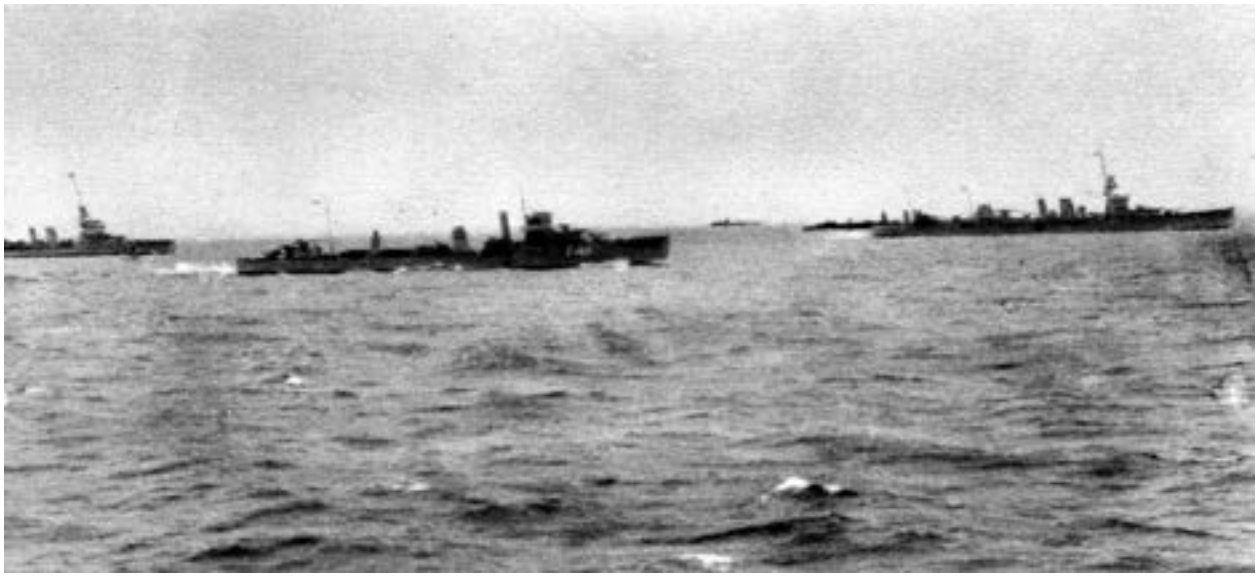
**John M. McVeigh**

John Marmion McVeigh was born on the 17th October 1896, in Belfast, the son of John and Jane McVeigh (ms Marmion). John had three sisters Sarah, Annie and Mary Ethel McVeigh. His brother Hugh, had died in infancy. The family lived at 70 Forthbank Terrace, Bo'ness. John was 5'9" tall, had a 35" chest, brown hair, hazel eyes and a fresh complexion. He had a small wound scar on the calf of his left leg.

A seaman to trade, he joined the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, and was called up to the Royal Navy. After the war had ended he signed on again for another period of five years, service no: MC/433. He served as Stoker, First Class on board HMS Dahlia and then in June 1919 he was transferred to HMS Gentian. HMS Gentian was a Royal Navy Minesweeper of the Arabis Class. She was 1250 grt and was built by Greenock & Grangemouth Dockyard Co., Greenock, yard no: 376. On the 15th July 1919, the ship was mined and sunk whilst in the company of her sister ship HMS Myrtle in the Gulf of Finland. The ships had been sent to the Baltic as part of Operation Red Trek, to forestall a Soviet and German takeover of the Baltic states after the 1917 Russian revolution. Six lives were lost including John McVeigh who was 22 years old. He is commemorated on the Chatham Naval Memorial, ref: 32 and is also named on the Baltic Waters, 1918-19 Memorial in Portsmouth Cathedral. The 112 deaths of British servicemen who died in this theatre are commemorated on this memorial plaque, which was unveiled in 2005.

John McVeigh is also commemorated on the family headstone in Carriden Cemetery, next to that of his relative Second Lieutenant Joseph McVeigh, Black Watch, who died at Arras in March 1918.



Royal Navy Squadron in the Gulf of Finland 1919

CHAPTER 7

# *1916*
# *France and Flanders*

The Somme

**The Shell Hole**

In the Shell Hole he lies, this German soldier of a year ago;
But he is not as then, accoutred, well, and eager for the foe
He hoped so soon, so utterly, to crush. His muddy skull
Lies near the mangled remnants of his corpse – war's furies thus annul
The pomp and pageantry that were its own. White rigid bones
Gape through the nauseous chaos of his clothes; the cruel stones
Hold fast the letter he was wont to clasp close to his am'rous breast.
Here, 'neath the stark, keen stars, where is no peace, no joy, nor any rest,
He lies. There, to the right, his boot, gashed by the great shell's fiendish whim,
Retains – O horrid spectacle! – the fleshless stump that was his limb!
Vile rats and mice, and flies and lice and ghastly things that carrion know
Have made a travesty of Death of him who lived a year ago.

*Hamish Mann  France, 10th September, 1916*

# The Somme

The strategy for the Allies in 1916 was to open simultaneous offensives on the Western, Eastern and Italian Fronts to try and stretch the enemy forces. General Douglas Haig had replaced General John French as the Commander-in-Chief of the BEF and he convinced French commander Joseph Joffre to undertake an offensive in the Ypres sector to harry the Germans from the Belgian coast and to try and capture the ports where their U-boats were operating from. In February Joffre was agreeable but only if a joint Anglo-French offensive occurred at the junction of the two armies in the Picardy region, in the upper reaches of the River Somme. Only one week later, on 21st February, the German commander Erich von Falkenhayn executed Operation Gericht against the French armies at Verdun, the fortress city that had symbolic and strategic importance for the people of France. His intention was to fight a series of long, drawn-out attritional battles to grind the French forces down that would force them to come to terms. French divisions were sent to defend Verdun and this had a consequential effect on the plans for the Somme offensive. The battle objectives were no longer intended as achieving a decisive breakthrough, but shifted to relieving the French forces at Verdun and draw forces away from the other Fronts. The main emphasis of the attack would now fall to the BEF.

Before the main battles, the early part of 1916 saw various minor local operations. The first Bo'ness casualty of the year was **Private Alexander H. Sneddon** (actually Snedden), Royal Scots, 12th Bn, who were part of the 27th (Lowland) Brigade of the 9th (Scottish) Division. He was wounded in the front line trenches east of Ploegsteert Wood in Flanders. Alexander was transferred 12km to No: 2 CCS at Bailleul where he died of wounds on 15th February. **Sergeant Andrew Adie**, Royal Scots, 12th Bn, was also fighting around Ploegsteert when he suffered serious gunshot wounds to the spine and neck. He died of his wounds at 13th General Hospital, Boulogne on 2nd March. Before the War, Andrew was a prominent figure in the Bo'ness Sea Scouts.

In the Loos Sector, **Private John Wotherspoon**, Cameron Highlanders 7th Bn, was killed by a shell on 12th March in the trenches near Hulluch, fighting with 15th (Scottish) Division, 44th Brigade. **Private John Stanley**, Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) 9th Bn, also

A 12 inch howitzer in action at the Battle of the Somme

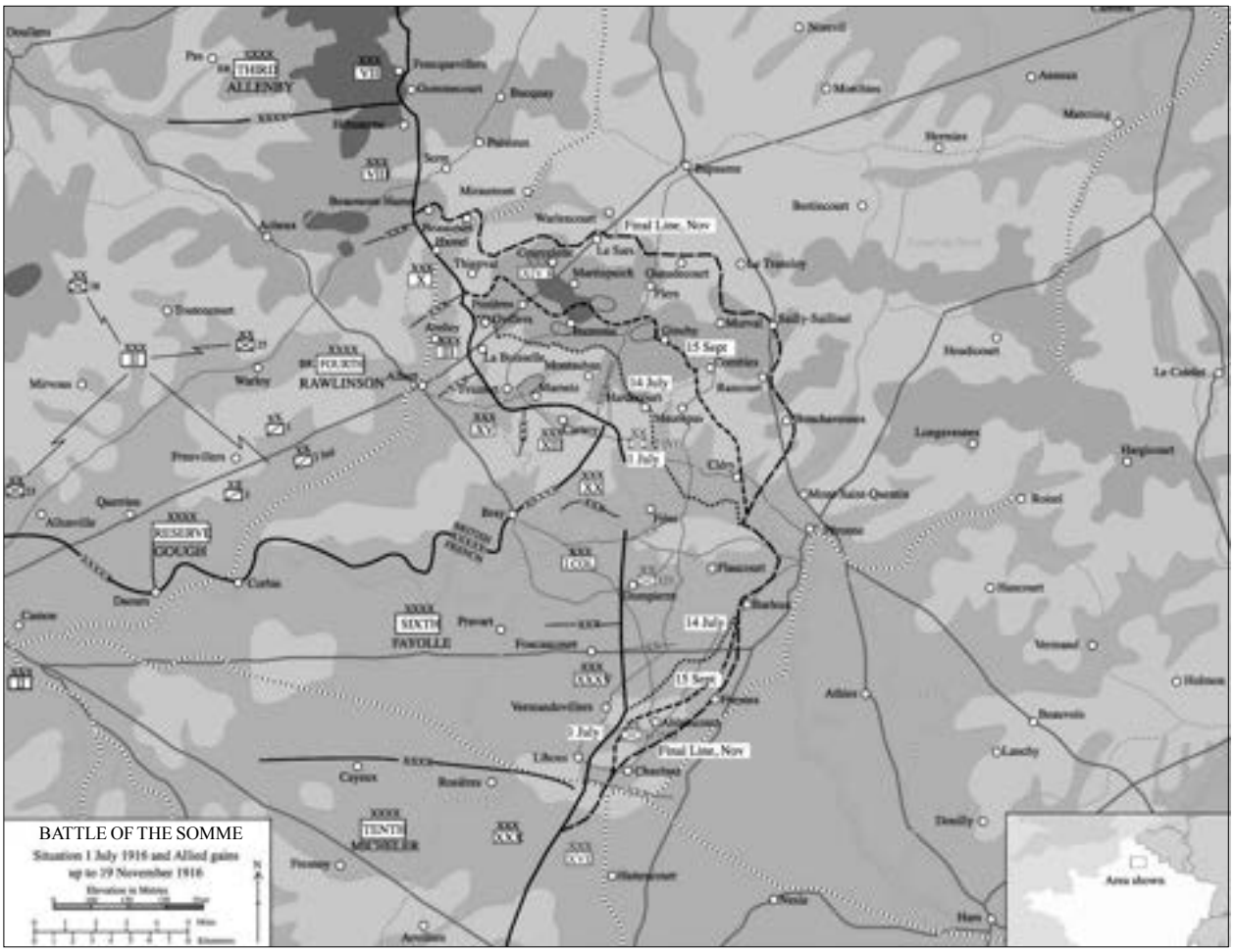
suffered severe wounds about the head and face during the trench warfare around Loos, and died of wounds on 16th March. He was also fighting with the 44th Brigade, "C" Coy. **Private John McCallum**, Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 13th Bn, was attached to 253rd Coy Royal Engineers when he was killed in action on 25th April whilst in the front line areas of the old Loos battlefield, north of the Vermelles-Hulluch road.

Back at Ypres, "Gallant Granger" **Private Daniel Rodgers** (actually Rodger), Royal Scots, 2nd Bn was with 3rd Division, 8th Brigade, during the Actions of the Bluff and St Eloi craters. He was killed on 27th March when the Battalion was shelled whilst moving up to take over trenches recently captured by 4th Royal Fusiliers, in the St. Eloi Sector. He died alongside Captain R.R. Davidson, 2nd Lt. J.W.M Rainie, and Privates 11523 James Conway, 8950 R. Laidlaw, and 3836 J. Stewart. Davidson and Rainie are buried in Reninghelst New Military Cemetery, but Daniel and the others have no known grave. The son of a Bo'ness Academy janitor, **Lance-Corporal James Gibson**, Royal Scots, 2nd Bn, "C" Coy, fought alongside Daniel Rodger during this offensive, and was wounded in action. He later died of wounds on 9th May near the Brigade Headquarters at La Clytte near Ypres. On top of the killing and maiming, illness amongst the troops continued to be rife due to poor weather, mud and the insanitary conditions in the trenches. **Pioneer Robert Fairclough**, Royal Engineers, 11th Labour Bn, died of pneumonia on 24th April, at No. 2 Canadian General Hospital, Boulogne.

**Private William Welsh**, Canadian Infantry (Manitoba Regiment) 16th Bn, was the son of the late Provost Welsh of Bo'ness. Before going to Canada, he had worked in the office of Messrs. Harrower, Welsh & Co., of which his father had been a partner. The 16th Bn served in the 3rd Brigade of the 1st Canadian Division. William Welsh was wounded near Château Rosendal south of Ypres in a precursor action to the Battle of the Somme. He was taken to No. 10 CCS where he later died of wounds on 2nd May. Another Bo'ness soldier who succumbed to his wounds at this time was **Private James Martin**, Royal Scots, 13th Bn, who died on 12th May. He had been wounded seven months earlier at the Battle of Loos in 1915. In the Albert sector (north of the Somme) **Private John Maxwell**, Highland Light Infantry, 15th Bn, "C" Coy, was killed in action on 12th May fighting in the Thiepval area with 32nd Division, 97th Brigade. He was killed when a large "minenwerfer" mortar shell burst near the cookhouse at the Johnstone Post area in the trenches causing seven other casualties. **Private David Grant**, Gordon Highlanders, 8th Bn, was serving with the 15th (Scottish) Division, 44th Brigade, near Bethune, north of Arras when he was severely wounded. David was part of a working party in the trenches when he was badly hit about the legs and chest by a trench mortar. He died of his wounds on 16th May.

**Private Richard Day**, of the local territorial force the Royal Scots 1/10th (Cyclist) Bn, volunteered for overseas service and along with a number of other Bo'ness men was attached to the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, 2nd/5th Bn in 61st (2nd South Midland) Division, 182nd Brigade. The 61st Division had moved rapidly to the front line once it reached France on the 25th May. Six days later, on the night of the 31st May, elements of the Division were in the front line. The 61st Division relieved the 38th (Welsh) Division, a New Army formation which had, itself, only arrived in France in December 1915. They were located in a low lying area between Armentieres and Lens, in front of the small town of Laventie. As the front lines were situated on ground with such a high water table, digging trenches was not practical. Both sides made use of breastworks, barriers of soil and sandbags, built six to seven feet above ground level. On the German side the low Aubers Ridge, running between the villages of Aubers and Fromelles, gave the Germans a considerable tactical advantage both for observation and artillery placement. Richard Day was injured by a shell during action on 26th June and removed to a CCS at the railhead of Merville, where he died of wounds received. **Lance-Corporal James S. Hamilton**, Royal Engineers, 181st Tunnelling Coy, had already put his coal mining background to good use. But this work was high risk, and he was killed in action on 29th June tunnelling in the Arras sector. **Private James Jones**, Cameron Highlanders, 6th Bn, 15th (Scottish) Division, 45th Brigade, was one of seven ordinary ranks killed in action on 30th June in the Hohenzollern Sector, east of Bethune. He was the adopted brother of Private John Wotherspoon who had been killed earlier in 1916.

Six days earlier, in heavy rain, the bombardment had begun at the Somme. It was to be the heaviest concentration of heavy firepower yet seen in the Great War. General Henry Rawlinson, Commander of the Fourth Army, confidently predicted that, "nothing could exist at the conclusion of the bombardment in the area covered by it". But with hindsight the British artillery targets were too thinly spread out, rather than concentrated on a short length of front. In terms of weight of shellfire per yard of enemy trench, the planned bombardment was




Battle of the Somme

not even up to that fired at Neuve Chapelle, over a year before. The result was that the enemy defences and firepower remained intact in many areas. This was to prove to be only one costly factor in the British sector north of the River Somme. Another issue was the difference in strategic thinking by the British command. Rawlinson favoured a limited "bite-and-hold" offensive, whilst Haig was looking for a breakthrough attack and a return to mobile warfare. The compromise reached meant neither strategy was employed. The third important factor affecting the success of the British strategy was the inexperience of the troops, mostly New Army volunteers, many of whom had only arrived in France that year.

The plan was for the French Sixth Army and the British Fourth Army to attack the German 2nd Army, commanded by General Fritz von Below, from Foucaucourt south of the Somme northwards to Serre, north of the Ancre. Another attack would take place further north, at Gommecourt, in the British Third Army area. The objective of the attack was to capture the German first and second positions from Serre south to the Albert–Bapaume road and the first position from the road south to Foucaucourt.

At 7:28am on Saturday the 1st July 1916, a series of massive underground explosions caused by 19 mines secretly planted by the tunnelling companies of the Royal Engineers heralded the start of the first day of the Battle of the Somme, and the opening phase known as the Battle of Albert. At 7:30am the whistles sounded for the troops to go over the top of the trenches and into no man's land. Contemporary reports suggest an initial lull, an eerie silence, but then the ominous sounds of the enemy machine guns opening fire and causing carnage. The main British attack was carried out by the Fourth Army under Rawlinson in the area north of the Somme, spanning the Albert–Bapaume road.

The Highland Light Infantry, 15th (Service) Battalion (1st Glasgow), the 16th (Service) Battalion (2nd Glasgow) and the 17th (Service) Battalion (3rd Glasgow) had arrived in France in November 1915, as part of the 97th Brigade in the 32nd Division for service on the Western Front. On 1st July, 32nd Division were part of X Corps given the task of attacking the German defensive position known as

the Leipzig Salient, opposite the village of Authuile, near Thiepval. Highland Light Infantry, 17th Service Bn, led the attack and had already crept forward to within 40m of the German lines at 7:23am, prior to the ending of the artillery barrage, and were able to rush the enemy trenches soon after. Unfortunately **Private James Gardner**, 17th HLI, was killed during this assault. The 16th HLI, on the left flank of the 97th Brigade, had a more difficult time, and were pinned down and decimated in no-man's land by machine gun fire. **Private Robert N. Brown**, and **Lance Corporal Walter Orr**, 16th HLI, were both killed in action during this attack. The 16th HLI suffered badly and when they came out of the line on the evening of 3rd July casualties totalled 20 officers and 534 other ranks. Despite the casualties the capture and consolidation of Leipzig Salient was the only permanent success in the area on the 1st July. In total, the 32nd Division lost 3949 casualties that day.

On the left hand side of 32nd Division, the 36th (Ulster) Division successfully attacked Schwaben Redoubt between Thiepval and the River Ancre. **Private Frederick Houston**, Royal Irish Fusiliers, 9th Bn, was fighting with the 108th Brigade, when he was killed in action. **Private John Keir Mackay**, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers 10th Bn, was also killed in the same attack, fighting with 109th Brigade. The 36th Division was relieved on 2nd July, having suffered 5104 casualties, including 2069 who died. The 36th Division held on bravely but German counter attacks forced them out of the Redoubt at 10:00pm that night.

A view of Beaumont Hamel

The VIII Corps held the northernmost flank of the Fourth Army. The 29th Division attacked a heavily fortified area called the Hawthorn Ridge Redoubt near to Beaumont Hamel. The attack was preceded by the explosion of the 18000kg Hawthorn Mine that had been dug under the position in secret. The British failed to exploit the confusion caused by the explosion and were too late in occupying the newly formed crater. Far from giving the British the advantage, the explosion served to alert the Germans to the imminent attack. The vast majority of British troops that went over-the-top were killed or wounded almost immediately in no-mans land. **Private William Morrison**, King's Own Scottish Borderers, 1st Bn, who was fighting with 87th Brigade, was one of those killed. Further south, the Anglo-French attack was more successful, although **Private Robert Stevenson**, Machine Gun Corps (Infantry) 20th Coy, was killed in action. He was fighting with 7th Division during their successful Capture of Mametz and was one of 3380 casualties sustained by the 7th Division, the vast majority from enemy machine gun fire.

By the end of the opening day the BEF sustained 57470 casualties and 19240 were killed. It was, and remains to this day, the bloodiest day in British military history, and seven Bo'ness men had made the ultimate sacrifice.

The Battle of Albert ended on 13th July, when Haig abandoned the offensive north of the Albert–Bapaume road, concentrating forces instead on the southern area where the Anglo-French forces were within touching distance of the German second line of defences. The next offensive, known as the Battle of Bazentin Ridge, saw the Fourth Army attempting a night-time attack to capture the villages of Bazentin-le-Petit, Bazentin-le-Grand and Longueval, which was adjacent to Delville Wood, with High Wood beyond. The Division successfully captured Longueval, but there were many casualties, including **Private James Hunter**, Royal Scots, 11th Bn, who was killed in action fighting with 27th Brigade. The attack was well planned and executed, but a fleeting opportunity to make a major advance was lost.

The remainder of July and August saw a series of costly battles to try and capture ground from the Germans, and their subsequent counter-attacks stubbornly adhering to their strategy of refusing to cede territory easily. **Private George Fargie**, Royal Scots, 2nd Bn, was fighting with 3rd Division, 8th Brigade, when he was killed in action on 23rd July during the next offensive, the Battle of Delville Wood. Nearby, **Second Lieutenant Robert Reid**, Black Watch, 1st/7th Bn, in the 51st (Highland) Division, 153rd Brigade, was killed in action on 30th July leading his men in the Attacks on High Wood near Bazentin-le-Petit.

**Lance Corporal Richard W. Hamilton**, a Royal Scot who was attached to the York and Lancaster Regiment, 9th Bn, was fighting with 23rd Division, 70th Brigade at the next offensive, the Battle of

Some of the first soldiers to cross the Somme near Peronne

Pozières, when he was killed in action on 29th July. The costly fighting ended with the British in possession of the plateau north and east of the village, in a position to menace the German bastion of Thiepval from the rear. **Private Victor Downie**, Highland Light Infantry, 8th Bn, attached to the Royal Scots, 16th (Service) Battalion (2nd Edinburgh), was killed in action on 3rd August. He was fighting with 34th Division, 101st Brigade, at the same Battle. **Private Peter Weir**, Black Watch, 1st Bn, was wounded fighting with 1st Division, 1st Brigade at Pozières. He was transferred to a nearby CCS where he died of his wounds on 25th August.

During the fight to take the German Switch Line trench near High Wood on the 12th August, the 12th Highland Light Infantry were fighting on the left, whilst the 6/7th Royal Scots Fusiliers were fighting in the centre. In the coming days the 6/7th RSF would successfully take the Switch Line, however the 12th HLI lost many men. **Private James Wright Masson** (actually Mason), Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 2/10th Bn and **Private Hugh Hannah**, Royal Scots, 2/10th Bn, both attached to Highland Light Infantry, 12th Bn, were fighting with 15th (Scottish) Division, 46th Brigade. They were both killed in action on 13th August.

**Lance Corporal Gilbert Stanners**, Royal Scots 1/10th Bn, attached to Highland Light Infantry, 12th Bn, was fighting with 46th Brigade, when he was killed in action on 17th August in the front line just north of Bazentin. He was the first of three Stanners brothers to be killed during WW1. **Private Thomas Sneddon**, Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 2/10th Bn, attached to Royal Scots Fusiliers, 6th/7th Bn, in 45th Brigade died during the same action on 30th August.

Elsewhere at this time, **Private David S. McKerracher**, Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1st Canadian Mounted Rifles Battalion (Saskatchewan Regiment), was fighting with the 3rd Canadian Division, 8th Canadian Brigade. He was killed on 10th August during skirmishes in the Ypres sector, just prior to the Division moving south to the Somme sector. Twenty one year old **Rifleman Thomas Meikle**, Royal Scots, 5/6th Bn, had only arrived in France four months earlier when he was killed in action on 22nd August fighting with 32nd Division, 14th Brigade, in the Arras sector.

Soldiers washing at the banks of the Somme

On 3rd September, the 1st Division, 1st Brigade attacked in High Wood as part of the fighting for Guillemont. A mine, with 1400 kg of explosives, that was laid secretly by 178th Tunnelling Company under the strong point at the east corner of the wood, was exploded thirty seconds before the infantry advance. The area was taken and consolidated but was given up later that night following German counter-attacks. Junior international footballer **Corporal Peter Wardlaw**, Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) 1st Bn, was killed during this action. He was awarded the DCM on this date, "for conspicuous gallantry in action. Although wounded he led his platoon with great courage and initiative. Later, although again being wounded, he remained at his post".

There were two further Bo'ness casualties in this area before the next phase of the Battle of the Somme. **Private Thomas Black**, Royal Scots, 12th Bn, was under the orders of 27th Brigade in the 9th (Scottish) Division. Thomas was killed in action around Delville Wood and Longueval on 6th September. **Private Edward McWilliams**, Highland Light Infantry, 1/9th (Glasgow Highland) Bn, was fighting with 33rd Division, 100th Brigade. Edward died of wounds sustained at the Battle of Delville Wood on 8th September.

The attacks in July and August succeeded in drawing German forces away from Verdun, forcing them to go on the defensive. Joffre, however, wanted more and insisted that Haig undertook another major offensive on the Somme front to try and achieve a breakthrough.

The second "big push" duly arrived on 15th September at the Battle of Flers-Courcelette when High Wood and Delville Wood were finally cleared. The Battle was notable for the entry of the Canadian Corps and the use of tanks for the first time in battle, albeit on a small scale. A number of Bo'ness men were killed on the opening day of the battle including **Lance Sergeant John Henry Cook**, Scots Guards 2nd Bn, who was killed in action near Ginchy, **Lance Corporal John Erskine**, Gordon Highlanders 8/10th Bn and **Private Alexander Grant**, Royal Scots 13th Bn, who were both killed near the village of Martinpuich, **Private William Fearns**, Durham Light Infantry 1/5th Bn who was fighting with 50th (Northumbrian) Division, 150th Brigade, and finally **Private John Manson**, Royal Scots 2/10th Bn, who was attached to the Royal Scots Fusiliers 6/7th Bn in the 45th Brigade who died of wounds. **Private James Mann**, and **Private**

A tank surrounded by infantrymen at Flers

**Thomas Robb**, were both Royal Scots attached to York and Lancaster Regiment, 9th (Service) Bn. Both were killed on 16th September at the same battle, fighting with 23rd Division, 70th Brigade.

Two subsequent offensives, the Battle of Morval and the Battle of Thiepval Ridge, saw limited attacks achieving good gains for the British forces, and suggested that the BEF were demonstrating tactical awareness on the Somme building on the lessons of hard fought battles. Haig, however, misread the success as somehow the Germans starting to buckle under the pressure and at the next attack, the Battle of Le Transloy, he again opted for a breakthrough strategy. The combination of bad weather and the Somme mud meant that was impossible but the BEF made limited gains pushing forward to capture higher ground that would provide a platform for 1917's operations. On 7th October, the first day of the Battle, **Private John McKerracher,** London Regiment (London Scottish), 14th Bn was killed in action during the attack and capture of the southern end of Hazy Trench. He was the brother of David McKerracher who had been killed earlier in the Somme Campaign on 10th August. **Private Aaron Barnett**, Black Watch, 9th Bn, was killed in action taking part in attacks on the Butte de Warlencourt. **Private Duncan Middleton**, Royal Scots Fusiliers, 6/7th Bn, died of wounds sustained during this battle. He was fighting with 45th Brigade in 15th (Scottish) Division. **Corporal William Marshall**, Cameron Highlanders, 5th Bn, was fighting for 9th (Scottish) Division, 26th Brigade, when he was killed in action on 12th October. **Second Lieutenant James Stanley Allan**, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 3rd Bn, attached to the 10th Bn, was wounded during this battle, and died of his wounds on 22nd October. Well-known Bo'ness footballer **Private Daniel Burns**, Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders, 2nd Bn, died of wounds on 26th October. He was fighting with 33rd Division alongside **Private Thomas Ballantyne**, Cameronians (Scottish Rifles), 5/6th Bn, who was killed in action on 28th October during an unsuccessful attack on Hazy Trench and Boritska Trench, east of the village of Lesboeufs. **Private Robert Wilson**, Highland Light Infantry 1/9th Bn, was killed in action on 1st November. He was fighting with 100th Brigade in 33rd Division. They

continued the attack on Hazy and Boritska Trenches, 1/9th HLI and 2nd Worcestershire Regiment suffering heavy casualties as they attempted to advance through knee deep mud. His comrade **Private Neil McCallum**, Highland Light Infantry 1/9th Bn, (Machine Gun Section) was wounded in the same action, and died of wounds later on 11th November. He was also fighting with 100th Brigade in 33rd Division.

It was during this phase of the Battle that Bo'ness born Captain Archibald Dunlop, Cambridgeshire Regiment, 1/1st Bn, won the Military Cross. During the attack on the Schwaben Redoubt he took part in numerous successful and aggressive bombing attacks. He was awarded his MC for "conspicuous gallantry in action. He organised and led a bombing party, driving the enemy down the trench and capturing 30 prisoners. Later, he assumed command of and handled his company with great courage and skill". Sadly Archie, or Jock as he was affectionately known to his men, would die of wounds in 1918.

The final phase of the Somme saw the emphasis of the action moving to the northern battlefield around the River Ancre. The Fifth Army (the renamed Reserve Army) under Gough were up against the German First Army forces, and were seeking the capture of Beaumont Hamel, Beaucourt and Serre, as well as a morale-boosting victory to satisfy critics at home and amongst the Allied commanders. Despite appalling weather, the continuation of British attacks after the Battle of Thiepval Ridge, known as the Battle of the Ancre Heights, saw the successful capture of higher ground that would provide crucial observation north of the Ancre Valley. Unfortunately **Gunner James MacKay** (actually John McKay), Machine Gun Corps, 58th Coy, was wounded during this attack and died on 31st October. Then a seven day preliminary bombardment, double that prior to the 1st July, was followed by an attack commencing on 13th November and lasting six days known as the Battle of the Ancre.

German helmets, bombs and ammunition

**Private Robert W. Dott**, Highland Light Infantry, 2nd Bn, (formerly 17th HLI), Bridgeness coal miner **Private Alexander Sneddon**, Royal Scots, 2nd Bn and **Able Seaman James Marshall**, Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, Hawke Bn, 63rd (Royal Naval Division), were killed in action on the opening day of this offensive. James was the cousin of William Marshall, who had been killed earlier at the Somme.

**Private John D. Taylor**, Gordon Highlanders, 1/7th Bn, was killed on 14th November fighting with 153rd Brigade in 51st (Highland) Division. He was killed in action when the 51st captured Beaumont Hamel. It was later described in the divisional history as "the foundation stone on which the reputation of the Highland division was built. General Harper's leapfrog system of attack had been proved; his attack with two Brigades instead of three had been fully justified, and an experience had been gained from which the future training of the Division was evolved."

**Sergeant James Dunlop**, Highland Light Infantry, 17th Bn, was killed in action on 18th November. He was fighting with 32nd Division, 97th Brigade at Beaumont Hamel. The HLI 17th battalion history paints a grim view of the action, saying, "Beaumont Hamel will not be remembered by us as bearing any resemblance to the official description. We look back upon it now, from the personal point of view, as a touchstone of the individual soul, as a prominent landmark in the vast monotony of death and horror-a chapter of inspiring deeds. It represents to us the heroism of a forlorn hope, the glory of unselfish sacrifice, the success of failure". James Dunlop was the elder brother of Captain Archibald Dunlop MC mentioned earlier.

**Private James Clark**, Royal Scots, 2nd Bn, died of wounds received at the Battle on 21st November. He was fighting with 3rd Division, 8th Brigade. James was evacuated to the No.8 Stationary Hospital, Wimereux where he died at 12:35am on 21st November of gun shot wounds to the right leg. **Private George Forbes**, Royal Scots, 5th Bn, was killed in a action on the same date fighting with 32nd Division, 14th Brigade. The Bo'ness Journal of Friday 8th December 1916, in an obituary for George, informs us that he was "well-known locally as a swimmer, and after enlisting, was instrumental in saving the lives of two persons in Leith baths

while stationed there". A letter published in the same edition of the newspaper reveals that George was "killed facing the shot and shell like the man he was" whilst "going from one trench into another under heavy shell fire". Apparently, his comrades "could not stop to bury him" as they advanced, so his body was left where it fell. Towards the end of the year **Private Fred P. Drummond**, Royal Scots, who was attached to the Royal Warwickshire Regiment 2/8th Bn when he was wounded. He died of his wounds at a CCS in Contay on 14th December. His comrade **Private Lawrence White** in the same Regiment also died of wounds on 20th December. They were both with 61st (2nd South Midland) Division, 182nd Brigade. **Private Thomas S. Stevenson**, King's Own Scottish Borderers 6th Bn, died of wounds on 19th December he had received earlier at the Battle of Transloy. The final casualty of the Somme 1916 was **Private Thomas Meldrum**, York and Lancaster Regiment, 9th (Service) Bn, formerly Royal Scots, who was killed in action by an artillery shell on 20th December.

Operations on the River Ancre continued with some gains, but in deteriorating weather conditions major operations on the Somme ended on 18th November. Over the course of the battle, British forces took a strip of territory 10km deep by 32km long. One of the deadliest Battles in human history was at a conclusion. The casualty figures for the Somme make horrific reading - 420000 British, 200000 French and more than 465000 German dead and wounded. Although not a victory in the conventional sense, any attritional gains were made by the Allies and the New Armies of the BEF had had a baptism of fire and blood that would improve their battlefield efficiency in the remaining war years. More importantly, the Germans realised that the BEF were a force to be contended with after initially dismissing their involvement, and they entered 1917 knowing that victory on the Western Front was now more distant than ever.

Informal photograph of personnel of a Royal Field Artillery 4.5inch howitzer battery at Thiepval in September 1916

**Alexander H Sneddon**

Private Alexander Hamilton Snedden (not Sneddon), service no: 12357, Royal Scots, 12th Bn, was 18 years old when he died on 15th February 1916. Born in Carriden parish, Alexander was the son of John Snedden and Catherine Robertson. The Royal Scots, 12th Bn, was part of the 27th (Lowland) Brigade of the 9th (Scottish) Division. Alexander was wounded in the front line trenches which lay east of Ploegsteert Wood in Flanders. He was transferred 12km to No.2 CCS at Bailleul where he died of wounds.

Alexander would have fought alongside the 6th Bn, Royal Scots Fusiliers, who were also part of 27th (Lowland) Brigade. They were commanded by a young Winston Churchill.

The Bo'ness Journal 10th March 1916, reported the following:

> Kinneil Soldier's Death, Nurse Sends Lock of Hair: Intimation of the death of Private Alex. Snedden (18½), 12th Royal Scots, has been received by his mother at 72 Furnace Rows, Kinneil, in a letter from a nurse in a French clearing station. Writing on 15th February to Mrs. Snedden, the Sister says: "I am greatly grieved to tell you that your son, 12357 Pte. Alex. Snedden, 12th Royal Scots, was admitted to this hospital, No.2 Casualty Clearing Station, at 7 o'clock this morning. He was very badly wounded on both legs and died an hour later. He had been given morphia at the Field Ambulance to ease his pain, and this, combined with the loss of blood resulted in his only being semi-conscious, so that I was, unhappily, not able to get any message from him to send you. He will be buried by the Presbyterian chaplain in the cemetery here, where so many hundreds of our brave soldiers already lie in peace. I enclose a lock of his hair, which you will like to have. Believe me to be in all sympathy.
>
> (Signed) M.E. Vernon Harcourt.
>
> Private Snedden was a son of Mr John Snedden, marine fireman, and enlisted at the outbreak of war when he had barely attained his seventeenth birthday. He had been in the trenches for this past nine months. An elder brother, Henry, of the Cameron Highlanders, is still in the firing line. Prior to enlistment Pte. Snedden was engaged in the Kinneil woodyard of Messrs James Kennedy & Coy.

Private Alexander Snedden is buried in the Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord, grave II. C. 140, France.

**Andrew Adie**

Sergeant Andrew Adie, service no. 12061, Royal Scots, 11th Bn, died on 2nd March 1916, in 13th General Hospital, Boulogne, France from gunshot wounds in the neck and back. He was 19 years old.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, Friday 10th March 1916:

Bo'ness Sergeant Wounded: Sergt. Andrew Adie, 5th Royal Scots, seriously wounded about the spine and neck in France, is the elder son of the late Mr John Adie, grocer and wine merchant, Grangepans. The lad was born in Bo'ness 20 years ago. He transferred from the Sea Scouts to the Army eighteen months ago and was marked out for rapid promotion. He took part in the Battle of Loos. Recently Mrs Adie removed to Montrose Street, Glasgow.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, Friday 17th March 1916:

Death of Well-Known Bo'ness Lad: News reached Bo'ness last Friday of the death of Private Andrew Adie, 11th Royal Scots. Private Adie was seriously wounded in the spine and neck on the 29th February in France and was removed to the base hospital at Rouen where he died on the 2nd March. He was very well known in Bo'ness, of which town he was a native. After finishing his education at Bo'ness Academy, he entered the office [as a Shipping Clerk] of Messrs John Denholm and Co., pitwood importers. All his spare time was taken up in sport, of which he was an all-round exponent. He was a member of one of the local football teams and was attached to the Bo'ness Sea Scouts. Private Adie was among the first of the local voluntaries and he was a fine type of our young Scottish heroes, many of whom have made the great sacrifice. A well set-up lad of 20, he was highly respected and for his widowed mother and other members of the family, who reside in Glasgow, sincere sympathy is felt.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, Friday 23rd June 1916:

Bo'ness Sea Scouts' Roll of Honour: ….. The assistant scoutmaster, Andrew Adie, of the 11th Royal Scots, was killed in action in France.

Sergeant Adie is buried in Boulogne Eastern Cemetery, grave VIII. D. 66. He is also remembered on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery. His scoutmaster in the Sea Scouts, William McCurrach, would later die of wounds in May 1917.

Andrew as a Sea Scout before the War

**John Wotherspoon**

Private John Wotherspoon, service no: S/17995, Cameron Highlanders, 7th Bn, was 19 when he was killed in action on 12th March 1916. John was born in Bellshill, Lanarkshire.

Bo'ness Journal, 31st March 1916:

> The death in France has been announced of Private John Wotherspoon, 7th Cameron Highlanders, who prior to his enlistment in April 1915, was resident at Castleloan. News of his death was received from Pte Fleming, Castleloan, who stated that his chum had been struck by a rifle grenade on 12th March and died instantly. He went to the Front in October last. Pte. Wotherspoon, who was only nineteen years of age, was formerly a miner at Kinneil Colliery. He was an orphan and resided with his aunt, Mrs Jones, late of Castleloan and now of Kirkcaldy. A brother of his, Mr William Wotherspoon, is resident at Castleloan, while another brother is a private in the A. & S. Highlanders.

In the photo, John is standing beside his chum, Sam Fleming.

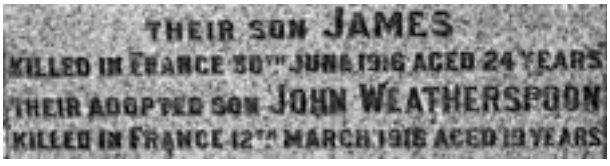
Excerpt from Fife Free Press & Kirkcaldy Guardian, 8th July 1916 (see entry for Pte. James Jones for full report):

> This is the second sad and heavy blow that Mr and Mrs Jones and family have received as a result of the war, an adopted son, Private John Wotherspoon, also of the Cameron Highlanders, having made the supreme sacrifice for his country on 12th March 1916. Both of these fallen heroes were formerly miners in Bo'ness. Much sympathy is felt for the parents in their second bereavement.

From the War Diaries of the 7th Bn. Cameron Highlanders:

> Hulluch Section March 12th - Change in weather: a nice sunny day … C Company's line blown in 11 places in the afternoon and trench considerably damaged… In A Coy 1 man killed and 1 wounded. In C Coy 1 man killed. [One of these men was John Wotherspoon.]

Private John Wotherspoon is remembered on the Loos Memorial, panel 119 to 124, the same section as his brother, James Jones. He is remembered on the family headstone in Kilsyth Cemetery, where his name is inscribed as 'John Weatherspoon', and also on the Kirkcaldy War Memorial.



**John Stanley**

Private John Stanley, service no: S/4205, Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), 9th Bn, was 26 years old when he died of wounds in France, on 16th March 1916. He was the son of Alexander Stanley, a coal miner, and the husband of Agnes McMeechan, 4 Coronation Cottages, Bridgeness, Bo'ness. John was also a coal miner and worked in Grange Colliery's No. 6 pit.

War Diaries show that John was killed during the 15th (Scottish) Division's participation in the trench warfare around Loos in March 1916. Specifically, he was in the 44th Infantry Brigade, "C" Coy.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 31st March 1916:

A Gallant "Granger" Dies of Wounds: Comforting Letter to Widow: Mrs Stanley, Coronation Cottages, Bo'ness, has received a letter from a staff-sergeant of the R.A.M.C. announcing the death of her husband, Private John Stanley, 9th Black Watch. The letter was addressed from a base hospital in France and bore the date 17th March. The following are the terms of the communication:

"Dear Madam, You must excuse me, an utter stranger, for writing you direct, but I feel that it is as well that you should know just what has occurred, seeing it is of so great importance to you. Much rather would I be writing you in a more cheerful strain but it is impossible under the present circumstances for my news is very sad. In this great war many thousands of brave soldiers have been wounded, more or less seriously, and your husband is now numbered amongst other casualties, having sustained severe wounds about the head and face. He passed away in our hospital very quietly and without any pain, having given his life like a hero for his country and in defence of the weak and helpless. His was a true soldier's death - a death to be proud of - for has he not given his all for others? Today he has been buried alongside many of his old comrades in a quiet little French churchyard in a town rarely disturbed by the shells of the enemy. Tomorrow a nice little wooden cross will be placed on his grave, which will mark it quite plainly until a more permanent cross or monument is erected to the memory of our fallen heroes. It is a hard blow for you, dear madam, but I trust you will be sustained and comforted in the knowledge that he died in the greatest cause the world has ever known - the defence of right against might. If there is any information you are desirous of obtaining I will do my utmost to assist you. Before I close allow me to assure you of my heartfelt sympathy in this, your time of darkness and trial. Be brave, struggle on, for the sake of your children. You can be prouder than ever of your husband, who lived for you, and, in a very real sense, died for you and all women. Again assuring you of my sympathy, I am, respectfully yours,

A. Baker, staff-sergeant, R.A.M.C."

Private Stanley was 26 years of age, and before enlisting was a miner at No. 6. Colliery, Grangepans. About two months ago Stanley spent a few days' leave at his home. In the Battle of Loos he fought side by side with numerous gallant comrades from Bo'ness, very few of whom survived that terrible engagement. That he escaped was a matter of congratulation, and when on the eve of his return to the trenches his friends wished him continued good luck, he went away with the feeling that he would get safely through the war, and soon be back again to his native place. It was not to be, however, and the death of another of our young gallant men is deplored by the community at large. Deceased leaves a widow and two children.

Private John Stanley is buried in Noeux-les-Mines Communal Cemetery, grave I. H. 22, France.

**John McCallum**

Private John McCallum, service no: 16476, Royal Scots, 13th Bn, attached to the 253rd Company, Royal Engineers, was killed in action, in France, on 25th April 1916. He was 39 years old. John was the son of Charles McCallum and Mary McCartney, and one of nine children. Prior to marrying Julia Williamson, John lived in McIntosh's Building in Corbiehall. Julia lived in Grangepans and they married on 27th December 1898, in Carriden Manse. They lived in Grangepans before moving to Foredale Terrace, Carriden, where they lived with their four children, Elizabeth, Charles, James and Agnes. John was a coal miner and enlisted in Bo'ness on 7th December 1914.

In the Casualty List issued by the War Office on 26th September 1915, John was listed as "Wounded". All officers and soldiers who were wounded in any campaign from 4th August 1914 onwards and named in official Casualty Lists were entitled to wear a "Wound Stripe" on their service dress jacket. However, John never received his stripe as it was first authorised under Army Order 204 of 6th July 1916 ten weeks after he was killed. Private John McCallum is buried in Vermelles British Cemetery, grave II. G. 31, in France.

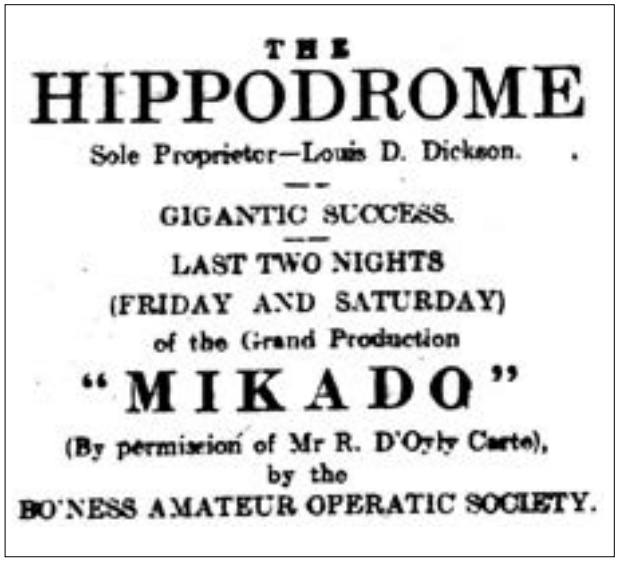
Vermelles Cemetery

**Daniel Rodgers**

Private Daniel Hood Rodger (name incorrect on memorial), service no: 3788, Royal Scots, 2nd Bn, was killed in action on 27th March 1916. He was 37 years old. Born in Ladyburn, Renfrewshire, he was the son of William Rodger and Agnes Hood. His brothers were Thomas, William, George and Frank and his sisters were Janet, Agnes, Mary and Grace.

Several members of the Rodger family worked in the Bo'ness pottery industry and Daniel was a Pottery Turner either at West Lothian Pottery in Grangepans or C.W. McNay's Bridgeness Pottery. In the photo, Daniel's father, William, is in the back row, his sister, Mary, is extreme left in back row and his brother, George, is in the front row.

He enlisted as a Special Reservist with the Royal Scots, 3rd Bn, on 3rd September 1914. His second posting to France was in July 1915, where he joined the 1st Bn in September and was posted to the 2nd Bn in November 1915. Daniel was killed when his battalion was shelled whilst moving up to take over trenches recently captured by 4th Royal Fusiliers, in the St. Eloi Sector, Belgium.

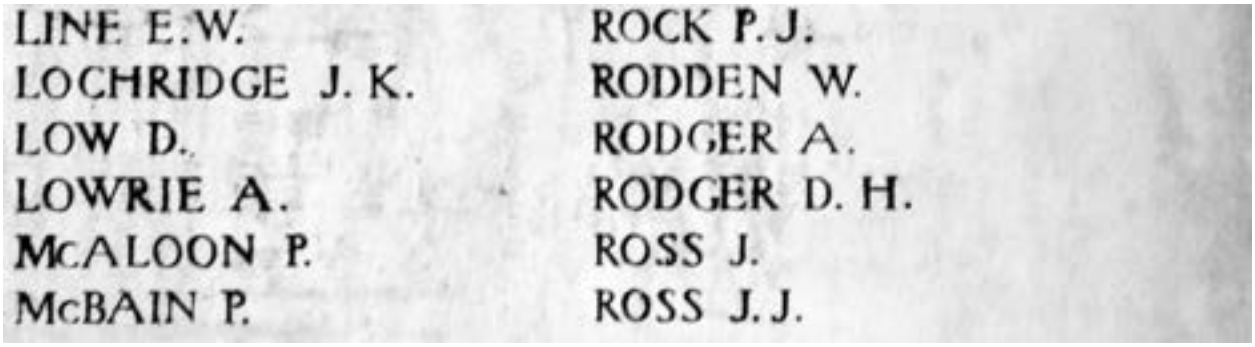

THE
HIPPODROME
Sole Proprietor—Louis D. Dickson.
GIGANTIC SUCCESS.
LAST TWO NIGHTS
(FRIDAY AND SATURDAY)
of the Grand Production
"MIKADO"
(By permission of Mr R. D'Oyly Carte),
by the
BO'NESS AMATEUR OPERATIC SOCIETY.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 1st September 1916:

> Pte. Daniel Rodgers: Mr Wm. Rodgers, Cumlouden Place, has received official information that his brother Pte. Daniel Rodgers, Royal Scots, has been killed in action. Pte. Rodgers was a pottery turner in Bo'ness. He was an enthusiastic member of the Bo'ness Amateur Operatic Society, and took a prominent interest in the society's productions, having been a member since inception. For many years he was also a member of committee.

Daniel appeared in the Operatic Society's production of Mikado in March 1914 although it is not known if he is in this photo of cast members.

Private Daniel Hood Rodger is commemorated on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, panel 11.


LINE E.W.
LOCHRIDGE J. K.
LOW D.
LOWRIE A.
McALOON P.
McBAIN P.
ROCK P. J.
RODDEN W.
RODGER A.
RODGER D. H.
ROSS J.
ROSS J. J.

**James Gibson**

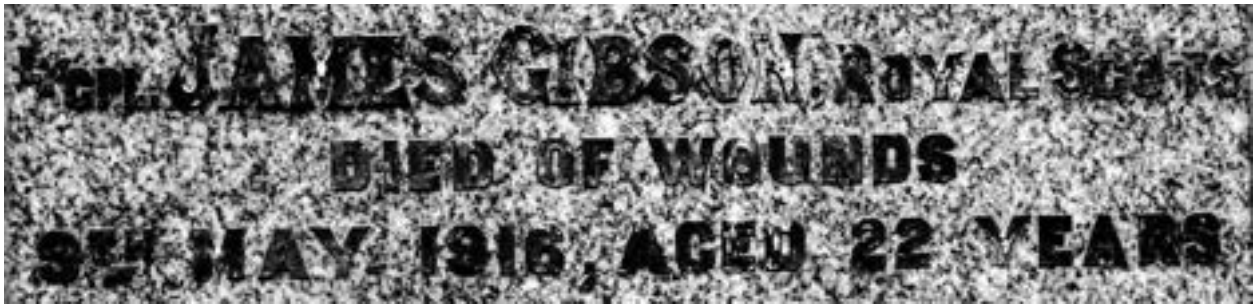
Lance-Corporal James Gibson, service no: 11591, Royal Scots, "C" Coy, 2nd Bn, was 22 years old when he died of wounds on 9th May 1916. James, born in Belgaum, India, was the son of James and Christina Gibson, of Panacre Place, Bo'ness. His brother and sisters were Robert, Annie and Christina. Before enlisting he worked as a blacksmith in Cochrane Brothers' Horseshoe Factory.

2nd Battalion, Royal Scots, was part of 3rd Division, 8th Brigade, and took part in the actions around Ypres in the Spring of 1916. James Gibson died of wounds near the Brigade Headquarters at La Clytte near Ypres.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, Friday 19th May 1916:

> Intimation of the death of Lance-Corporal James Gibson, 2nd Royal Scots, is conveyed in a letter from a comrade to friends in Bo'ness. The Lance-Corporal was the eldest son of Sergeant Gibson, janitor at Bo'ness Academy, and he was born on the strength of the regiment in India while his father was serving there with the Royal Scots 22 years ago.

Lance-Corporal James Gibson is buried in La Clytte Military Cemetery, grave I. A. 25, Belgium. He is also remembered on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery.



**Robert Fairclough**

Robert Fairclough, service no: 124768, was a Pioneer with the Royal Engineers, 11th Labour Bn. Robert was the son of James and Isabel Fairclough, of Distington, Cumberland, although at the time of his death, in No. 2 Canadian General Hospital, his next of kin was brother Andrew Fairclough, 11 Bridgeness Lane, Bo'ness.

The Scotsman, 5th May 1916:

Pioneer Robert Fairclough, R.E., was a native of Bo'ness. Before enlisting he was employed at the Rosyth Naval Base. He was one of three brothers with the colours. He was 39 years of age and unmarried.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 5th May 1916:

Bo'ness Man dies in France: The death has occurred from natural causes in a hospital at Boulogne of Pioneer Robert Fairclough, of the 11th Labour Batt. Royal Engineers. He had been prostrated with a severe attack of pneumonia and passed away on 24th April. Word was immediately sent to his brother, who resides at Bridgeness Lane, Bridgeness.
Pioneer Fairclough was a native of Bo'ness. He enlisted soon after the outbreak of the war in the Army Service Corps but latterly transferred to the Royal Engineers. Before enlisting he was employed at Rosyth Naval Base. He was aged 39 and unmarried.

Pioneer Robert Fairclough is buried in Boulogne Eastern Cemetery, grave VIII. A. 101.

Engineers repairing a destroyed bridge

**William Welsh**

William John Welsh, service no: 28811, was a Private with the Canadian Infantry (Manitoba Regiment), 16th Bn. Born in Bo'ness on 6th July 1890, he was the son of the late Provost Welsh, of Knowepark, Bo'ness.

The 16th Battalion (Canadian Scottish) was a unit of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. It was organised at Valcartier on 2nd September 1914, (William enlisted 23rd September 1914) in response to the Great War and was composed of recruits from the 91st Canadian Highlanders (Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders), the 79th Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, the 72nd Seaforth Highlanders of Canada, and the 50th Regiment (Gordon Highlanders). The 16th Battalion served in the 3rd Brigade of the 1st Canadian Division.

William was wounded near Château Rosendal (renamed by the British as Bedford House) south of Ypres in a precursor action to the Battle of the Somme. He was taken to No. 10 Casualty Clearing Station where he later died of wounds on 2nd May 1916. He was 25 years old.

Bo'ness Journal, 12th May 1916:

Son of the Late Provost Welsh Killed: Mrs Burness, St Vincent Crescent, Glasgow, has received official intimation of the death on May 2nd from wounds received the previous day of her brother, Private William John Welsh, Canadian Scottish. Deceased, who was the only son of the late Provost Welsh, was in business in Canada when the war broke out and came to this country with the first Canadian contingent. He went to France with the contingent and has been with his contingent throughout the campaign. Before going to Canada, Mr Welsh was in the office of Messrs. Harrower, Welsh & Co., of which his father had been a partner. In Canada he was married, and his wife died some time before the war.

Private William Welsh is buried in Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, grave VI. B. 37, Belgium. He is also remembered on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery.

**James Martin**

Private James Martin, service no: 14522, Royal Scots, 13th Bn, died of wounds on 22nd May 1916. He was 22 years old. Born in Bo'ness, James was the son of Thomas and Annie Martin.

James' military records state that he died of wounds received at the Battle of Loos on 22nd May 1916. His death was 7 months after the battle ended. He is buried in Abbeville Communal Cemetery. For much of the Great War, Abbeville was headquarters of the Commonwealth lines of communication and No.3 and No.5 British Red Cross and No.2 Stationary Hospitals, among others, were stationed there at various times from October 1914 to January 1920. The communal cemetery was used for burials from November 1914 to September 1916.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 2nd June 1916:

Pte. Wm. Martin: Official information has been received by Mr and Mrs Thomas Martin, 43 Ann Terrace, Grangepans that their son William, a private in the Royal Scots, had died of wounds on 22nd May. He was one of six sons serving with the colours and this was the first break in the family. He enlisted in September 1914 and prior to the war was a miner in No. 2 Pit, Grangepans.

[Despite the references to William, this report relates to James Martin and not William, his older brother]. Private James Martin is buried in Abbeville Communal Cemetery, grave III. H. 6, France.

Two wounded soldiers lying on stretchers at a Dressing Station

**John Maxwell**

Private John Maxwell, service no: 13336, Highland Light Infantry, "C" Coy, 15th Bn, was 26 years old when he was killed in action, in the Thiepval area of the Albert sector on 12th May 1916.

The 15th Battalion was one of three Glasgow Pals Battalions. The three Battalions had nicknames for one another reflecting which industries they were drawn from and the 15th were known as the Boozy First. Their original name was the Glasgow Tramways Battalion as most of their original recruits worked for the city's tram service.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 9th June 1916:

> Former Kinneil Miner Killed: Mrs Maxwell, 12 William Street, Shettleston, has received official intimation that her husband, Private John Maxwell, H.L.I. (Tramway Battalion), was killed on May 12. He joined the army in August 1914 and went to the front on November 24, 1915. Before he enlisted he was a tramway conductor in Glasgow. Private Maxwell was a native of Bo'ness and was the only son of Mr John Maxwell, Furnace Row. Up till within a few years ago the young man wrought in the pits at Kinneil.

War diaries show that John was one of eight casualties on 12th May 1916. He was killed when a large 'Minenwerfer' mortar shell burst near a field kitchen at Johnstone Post near Thiepval.

Private John Maxwell is buried in Authuile Military Cemetery, grave A. 9.

Typical Word War 1 Field Kitchen by the roadside

**David Grant**

Private David Grant, service no: S/7971, Gordon Highlanders, 8th Bn, was 24 years old when he died of wounds on 16th May 1916. David was the son of David and Mary Grant, of Wallacelea, Church Wynd, Bo'ness and the brother of Private William Clark Grant who is also named on the Bo'ness War Memorial.

Linlithgowshire Gazette 24th June 1916

Bo'ness Lad Dies of Wounds: On Saturday Mr and Mrs David Grant of Church Wynd, received the sad intelligence that their fourth son David, a private in the Gordon Highlanders, had died of wounds, and the news, which soon spread in the burgh, caused a painful sensation. The grief was all the more poignant since this made the second bereavement of the kind suffered by the family, the third son, William, of the Scots Guards, having died in an English camp hospital on 22nd February, 1915.

Both lads, who were very popular in the town, enlisted about the same time, that is towards the end of 1914, and in the succeeding May, three months after his brother's death, David was sent to the trenches. After seven months arduous campaigning, he was given a few weeks rest, and returned to the front in January of this year. He passed through the battle of Loos and other big campaigns without a scratch.

The first intimation that something untoward had happened was received by the parents last Saturday morning, in the shape of a kindly letter from Lance-Corporal Martin, a Bo'ness comrade in the same regiment. The writer said: "We were up to the front line on fatigue last night, and just as we were finishing up, I'm sorry to say, Davie was wounded. He was hit on the arm, a rather nasty one, but he bore it wonderfully well, and was able to walk down to the advanced dressing station

The same evening very much more serious news arrived. This was a sympathetic note from Sergeant Godfrey P. Geddes, of the Gordon Highlanders, who said:

'I regret, very much to inform you that your son, Private Grant, died of wounds early this morning, 16th May. While with a working party in the trenches two nights ago, he was badly hit about the legs and chest by a trench mortar. There was no hope for him at all, but I'm glad to say he passed away quietly without suffering and pain'.

On Monday morning confirmation of the sad news was received by post.

Lieut. Drummond wrote as follows under date 17th May:

I hardly know how to begin this letter, for no matter how much I sympathise with you in your loss, a stranger's sympathy is difficult to express. Your boy was wounded on the night of the 15th and passed away quietly at 10.45 p.m. on the 16th. Lance-Corporal Martin told me of your lad being wounded and I thought from his description that it wasn't dangerous. However, this morning I was told he had died. About fifty men volunteered to attend his funeral and marched five miles to the casualty clearing station to accompany your boy to his resting place. As I had become acquainted with him through my wife (a Muirhouses lady) and had kept an eye on him, I managed to attend the funeral also. We buried him in [redacted] Churchyard and after the funeral service the piper played "Scots Wha Hae" over his grave. A small wooden cross has been erected where he lies and I took note of the inscription:

No. 7971 Pte. D. Grant,
8-10th Gordon Highlanders,
Died of Wounds,
16th May 1916

I went to the casualty clearing station where he died and saw the doctor and nurse who attended him, to find out if he had said anything you might have wished to know. But they had nothing to tell me except that your lad had been brought in and

had been very quiet and died very peacefully. His death will be a sad blow to you and I sympathise deeply with you in the great loss you have to bear. He was a very likeable lad and a favourite with all. If I am spared to come on leave again, I will come and see you. Lance-Corporal Martin and Private Baikie, also from Bo'ness, bore the coffin from the ambulance to the grave. With deepest sympathy.

Yours very sincerely,

(sgd.) Lieut. Drummond.

By the same post the parents received the following sympathetic letter from Bo'ness comrades:

**IN LOVING MEMORY**

OF

**PRIVATE DAVID GRANT**

(8TH BATT. GORDON HIGHLANDERS)

Beloved Son of DAVID and MARY GRANT,
Wallacelea, Church Wynd, Bo'ness,

WHO WAS

**Wounded in Action on 15th May, 1916,**
**Died on 16th May, 1916,**

**IN HIS 24th YEAR.**

INTERRED IN BETHUNE CEMETERY, FRANCE.

He little thought when leaving home,
That he would ne'er return;
That he so soon in death would sleep,
And leave us here to mourn.

His well-known form no more we'll see,
Nor well-known voice we'll hear;
We miss him greatly from the home,
A sad, sad blank is here.

PTE DAVID GRANT
8-10TH GORDON HIGHLANDERS
WHO DIED OF WOUNDS
16TH MAY 1916, AGED 24 YEARS.
INTERRED IN BETHUNE CEMETERY.

"We very much regret to say that we got word this morning that Davie had died of his wounds. The funeral took place at two o'clock this afternoon. About a hundred of his comrades of his company were there and we gave him a good burial. The hospital where he died is about ten miles or so behind the firing line and he is buried in the town cemetery. The news was an unexpected and sad blow to us all. He died a good soldier, giving his life for King and country and we unite in sending our deep and heartfelt sympathy to you and all the family in your sad bereavement. He was well liked by all and we will miss him greatly. From J. Martin, C. Cameron and D. Baikie, his best pals."

Deceased was a native of Bo'ness. He served his apprenticeship as a mason with Messrs John Hardie and Sons, builders, and prior to enlisting was employed with the firm on work at Bangour Hospital. He was 23 years of age.

Private David Grant is buried in Bethune Town Cemetery, grave V.C.67, France, and is also remembered on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery.

**Richard Day**

Private Richard Duncan Day, service no: 2703, Royal Scots, 1/10th Bn, attached to Royal Warwickshire Regiment, 2nd/5th Bn, was 25 years old when he died of wounds on 26th June 1916. Richard, the son of George Day and Helen Howden, was born in Corbiehall, on 31st August 1890. George was a seaman and he had married Helen in Grimsby on 19th February 1888. The couple also had two daughters, Jemima and Ellen. In 1910 Richard had met with an unfortunate accident at work.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 18th November 1910:

Richard Day, woodyard worker, residing in Kinneil Street, met with an accident on Monday in the woodyard of Messrs James Kennedy and Co., Kinneil. He was on top of a stack throwing down props when he slipped and fell to the ground, a distance of 18 feet. He sustained a compound fracture to one of his legs. After being treated by Dr Graham, he was conveyed to his home.

In 1916, the 61st Division carried out frequent raids in the area around Neuve Chapelle. In a low lying area between Armentieres and Lens, in front of the small town of Laventie, the front lines were situated on ground with such a high water table that digging trenches was not a practical proposition. Both sides made use of breastworks, barriers of soil and sandbags, built six to seven feet above ground level. On the German side the low Aubers Ridge, running between the villages of Aubers and Fromelles, gave the Germans a considerable tactical advantage both for observation and artillery placement. It was in this area that Richard Day was injured by a shell. He was taken to a Casualty Clearing Station at the railhead of Merville, where he died from his wounds.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 7th July 1916:

On Monday morning Mr and Mrs George Day, James Place, Kinneil Street, Bo'ness, were informed of the death of their only son Richard, a private in the Warwickshires. He had been dangerously wounded on the 27th June and his death occurred two days later.

The chaplain at a clearing station, the Rev. D.A. Morrison, in a letter to Mrs Day, stated that the young man died early on the morning of the 29th as a result of wounds he had received two days previously. The writer continued: "We were hoping that he would pull through, for he was very bright and patient in spite of his injury. The shrapnel had evidently penetrated the abdomen and set up acute inflammation. The doctor who attended him worked heroically to save his life but his constitution could not stand the shock".

Private Day, who was a native of Bo'ness, was aged 25 and unmarried. In March 1915 he joined the 10th Royal Scots and in May of this year was drafted into the Warwickshires. Before enlisting he was employed at Leith Dock.

Despite the chaplain in his letter stating that Richard had died on 29th June from wounds suffered on 27th June, military records and Richard's headstone record the 26th June as the date of his death. He is buried in Merville Communal Cemetery, grave VI.Q.70, in France.

**James S. Hamilton**

James Smith Hamilton served in the Royal Engineers, 181st Tunnelling Company, as Lance Corporal James Smith, service no: 91861. He had been wounded earlier in the War.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 23rd October 1914:

Bo'ness Reservists Wounded in Action: On Tuesday morning information was received that Private James Porteous, of the Gordon Highlanders, and Private James Hamilton, of the Royal Scots, had been wounded in action. Both men lie in a Leeds hospital, Porteous apparently suffering from wounds to the legs, while Hamilton seems to have been wounded in the right wrist.

Private Hamilton, whose wife and family reside at Helen Place, Hamilton Street, Grangepans, is the second youngest son of Mr Thomas Hamilton, Taylor's Buildings, Grangepans. He expects to be home soon. Both men were in the Boer War and passed through it unscathed.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 7th July 1916:

Mrs Hamilton, Hamilton Street, Grangepans, received information on Tuesday morning that her husband, Lance-Corporal James Smith Hamilton, of the Royal Engineers, had been killed on the 29th June. He was a reservist in the 1st Royal Scots but over a year ago transferred to the Royal Engineers. His time expired in February of this year, he having served 17 years, but he rejoined in April. Hamilton was through all the big engagements. In October 1914, he was wounded in the hand, and spent several weeks at home recuperating. Lance-Corporal Hamilton, who was a native of Bo'ness, was aged 40. He leaves a widow and six young children. A miner to trade, he was employed for some years in No. 2 Pit, Bridgeness, belonging to Bridgeness Coal Company.

Lance-Corporal Hamilton is buried in Maroeuil British Cemetery, grave II.H.5, in France.

**James Jones**

James Jones, service no: S/16729, was a Private with the Cameron Highlanders, 6th Bn.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 7th July 1916:

Cameron Highlander Reported Killed: News reached Bo'ness yesterday morning of the death of Private James Jones of the Cameron Highlanders. The information was conveyed in a letter from Private A. Saunderson, of the same regiment, who stated that Pte. Jones was killed early in the morning of 30th June. He was a stretcher-bearer and had just returned to the firing line after having taken a wounded man to the dressing station, when he was killed by the bursting of a shell in the trenches. The writer says that Pte. Jones was killed half a mile from the spot at which his cousin, Pte. Wotherspoon, fell and was buried. Pte. Jones was a native of Bo'ness and several years ago went to reside at Kirkcaldy with his parents. While resident in Bo'ness he was employed as a miner and was well known in the port.

Fife Free Press & Kirkcaldy Guardian, 8th July 1916:

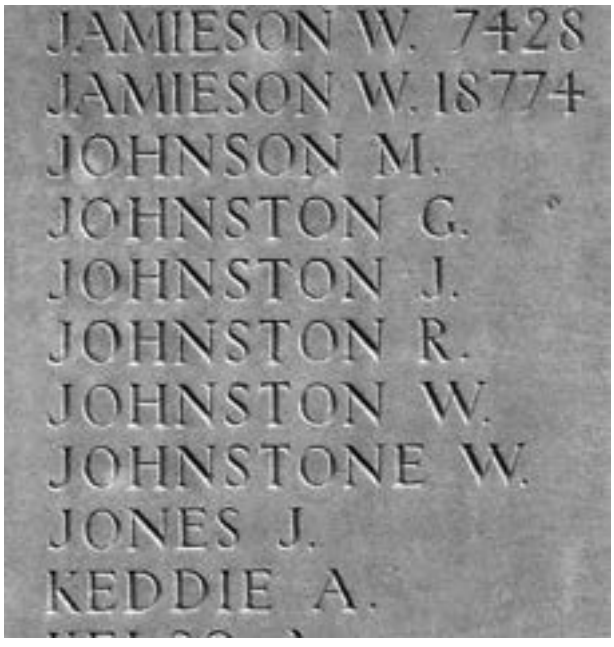
Second Son to be Killed: Mr and Mrs Richard Jones, 171 Den Road, Kirkcaldy, have just been notified that their son, Private James Jones, Cameron Highlanders, has been killed in action during the recent advance. A private in the same battalion writes as follows to his parents on 30th June:

"I write you this note to inform you that your son James was killed on the 30th June by a shell. He was a stretcher-bearer, like myself, taking down two wounded men to the dressing station. We had got our men down to the station and were on our way up to the firing line when a shell burst in the trench, killing your son James and another stretcher-bearer named Andrew Johnston. Your son did not suffer any pain, and will be buried tonight in the British Cemetery, just behind the trenches, where hundreds of British soldiers like himself are buried. I think it will be possible, when this terrible war is over, for you to get a photo of your son's grave. You have my deepest sympathy, also his brothers and sisters. If there is anything you would like to know, just drop me a note, and I will do my best to inform you. – 18846 Pte. D. Galt".

This is the second sad and heavy blow that Mr and Mrs Jones and family have received as a result of the war, an adopted son, Private John Wotherspoon, also of the Cameron Highlanders, having made the supreme sacrifice for his country on 12th March 1916. Both of these fallen heroes were formerly miners in Bo'ness. Much sympathy is felt for the parents in their second bereavement.

Despite the Linlithgowshire Gazette stating that James was a native of Bo'ness, military records say he was born in Kilsyth. He is remembered on the family headstone in Kilsyth Cemetery and is also on the Kirkcaldy War Memorial.

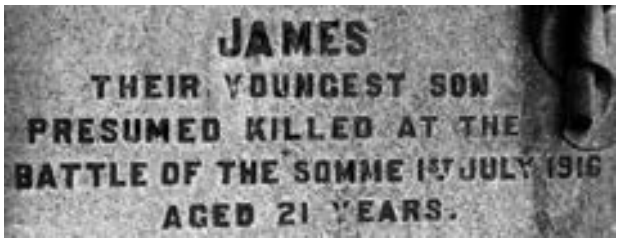
Private James Jones was 24 when he was killed and is remembered on the Loos Memorial, panel 119 to 124, the same section as his brother, John Wotherspoon.



**James Gardner**

Private James (Jimmie) Gardner, service no: 16260, Highland Light Infantry, 17th Service Bn (3rd Glasgow), was 21 when he was killed on 1st July 1916.

The Highland Light Infantry, 15th (Service) Battalion (1st Glasgow), the 16th (Service) Battalion (2nd Glasgow) and the 17th (Service) Battalion (3rd Glasgow) landed at Boulogne as part of the 97th Brigade in the 32nd Division in November 1915 for service on the Western Front. James was killed during the 32nd Division's attack of the Leipzig Salient on the first day of the Battle of the Somme.




Linlithgowshire Gazette, 21st July 1916:

Bo'ness Man reported Missing: "….. My battalion was heavily engaged in the recent fighting, and James Gardner, son of Mr Gardner, Strathairly, Dean Road, Bo'ness, is reported missing. I am not in his company but have made inquiries in his section and his chum tells me that he can get no information regarding him at all. He was speaking to Jim five minutes before the action when he was quite cheery and confident. His company had the hardest fighting and suffered more than the other companies of the battalion….. Yours very sincerely, Hugh McVeigh".

Private Gardner is one of two brothers in the Army. The other brother, attached to the Army Pay Corps, is a patient in a Bristol Hospital. Private Gardner, before enlisting, was employed as a joiner in Glasgow. He is a native of Bo'ness.

Bo'ness Journal, 23rd March 1917:

Killed on 1st July: Private James Gardner, H.L.I., youngest son of the late William Gardner and Mrs Gardner, Strathairly, who was reported missing after 1st July last year, has now been officially intimated as having been killed on that date.

Bo'ness born James was the son of William Gardner (a blacksmith) and Margaret Dingwall (originally from Strathairly, Upper Largo, Fife) and his siblings were Andrew, William, John, Margaret, Rachel and Janet. The family had lived at Bankhead and Borrowstoun prior to Dean Road.

James Gardner is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, pier and face 15C, and on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery.

**Robert N. Brown**

Private Robert Nisbet Brown, service no: 15044, Highland Light Infantry, 16th (Service) Bn (2nd Glasgow), was 21 when he was killed in action.

Robert was killed during the 32nd Division's attack on the Leipzig Salient on 1st July 1916. The 16th Battalion suffered heavily during the first day of the Somme when the 32nd Division attacked Thiepval, and when the 16th HLI came out of the line on the evening of July 3rd its casualties totalled 20 officers and 534 other ranks.

The 16th (Service) Battalion (2nd Glasgow) was often known by its original title of the Glasgow Boys Brigade Battalion. It was formed in Glasgow on 2nd September 1914, by the Lord Provost and the City of Glasgow, with many recruits coming from the Boys Brigade. It was adopted by the War Office on 1st July 1915, and landed at Boulogne 23rd November 1915.

Robert, the son of Robert and Janet Jane Brown, was born in Coatbridge, Lanarkshire. At the time of his death, his parents lived at 6 Coronation Cottages, Bo'ness. Private Brown is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, pier and face 15C.

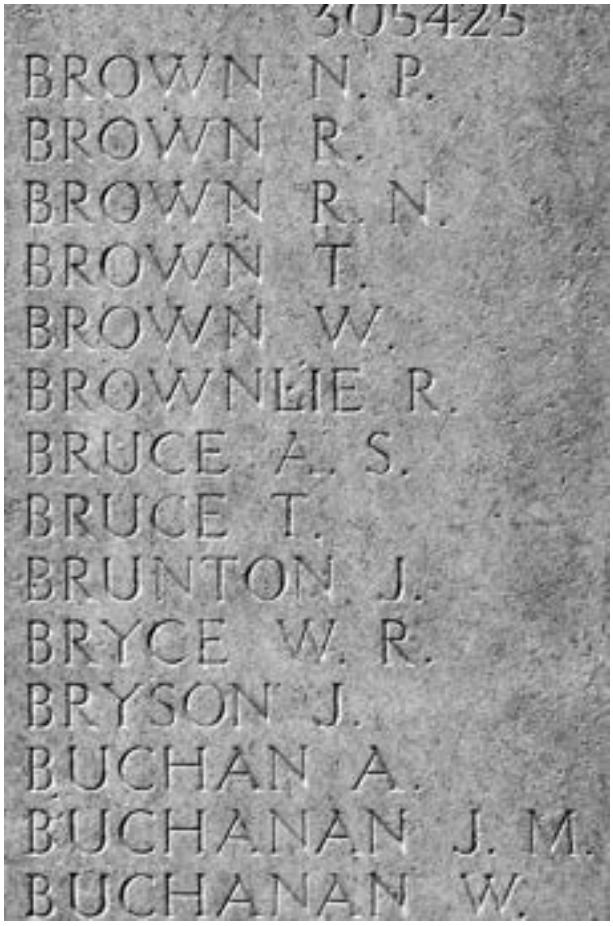
**Walter Orr**

Lance Corporal Walter Orr, service no: 15032, Highland Light Infantry, 16th (Service) Battalion (2nd Glasgow), was 35 when he was killed in action on the first day of the Somme, in the Battle of Albert, 1st July 1916.

Walter was born in New Monkland, Lanarkshire. When he married Margaret Ritchie in 1898 he was living in Dysart, Fife, and was a coal miner.

> Linlithgowshire Gazette, 28th July 1916:
>
> Bo'ness Piper Killed in Big Push: Official information was received last Friday morning by Mrs Orr, 15 Foundry Square, Grangepans, that her husband, Lance-Corporal Walter Orr, H.L.I., had been killed in the "big push" on 1st July. He was a former member of Bo'ness Burgh Pipe Band, and on joining the colours at the outbreak of war he enlisted in the regimental band. He had been eight months in the trenches. Deceased, who was 35 years of age, was a native of Lanarkshire, but for some years back had been employed in No. 2 Pit, Grangepans. He leaves a widow and five children.

Lance Corporal Orr is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, pier and face 15C.



**Frederick Houston**

Private Frederick Houston, service no: 20342, Royal Irish Fusiliers, 9th Bn, was 26 when he was killed in action on the first day of the Somme, 1st July 1916, in the Battle of Albert.

Frederick, the son of John Houston, was born in Castledawson, County Londonderry, Northern Ireland. He emigrated to Chicago in August 1910 but returned to Britain in 1915. He was formerly with the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, service no: 22369, and enlisted in the Princess Victoria's Royal Irish Fusiliers in Bo'ness in 1915.

Bo'ness Journal, 27th April 1917:

Missing Now Reported Killed: Pte. Fred Houston, Royal Irish Fusiliers, who was reported missing in August last year, has now been officially reported killed. Pte. Houston, who had been in the United States, came to this country in 1915 and after a few weeks employed in the Forth Shipbreaking Company's yard at Bridgeness, he enlisted in April 1915. He resided while here with his brother, Mr Thomas Houston, Gladstone Terrace.

Private Houston is buried in the Mesnil Communal Cemetery Extension, grave III.A.6, France.

**John Keir Mackay**

Private John Edward Keir Mackay, service no: 15860, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 10th (Service) Battalion (Derry), was 26 when he was killed in action on 1st July 1916, the opening day of the Battle of Albert, on the first day of the Somme.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 1st September 1916:

Pte. J.E. Keir Mackay (15860), of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, reported wounded and missing since the engagement on 1st July, 1916, is the youngest son of the late ex-Police Inspector Mackay. Pte. Mackay is one of four brothers in the Army. He left Bo'ness four years ago and went to Londonderry, and, being a patternmaker to trade, went to fill a vacancy in one of the foundries there. After joining the Fusiliers at the outbreak of war, he was granted a few days' furlough, which he spent in Bo'ness. He was a native of the town and was aged 25.

Bo'ness Journal, 16 March 1917:

Mackay: Previously reported wounded and missing since 1st July, 1916, now officially reported killed, John Edward Keir, youngest son of the late ex-Inspector Mackay, Bo'ness.

Private Mackay is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, pier and face 4D and 5B.

**William Morrison**

Private William Morrison, service no: 19939, King's Own Scottish Borderers, 1st Bn, was 33 when he killed in action on the first day of the Battle of Albert 1st July 1916, during the opening day of the Somme.

William was born in Glasgow, enlisted in Falkirk, and lived at 13 Waggon Road, Bo'ness, with his wife Mary and their five children.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 4th August 1916:

Missing in Early Stages of Advance: On Friday Morning Mrs Wm. Morrison, 15 Avon Place, was officially notified that her husband, a private in the K.O.S.B., was posted missing on 1st July. Mrs Morrison received a letter from her husband the previous day stating that he was quite well. He joined the Army fourteen months ago and last August was sent to Gallipoli where he served for five months. After a few weeks' rest he was drafted to France and went amissing in the early stages of the present advance.

Bo'ness Journal, 27th April 1917:

Pte. Wm. Morrison, K.O.S.B., who was posted missing as at 1st July last, has now been officially reported killed. Pte. Morrison at the time of enlisting was employed as a moulder in Falkirk. His widow and five children are at present residing at Avon Place with her parents, Mr and Mrs Bellamy.

William Morrison is buried in the Ancre British Cemetery, grave I.A.44, Beaumont-Hamel, France.

**Robert Stevenson**

Private Robert Stevenson, service no: 18247, Machine Gun Corps (Infantry), 20th Company (formerly 8229 Gordon Highlanders), was killed in action on 1st July 1916. He was killed near Mametz during the 7th Division's participation in the Battle of Albert. He was 26 years old.

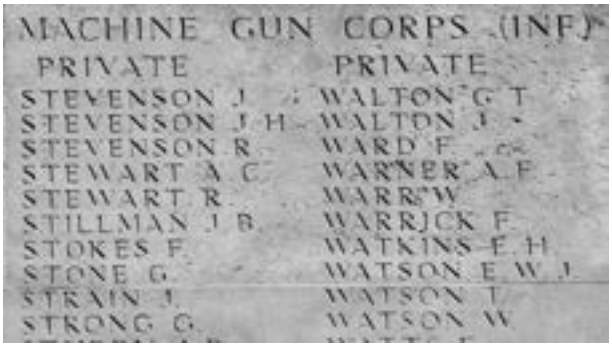
Robert, the son of Thomas Stevenson and Janet Mack White, was born at Burnshot, near Blackness, in Carriden Parish, on 4th January 1890. Burnshot was the home of Janet's father, Alexander White, who was a farm overseer. Thomas Stevenson was an Engine Keeper and was living in Philpstoun when he married Janet in Bo'ness in 1889.

In the Linlithgow Parish Roll of Honour published in the Linlithgowshire Gazette, 9th April 1915, Robert is listed as living at 116 High Street, Linlithgow, the home of his aunt and uncle. In the Bo'ness and Carriden Parish Roll of Honour published in the Bo'ness Journal, 3rd December 1915, he is listed as living in Market Street, Bo'ness. In both Rolls, his regiment is 2nd Gordon Highlanders. His military records state that when he enlisted in Leith (no date given) he was living in Bo'ness.

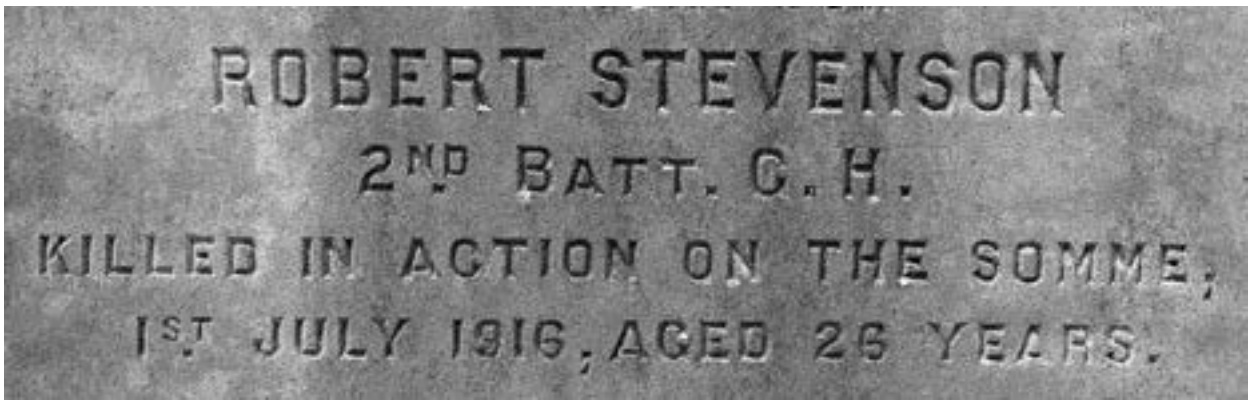
Linlithgowshire Gazette, 28th July 1916:

Stevenson: Killed in action, July 1st, Private Robert Stevenson, Machine Gun Corps, aged 25, eldest son of the late Mr and Mrs Thomas Stevenson, and beloved nephew of Mr and Mrs Marshall, 116 High Street, Linlithgow.

Private Robert Stevenson is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, pier and face 5C and 12C. He is also remembered on his parents' headstone in Linlithgow Cemetery.


MACHINE GUN CORPS (INF)

| PRIVATE | PRIVATE |
|---|---|
| STEVENSON J | WALTON G T |
| STEVENSON J H | WALTON J |
| STEVENSON R | WARD F |
| STEWART A C | WARNER A F |
| STEWART R | WARR W |
| STILLMAN J B | WARRICK F |
| STOKES F | WATKINS E H |
| STONE G | WATSON E W J |
| STRAIN J | WATSON T |
| STRONG G | WATSON W |



**George Fargie**

Private George Fargie, service no: 12409, Royal Scots, 2nd Bn, was 44 years old when he was killed in action on 23rd July 1916, during the Battle of Delville Wood, part of the Battle of the Somme.

George, the son of Adam Fargie and Christina Clephan, was born in Dalkeith in 1872. By 1877, the family were living in Bo'ness.

Falkirk Herald, 21st July 1917:

Private George Fargie, Royal Scots, son of Mrs A. Fargie, 49 Stewart Road, Falkirk, is officially reported to have been killed in action on 23rd July 1916, since when he had been reported wounded and missing. Private Fargie first enlisted in 1898 and served in the Boer War. On the outbreak of the present war he again offered his services. Prior to that he was a moulder in Burnbank Foundry. He was 44 years of age.

Bo'ness Journal, 27th July 1917:

Killed in Action: Pte. George Fargie, Royal Scots, who was reported missing in July 1916, and is now reported as having been killed then, is the son of the late Adam Fargie, who for many years was employed in local foundries, and resided in Waggon Road, Bo'ness.

Private George Fargie is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, pier and face 6D and 7D.

**James Hunter**

Private James Hunter, service no: 4318, Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 11th Bn, was 39 when he was killed in action. He died at the Somme, on the first day of the Battle of Bazentin Ridge, on 14th July 1916.

James, the son of James Hunter and Agnes Sloan, was born in Bo'ness in 1887. His younger siblings were Alex and Sarah and his older brother, William, was killed at Mons in 1914. When James enlisted in Bo'ness in 1914 he was working as a Labourer.

James Hunter is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, pier and face 6D and 7D.

It was a tragic time for James Hunter's sister Sarah. The family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery reveals she that she not only lost her two brothers in WW1 but also her husband, Charles Sullivan of the Australian Forces, who was killed in action at Hangar Wood on 31st March 1918. Their son John, aged 5, had also drowned in a tragic accident in 1915. Finally her father James Hunter died in 1919.

**Robert Reid**

Second Lieutenant Robert Reid, Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), 1st/7th Bn, was killed in action on 30th July 1916, at the age of 27. He was killed in the Battle of the Somme in the area around Bazentin-le-Petit. Robert, born in Grangemouth, was the eldest child of William and Jean Reid. He married Margaret Oliver Chisholm in 1915. Robert was a tall man, standing 5'11".

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 11th August 1916:

The Late Lieut. Robert Reid: Second Lieut. Robert Reid, Black Watch, killed on 31st July, was the eldest son of Mr Wm. Reid, of the firm Messrs Love and Stewart, Ltd., Bo'ness and Glasgow. He was born at Grangemouth on the 13th November 1888. Some time later his parents removed to Bo'ness, where, for a number of years, they resided at the Redlands. Subsequently they went to Glasgow, and the family residence is now Falkenberg, Bearsden.

The deceased officer received his education at Bo'ness Academy and afterwards in Sweden. Before the war he served for three years in the 5th Scottish Rifles (Territorials) and enlisted in the Glasgow Highlanders in August 1914.

About a year ago he received his commission in the Black Watch and had only been a little over the two months at the front. Previous to enlisting he was Scoutmaster to Bearsden Boy Scouts.

Lieutenant Reid was a nephew of Bailie Hogg, Bo'ness. His brother James is a lieutenant in the Navy and won distinction for services at the Dardanelles.

Milngavie and Bearsden Herald, 11th August 1916:

Reid – Killed in action, 31st July, Second-Lieut. Robert Reid, Black Watch, beloved husband of Margaret Oliver Chisholm, Allars, Bearsden, and eldest son of Mr and Mrs Wm. Reid, Falkenberg, Bearsden; aged 27 years.

Second Lieutenant Robert Reid was originally buried near to where he fell, wearing his kilt and covered with his Black Watch greatcoat. In 1928 his body was exhumed as part of grave concentration and he was reburied in Serre Road Cemetery No. 2, grave V.G.25.

**Richard W. Hamilton**

Lance Corporal Richard W. Hamilton, service no: 2822, Royal Scots, 5th Bn, attached to 9th Bn York and Lancaster Regiment, was killed in action at the Battle of Pozières on 29th July 1916. Born in Grangepans on 22nd July 1891, Richard was the only child of Archibald Ferguson Hamilton and Marion Flint Gray and lived at Craigfoot Terrace, Grangepans.

Richard enlisted in Bo'ness on 2nd December 1914, and was promoted to Lance Corporal on 1st April 1915. He was stationed in Britain from his enlisting until he embarked at Folkestone for Boulogne on 5th July 1916. He arrived at the Front on 13th July 1916, and was killed 16 days later.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 11th August 1916:

Mrs E. Hamilton, 40 Craigfoot Terrace, Grangepans, received information on Friday that her only son, Richard, a Lance-Corporal in the Royal Scots, attached to the Lancs. and Yorks. Regiment, had been killed in action. The news was conveyed in a letter from a comrade of the same regiment. Lance-Corporal Hamilton joined the colours in the course of the recruiting boom towards the end of 1914, and only six weeks ago was sent to the trenches. Deceased was well known in sporting circles in the town. For a good many years Lance-Corporal Hamilton was employed as a sawyer in the sawmills of Messrs Thomson and Balfour, but latterly he was employed in a woodyard at Grangepans. Lance-Corporal Hamilton, who was a native of Bo'ness, was aged 25, and unmarried.

Richard Hamilton is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, pier and face 6D and 7D.

The road to Pozierres with Contalmaison under bombardment in the background

**Victor Downie**

Private Victor Downie, service no: 305288, Highland Light Infantry, 8th Bn, attached to Royal Scots, 16th Bn (McCrae's Battalion), was killed in the Battle of Pozières, at the Battle of the Somme, on 3rd August 1916. He was 22.

Victor was born in Dechmont and the sixth son of Alexander Downie and Catherine Morison. He was the brother of Charles Downie, who is also on the Bo'ness War Memorial. Victor enlisted in Lanark.

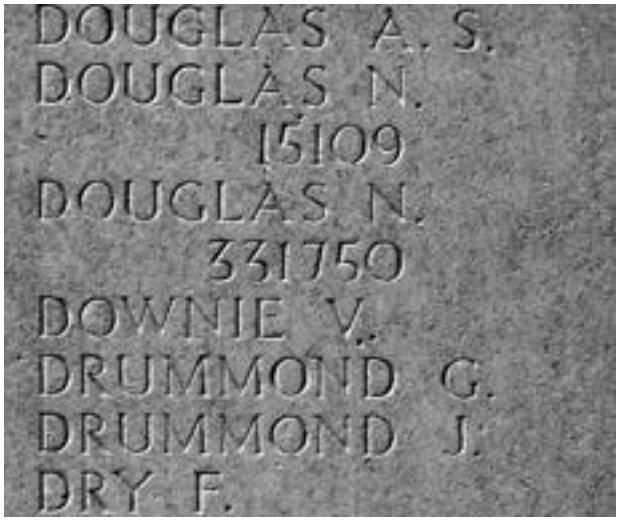
Hamilton Advertiser, 16th September 1916:

Downie: Previously reported missing, now officially concluded killed in action, on the 25th September 1915, Pte. Charles Downie, Gordon Highlanders, beloved son of Mr and Mrs Downie, 24 Bellford Place, Bo'ness (late of Lanark); also, Pte. Victor Downie, H.L.I., attached to the Royal Scots, reported missing on the 4th August 1916.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 22nd September 1916:

Official notice is to hand of Victor Downie, H.L.I. (attached Royal Scots), having gone amissing on 13th August. He is a brother of Charles, and was previously wounded, having just returned to the fighting line after recovering from his wounds. Before enlisting he was employed on a farm at Lanark. His father is employed as a blacksmith at the workshop of Messrs Cochrane Brothers.

Private Victor Downie is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, pier and face 15C.



Thiepval Memorial

**Peter Weir**

Private Peter Weir, service no: S/11834, Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), 1st Bn, died of wounds on 25th August 1916. He was 18 years old. Born in 1898, Peter was the son of Samuel and Janet Weir of Linlithgow. He enlisted in Leith.

Bo'ness Journal, 24th August 1916:

> Carriden Soldier Dies from Wounds: Private Peter Weir of the Black Watch, who was reported in our last week's issue as having been wounded in France, has died from his wounds. The sad news was conveyed home to his parents by letter from the Rev. G.S. Duncan, Chaplain (Church of Scotland). The young soldier was wounded in the chest and he died at the casualty clearing station at an early hour on the morning of Friday last. Private Weir was a very nice boy and being tall and robust he was a fine looking young soldier. He was the third son of Mr. Samuel Weir, late town Herald of Linlithgow (now resident at Carriden) and was born at Whiteside Lane Cottage, Boghead estate, Bathgate, about 18 years ago. Being of a cheery and kindly disposition, he was much liked by all who knew him. The deceased was employed for a year prior to enlistment in Forth Shipbreaking Yard, where his father, Mr Samuel Weir, is a night watchman, and his home is at Fordale Terrace.

A similar report in the Linlithgowshire Gazette, 1st September 1916, also adds:

> He was one of three brothers serving with the colours. The eldest brother, Cpl. John Weir, Black Watch, was wounded in Mesopotamia in January last, and since then he has been lying in Poona, India. William, the second of the family, is a lance-corporal serving with the 10th Royal Scots.

Peter was wounded on 18th August 1916, during the 1st Division's participation in the Battle of Pozieres, a phase of the Battle of the Somme. He was transferred to either 3rd or 44th CCS where he died of his wounds.

Private Peter Weir is buried in Puchevillers British Cemetery, grave III.E.18, France.

The following poem was included in Peter's death announcement in the Linlithgowshire Gazette, 1st September, 1916:

> Sadly from the field of conflict,
> Where the wounded and the slain
> Lay with pale and upturned faces,
> Some in peace and some in pain,
> Slow we bore a dying soldier
> Who had fallen in the fight,
> And to us he faintly whispered –
> "Comrades, let me sleep tonight."
> Now he sleeps – calmly sleeps –
> While the days and the years go by;
> Now he sleeps – sweetly sleeps –
> Till the call of the roll on high;

**James Wright Masson**

Private James Wright Mason (not Masson as written on War Memorial) service no: 375133, formerly 2155, Royal Scots, 2nd/10th Bn, attached to 12th Bn Highland Light Infantry, was killed in action in the Battle of Pozières on 13th August 1916. He was 21 years old.

John, born in Grangemouth in 1895, was the son of John and Maggie Mason. He lived in Bo'ness and worked at Denholm's woodyard at Kinneil. He enlisted in Bo'ness.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 15th September, 1916:

Wounded: Private J. Mason, Royal Scots, attached to H.L.I., officially reported wounded on 13th August, is a nephew of Mrs John Donaldson, Brown's Close, Corbiehall. He enlisted in October 1914 and was sent with a draft to France several weeks ago. In civil life he was employed in a woodyard at the Slaghill.

A year later he was declared killed in action at the time of his reported wounding.

Private Mason is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, pier and face 6D and 7D.

Scene on the Somme Front

**Hugh Hannah**

Private Hugh Hannah was born in Ayrshire in 1885. He married Jeanie McLean at Carriden in 1906. The couple had six children, Hugh, Helen (Nell), Margaret (Peggie), David, Robert Reid McLean and Mathew (Mathy) Hannah. In 1911, the family were living at 2 Cumlouden Place, Panbrae, Bo'ness, but soon after they had moved to McIntosh's Buildings, Corbiehall. Before the war, Hugh was employed at Messrs. James Calder & Co. Ltd., Distillers, Bo'ness Distillery.

He was one of the local territorials who were mobilised at the outbreak of the war, and enlisted with the Royal Scots, 2/10th (Cyclist) Bn, service no: 1006. Hugh was sent on coastal duty at East Lothian for a number of months. He volunteered for overseas service and was sent to the Front with a draft on the 28th July 1916, being attached to the Highland Light infantry, 12th (Service) Bn. He came under the orders of 15th (Scottish) Division, 46th Brigade.

He was only in the action for about a fortnight before he was reported missing in action on 13th August fighting with the 15th (Scottish) Division in the Switch Line beside High Wood. On 12th December 1916, his wife received a letter from the War Office that he was officially confirmed as killed in action.

His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, pier and face 6D. He was 31 years of age. (see also: *The Somme - a Personal Journey* on page 207)

**Gilbert Stanners**

Lance Corporal Gilbert Stanners, service no: 93, Royal Scots, 1st/10th Bn, attached to Highland Light Infantry, 12th Bn, was 35 when he was killed. Gilbert was killed in action, on the front line just north of Bazentin, during the Battle of Pozieres on 17th August 1916.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 1st September 1916:

Corpl. Gilbert Stanners: From a letter received from a comrade, it was learned last Thursday morning that Corpl. Gilbert Stanners, of the H.L.I., late of the 10th Royal Scots (Cyclists), had been killed in action on the 19th August. Corpl. Stanners was formerly attached to the local unit of Territorials, the 10th Royal Scots (Cyclists). He had served for ten years with the company, and his time expired in May. He was granted a month's furlough and re-joined his regiment. The corporal was one of a draft which went to the front some time ago, and with others was attached to another regiment. Before the mobilisation he was employed as a foreman in the yeast department of the distillery of Messrs James Calder and Co., Bo'ness. He was one of four brothers on active service. He was aged 35, and a native of Bo'ness, where he was very well known and respected. Deceased, who was the eldest son of Mr Thomas Stanners, blacksmith, Hopetoun Terrace, leaves a widow and one child, who reside at Hamilton Place, Corbiehall.

Gilbert, one of nine children, was the son of Thomas Stanners and Christina McCallum. He was born on 24th March 1881, at Arnloss, Slamannan, Stirlingshire. The Stanners family moved to Bo'ness around 1885 and lived in North Street and Corbiehall before finally settling in Hopetoun Terrace. Gilbert was the first of three sons killed in action.

Gilbert married Helen Margaret Culbert in 1911 and they had a daughter, Christina, in 1914. The family lived at Hamilton Place, 24 Corbiehall, Bo'ness. 49 days after Gilbert was killed, their second daughter was born. She was named Gilberta, in memory of her father. On 5th October 2016, Gilberta celebrated her 100th birthday.

Lance Corporal Gilbert Stanners was originally buried near to where he fell. In 1929, his body was identified from his identity discs and it was exhumed and reburied in Serre Road Cemetery No. 2, grave XXIV.L.14. He is also remembered on his parents' headstone, along with his brothers, and his widow's headstone, both in Bo'ness Cemetery.

**Thomas Sneddon**

Private Thomas Sneddon, service no: 2194, "B" Coy, 2/10th Royal Scots, attached to 6/7th Royal Scots Fusiliers, was killed in action whilst in the trenches of the Somme on 30th August 1916.

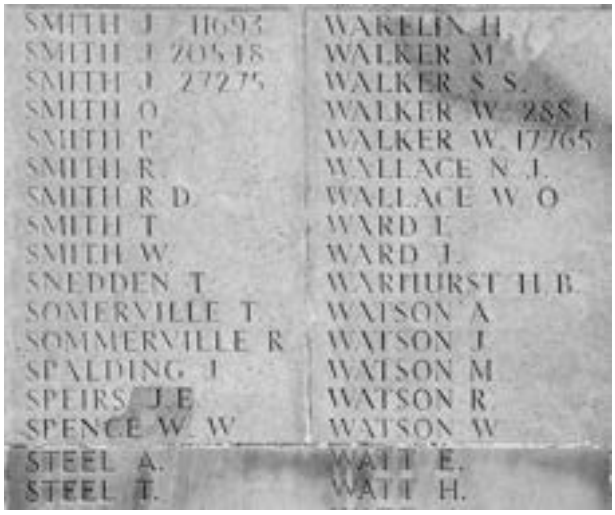
Thomas, the son of Henry Sneddon and Annie Hamilton, was born in Gauze Cottage, Bo'ness on 17th September 1891. He was well-known in juvenile football circles, being a member of the Vale of Forth team. He enlisted in Bo'ness.

Bo'ness Journal, 8th September 1916:

> Word has reached Bo'ness this week that Pte. T. Sneddon, whose parents reside at Maidenpark Quarry, has been killed. The parents of Pte. Sneddon, Mr and Mrs Henry Sneddon have not received any notice of the death of their son, the news having been conveyed in several letters from Bo'ness soldiers at the front.

Military records and census returns are inconsistent with regard to the spelling of his surname, with some saying Sneddon and some saying Snedden.

Private Thomas Sneddon is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, pier & face 6D and 7D.



Sleighs used for conveying the wounded through the mud

**David S. McKerracher**

Private David Spence McKerracher, service no: 136364, 1st Canadian Mounted Rifles Battalion (Saskatchewan Regiment), was killed in action in the trenches south of Zillebeke, now part of Ypres, Belgium on 10th August 1916.

One of eight children, David, the son of Duncan McKerracher and Catherine Spence, was born in Bo'ness on 1st February 1885, at Jane Terrace in Braehead.

He was a clerk, and emigrated in 1910. On 19th March 1910, he sailed from Glasgow aboard the SS Ionian bound for Halifax, Nova Scotia. He landed in Canada ten days later but his journey did not end until he had reached his final destination, Montreal.

When he signed his Attestation Paper, in Toronto, to join the Canadian Expeditionary Force on 3rd September 1915, where he had been working as a labourer. He gave his mother as next of kin and in 1915 she resided at 9 Wood Street, Dennistoun, Glasgow.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 1st September 1916:

Private David S. McKerracher, Canadian Mounted Rifles, killed, was the second son of the late Mr Duncan McKerracher, plumber, and for many years a member of Town Council and Dock Commission. Private McKerracher was a native of Bo'ness, and he emigrated to Canada in 1909. He had been six years in that country when he joined the colours in September 1915. He had only been at the front two months when he met his death. Deceased was aged 31.

Toronto Star:

Pte. David S. McKerracher, one of those who have made the Supreme sacrifice, enlisted with the 74th Battalion about nine months ago. He had no military experience when he joined the unit, leaving Toronto in March. He was transferred to the Canadian Mounted Rifles when he arrived in England. His name has not appeared in the casualty lists before, and he was killed after being in the trenches less than three months. His relatives live in Scotland.

Glasgow Herald, 8th October 1917:

McKerracher: In ever loving memory of Private John McKerracher, killed in action in France on 7th October 1916, aged 21 years; also David, his brother, C.M.R., killed in Flanders, aged 31 years, beloved sons of Mrs McKerracher.

Private McKerracher is buried in Railway Dugouts Burial Ground (Transport Farm), Grave VI. I. 4., Belgium and also remembered on the family headstone in Riddrie Park Cemetery, Glasgow. His brother John also appears on the Bo'ness War Memorial.

**Thomas Meikle**

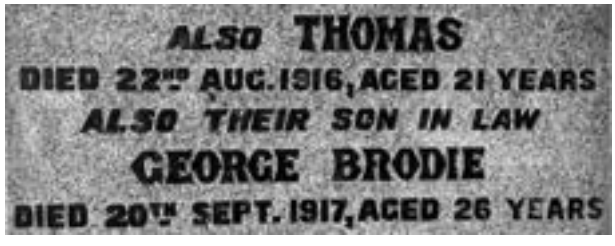
Rifleman Thomas Bryce Brownlee Meikle, service no: 2852, Royal Scots, 5th Bn, was 21 when he was killed in action.

Born in Bathgate, Thomas was the third son, and fourth child, of Thomas Meikle and Ellen (Helen) Brownlee. Days after the birth of their seventh child, they moved the family to Bo'ness and lived at 63 South Street. In later years they lived at 22 South Street. Thomas and Helen had nine children and Thomas' siblings were Elizabeth, Robert, William, John, Jeannie, Colin, Archibald and George.

Thomas enlisted in Bo'ness on 2nd December 1914, but remained stationed in Britain until he left Southampton on 1st April 1916. He landed in Rouen the following day and arrived at the Front on 17th April. He was killed on 22nd August 1916, fighting with 32nd Division, 14th Brigade, in the Arras sector.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 1st September 1916:

Mr and Mrs Meikle, South Street, Bo'ness, were notified by letter on Monday night, from Lieut. Chalmers, of the Royal Scots, that their third son, Private Thos. Meikle, Royal Scots, has been killed in action on the 22nd August by a German trench mortar. The Lieutenant writes in the following terms: "It is with profoundest regret that I have to inform you of the death in action of your son Thomas. He was killed by a German trench mortar on 22nd inst., and was cleaning his rifle at the time. He was a fine soldier, and a great favourite in the platoon, always bright and cheery, and we shall all miss him. I know it is very little consolation to say that he suffered no pain, being unconscious all the time. He has been buried in [redacted] cemetery, and a wooden cross marks his grave. I enclose a letter which has come from him, but unfortunately too late. I feel I have lost a pal and friend, and sincerely sympathise with you in your great sorrow." Private Meikle, aged 21, was a native of Bo'ness, where he was very well known. Before enlisting in November, 1914, he was employed as a labourer at the dock. He was one of three brothers with the colours. He was well known in football circles, and was the popular centre forward of Vale of Forth F.C. He was formerly connected with Linlithgow Rose.




Rifleman Thomas Meikle is buried in Cambrin Churchyard Extension, grave Q.15, France. He is also remembered on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery.

**Peter Wardlaw**

Corporal Peter Wardlaw DCM, service no. S/5876, Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), 1st Bn (formerly 10th Bn), was killed in action on 3rd September 1916. He was killed during the 1st Division's participation in the Attacks on High Wood, a phase of the Battle of the Somme. Peter was born in Linlithgow Bridge, in the Parish of Muiravonside, Stirlingshire, on 24th April 1891. He was the son of Peter Wardlaw and Annie Storrie. In the 1901 census he was living with his grandparents, James Wardlaw and Margaret Lamont, at Muirhouses, Bo'ness.

Falkirk Herald 2nd December 1916:

Another D.C.M. Winner: Former Falkirk F.C. Player Reported Wounded and Missing after Gallant Work: Intimation is made of the award of the D.C.M. to Corporal Peter Wardlaw, Linlithgowbridge, who was well known as a footballer, being a member of the Falkirk team season 1912-13. The D.C.M. was gained on 3rd Sept., and Corporal Wardlaw is reported as wounded and missing on the same date. The award was made for conspicuous gallantry in action. Although wounded he led his platoon with great courage and initiative. Later, although again badly wounded, he remained at his post. Before enlisting in September 1914, Corporal Wardlaw, who is 25 years of age, and a son of Peter Wardlaw, Linlithgowbridge, was employed as a chauffeur at Lochearnhead, and prior to that was for seven years a clerk with Messrs Glen and Henderson, Linlithgow. On three occasions before 3rd September, Corporal Wardlaw was wounded. As a footballer he gained his junior international cap while playing for Vale of Grange. From that club he was transferred to Airdrieonians, and thence to Falkirk. Before enlisting he was playing for Broxburn United, his position being outside right.

Vale of Grange was a Bo'ness team and they played their home games at Drum Park. In the team photo from 1909-1910 season, Peter is in the front row on the extreme left.

In March 1920 Corporal Peter Wardlaw's body was exhumed from its location in High Wood, presumably where he fell on 3rd Sept 1916, and reburied in its present location in Caterpillar Valley Cemetery, grave XII.H.15, France.

Peter is also remembered on the Muiravonside War Memorial and on the family headstone in Linlithgow Cemetery.

**Thomas Black**

Private Thomas Black, service no: 3397, Royal Scots, 12th Bn, was 37 years old when he was killed in action. He died on 6th September 1916, during the Battle of the Somme around Delville Wood and Longueval.

Royal Scots, 12th Bn were part of 27th Brigade of the 9th (Scottish) Division. After the 1st South African Infantry Brigade Group joined in early 1916, the division was known colloquially as the Jock and Springboks.

Thomas Black, the son of Esther Black, was born in Linlithgow in 1880. He enlisted in Edinburgh on 24th August 1914, having served 10 years in the Royal Scots Special Reserve. He had fought in the Boer Wars and held the Queen's South Africa Medal with clasps for Transvaal, Orange Free State and Cape Colony. This medal was instituted by Queen Victoria in 1900, for award to military personnel and civilian officials who served in South Africa during the Second Boer War from 11th October 1899 to 31st May 1902. Thomas went to France with the BEF on 11th May 1915.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 6th October 1916:

Killed: Official intimation to hand is to the effect that Pte. Thomas Black, Royal Scots was killed in action on 6th September. The news was conveyed to his cousin, Mr Frank Binnie, Bridgeness. Black was formerly a labourer at Bo'ness Dock. He was twice previously wounded.

Frank (Francis) Binnie was his next of kin and lived at Brae Terrace, Bridgeness.

Private Thomas Black is commemorated on the Arras Memorial, bay 1 and 2.

Pictured are his actual medals, memorial plaque and Soldiers' Small Book, which describes Thomas as being 6'1" in height and having blue eyes, fair hair and a fair complexion.

**Edward McWilliams**

Private Edward Victor McWilliams, service no: 3680, Highland Light Infantry, 9th (Glasgow Highlanders) Bn, died on 8th September 1916, from wounds sustained at the Battle of Delville Wood. He was 19 years old.

Edward was the son of Robert McWilliams and Emma Jane Cains. In the 1891 census the McWilliams family lived in Blackness Castle where Robert was foreman in the Ordnance Stores Department. Edward was born in the castle on 30 January 1897. In the 1901 census, Robert was still foreman in the Ordnance Stores but the family now lived at 10 Muirhouses Cottages at Muirhouses, Bo'ness. Edward enlisted in Glasgow.

Bo'ness Journal, 22nd September 1916:

> Died of Wounds: Mr and Mrs R. McWilliams, 2 Stewart Street, Partick, Glasgow, have been informed of the death on 8th September, the result of wounds received in action in France, of their youngest son, Edward McWilliams, H.L.I. He enlisted on the 9th January, 1915, and went to France in June of that year. He was a brother of Alex. McWilliams who died in Bo'ness, June, 1912, and who was employed as cashier with Love, Stewart & Co. Edward whilst in Bo'ness was employed as apprentice cooper at Messrs Calders distillery.

Private Edward McWilliams is buried in St. Sever Cemetery, Rouen, grave B.23.43, France.

The splintered remains of Delville Wood

**John Henry Cook**

Lance Sergeant John Henry Cook, service no: 12671, Scots Guards, 2nd Bn, was 23 when he was killed in action on 15th September 1916.

Scots Guards, 2nd Bn, were part of the 3rd Guards Brigade of the Guards Division. In turn, the Guards Division were part of XIV Corps of the Fourth Army. John Henry Cook was killed near Ginchy during the first day of the Battle of Flers-Courcelette, a subsidiary attack of the Battle of the Somme. The battle is best known for the first use of tanks on the battlefield with the use of the British Mk I tanks, with mixed results. Of the 49 tanks shipped to the Somme, only 32 were able to begin the first attack in which they were used and only 9 made it across "no man's land" to the German lines.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 6th October 1916:

Killed in Action: Official intimation was received on Friday of the death of Sergt. John H. Cook of the Scots Guards. He was the fifth son of Mr & Mrs Alex. Cook, Hopetoun Terrace. Born at South Queensferry 23 years ago, Mr Cook had not yet completed his schooling when his parents removed to Bo'ness. He went from the Academy to the offices of Mr Matt. Steel, architect, and there served his apprenticeship. Brought into contact with many prominent local yachtsmen, it was not to be wondered at that he contacted a great liking for the sport, and he spent much of his free time sailing the Forth. To gain further experience in his profession he several years ago entered an architect's office in Edinburgh, and from there went to Wishaw, where he acted as assistant to Mr Cowie, architect. About two years ago he enlisted, and a strapping lad of 6 feet, he selected the Scots Guards as his regiment. He was trained in England and by virtue of his fine soldierly qualities, rose rapidly in the ranks, being promoted to signalling instructor. In January of this year he was sent to the front, and fell on the field on the 15th September.

Lance Sergeant John Henry Cook is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, pier and face 7D.

**John Erskine**

Lance Corporal John Erskine, service no: S/7970, Gordon Highlanders, 8th/10th Bn, was killed in action on 15th September 1916. 8/10th Bn were formed when 8th Bn merged with 10th Bn on 11th May 1916. They were part of 44th Brigade, 15th (Scottish) Division. John was killed near the village of Martinpuich during the Battle of Flers-Courcelette. He was 30 years old.

Born in Carriden in 1885, John Erskine was the son of John Erskine and Isabella Grant. He lived with his grandfather, Alexander Grant, Etna Cottage, Bridgeness, and was a coal miner working with the Bridgeness Coal Company. He enlisted in Aberdeen on 5th December 1914.

Bo'ness Journal, 12th May 1916:

Pte John Erskine, Gordon Highlanders, of Bridgeness, has been wounded and gassed in action, and is now in a hospital in France.

Bo'ness Journal, 29th September 1916:

Killed: Unofficial word has been received that Pte. John Erskine has been killed in action. He was in the Gordon Highlanders, having joined that famous regiment about two years ago. In view of his previous training, Erskine was almost immediately sent to France. On two occasions he was wounded, and after recovering spent each time a few days at home. He was about 30 years of age and lived with his grandfather at Bridgeness.

The Bo'ness Journal, 6th October 1916, confirms John's death, and that before the War, he was employed in the Bridgeness Pits.

Lance Corporal John Erskine is buried in Contalmaison Chateau Cemetery, grave I.A.6, France.

**Alexander Grant**

Private Alexander Grant, service no: 27904, Royal Scots, 13th Bn, was 23 years old when he was killed in action on 15th September, 1916.

Born in Linlithgow, Alexander was the son of Andrew Grant of 10A St. David's Place, Grangepans. He had lived with his father and four sisters. Alexander was 5' 8" in height. He enlisted on 14th December 1915 and was posted to France on 17th August 1916. Only one month later Alexander was killed near the village of Martinpuich. The 15th (Scottish) Division of the Fourth Army captured the village on 15th September, during the Battle of Flers–Courcelette.

Linlithgowshire Gazette 29th Sept 1916:

On Tuesday, Mr Andrew Grant, foreman plasterer, Doocot Brae, Grangepans, was officially notified of the death of his son Alexander, a Private in the Royal Scots. It seems that the sad intelligence was contained in a letter from Private James Adams, serving in the same regiment, and by whose side he fell in action on 15th September. Deceased was aged 23 and was an only son. Before enlisting a year ago, he was employed in the woodyard of Messrs Love and Stewart, Grangepans. He had been in the firing line for a few weeks only.

Private Alexander Grant is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, pier and face 6D and 7D.

Old postcard showing the ruins of Martinpuich

**William Fearns**

Private William Fearns, service no: 3501, Durham Light Infantry, 1st/5th Bn, was killed in action on 15th September, 1916. He was 18 years old.

Born in Carriden parish in 1898, William was the eldest child of William and Mary Fearns and the grandson of Mrs. Fearns, Craigview Place, Bo'ness.

In the 1901 census, the family lived in No. 3 Duguid's block in Carriden Parish (perhaps Muirhouses). William (father) was a kiln man in either West Lothian Pottery in Grangepans or Bridgeness Pottery. By 1906, the family were living at 6 Windmill Terrace, Stockton-on-Tees, although they had moved to England via a short stay in Glasgow.

William was killed on 15th September when the 50th (Northumbrian) Division took part in the Battle of Flers-Courcelette.

Bo'ness Journal, 20th October 1916:

In Memoriam: Fearns: Killed in action on 15th Septr., 1916, Pte. William Fearns, aged 18 years, attached Durham Light Infantry, son of William Fearns, late of Bo'ness. Inserted by his Granny, Mrs Fearns, Craigview Place.

Private William Fearns is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, pier and face 14A and 15C.

The uniform of the Durham Light Infantry

**John Manson**

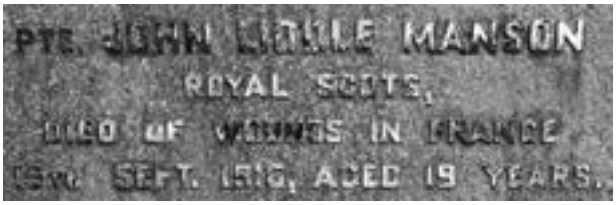
Private John Liddle Manson, service no: 1000, Royal Scots, 2nd/10th Bn, was 19 years old when he died of wounds on 15th September 1916.

John, the son of William Manson and Janet Liddle, was born in Dunblane in 1897. The family moved to Stacks Cottages, Carriden, around 1900. John was a miner with Messrs James Ross & Co, Oil Works, Philpstoun (below).

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 13th October 1916:

> Last Saturday official intimation was received by Mr and Mrs Manson, the Fishery, Stacks Farm, of the death of their son, Private John Manson, Royal Scots, attached Royal Scots Fusiliers. Private Manson, who was 19 years of age, and was formerly employed as a miner at Philpstoun Oil Works, enlisted in the Territorial Force about three years ago, and went to the front about the end of July of this year. He died of wounds received in action on 15th September.

Private John Manson is buried in Contalmaison Chateau Cemetery, grave, I.B.19. He is also commemorated on the family headstone in Linlithgow Cemetery.



**James Mann**

Private James Mann, service no: 2771, Royal Scots, 5th Bn, attached to 9th Bn, York and Lancaster Regiment, was 18 when he was killed in action on 16th September 1916. James lived in Bo'ness and also enlisted in the town. At the time of enlisting, he was a miller at Bo'ness Distillery.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 29th September 1916:

On Tuesday, Mr and Mrs James Mann, Livingstone Terrace, Grangepans, was unofficially notified of the death of their son, Lance-Corporal James Mann, Royal Scots, attached to Yorks and Lancashire Regiment. Tall for his age and fired with patriotic zeal, he, at the early age of 17, enlisted, and was sent to the front with a draft two months ago. The news that he had fallen was communicated by his Company Sergt.-Major, who wrote the parents under date 20th September as follows:

"Dear Mrs Mann, We received the parcel for your son yesterday, but I am sorry to inform you that he met a soldier's death just the day before, 16th September. The real facts are – My company was going forward to reinforce the front line trench and he was hit by a shell. I can assure you he had no pain, his death being instantaneous. We gave him a soldier's burial, and, believe me, he is sadly missed by his platoon. Since he came to my company I have found him clean, smart and one of the best boys that has passed through my hands, as he was always very willing and hard working. His platoon sergeant and I and all who knew him sympathise with you in the loss of a good son and a brave soldier.

The deceased lad was the second son of Mr Mann, his elder brother Peter being a lance-corporal in the Royal Engineers. He was not yet 19 years of age and his untimely death has evoked many expressions of regret for the bereaved parents.

Private James Mann is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, pier and face 6D and 7D. He is also remembered on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery.

**Thomas Robb**

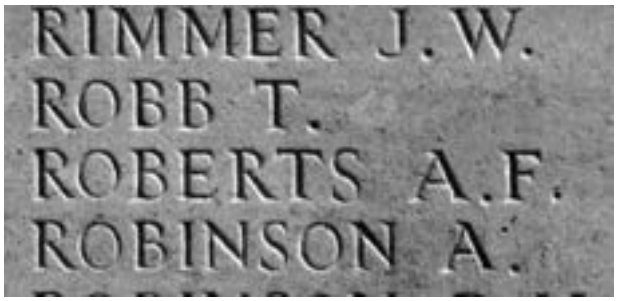
Private Thomas Robb, service no: 34722, York and Lancaster Regiment, 9th (Service) Bn, formerly 2931 Royal Scots, was killed in action on 16th September 1916. He was 28 years old.

Thomas was born in Bo'ness in 1889 and was the son of George Robb and Agnes McIntyre.

When Thomas enlisted in the 5th Royal Scots in Bo'ness on 6th December 1914, he lived at 18 Main Street, Bo'ness. He was stationed in Britain until 5th July 1916. He went to France on 6th July and was attached to the 9th York and Lancaster Regiment on 13th July. He was reported as wounded on 16th September and on 12th November was officially reported as wounded and missing since the earlier date.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 23rd February 1917:

Bo'ness Man Killed in Action: Mrs Cairns, Main Street, Bo'ness, has been officially informed that her son, Private Thomas Robb, Royal Scots (attached Royal Yorks and Lancashires), formerly reported wounded and missing since 17th September, 1916, must now be regarded as killed. Private Robb enlisted in November, 1914, proceeding to France in July, 1916. He was 28 years of age and was formerly employed by Messrs Harrower and Welsh as a woodyard labourer.




Private Thomas Robb is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, pier and face 14A and 14B.

British tank in action at the Somme

**John McKerracher**

Private John McKerracher, service no: 8210, London Regiment (London Scottish), 14th Bn, formerly 2747 Highland Light Infantry, 9th Bn, was killed in action on 7th October 1916. He was killed at the Somme in the attack and capture of the southern end of Hazy Trench in the Battle of Le Transloy.

One of eight children, John, the youngest son of Duncan McKerracher and Catherine Spence, was born in Bo'ness in 1895. He was the brother of David Spencer McKerracher, 1st Canadian Mounted Rifles Battalion (Saskatchewan Regiment), killed two months previously. Both men are remembered on the family gravestone in Riddrie Park Cemetery, Glasgow.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 20th October 1916:

Two Brothers Killed: On Monday Mrs Duncan McKerracher, Glasgow, received official intimation of the death of her son John, a private in the H.L.I. A lieutenant of the regiment wrote that the lad was instantaneously killed on 7th October, having been shot through the head. John was the youngest son of the late Mr Duncan McKerracher, Bo'ness, a brother of our respected townsman, Mr John McKerracher, water superintendent. Deceased, aged 21, joined about two years ago, prior to which he was a clerk in the city. He had only been a few weeks in the firing line. His brother David was killed in action in August of this year.

Private John McKerracher is buried in the A.I.F. Burial Ground, Flers, at grave II. M.16.

**Aaron Barnett**

Private Aaron Barnett, service no: S/4523, Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), 9th Bn, was killed in action on 11th October 1916. He was killed at the Somme during the Battle of Le Transloy in which the Division took part in attacks on the Butte de Warlencourt.

Aaron, the son of George and Ellen Barnett, 26 Gladstone Terrace, was born in Bo'ness in 1895.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 27th October 1916:

Grangepans Man Killed: Private Aaron Barnett, Black Watch, killed, is the son of Mr George Barnett, bootmaker, South Street. He joined at the outbreak of war, and was wounded at Loos, returning to the trenches March last. Deceased was aged 21. His elder brother, Thomas, lost his life in the troop train disaster towards the end of May last year. In a letter from a Lieutenant, addressed to Mr Barnett, it is stated that the young man was killed, along with four others, by a shell while engaged consolidating newly-captured ground.

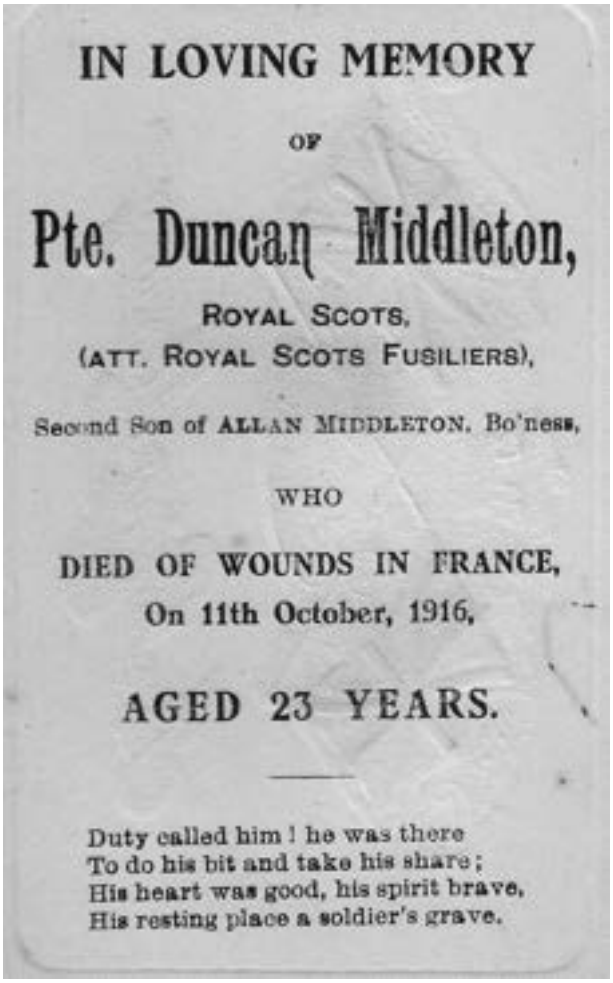
A similar report in the Bo'ness Journal, 27th October 1916, adds that Aaron was a builder with Messrs John Hardie & Sons, Bo'ness, before the War. Private Aaron Barnett is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, pier and face, 10A.

**Duncan Middleton**

Private Duncan Middleton, service no: 43207, Royal Scots Fusiliers, 6th/7th Bn, was 23 when he died of wounds sustained at the Battle of Le Transloy, on 11th October 1916.

Duncan, the second son of Allan Middleton and Jessie Weir, was born in Cramond in 1892. The family later moved to Bo'ness and Duncan enlisted in Bo'ness. His younger brother, John, was killed in action in September 1917.

Private Duncan Middleton is buried in Becourt Military Cemetery, grave I.X.3, Becordel-Becourt, France.



**William Marshall**

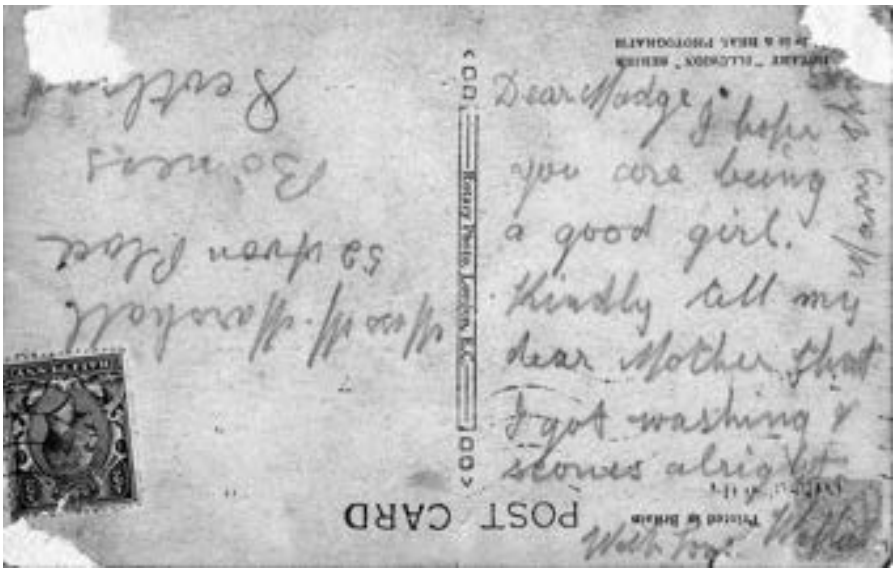
Corporal William Rodger Marshall, service no: S/18636, Cameron Highlanders, 5th Bn, was killed in action at the Battle of Le Transloy on 12th October 1916, in the British attack on the Butte de Warlencourt. He was 23 years old.

William, the son of James Marshall and Agnes Rodger, was born in Bo'ness in 1893. The family lived in South Street before moving to 52 Avon Place. Prior to enlisting in Bo'ness, William worked in Bo'ness Distillery.

Corporal Marshall is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, pier and face 15B.

Pictured below is the last postcard that he sent to his younger sister. It reads:

> Dear Madge,
>
> I hope you are being a good girl.
> Kindly tell my dear Mother that I got
> washing and scones alright.
>
> Many thanks.
>
> With love,
>
> William.



**James Stanley Allan**

Second Lieutenant James (Hamish) Stanley Allan, service no: 1532, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 3rd Bn, attached to 10th Bn (formerly Malay State Volunteer Rifles), died of wounds on 22nd October 1916. James was wounded at the Somme during the Battle of Le Transloy and died at No.45 Casualty Clearing Station in Dernancourt, France.

James, born in Bo'ness in 1890, was the son of James Allan and Isabella Bruce.

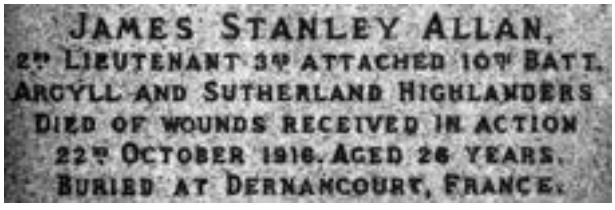
Linlithgowshire Gazette, 9th June 1916:

Decoration for Captain Bruce Allan: A Patriotic Family: …..The captain is a native of Bo'ness, being the second son of the late Mr James Allan, jun., Craigallan. The family record is a splendid one, five sons and a daughter, in all, serving. The particulars are: Douglas Allan, eldest son, Australian Forces; Bruce Allan, captain, Royal Scots; James, second lieutenant, 3rd Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders; Russell Allan, serving with the Volunteers in Straits Settlement; George, petty officer in Navy; and Miss Allan, military hospital nurse. James (Hamish) is a well-known East of Scotland rugby player, his position being back. The family residence is in Rosebery Crescent, Edinburgh.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 10th November 1916:

The Late Lieutenant Allan: Second Lieutenant James (Hamish) Allan, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (died of wounds) was the third son of the late James Allan, jun., of Craigallan. He received a gunshot wound in the breast from a poisoned bullet and died a few days later. Lieutenant Allan was gazetted in January last. An elder brother, D. Allan, was award the Military Medal [actually Military Cross] for gallantry in the field at Gallipoli. The family record is an excellent one, all five sons and a daughter being on service. Their residence is at Oxford Terrace, Edinburgh.

Second Lieutenant James Allan is buried in Dernancourt Communal Cemetery Extension, grave III.H.37, France, and is also remembered on the family headstone in Dean Cemetery, Edinburgh.



**Daniel Burns**

Private Daniel Burns, service no: 43182, Royal Scots, 2nd Bn, was severely wounded on 25th October 1916. He died on 26th October in No.11 Casualty Clearing Station, located at that time in Varennes.

Daniel was born in New Monkland in 1886. His parents were John Burns and Mary Ann Travers and his siblings were Mary, Jane, John, Samuel, Margaret, Lizzie and Unity. He married Catherine Gillon, in Bo'ness, in 1913.

He was a well-known local footballer and was the Captain of Kinneil Ramblers pictured below. Daniel is sitting in the front row, third in from right.

He enlisted in the Royal Scots, 1/10th (Reserve) Bn, in Bo'ness, on 9th December 1914. He lived at 36 Furnace Rows, Bo'ness. He transferred to the Royal Scots, 2nd Bn, on 12th September 1916.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 3rd November 1916:

Mrs Daniel Burns, 36 Furnace Rows, Bo'ness, received a letter on Monday from a nurse in hospital in France stating that her husband, Pte. Daniel Burns, Royal Scots, had died of wounds on 26th October. It seems that Burns was severely wounded by shell, his shoulder being badly shattered and his left forearm blown off. Prior to enlisting about two years ago, Burns was employed as a miner in Kinneil Company's pits. He went to France over three months ago. Deceased, who was 30 years of age, leaves a widow and two young children.

Private Daniel Burns is buried in Varennes Military Cemetery, grave I.E.20.

**Thomas Ballantyne**

Private Thomas Bryden Ballantyne, service no: 2024, Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) 5/6th Bn (formerly Royal Scots 5th Bn, 2904), was killed in action on 28th October 1916.

5/6th Bn Cameronians were part of 19th Brigade in 33rd Division. Thomas Ballantyne was killed when the 33rd Division attacked a number of trenches east of the village of Lesboeufs in what is known as the Capture of Boritska and Dewdrop Trenches, a phase of the Battle of the Somme.

Thomas, the son of Thomas Bryden Ballantyne and Mary Paterson, was born in Douglas, Lanarkshire, in 1887.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 24th November 1916:

> Corbiehall Man Killed: Mrs [Mary] Ballantyne, Thomson Place, Corbiehall, was officially notified last Saturday that her son Thomas, a private in the Scottish Rifles, had been killed in action on 28th October. Deceased was aged 29. He left the woodyards at Kinneil for the Army soon after the outbreak of war, and served for eleven months at Gallipoli, where he was wounded. Soon after his recovery he was sent to France. A letter of sympathy has been received by the mother from the Scottish Rifles chaplain.

A similar report in the Bo'ness Journal also tells us that Thomas had worked in Kennedy's woodyard

and was one of a band of football players who formed the Vale of Forth football team before joining the 5th Royal Scots towards the end of 1914.

Private Thomas Ballantyne is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, pier and face 4D.

**Robert Wilson**

Private Robert Waddell Wilson, service no: 4465, Highland Light Infantry, 9th (Glasgow Highlanders) Bn, was killed in action on 1st November 1916. He was killed when, along with the 2nd Worcesters and the French, the HLI launched an attack on the Boritska Trench. He was 26 years old.

Robert, the son of George Wilson and Christina Waddell, was born in Bo'ness in 1890. He was one of two sons, not an only son as stated in the Linlithgowshire Gazette announcement below. He had an older brother, George, and sisters Jessie, Helen, Christina, Agnes, Maggie and Mary.

The family grew up in North Street and Corbiehall before eventually living in Woodford Terrace, Braehead, all Bo'ness.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 1st December 1916:

Bo'ness Lad Killed in Action: Pte. Robert Wilson, H.L.I: Killed in action. He was the only son of Mr George Wilson, pilot, Bo'ness, and was formerly employed in the office of Messrs James Calder and Co., Ltd., distillers, Bo'ness.

Private Robert Wilson is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, pier and face 15C.

Highlanders on the way to the trenches

**Neil McCallum**

Private Neil MacCallum, service no: 4364, Highland Light Infantry, 9th (Glasgow Highlanders) Bn (Machine Gun Section), was severely wounded at the Somme during the attacks on the Boritska and Dewdrop Trenches. He died from his wounds on 11th November 1916. Neil, born in Lochgilphead in 1890, was the son of John McCallum and Mary McEwan.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 17th November 1916:

Mr and Mrs John M'Callum, Bruach-na-Caoran, Grange Loan, were officially notified by telegram on Monday of the death from wounds on 11th inst. of their eldest son Neil, a private in the H.L.I., and the sad news was subsequently confirmed by letter from a sister in No.1 General Hospital, France. It seems that the young man had been seriously wounded about the lower limbs and that he died while undergoing an operation. The sad intelligence came as a great shock to the parents, who had just received a note written by the brave lad himself, couched in the most hopeful terms; and while at first they were not inclined to credit the news, the arrival of the letter from the hospital dispelled all doubts. Deceased was aged 26. Born at Lochgilphead, he removed with his parents to Bo'ness some 12 or 14 years ago when Mr M'Callum acquired the painter's business so long carried on by Mr Craig, North Street. In the conduct of that business Mr M'Callum was, until a few years ago ably assisted by his eldest son. Striking out for himself latterly Neil commenced business in Glasgow and was in a good way of doing when in the summer of 1915, in response to the country's call, he joined

the H.L.I. He had been in the trenches for some five months. His death makes the first break in the family.

One week later, in the same newspaper was this report of a wonderful tribute to Neil paid by Rev. Young, Craigmailen Church. He said,

All his letters home breathed the spirit of one who had made up his mind to endure hardship without repining and to take the rough and the smooth as all in the day's work. This fine young soldier had a heart for any fate. He set his mind on becoming an officer, undeterred by the added risks and responsibilities which promotion in the Army brings in its train and one of the last services which I rendered Pte. M'Callum was to sign a paper in connection with his application for a commission. This took place less than a month ago. Death came to our friend, however, before this transaction was carried out. It was not an earthly, but a heavenly, voice that said to him, "Friend, come up higher!" On 11th November, Pte. M'Callum passed peacefully away in a French military hospital whilst undergoing an operation for wounds received in action. To Mr and Mrs M'Callum and their family circle we tender our deep sympathy in their great sorrow. May they be sustained by the comforting thought that their loved one has passed to his rest and to his reward amid the words of heavenly welcome – "Well done, thou good and faithful servant! Enter thou into the joy of the Lord."

Private Neil MacCallum is buried in Etretat Churchyard, grave II.B.7, France. He is also commemorated on the Lochgilphead War Memorial and on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery. In relation to use of "M'Callum, McCallum and MacCallum" – three versions of one name. We have favoured MacCallum, as that is the version on the family headstone, but have used the other spellings if that was the version in the original article.

**James Mackay**

Gunner John McKay (not James Mackay as it appears on Memorial) was born in Bo'ness in 1895. He was the son of William McKay, a distillery engine stoker, and Elizabeth McKay (ms Nelson), who had worked as a potter in the local potteries. His parents had been married in Bo'ness in 1895, and another brother Thomas was also born in Bo'ness. The family then moved to 3 Lyall Street, Maryhill, Glasgow, at the turn of the century, where John's brother William was born. Later the family returned to the Lothians, living in Linlithgow Bridge, where three sisters were born, Minnie, Elizabeth and Isabella. Prior to the war both John and his father worked at J. Lovell and Son, Avon Paper Mills, Linlithgow.

John initially enlisted at the outbreak of war at Linlithgow with the Royal Scots, service no: 14924, and was sent to France on 11th May 1915. Because of his prowess with a gun he was later transferred to the Machine Gun Corps, 58th Coy, service no: 207050, attached to 58th Brigade of the 19th (Western) Division.

He was wounded at the Battle of the Somme, during the Battle of the Ancre Heights, and was evacuated from the battlefield to 2/1 South Midland CCS near Warloy-Baillon. Sadly, John died of his wounds on 31st October 1916.

He is buried at nearby Warloy-Baillon Communal Cemetery Extension grave VII. C. 12. The fighting from July to November 1916 on the northern part of the Somme front accounts for the majority of the burials in this cemetery extension. He was 21 years old.

The use of James instead of John on the Bo'ness War Memorial can't be fully explained but John and his family had strong links to Bo'ness and he is the only McKay/MacKay not named correctly. There may also have been confusion with the other man named James McKay on the Memorial. Gunner John McKay is also commemorated on the Linlithgow War Memorial.

Smashed up mill following the Battle of Ancre

**Robert W. Dott**

Private Robert Wilson Dott, service no: 15565, Highland Light Infantry, 2nd Bn, formerly 17th Highland Light Infantry, was killed in action on 13th November 1916. This was during the 2nd Division's attack on the Redan Ridge, part of the Battle of the Ancre, the final large British attack of the Battle of the Somme. He was 36 years old, being born in Bo'ness in 1880. His parents were Robert Wilson Dott and Margaret Guild Forbes and his siblings were David, Margaret, Matthew and Mary.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 15th December 1916:

Killed in Action: It was with deep regret that the Bo'ness community learned last weekend that private R.W. Dott, a prominent young townsman in the H.L.I., had fallen. Official notice to that effect was received by Misses Dott at Easter Park last Thursday. They had not heard from their brother for several weeks past and were somewhat anxious. The news that he had been killed on 13th November came as a great surprise and shock to them and to everybody.

Private Dott was the younger son of the late Mr Dott, for long the station agent at Bo'ness. He was the cashier in the office of Messrs Harrower, Welsh and Co., pitwood importers. At the outbreak of war, he and a large number of men from the desk joined the popular Glasgow battalion, which, since going to the front, has done noble work. Private Dott, on more than one occasion, had the chance of promotion, but preferred to remain in the ranks. Willing and adaptable, he undertook tunnelling work for a period. During this time he became detached from his old comrades and he subsequently resumed his place in the line in a new battalion amongst strangers.

Doubtless this accounts for nothing but the bare official intimation of his death having been received. Mr Dott was a good all-round sportsman. He excelled in bowling and held the single-handed championship of the green for a season. He was equally successful as a skip and played the game for the love of it. In the management of the club, too, he took an active part, filling with credit and distinction the offices of secretary and president in turn. Both on and off the green Mr Dott was extremely popular. He was one of our prominent young churchmen and held the office of deacon at St. Andrew's United Free Church.

Two weeks later, his bowling club paid tribute:

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 29th December 1916:

Bo'ness Bowling Club, Limited: At a meeting of the directors of the Bo'ness Bowling Club last Friday evening, the Chairman made reference to the untimely death on service of their co-director, Mr R.W. Dott. He recalled that Mr Dott was appointed a director of the company in the room of the late Mr John Adie at the general meeting of January, 1913, and from that time until he joined the colours at the outbreak of war he had attended every meeting of the company, twelve in number. In January last he was, in his absence, re-appointed a director for another term of three years. The Chairman concluded by moving that they place on record their appreciation of Mr Dott's services to the company and to the playing club, and, above all, that a note be made of his patriotic self-sacrifice. It was agreed to send an excerpt from the minute to Mr David Dott, along with a message of sympathy to the Misses Dott in their bereavement.

Private Dott is buried in the Redan Ridge Cemetery No.2, grave B.2, Beaumont-Hamel. He is also remembered on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery.

**Alexander Sneddon**

Private Alexander Snedden or Sneddon, service no: 27567, Royal Scots 2nd Bn, was killed in action at the Somme, during the Battle of the Ancre, on 13th November 1916. He was 35 years old. Alexander was the son of Alexander Sneddon and Elizabeth Johnstone, Foredale Terrace, Carriden. His siblings were Daniel, Jane, Margaret, Anne, Hamilton and Susan.

Bo'ness Journal, 8th December 1916:

Pte. Alex. Sneddon, 2nd Royal Scots, has been missing since the 13th November. He enlisted [at Glencorse] in November of last year and was wounded previously with gunshot wound in the head on 14th July. Prior to enlisting he was employed as a miner in Bridgeness Colliery and resided with his father Alex. Sneddon, at Fordale Terrace, Carriden.

Alexander's service records tell us that he received a gunshot wound to the head on 14th July 1916,

whilst fighting near Montauban. He was admitted to 11th General Hospital in Camiers the next day. A week later he was sent to 206 Convalescent Depot. He rejoined D Coy, 2nd Bn, Royal Scots, on 25th September 1916. He was hospitalised again with inflammation of his right hand on 26th October 1916. He rejoined his battalion again on 1st November 1916, only to be killed less than a fortnight later near Serre.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 15th December 1916:

Missing: Three Bo'ness men are this week officially reported missing. They are Privates Alex. Sneddon and Walter Stanners, Royal Scots, and John Taylor, Gordon Highlanders. They went missing in the fighting between 13th and 18th November.

Private Alexander Sneddon is buried in Serre Road Cemetery, grave I.D.29. He is also remembered on a difficult to read family headstone in Carriden Churchyard. It says simply:

Alexander, killed in France 13th Nov 1916.

**James Marshall**

Able Seaman James Marshall, service no: Z/7177, Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, Hawke Bn, Royal Naval Division, was firstly reported missing then later reported killed in action on 13th November, 1916. Seven days after joining Hawke Battalion, James was killed at the Somme in the Battle of Ancre. He was 19 years old. His cousin William Marshall had been killed at the Somme on 12th October.

A short naval record tells us James was born on 5th November 1897. He had worked as a labourer and his father, John, of 16 South Street, Bo'ness, was his next of kin. He enlisted on 15th November 1915, and was drafted to the BEF (rank of Bomber) on 10th July 1916. He was 5'2" in height and had a fresh complexion, with dark brown hair and grey-blue eyes.

Able Seaman Marshall is buried in Ancre British Cemetery, grave E.45, Beaumont-Hamel, France.

Royal Naval Division Memorial

**John D Taylor**

Private John Dewar Taylor, service no: 29123, Gordon Highlanders, 1st/7th Bn, was killed in action on 14th November 1916. He was killed during the 51st (Highland) Division's participation in the Battle of the Ancre when the 51st captured Beaumont Hamel.

John, the son of Arkley Taylor and Robina Dewar, was born in Carriden parish in 1891. He married Mary Anderson on 5th June 1914.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 15th December 1916:

Missing: Three Bo'ness men are this week officially reported missing. They are Privates Alex. Sneddon and Walter Stanners, Royal Scots, and John Taylor, Gordon Highlanders. They went missing in the fighting between 13th and 18th November.

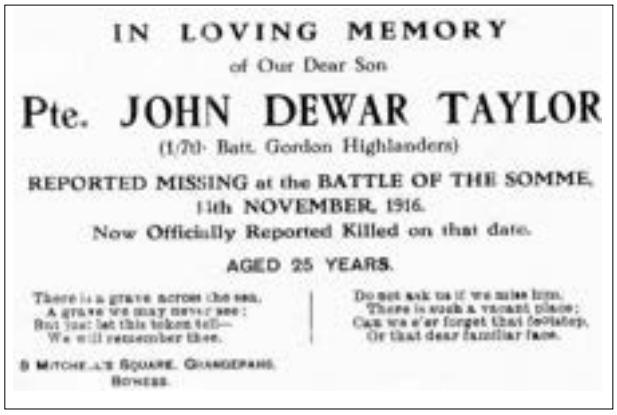
Bo'ness Journal, 31st May 1918:

Killed: Mrs Taylor, 33 Waggon Road, has received official intimation that her husband, Pte. J. Taylor, Gordon Highlanders, is presumed to have been killed on 24th Dec., 1917. Pte. Taylor, who was 25 years of age, enlisted in the Gordon Highlanders in the early part of 1916, and was sent to France three months later. In civil life he was employed as a van man with Johnston, Baker, and leaves a widow and two children.

The newspaper report above has wrong date of death. The correct date, 14th November 1916, was originally confirmed by family "In Memoriam" notices in Bo'ness Journal of the 22nd November 1918. There is further confirmation of the correct date from the memorial card shown opposite.

Private John Taylor is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, pier and face 15B and 15C.

In the photo, John (known to the family as Jock) is at the horse's head.



IN LOVING MEMORY

of Our Dear Son

Pte. JOHN DEWAR TAYLOR

(1/7th Batt. Gordon Highlanders)

REPORTED MISSING at the BATTLE OF THE SOMME, 14th NOVEMBER, 1916.

Now Officially Reported Killed on that date.

AGED 25 YEARS.

There is a grave across the sea,
A grave we may never see:
But true: let this token tell—
We will remember thee.

Do not ask us if we miss him,
There is such a vacant place;
Can we e'er forget that footstep,
Or that dear familiar face.

9 MITCHELL'S SQUARE, GRANGEPANS, BO'NESS.

**James Dunlop**

Sergeant James Dunlop, service no: 15523, Highland Light Infantry, 17th (Service) Bn (3rd Glasgow), was killed in action during the final attack near Beaumont-Hamel, Battle of the Ancre. He was killed on 18th November 1916, the final day of the Battle of the Somme. He was 24 years old.

James, the eldest of three sons of James Dunlop and Helen Henderson, was born in Bo'ness in 1892. James had six siblings, Helen, Agnes, Margaret, Archibald (who would later himself die of wounds in 1918) and twins Janette and Thomas.

On the first day of the Battle of the Somme James Dunlop had been wounded in the right thigh at 8:15am. He crawled into a shell hole and lay there for ten hours before being rescued. Unfortunately his luck would run out later that year.

Bo'ness Journal, 1st December 1916:

> Killed in Action: Sergt.-Major James Dunlop was the eldest son of Mr James Dunlop, headmaster, Public School. He was in Glasgow acting as an assistant teacher in Townhead Public School when war broke out and enlisted in the City of Glasgow battalion. He had been promoted to the rank of Sergt-Major before his regiment went to France. He was killed by shrapnel on the 18th [of November]. The news was conveyed in a letter as follows: "I am very sorry indeed to inform you that your son was killed in action on the 18th November. The battalion made an attack at dawn that morning…Dunlop was acting Sergt.-Major for A Company, and was doing extraordinarily good work encouraging the men when he was killed by a shell. He was buried where he fell." James was a junior student at Bo'ness Academy, and on finishing attended classes at Glasgow University, specialising in art in which he excelled. His drawings at the annual Academy exhibition always attracted particular attention.

Because of his time spent working in Glasgow, James is listed on the Glasgow Education Authority Memorial, Glasgow Training College War Memorial and in the Roll of Honour of the Citizens of Glasgow.

Sergeant James Dunlop is buried in New Munich Trench British Cemetery, grave F. 15, Beaumont-Hamel, France.

**James Clark**

Private James Clark, service no: 43189, Royal Scots, 2nd Bn, suffered gunshot wounds to the right leg during the Battle of the Ancre and was evacuated to the No.8 Stationary Hospital, Wimereux, where he died at 12:35am on 21st November 1916. He was 21 years old.

Born in Rutherglen in 1895, James was the son of David Clark and Elizabeth Wallace. Following the death of his mother in 1899, James lived with his father and siblings, Elizabeth and William at Philpingstone Terrace, Bridgeness. Prior to enlisting in Bo'ness, James was employed as a machineman at Victoria Saw Mills, Bridgeness.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 1st December 1916:

Bo'ness Royal Scot Died of Wounds: Mr and Mrs David Clark, 65 Philpingstone Terrace, were last Thursday officially notified of the death from wounds of their son James, a private in the Royal Scots. A few days previously intimation had been received that the lad had been wounded in the legs, and was lying in a base hospital. Hopes were entertained of his recovery, as the wounds were not believed to be dangerous. The news, therefore, of his death came as a great shock to everybody and sympathy was expressed for the parents. Pte. Clark was an excellent soldier, having got a first class training in the leading company of Territorials in the county. He left for France in the summer. Deceased was aged 21. Mr Clark has received the following letter of sympathy, dated November 22nd, from a chaplain at a stationary hospital in France: "Dear Mr Clark, You have already been acquainted of the passing away of your son, Pte. J. Clark, Royal Scots, and the cause of it. He was with us but a few days, and every possible effort was made to save his life. He received every tenderness. The nursing sisters could not have done more for a brother, while the doctors applied every ounce of their skill on his behalf. When it was realised that all was in vain, sadness fell on all. He bore his sufferings with heroic patience. It is needless for me to say that I sympathise with you. It is a terrible blow to lose so fine a son but let me urge you not to think of him as dead. He is truly alive – alive in a fuller sense than when he was on earth. He sacrificed his early career for the world's well-being and now he is reaping the reward of his sacrifice in the immediate presence of his Saviour. He has put off khaki to put on the white robe of the blessed. You will be from him but for a while and soon the eternal morning will break for you and you will be with your boy again. I buried his remains this afternoon at two o'clock at the Wimereux Cemetery, outside Boulogne. The number of his grave is 1218. As soon as possible a cross bearing his name will be erected to mark the place. A number of his comrades attended the burial service and the sun shone brightly as we looked down and committed him to God's own keeping. May your hearts be comforted and strengthened by the hope of the gospel is the prayer of, yours, with deep sympathy, (Rev.) R.E. Jones, chaplain".

Private James Clark is buried in Wimereux Communal Cemetery, grave II.A.13.

**George Forbes**

Signaller George Alexander Forbes, service no: 2896, Royal Scots, 5th Bn, was killed in action on 23rd November 1916. Born in Linlithgow in 1897, George was the son of George Forbes and Janet (Jessie) Ballantyne. He had two brothers, John and Robert, and four sisters, Mary, Margaret, Janet and Jane. The family were living at Low Port, Linlithgow, in 1901. They moved to Bo'ness around 1903 and in 1911, they were living at 20 Main Street, Bo'ness.

Bo'ness Journal, 8th December 1916:

Killed by Shell Fire: Mr and Mrs George Forbes, residing at 20 Main Street, Bo'ness, have received the following letter from Pte. James Sloggie, of the same regiment, intimating the death of their son, Signaller George Forbes, who joined the Royal Scots in December 1914. George was a member of the Sea Scouts and in September 1914 went on coastguard duty at St. Abbs, where he was for ten weeks. He was well known locally as a swimmer and after enlisting was instrumental in saving the lives of two persons in Leith baths while stationed at Craigleith. He was aged 19 years and 10 months and before enlisting was employed by Kinneil Coal Company. The following is the letter intimating his death:

"France, 25th November.

I can't say how sorry I am to have to write this; but being so close a chum of George's the least I can do is to write you a note of sympathy. He was killed on the 23rd facing the shot and shell like the man he was. We were going from one trench into another under heavy shell fire when he was taken from us. We couldn't stop to bury him as duty called us forward; but the Padre has promised to perform the last painful duties. Anyone of us, his chums, would have given our right hand to save his dear life but it was God's will and we were helpless. I can't write much more; but if I can't express my feelings in writing I am sorry and my grief is no less. We have lost our best chum and a good soldier, from yours in sympathy, Jim Sloggie".

Mrs Forbes also received the following letter on Wednesday morning:

"Signal Section,

28th November, 1916.

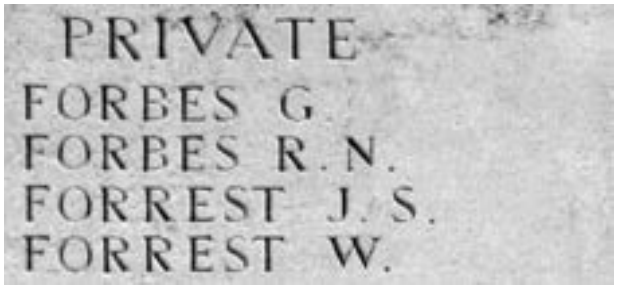
Dear Mrs Forbes, I presume that by the time this letter reaches you, you will have heard about your son George having fallen in action. I take this liberty then, on behalf of the signal section, of writing you these few lines, and sympathising with you in your very great loss. We all miss your son very much as he was such a nice cheery lad and was ever ready to lend a helping hand when required. The only consolation that we can get is, that George died bravely, doing his duty, as every man should do at the present time. "Greater love hath no man than that he lay down his life for his friends." Sympathising once more with you in your great loss, I remain, yours sincerely,

W.G. Farquharson".

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 15th December 1916:

Killed in Action: Mr George Forbes, 20 Main Street, Bo'ness, received word last week from France that his son, Signaller George Forbes, Royal Scots, had been killed in action on 23rd November. He was 19 years of age and was one of a large band of local Sea Scouts who went on duty on the East Coast shortly after the outbreak of war, and some time later joined the Army. He was in the employment of the Kinneil Coal Company before enlisting. His parents belong to Linlithgow.

Signaller George Forbes is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, pier and face 6D and 7D.



**Fred P. Drummond**

Private Peter Frederick Drummond, service no: 5704, Royal Warwickshire Regiment, 2nd/8th Bn (formerly 2032 Royal Scots), died of wounds on 14th December 1916. He was 21 years old. Despite his name on the memorial reading Fred[erick] P[eter] his name on his birth certificate is Peter Frederick Drummond but he appears to have been called Fred. He was the son of Robert Drummond and Annie Bowie, and was born on 28th March 1895, at Old Burnshot in Carriden parish.

According to a short article in the Linlithgowshire Gazette, 23rd June 1916, Robert and Annie had seven sons in national service, six in the mercantile marine service and one, Fred, in the Royal Scots. Fred's brothers John, William and Robert are also listed on Bo'ness War Memorial, albeit Robert is there in error.

Linlithgowshire Gazette Friday 22nd December 1916:

Young Territorial Dies of Wounds: On Tuesday, Miss Drummond, Marchlands Terrace, received intimation of the death from wounds of her brother Fred, a private in the Royal Scots, attached to the Royal Warwickshires. The sad intelligence was conveyed by a letter from the matron at No.49 Casualty Clearing Station, France. The letter was in these terms: "Private Drummond was admitted to this station very badly wounded in the hand and foot. The hand had to be amputated, but it was no good. He lived but a short time, dying at 11:45 p.m. on the 14th December. He died more from shock and loss of blood than from the effects of the operation. He was conscious part of the time and when I mentioned to him that I would write to you he asked me to convey his love to all at home. He will be buried in the cemetery near here, and a cross erected to his memory giving his name and number. His belongings will be sent to you later. Please accept my sincere sympathy."

Private Drummond was 21 years of age and before enlisting he was employed as a patternmaker with Messrs A. Ballantine and Sons, New Grange Foundry. He was a Territorial, and volunteered for foreign service, leaving for the front in the spring of the year.

Private Peter Frederick Drummond is buried in Contay British Cemetery, grave VIII.E.16.

**Lawrence White**

Private Lawrence White was born in Bo'ness in 1890, the son of John and Jane Collins White (ms Hendry). His parents were married in Bo'ness on 18th April 1882. His father worked variously as a dock labourer, dock gateman and seaman. Lawrence came from a large family with brothers John, Hendry, James, Baziel (or Basil), Robert, and sisters Jane, Mary, Margaret, Elizabeth and Ann White. The family lived at 11 Johnstone's Buildings, Scotland's Close, Bo'ness. On 21st June 1912, Lawrence married Janet B. McNeill, of 50 Castleloan, and the couple had three children, Christine (Chrissy), Jean and Annie Wilkie McNeil White. He was a pipe-moulder to trade and was employed at Messrs A. Ballantine and Sons, New Grange Foundry.

He enlisted with the Royal Scots, 1/10th (Cyclists) Bn, service no: 992, and spent some time on coastal duties in East Lothian. Along with a number of other local men he volunteered for overseas service and was part of an early draft who was transferred to the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, 2/8th Bn, new service no: 5646. He arrived in France on 21st May 1916 and came under the orders of 61st (2nd South Midland) Division, 182nd Brigade.

Lawrence was wounded on 18th December, along with Second Lieutenant R. McClure and 8 comrades by an exploding artillery shell whilst they were laying wire in trenches near the town of Courcelette. One comrade was killed. Lawrence was taken to a field hospital but died of his wounds two days later.

On 28th December 1916, his wife received a letter from the regimental chaplain:

> Dear Mrs White, - I sent you a Christmas card the other day saying that your dear husband was badly wounded. I have visited him, and prayed with him since he came into the hospital. All was done for him that could be, and we had hoped he would pull through. But it was too much for him, and he passed away to his great reward on Wednesday, full of peace and victory. He has fought a good fight, Mrs White, and though he mentioned you and the dear children lovingly, he faced death as bravely as he faced the foe, and now looks forward to meet in a better land. Greater love hath no man than this - that a man lay down his life for his friends. Thus speaks the Saviour, and thus died your noble husband. He is buried alongside a number of his comrades in a quiet little cemetery here. Cross with his name and regiment marks the spot. God help you is the prayer of Captain T. Sands (chaplain).

Lawrence White is buried in Varennes Military Cemetery, grave I. F. 2. The inscription on his headstone was chosen by his widow Janet and says, 'THY WILL BE DONE'. His mother Jane had already lost her husband John in 1916, and to add to her grief, two years later Lawrence's brother Hendry White was killed in action during heavy artillery shelling by the Germans of the front line at Fletre, near Meteren, on 9th August 1918. See also *The Somme: a Personal Journey* on page 207.

**Thomas S. Stevenson**

Private Thomas Stewart Stevenson, service no: 24883, King's Own Scottish Borderers, 6th Bn, died of wounds on 19th December 1916. He was wounded on the front line at Roclincourt, north of Arras, on the 19th, and was removed to the village of Avesnes-le-Comte. The 30th and 37th Casualty Clearing Stations were there from April 1916 and the 42nd from June 1916. He died of wounds that night.

Thomas, born in Bo'ness in 1895, was the son of Thomas Stevenson and Elizabeth Thomson. He lived with his parents and seven siblings in the family home at Albert Buildings, Main Street, Bo'ness. Thomas was a baker and along with his brother James and sisters Bella and Jeanie, worked in his father's bakery business.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 29th December 1916:

Died of Wounds: Official intimation was received on Monday that Private Thos. S. Stevenson, K.O.S.B., third son of Mr Thos. Stevenson, baker, Main Street, had died of wounds. Admitted to hospital on the evening of Tuesday 19th December at 9.30, he died about two hours later and the sad intelligence was at once sent off to the parents, who received it on Saturday night. Confirmation was forthcoming from the Army headquarters on Monday. Deceased was aged 21. Enlisting in June of this year, he was sent to France on 20th October, so that he had been at the front for two months.

Private Thomas Stevenson is buried in Avesnes-le-Comte Communal Cemetery Extension, grave II.B.26, and is also commemorated on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery.

**Thomas Meldrum**

Private Thomas Meldrum, service no: 34720, York and Lancaster Regiment, 9th (Service) Bn, formerly 2891 Royal Scots, was killed in action on 20th December 1916. Thomas, the first child of James Meldrum and Agnes Donnelly, was born in Carriden in 1897. His siblings were Charles, James, George, Jane, Mary, Agnes and Ellen. Thomas enlisted in Bo'ness, into 2/5th Royal Scots on 4th December 1914. He was transferred to 4th (Reserve) Bn, York and Lancaster Regiment, in July 1916 then posted to 9th (Service) Bn, York and Lancaster Regiment in September 1916.

Bo'ness Journal, 5th January 1917:

Killed in Action: Mr and Mrs James Meldrum, [35] Philpingstone Terrace, have received the following letter, intimating the death of their eldest son Thomas, who enlisted towards the end of 1914 in the 5th Royal Scots with so many others from Grangepans district. Being under age he was not sent to France until July of last year, on attaining the age of nineteen and was attached to a machine gun section of the York and Lancaster Regiment. Before enlisting, he was employed in the No. 6 Pit, Bridgeness. The death was confirmed officially on Wednesday morning.

This letter was a continuation of the obituary:

Bo'ness Journal, 22nd December 1916:

Dear Mr and Mrs Meldrum, I am very sorry to have to tell you that your boy, Tom, was killed by a shell on Wednesday morning while on duty with his gun team in our front line trench. Though he was so young I have always found him a good soldier. He came to my section in July, and quickly learned his new duties. With his fellow gunners, who were all fond of him, he has seen plenty of fighting and borne his share of work and hardship bravely. You have my deepest sympathy in your grief, especially at this season when so many who have as yet given nothing for their country are giving themselves a good time. Yours Sincerely, G.Rigby, 2nd Lieut. 9th York and Lanc. Regt.

P.S. Your poor son's death was instantaneous. His body has been buried near the graves of many other brave fellows behind our line. – G.R.

Private Thomas Meldrum is buried in Railway Dugouts Burial Ground (Transport Farm), grave VI.Q.8, Belgium. He is also remembered on the family headstone in Carriden Church.

# *The Somme: A personal journey*

## Richard Hannah

On 1st July 1916, British and French forces began an offensive which would become known as the Battle of the Somme. Long-planned, its launch was intended to relieve pressure on the French, who were fighting a costly battle at Verdun. It was thought that by attacking at the Somme, the Germans would relocate much needed resources from Verdun to the Somme sector. After an artillery bombardment that lasted seven days, with more than 2.5 million shells fired at German positions, and over 250000 shells fired in the final hour before the offensive began, twenty seven Allied divisions (some 750000 men) attacked along a 20km front from Gommecourt to Foucaucourt, including five French divisions to the south.

At 7.30am, on a clear midsummer's morning, having heard the whistles blow, the British infantry emerged from their trenches and advanced in extended lines at a slow steady pace across the expanse of No Man's Land. They were expecting little resistance in the process. Instead they met a hail of machine gun and rifle fire from the surviving German defenders who had been well dug-in during the previous seven days bombardment, relatively safe inside their well-constructed concrete bunkers. The advance was compounded further by the huge amount of German barbed wire that was still intact, meaning many men had to use the same small areas where it had been broken to try and advance. This made them sitting ducks for the German machine gunners. Accurate German artillery barrages immediately added to the pandemonium, as shells engulfed the attackers and wrecked the crowded British assembly trenches. The advancing infantry, and many waiting to attack, suffered enormous casualties having advanced very little distance or indeed not even having left their trenches.

On that first day more than 19000 British soldiers lost their lives and a gain of only 3 square miles was achieved. By the end of the battle the British had suffered around 420000 casualties the French about 200000 and the Germans an estimated 465000 casualties. Two men amongst those casualties are close to my own heart, Private Lawrence White and Private Hugh Hannah. These brave Bo'ness men were my Great Grandfathers, men I had never met and whom I knew very little of. I would find out a lot about these two men and many more during the research for this book.

Late January 2015, it is -4°C and I have made the long journey south with my Dad William Hannah. We have arrived in Albert, France to pay our respects. We arrived in the relative comfort of my pick-up, air conditioning temperature up high to keep us warm. Lawrence and Hugh will have had a much different journey south. Train and boat journeys south to France before onward travels to the Somme battlefields. Lawrence was here in the Winter of 1916, Hugh had perished six weeks after the battle had begun and I am all too aware that our journeys and experiences here will have been so different. The truth is that we were in Albert to pay our respects to Lawrence only. At this point in the project I was unaware that my other Great Grandfather Hugh Hannah had even been killed during the war, far less at the Somme, something we would discover later.

We have an itinerary prepared, places we want to visit, but when driving through the countryside we cannot believe just how many cemeteries there are. We stop at the first few and walk around, then quickly realise that we can't stop at them all. Cemetery after cemetery they roll on, rows and rows of white graves, everyone neatly lined up and each cemetery is immaculate.

A small sign catches my eye for "High Wood Cemetery", on the way south I have been listening to the song High Wood by the Scottish singer Fish, written about the battle here. The small car park beckons us in and we stop the truck. When we step out the first thing we notice is the silence, there is no traffic and there are no people. A crow can be heard calling from within the wood.

High Wood was a very significant area in the Somme and was fought for, fiercely, on several occasions. the British won and lost this wood several times from the start of the offensive. It is a small wood, but in a prominent position and of great strategic value. On the 30th July 1916, the British tried to take it back again. The Royal Warwickshire Regiment lost 171 men in the attack, and as they only started with 468 men, this was a significant loss to them. What we were to discover later was that Hugh Hannah had perished on the 13th August 1916,

High Wood Cemetery

fighting in the Switch Line beside High Wood. His company had fought hard but had been unsuccessful in taking their objective in the Switch Line and orders were given to hold the line. Troops dug in to what was left, nothing much but shell holes to provide limited cover. During the short battle 16 Officers and 236 Ordinary Ranks were killed. Hugh Hannah, Royal Scots 2/10th Bn, but attached to the Highland Light Infantry, 12th Bn, was sadly one of these men. Later reports state that in the coming days and weeks in the Switch Line troops dug new trenches, unable to remove their comrades from the battlefield, their bodies were used atop of the trenches to offer protection to those still alive. The constant machine gun and artillery barrages that followed meant that sadly many bodies were never recovered from the battlefield. Hugh's body was never recovered from the Switch Line. He left behind a wife and 6 children all under the age of 10. High Wood was eventually taken with the help of tanks on 15th September 1916. We now know that we drove the road beside where my Great Grandfather was killed in the Switch Line trench, what pulled me to this particular cemetery I will never know, but I am glad we stopped and walked around it. The lyrics now play in my mind and seem to have real significance now:

Tractors crawl, horsepower straining
Carve the earth, the ploughshares turning
The sod that hides where dead men lie
The lost and fallen of wars gone by
Gathering the iron harvest

Reminders of their bloody madness
Whose bones in furrows sometimes rise
To plead to be identified

The following morning we get up early and have a breakfast in our lovely warm hotel, we step outside into freezing fog. The temperature is now down to -6°C. Whilst sitting waiting on the truck to defrost Dad and I discuss how grim things must have been in 1916. We sit here wearing the best winter clothing, the heated seats having the desired effect, and we feel we are ready to continue our journey, but what of the lads almost a century ago? Woollen uniforms, heavy leather boots all saturated from days, weeks and months in water and mud-filled trenches. No Gore-Tex boots, no duck down jackets and thinsulate gloves for them whilst dodging enemy gunfire! We simply cannot imagine how bad things must have been.

We drive into Albert and stop at a florist and purchase two single roses. We set off in search of the small town of Varennes and its CWGC military cemetery, it is only 11km from our hotel but the fog isn't lifting and the small single track roads are difficult to navigate through in the limited visibility. The sun is climbing into the sky and is trying to make it easier for us but it will be some time before the temperature is high enough to shift this freezing fog. On arrival we notice this cemetery is smaller than those we have already visited. It is by no means small though as 1219 men lie in rest within its boundary. At the bottom of the steps there is a small door in the wall. Within this small enclosure is a book with information on the layout of the cemetery and we quickly find the location of Lawrence. The crunch of our footsteps on the frozen grass is the only sound we hear as we head across the cemetery. No one has been in here since November according to the visitor book, yet the place is irreproachable, the CWGC doing a fantastic job. This journey has been a long time in the planning, and was finally undertaken thanks to a push by my wife Liz, who suggested with Dad's failing health that now was a good time to make this pilgrimage to the Somme. We locate Lawrence White's grave.

Dad and I stand side by side in silence. Neither knows what to say, it all seems more real when there is a grave to look at. The white headstone is pristine, the wording is simple:

5646 Private L. White. Royal Warwickshire Regt.
20th December 1916 Age 26

The inscription "Thy will be done" is on the bottom of the headstone as requested by his widow. I assisted Dad in laying the red rose at the foot of the grave and I laid his medals alongside the rose. Lawrence and

Hugh Hannah had both signed up with the local territorials at Bo'ness, "B" Company of the Royal Scots, 10th (Cyclists) Battalion, and were mobilised and ordered to the East Coast on 5th August. They were moved to East Linton as part of the coastal defence at North Berwick. They were later selected to move from territorial duties to the front line, and although the men had wanted to deploy together, some 250 were selected to mobilise to France on or around the 21st May 1916. Lawrence was one of this first batch of men sent to France. A letter from that time states these men have "put away their cycles and transferred into the infantry". At some point around the end of May after arriving in France Lawrence was transferred into the 2nd/8th Bn Royal Warwickshire Regiment. According to regimental diary records Lawrence was injured on the 18th December in or around the town of Courcelette, during hostile artillery active on Desire trench and Ravine trench. New wire was being laid at Regina trench and 1 ordinary rank was killed, Second Lieutenant R. McClure was injured and 9 ordinary ranks were also injured. Lawrence was one of these ordinary ranks. Records show that Lawrence was transferred to a field hospital with injuries to his back, however his injuries were too severe and he died on the 20th December. The cemetery in Varennes where Lawrence is buried is the site of a former field hospital and approximately 15km from the town of Courcelette. His company was relieved on the 20th December the day that Lawrence passed away. He left a wife and 3 daughters, the youngest of whom Annie, my Grandmother, he never set eyes on as she was born only two months before he died.

As we walked out of Varennes cemetery the sun was creating a halo in the fog above the solitary tree near the exit, and we said our goodbyes. We left Varennes and made our way to Thiepval memorial to pay our respects. Thiepval has more than 72000 British and South African names on it, all soldiers whose bodies were never found. The memorial was very quiet, mainly due to the time of year we were

visiting but also because the cold was keeping people indoors. The size of this memorial cannot be explained in words, and needs to be seen to fully appreciate it. At over 45m high, it is the largest commonwealth memorial to the missing in the world and can be seen from miles around. We walked up the steps and around the 16 piers and looked at the names on the 64 panelled sides of Portland stone. Name after name of missing men on panel after panel, listed in their regiment with their surname. As remains are found and identified the panel is removed and updated accordingly. As we walked around we were surprised when we found the name Hannah…

Our journey was complete and we had set out what we wanted to achieve, on returning to Bo'ness the other rose was laid on the grave of Lawrence's daughter Annie Wilkie McNeil Hannah, the daughter he never met. We also later found that Hugh Hannah was killed on the 13th August 1916, and is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial, pier and face 6 D (shown above).

CHAPTER 8

# *1917*
# *France and Flanders*

Early 1917 and Arras

**Ghosts of War**

When you and I are buried
With grasses over head,
The memory of our fights will stand
Above this bare and tortured land,
We knew ere we were dead.

Though grasses grow at Vimy,
And poppies at Messines,
And in High Wood the children play,
The craters and the graves will stay
To show what things have been.

Though all be quiet in day-time,
The night shall bring a change,
And peasants walking home will see
Shell-torn meadow and riven tree,
And their own fields grown strange.

They shall hear live men crying,
They shall see dead men lie,
Shall hear the rattling Maxims fire,
And by the broken twists of wire
Gold flares light up the sky.

And in their new-built houses
The frightened folk will see
Pale bombers coming down the street,
And hear the flurry of charging feet,
And the crash of Victory.

This is our Earth baptised
With the red wine of War.
Horror and courage hand in hand
Shall brood upon the stricken land
In silence evermore.

*E. Alan Mackintosh 1917*

# Early 1917 and Arras

The Great War had now lasted nearly three long and brutal years and the carnage of both Verdun and the Somme in 1916 had led to both changes in military strategy and the political landscapes of the combatants on both sides. The German Army was still only 65km from Paris and the French Government had had enough, replacing Joffre with General Robert Nivelle as the de facto Commander-in-Chief on the Western Front. Facing increasing civil unrest in France, the French desperately needed a victory on the battlefield. In Britain, David Lloyd George had replaced Asquith as the British Prime Minister. Lloyd George was a key supporter of Nivelle, and agreed with him that a renewed spring offensive in 1917 could achieve a breakthrough. Nivelle persuaded him that a French offensive could succeed if the British launched a diversionary attack around Arras to take the German forces away from the main French assault further south in the Aisne sector. The plans for the Battle of Arras 1917 had been set in motion.

Lloyd George and other dignitaries visiting the Front

The German command was also under intense pressure with the mounting massive costs in terms of lives lost and also to the German economy with the vast resources needed to service multiple fighting fronts. A shrewd strategic decision was therefore made by Chief of General Staff Paul von Hindenburg and his deputy General Erich Ludendorff to employ a more defensive strategy in 1917. The first significant action taken was to withdraw their forces from the front line, roughly between Arras and Soissons on 16th-20th March 1917 to a defensive position in what is known as Operation Alberich. This newly fortified position was called the Hindenburg Line, and work on its fortification had begun during the Battle of the Somme. This shortened the line by some 45km and as a result needed fewer troops and artillery divisions to hold. In addition, the retreating Germans also carried out a scorched earth policy, destroying towns, poisoning water supplies and mining roads and transport infrastructure, as they passed. As a result of this surprise move Nivelle's offensive plans were already badly affected. The German withdrawal was in the same area that the French main attack was to take place, and now the French Army faced a more formidable German defensive position. In the background, a new French Government asked Nivelle to seriously reconsider his strategy in light of the situation, however, he remained determined that the attack would go ahead as planned, and would not be moved, securing his place in infamy. The so-called Nivelle Offensive is remembered in history as a symbol of one man's folly.

In the front line, the troops were oblivious to these behind-the-scenes manoeuvres. Prior to the first significant attack of 1917 two Bo'ness men had already lost their lives. As well as the constant threat of bullet and artillery shell, the cruel winter conditions meant men had to endure the freezing temperatures and blizzard conditions with attendant wind-chill. When the thaw came in February, the soldiers then had to suffer slimy yellow-brown fields of mud and waterlogged trenches filled with rotting corpses and vermin. **Private Edward A. Sneddon** (or Snedden), Royal Scots, 5/6th Battalion had suffered from recurring illness and trench foot both in Egypt and France and finally succumbed to illness in January, 1917. **Able Seaman Robert Graham**, Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, 7th (Hood) Battalion, already a veteran of Gallipoli, was wounded by an exploding shell during the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division's participation in the Operations on the Ancre, around the Bapaume area south of Arras. He died of his wounds in hospital on 17th February 1917.

The British diversionary attack commenced on Easter Monday, 9th April 1917, and although known as the Battle of Arras, was actually a series of

Getting 'Granny' ready to strafe the enemy

separate battles in two main phases. The main attack had been preceded by heavy artillery bombardment for days on end. Over one million more shells were used in this attack than at the Somme in 1916. **Private Alexander Duncan,** Royal Scots, 11th Battalion was killed by "friendly-fire" just prior to the commencement of the main hostilities at Arras. He was located in a trench north of the River Scarpe that ran through the centre of the battlefield during the preliminary bombardment by the British artillery when one shell fell short and killed Alexander Duncan and five comrades, wounding four others. The five others killed are identified as Andrew Richmond, John McDonald and Colin Campbell (all commemorated on Arras Memorial), John Dick and John Mackie (buried in St. Nicolas British Cemetery next to Alexander Duncan).

The first major British attack of the Battle of Arras, known as the First Battle the Scarpe, took place to the East of Arras. Three Scottish Divisions took part - the 15th (Scottish) Division was in VI Corps, while 9th (Scottish) Division and 51st (Highland) Division were in XVII Corps - as part of the Third Army under the command of General Allenby. Along with those in various other Divisions, fifty-two Scottish infantry battalions fought at Arras, with attendant casualties.

With the help of sleet, rain and a westerly wind at their backs, the 9th (Scottish) Division were part of the biggest single advance achieved by the British on the Western Front since trench warfare began. Along with the 4th Division, they moved 5.5km into German held territory and were able to dig in. Casualties were relatively light, but included two Bo'ness men in the 27th Brigade, **Private John Simpson**, King's Own Scottish Borderers, 6th Battalion, and **Private John B. White**, Royal Scots, 12th Battalion.

The 15th (Scottish) Division, meanwhile, pushed forward 3.25km, and along with the 12th Division secured Battery Valley and captured many German artillery pieces abandoned there. Casualties in this attack included **Private William Robertson**, Royal Scots Fusiliers, 6/7th Battalion, who was killed alongside 14 other comrades at Fred's Wood, a small strip of trees just south of Saint-Laurent-Blangy. The 3rd Division were also in VI Corps and one of their objectives was to capture the German trenches at Feuchy. The attack started successfully,

The taking of Vimy Ridge, Easter Monday 1917. Painted by Richard Jack 1919

and a large number of German prisoners were captured, but about 600m from their objective, the assaulting 8th Brigade were mown down by an enfilade of machine gun fire from Feuchy Chapel to the north. One of the men killed was **Private John McCredie**, Royal Scots, 2nd Battalion.

At approximately the same time a meticulously planned assault was being made by the Canadian Corps, under the command of General Sir Julyan Bing, at what is known as the Battle of Vimy Ridge. Four Canadian Divisions, fighting for the first time together, quickly captured and held the high ground of Vimy Ridge. Casualties were very high, with 3598 lives being lost, including **Private James E. Johnston(e)**, of the Canadian Infantry, 54th Battalion, a coal merchant from Bo'ness who had went to Canada to make his fortune and enlisted with the Canadian forces at the outbreak of war. Just as Gallipoli is synonymous with Australian and New Zealand national identity, Vimy Ridge is also seen as a symbol of supreme Canadian national achievement and sacrifice. A large part of the former battleground serves as a memorial park and site of the Canadian Vimy Memorial.

Over the next few days, the initial gains were consolidated but momentum could not be sustained and the Allied forces faced stiffening resistance from the Germans, with casualties being sustained. **Private William Henderson**, who had been fighting alongside William Robertson in the Royal Scots Fusiliers, 6/7th Battalion, was wounded on the 10th April 1917, and died three days later. Having successfully captured their objectives on the southern shoulder of Vimy Ridge, near Roclincourt, the 51st (Highland) Division were digging in when **Private Thomas White**, Royal Scots, 1/9th Battalion, was wounded. He died later that day. Early in the morning of the 11th April, Grangepans man **Private John Seaton**, Gordon Highlanders, 5th Battalion was killed by an exploding shell in the same area. **Gunner John McGillivray,** Machine Gun Corps, (Heavy Branch), "C" Battalion also lost his life on the same date.

The Canadian National Vimy Memorial

**Second-Lieutenant Harry A. Hayworth** Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 10th Battalion, had gallantly led his platoon into battle, participating in the Capture of Athies (9th April) and the fighting around the Rouex Chemical Works (12th-15th April). Thankful that they had survived the worst of the action, his platoon were moving back through Athies on 15th April after being relieved, when they came under heavy artillery fire. Second-Lieutenant Hayworth and six of his men were killed and six others wounded.

Heralded by intense bombardment of 11 million artillery shells, sixty miles to the south of Arras the French offensive began at dawn on the 16th April 1917, known as the Second Battle of the Aisne. Nivelle had repeatedly emphasised the value of surprise attack but a combination of careless talk, indiscretion by Nivelle himself in the press and captured plans meant the Germans knew his strategy almost to the letter. The initial objective was the formidable ridge of the Chemin des Dames in the Champagne region. By the end of the battle the French had gained an area of 6.5km along a 26km front, but incurred huge losses of 134000 casualties including 30000 dead. The attack was a disaster and called off without Nivelle's plans for a decisive breakthrough coming close to being realised. High expectation amongst the French forces at Easter soon evaporated and even developed into a series of bloodless mutinies that spread through a demoralised army. The British knew nothing of this unrest until hostilities were over and, fortunately for the Allies, neither did the Germans. Nivelle would soon be replaced by General Petain, the saviour of Verdun.

The French had been supported by the British Fourth and Fifth Armies in an action known as the Pursuit of the German Retreat to the Hindenburg Line. **Private James John Hunter**, Highland Light Infantry, 17th Battalion, was fighting with the 32nd Division as they began operations to reclaim outpost

An officer leads the way amidst the bursting of German shells

villages still occupied by the Germans west of the Hindenburg Line. A stirring description of the morale at this time is given in a Battalion record, saying that,

> The road from Nesle to St. Quentin is a long and cruel one, but in these early days of 1917, it was to the 17th H.L.I., the pathway to glory. They were sweeping onwards in the track of the retreating enemy, with the glow of victory to strengthen their hearts and the blessings of a delivered people in their ears. The echoing trumpets of romance called to them from the Cathedral City, and their blood stirred to the call.

Sadly for Private Hunter he was wounded in action on 16th April 1917, near the village of Fayet north west of St Quentin and died later that day at a Casualty Clearing Station.

Back in the Arras sector, the Battle was entering its second phase following the lull needed to resupply the armies in the field despite the hostile weather and churned up battlefield. The British plan was to consolidate the gains already made but to continue with the diversionary attack, to keep the Germans on the back foot, with the hope at that time of making the breakthrough in unison with the French further south at Aisne. The next planned assault was the Second Battle of the Scarpe, commencing on 23rd April 1917. Following days of freezing conditions and poor visibility, the VI and VII Corps of the Third Army attacked along both sides of the River Scarpe, along a 14km front between the towns of Gavrelle and Croiselles, to the north east and south east of Arras respectively. The 63rd (Royal Naval) Division stormed the fiercely defended village of Gavrelle. **Able Seaman John Queenan**, of the 1st (Drake) Battalion, C Company (189th Brigade) was severely wounded by an artillery shell during this attack and died of wounds one week later in hospital. Further south, the 15th (Scottish) Division captured the village of Guemappe on the north side of the River Cojeul, with help from the 50th (Northumbrian) Division who were attacking on the south side, capturing vital enemy high ground. During this attack **Private George Grant** of the Gordon Highlanders, 9th Battalion, was wounded and died later that day.

Adjacent to the 50th Division were the 30th Division, containing the 2nd Royal Scots Fusiliers in 90th Brigade who led the attack. John Buchan, the famous author of the "Thirty Nine Steps", also wrote the official History of the Royal Scots Fusiliers and recorded the following account of the action that day.

On the 23rd, too, the 2nd Royal Scots Fusiliers were engaged with the rest of the Thirtieth Division in an attack on the high ground overlooking Cherisy in the Sensee Valley. The battalion advanced at 4:45am on a two-company front, and was immediately caught and checked by a terrific machine-gun barrage. At six a.m. the enemy counter attacked, but was held; at six p.m. the survivors of the Scots Fusiliers were withdrawn to reserve positions. The day depleted the battalion by more than one-half. The commanding officer - Lieut.-Colonel M.E. McConaghey - fell, and with him Second-Lieutenants J. Spears, J. McLeod, T. Leishman, H. F. Smith, and J.C. Cameron, and 55 other ranks: 4 officers and 195 men were wounded: 4 officers and 209 men missing.

Bo'ness man **Second-Lieutenant Thomas Leishman**, Royal Scots Fusiliers, 5th Battalion, attached to 2nd Battalion, is the "T. Leishman" mentioned here.

Just prior to the next diversionary assault, named the Battle of Arleux, **Private Harry Harris**, Highland Light Infantry, 2nd Battalion, was notified as missing, presumed dead on 27th April 1917, the victim of an unusual incident. On the previous day, his battalion had moved into the front line between Oppy Wood and Arleux, north of Monchy-le-Preux, with A and B Companies in the front line trenches and C and D Companies in support. The following day a fateful decision was made to withdraw the two forward companies from the front line owing to their proximity to the enemy front line that was being bombarded by artillery. The troops were accommodated in a nearby building referred to as the Sugar Factory. Unfortunately the building suffered a direct hit from a rogue artillery shell, also causing German ammunition lying nearby to explode to devastating effect. There were 50 ordinary ranks killed, including Harry Harris, as well as over 40 wounded including many senior officers.

After a ten day rest following the First Battle of the Scarpe, the 12th (Eastern) Division re-entered the Arras battlefield, with 35th Brigade going into the forward positions between the north of the River Scarpe on 27th April in preparation to support an attack on Roeux by 12th Division the next day. It was here, near Fampoux, that **Private James McIlroy**, Royal Berkshire Regiment, 5th Battalion, lost his life during heavy artillery bombardment.

After the area around Arleux was successfully captured, a further attack on German fortifications was planned east from Monchy-le-Preux, known as the Third Battle of the Scarpe. The aim was for a pincer assault on two fronts, with the Australians attacking Bullecourt at the same time. Neither assault was successful and with heavy casualties sustained the assault was called off.

On 3rd May, **Lance-Sergeant Alexander D. Anderson,** Royal Scots Fusiliers, 1st Battalion, was notified as missing in action along with 63 other

Group of Royal Scots Fusiliers officers with 2nd Lt Thomas Leishman seated on the ground left

comrades, 33 confirmed killed and 249 wounded following an unsuccessful attack at Hill Trench east of Monchy-le-Preux when the 8th Brigade were raked with German machine gun fire from the outset. The Royal Scots, 2nd Battalion, were also part of 8th Brigade and their own attempt to advance was a disaster. They spent the day pinned down by machine gun fire in front of a line of enemy barbed wire. They were relieved the following night having lost 12 officers and 254 soldiers since 24th April 1917. **Privates John Boyle, James D. Broom and Alexander Morrison,** all Royal Scots, 2nd Battalion, were casualties during this battle. The eight Royal Scots Battalions involved at the Battle of Arras suffered over 3100 casualties in less than four weeks.

**Private Peter Potter** was serving with the London Regiment (London Scottish) 1st/14th Battalion in the 56th (London) Division, 168th Brigade. On 11th May a major assault was launched to try and capture German positions at Cavalry Farm, near to the village of Guemappe and just south of the main Arras to Cambrai Road. An eyewitness account records,

> At 8.30 p.m. on the 11th May the 4th London Regt. on the right and the London Scottish on the left attacked Cavalry Farm and the trench on the far side of it, and Tool Trench.
>
> A practice barrage on the previous day had drawn heavy fire in a few minutes, and it had been decided not to have a barrage, but to keep the heavy artillery firing steadily to the last minute. The enemy, who held the line in full strength, were taken by surprise. Only Cavalry Farm was visible from our line, and the 4th London Regt. swept into this place with no difficulty. But the right of the enemy line was able to put up a fight, and the left company of the London Scottish suffered somewhat severely. Except for this one point, the trench was vacated by its garrison in a wild scramble. They could not, however, escape the Lewis gunners and brigade machine-gunners, who did some good execution. Quite a lot of the enemy were killed in the trench and a round dozen taken prisoner—they were of the 128th Infantry Regt. and the 5th Grenadier Regt. Eight machine guns were also found.

Sadly in the continued skirmishing in the following days Peter Potter was killed in action, and joined the lengthening roll of honour for 1917.

The Battle of Arras officially ended on 16th May 1917 but for various reasons, including the objective of seizing tactically important ground, and providing respite to a beleaguered French army now in disarray and open mutiny, Haig decided to continue limited operations in the Arras area. This came at the cost of further British casualties, for very little gain, and was a recurring trait associated with Haig's tactics in WW1.

**Private Robert Leishman**, Highland Light Infantry, 1/9th (Glasgow Highlanders) Battalion, was killed by an artillery shell along with two other comrades whilst carrying supplies to the front line trenches near Croiselles on 16th May 1917. He was the brother of Thomas Leishman killed earlier in the campaign. Bo'ness Distillery worker **Petty Officer Joseph Rocks**, Royal Naval Division, 1st (Drake) Battalion, was killed in action in the Gavrelle Sector on 19th May. **Lance Corporal William Currie**, Army Service Corps, Motor Transport Company, 283rd Company, was killed on 26th May whilst transporting ammunition to and from the front line trenches east of Arras. **Private John Jackson**, Machine Gun Corps (Infantry), 88th MG Company, was wounded in action and also died on 26th May. Well-known Bo'ness Sea Scoutmaster **Sub-Lieutenant William McCurrach**, 63rd Royal Naval Division, 190th Brigade Machine Gun Company, was severely wounded and died on 27th May at a Casualty Clearing Station in Aubigny. **Private Charles Mair**, Royal Scots, 11th Battalion, was fighting with 27th Brigade in the 9th (Scottish) Division as they were defending a German counter-attack at

Destroyed interior of the cathedral, Arras

Greenland Hill, near Plouvain when he lost his life. **Private William Robertson**, Highland Light Infantry, 1/9th (Glasgow Highlanders) Battalion, was wounded on 28th May during the 33rd Division's attacks on the Hindenburg Line in the area of Croiselles and Bullecourt. He was evacuated to Le Treport on the French coast but died following an operation to amputate his left leg on 17th June 1917. **Private John Reedie**, a sailor who moved to New York with his parents, was fighting with the Canadian Mounted Rifles (Quebec Regiment) 5th Battalion. He was killed defending the hard fought Canadian gains at Vimy Ridge on 4th June 1917. He was the final Bo'ness man to die as a result of the actions around Arras.

The initial gains at Arras had been a great success and significant areas of tactically-important ground had been captured such as Vimy Ridge. The assault had successfully achieved its objective of drawing German forces away from the French further south at Chemin des Dames. However, the successes were mitigated by the high number of casualties - over 150000 British dead and wounded - and despite early gains, when the battle was over, very little ground had been captured or ceded, no Allied breakthrough had been made and the assault had little strategic or tactical impact.

With the French failing to make a breakthrough themselves at the Chemin des Dames, Haig's thoughts had already been turning to his long-favoured plan of achieving a breakthrough in Flanders, specifically around the Ypres Salient, and towards a small village that the world still associates with the horrors and great human costs of the First World War - Passchendaele.

General view of the destruction of Arras

**Private Edward A. Sneddon**

Private Edward Allan Snedden (according to all information in the official records, the Bo'ness War Memorial has the wrong spelling) was born on 27th October 1888, the youngest son of William Snedden & Isabella Snedden (ms Grant) of Etna Cottage, Philpingstone Road, Bridgeness. When both his parents died, brothers George and Thomas, together with sister Janet, stayed at the family home, but Edward went to live with his brother Henry at 35 Gladstone Terrace, Bo'ness. He was 27 years old, 5'11" in height and weighed 144lbs. He was unmarried. From boyhood up to the time of enlisting, he had been employed as a clerk in the offices of Messrs A. Ballantine and Sons, New Grange Foundry, and he was held in high esteem and respect by the office staff, as well as by the workers in every department.

He enlisted on 24th July 1915, at Princes Street, Edinburgh, with the Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 1/6th Battalion, service no: 3312. He enjoyed only a few hours of leave back home in late August 1915 when he was recalled by telegram to headquarters in Edinburgh to join the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force bound for Alexandria, Egypt and the Palestinian Campaign, arriving there on 15th September 1915. His stay in Egypt was blighted by ill-health, particularly nephritis, and he was invalided back home on the 25th May 1916, being admitted to London General Hospital on 9th June 1916.

Afterwards, during his period of convalescence, he visited and spent some time with his relatives at Bo'ness, and although his health was still far from satisfactory he returned to his regiment. In due course he was sent to France, arriving on 29th December 1916, and joined 5/6th Royal Scots. He had not been long in the trenches, however, when he had a relapse of the disease, along with trench foot. Edward Sneddon died of illness on 30th January 1917 at a General Hospital in Etaples, France. The small fishing port at that time had become a focal point for reinforcement camps and hospitals for the Allies. He is buried at Etaples Military Cemetery, grave XXI. C. 4. He is also commemorated on the family headstone in Carriden Cemetery.

**Robert Graham**

Able Seaman Robert Graham was born on 23rd June 1896, the son of Angus and Agnes Graham (ms Thomson), 12 North Street in Bo'ness town centre. He had three sisters Margaret, Janet and Agnes Graham. In civilian life he was employed as a Labourer. He was 5'6" and was described as having a fresh complexion, with brown hair, grey eyes and a scar on the right hand side of his mouth. He was unmarried and lived at 115 North Street, Bo'ness. He enlisted at the outbreak of WW1 with the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, 7th (Hood) Battalion, Royal Naval Division, service no: Clyde Z/4069. Hood Battalion was drafted to Egypt to reinforce the troops in the Gallipoli Campaign. Robert saw action in Gallipoli and was wounded on 8th November 1915, resulting in him being hospitalised until 1st January 1916, when he rejoined his unit just as Gallipoli was being evacuated.

The winter months took their toll, and Robert was taken ill with rheumatism and frost bite. He spent most of early 1916 in and out of military hospital in Alexandria. Eventually he rejoined his Unit on 25th April 1916, at Mudros on the island of Lemnos in the Aegean Sea. The Royal Naval Division transferred from the authority of the Admiralty to the War Office on 29th April 1916, and was redesignated as the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division on 19th July 1916. The Division moved to France, arriving in Marseilles in May 1916 after which it remained on the Western Front for the rest of the war. Robert arrived on 22nd May a week after leaving Mudros on the troopship HMT Ionian. Hood Battalion now came under the orders of 189th (RN) Brigade. Robert was wounded by an exploding shell on 5th February 1917, during the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division's participation in the Operations on the Ancre (January - March 1917). He suffered shell wounds to his right forearm and right leg, a compound fracture to this left thigh, and then developed gangrene in his feet. He died at No:1 Canadian General Hospital, Etaples on 17th February 1917, and his body is buried in Etaples Military Cemetery, grave XXI. F. 2.

**Alexander Duncan**

Private Alexander Duffus Duncan was born in Mortlach, Banffshire, the son of James and Jane Duncan of Dufftown, Banffshire. He was married to Jane Duncan (ms Paul) in 1915 at Carriden and they lived at Foredale Terrace, Carriden. They had one daughter, Jane Paul Duncan. Pte. Duncan was well known locally, having been employed before enlisting as a van man by the Bo'ness Co-operative Society.

He enlisted in the spring of 1916 with the Royal Scots, 5th Battalion, but was soon transferred to serve with 11th Battalion who came under the orders of 9th (Scottish) Division, 27th (Lowland) Brigade. The 9th Division had served on the Western Front since May 1915, and was regarded by many as one of the best fighting formations of World War One.

Alexander Duncan was killed in action by an errant artillery shell, just prior to the commencement of the Battle of Arras 1917, when serving in the front line trenches north of the River Scarpe. The news of his death was conveyed to Mrs Duncan by letter from Captain E. G. Turner, who stated that the regiment was "having a rough time" when Alexander was killed. He reported that his death was instantaneous. In conclusion, he expressed his regret at "the death of a good soldier, esteemed by all in the regiment".

Alexander Duncan is buried in St Nicholas British Cemetery, near Arras, at grave I. A. 15. The cemetery was started in March 1917 and used by the divisions and field ambulances stationed there until October 1918. St Nicolas British Cemetery contains 364 First World War burials.

Alexander Duncan is also remembered on Mortlach War Memorial, Dufftown.

**James E. Johnston**

Private James Easton Johnstone (spelling on War Memorial is incorrect) was born on 30th March 1880 in Bo'ness, the son of Mr John Johnstone, a local draper and clothier, and Mrs Isabella Johnstone. He came from a big family with brothers John, William, Robert and George, and sisters Christina, Jemima, Bella and Elizabeth Johnstone. He was 5'6" in height and weighed 156lbs, had a fair complexion, blue eyes and light brown hair. He was married to Agnes McNeil Johnstone (ms Grant) in 1904 at Bo'ness. The couple had four boys, John, James, William and Emerson and two girls, Margaret and Isa, and the family lived at 34 Main Street, Bo'ness.

In Bo'ness he was employed as a coal merchant but in 1913 James made his way to Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada where he carried on the coal business, and latterly found work as a teamster, or coach driver. It was there on 11th February 1916, that he enlisted initially with the Canadian Infantry, 158th Battalion, of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. On 14th November 1916, he sailed from Halifax, British Columbia, onboard the SS Olympia and arrived 6 days later in England.

He was granted leave to return to Bo'ness to see his family for Christmas. On his return to his barracks, he was transferred to the Canadian Infantry (Kootenay), 54th Battalion, and was soon embarking for the Front, arriving in France three days before the turn of the year. This Battalion came under the orders of 4th Canadian Division. James Johnstone, age 37, was killed in action on 9th April 1917, during the 4th Canadian Division's participation in the Battle of Vimy Ridge, a phase of the Battle of Arras 1917. In a letter to his wife, the Rev. J.H. White, chaplain to the Canadians said,

> I deeply regret having to confirm the sad intelligence already sent to you of the death of your dear husband…..We took part in an important engagement, and so far as I have been able to find out he was instantly killed early in the action. His remains were reverently laid to rest in the battlefield by the side of many brave comrades who fell in the same engagement. Your husband was regarded by his comrades as a fine, fearless fellow, always ready and willing to do his bit and share any danger.

As mentioned, James was buried near to where he fell, but in 1919 his body was exhumed and reburied at Canadian Cemetery No.2, Neuveille-St. Vaast, grave 2. C. 5. The cemetery was established by the Canadian Corps after the successful storming of Vimy Ridge on 9th April 1917, and some of those buried in the cemetery fell, or died of wounds, in that battle. The majority of the graves, however, are later burials of the dead recovered from surrounding battlefields and from isolated graves which were transferred into the cemetery over a period of years after the Armistice.

**William Robertson** (1 of 2)
Private William Robertson was born on 15th July 1892, at 29 Corbiehall, Bo'ness, the son of William Robertson, a coal miner's hewer, and Jessie Robertson (ms Mitchell). The family lived latterly at 96 Kinneil Road, Bo'ness.

He enlisted in Bo'ness in 1916, initially with the Royal Scots 2/10th (Cyclist) Battalion, service no: 2980, that was formed in 1914 and moved to coastal defence work at Berwick-upon-Tweed for most of the war. Men from the 2/10th frequently volunteered to be sent to the Front and William was one of them, being drafted to the Royal Scots Fusiliers 6th/7th Battalion, service no: 43244. This was an amalgamation of 6th and 7th Battalion Royal Scots Fusiliers that had happened on 7th May 1916. They came under the orders of 15th (Scottish) Division, 45th Brigade.

William Robertson, aged 25, was killed on 9th April 1917 near an area called Fred's Wood, a small strip of trees just south of Saint-Laurent-Blangy, outside the town of Arras. This was during the 15th (Scottish) Division's participation in the First Battle of the Scarpe, part of the opening phase of the Arras Offensive 1917. Fourteen other comrades were killed that day and 91 wounded.

William Robertson's body was not recovered from the battlefield and he is commemorated on the Arras Memorial, bay 5. The memorial commemorates almost 35000 servicemen from the United Kingdom, South Africa and New Zealand who died in the Arras sector between the spring of 1916 and August 1918, and have no known grave. The most conspicuous events of this period were the Arras offensive of April-May 1917, and the German attack in the spring of 1918. A separate memorial remembers those killed in the Battle of Cambrai in 1917.

**John McCredie**

Private John Young McCredie, aged 35, was born in Alloa, Clackmannanshire, but had lived and worked in Bo'ness for some time. His parents were Mr. and Mrs. John McCredie of "Roseneath", Dundas Street, Bo'ness. The railways had brought his father and family to Bo'ness and John also worked as a Distillery Shunter, on the North British Railway in the town. He had two brothers Robert and Charles McCredie, and four sisters, Helen, Jane, Agnes and Jemima.

He was married to Maggie Jane McCredie (ms Hamilton) in 1904 at Carriden and the couple had five children, John, William, Maggie, Jane and Robert, all born in Bo'ness. Sadly youngest son Robert died of respiratory illness in 1915, aged 1 year and ten months. The family lived at 76 Market Square, Bo'ness.

John McCredie enlisted on 20th February 1915 at Glencorse, Midlothian with Royal Scots, 2nd Battalion, service no: 20757. He first arrived in France on 19th May 1915 and served with until 13th March, 1916, when he was admitted to hospital at Wimereux with a bad case of trench foot, and transferred back to Hampstead General Hospital in England, where he spent 54 days.

After recovering from the illness back home in Bo'ness he returned to France on 22nd July 1916. On 2nd August 1916 John was posted to Royal Scots, 11th Battalion, but he then suffered multiple gun shot wounds to the abdomen and right arm sustained on 18 August 1916. He was admitted to 23rd General Hospital and then evacuated back to England on the 4th September 1916 on board the Hospital Ship Western Australia. He spent 43 days recovering at the West Bridgford Military Hospital, Nottinghamshire.

Once again John recuperated in Bo'ness but nothing could prevent him from returning to the action and on 25th February 1917 he rejoined 2nd Battalion in the field, just in time for the Battle of Arras.

Private John McCredie was killed on 9th April 1917, the first day of the First Battle of the Scarpe. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Arras Memorial, bay 1 and 2.

General inspection for trench foot

**John Simpson**

Private John Simpson, aged 34 years old, was a native of Borrowstoun village to the south of the town. He was married to Annie and worked as a carter on Kinneil Estate, where the couple also lived.

He enlisted at Bo'ness on 1st June 1916, with the King's Own Scottish Borderers, 6th Battalion, and was given service no: 23876. He arrived in France in October that year and came under the orders of the 9th (Scottish) Division, 27th Brigade, regarded by many as one of the best fighting formations of 1914-18. Many reinforcements were needed by the Division after suffering horrendous losses at the gruelling Battle of the Somme.

In Spring 1917, hostilities resumed with the First Battle of the Scarpe, the opening phase of the Arras Offensive 1917. John Simpson was notified as missing in action on 9th April 1917, during the first day of the battle.

His wife waited anxiously for news, but his death was only confirmed by the Army Council almost a year later in March 1918. His body was never found and his name is commemorated on the Arras Memorial, bay 6. In total 77 men from the King's Own Scottish Borderers, 6th Battalion, died on the battlefield that day.

On 9 April 1917, John Simpson and his comrades of the 9th (Scottish) Division liberated the village of Athies. In honour of their sacrifice a memorial was built in the place known as Point-du-Jour. The memorial is made from blocks of Scottish granite piled up in accordance with the funerary traditions of the Celts. It is a cairn which bears the names of all the battles fought by the Scottish Division during the Great War. The monument is encircled by twenty-six stones which represent the units of the Division, including the 6th KOSB. The memorial reads,

REMEMBER
WITH HONOUR THE
9th SCOTTISH DIVISION
WHO ON THE FIELDS
OF FRANCE
AND FLANDERS
1915-1918
SERVED WELL

**John B. White**

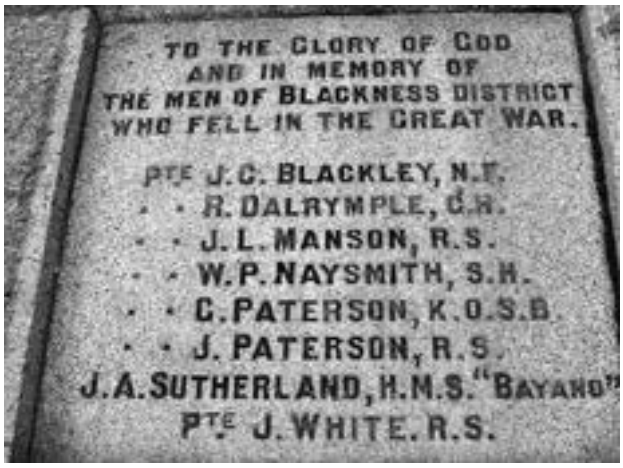
Private John B. White was born on 2nd February 1890, the second son of James and Janet White (ms Marshall), of Cauldcoats Cottages, Linlithgow. John's parents were married at Carriden in 1886. His two brothers were called Alexander and James, whilst he also had three sisters, Janet, Christina and Hellen White. The family had previously lived at Burnshot Farm, Carriden, at the turn of the century where his parents were farm workers. John was unmarried. Before enlisting he was employed as a ploughman with the local farmer Mr. McGowan of Cauldcoats. Both of these farms can still be found today just south west of the village of Blackness.

He enlisted at Linlithgow in 1916 with the Royal Scots, 12th Battalion, service no: 40725. He arrived in France soon after and came under the orders of 9th (Scottish) Division, 27th Brigade.

John White was killed in action, aged 27 years, on the front line East of Arras on 9th April 1917, near Objective Obermeyer during the 9th (Scottish) Division's participation in the First Battle of the Scarpe. His body was recovered from the battlefield and buried at Bailleul Road West Cemetery, St. Laurent-Blangy, grave B. 38.

St. Laurent-Blangy is a village adjoining the north-east side of Arras. Part of the commune and the greater part of the village were included in the front taken over by British troops in March 1916, and the remainder fell into British hands on the 9th April 1917. Bailleul Road West Cemetery was made by the 12th Royal Scots in May 1917.

John White is also commemorated on Blackness War Memorial.



**Thomas White**

Private Thomas White, aged 19, was the son of John White, a dock labourer, and Annie White (ms Brown), who sadly died of heart failure on 1st October 1907. The family formerly lived at 130 North Street and 61b Forth Place, but then moved to 42 South Street, all in Bo'ness. Thomas had one sister, Isabella, and two brothers John and David White.

He enlisted at the age of 17 in December 1914, with the Royal Scots, 1/9th Battalion, service number 5800, which was subsequently amended to 352469. At the time he was employed in the woodyard of Messrs Harrower & Welsh, Bo'ness. He arrived in France at the beginning of 1917 and came under the orders of 51st (Highland) Division, 154th Brigade.

With his first major conflict the Battle of Arras looming, he wrote a final letter home to his father and sister in March 1917 where he said that he was thinking he was going to "pull through". In the letter home there was no mention of the horrors of war he had endured but he was thankful for the many letters and supplies received from back home. He wrote,

> Sister and father, just a few lines to let you know I received your most kind and ever welcome parcel and letter all safe and I was glad you did not forget the writing pad for it was just the thing I was most needing.

He added, hinting at a sweetheart back home,

> I was glad to hear that Jean got her letters all right and you can tell her that I will be looking for a letter and something from her any day now.

Unfortunately the letter arrived home safely but Thomas did not.

Private Thomas White was wounded on 10th April 1917, during 51st (Highland) Division's participation in the First Battle of the Scarpe. He died on the same day at one of the casualty clearing stations, situated west of Arras. He is buried in Aubigny Communal Cemetery Extension, at grave II. A. 13.

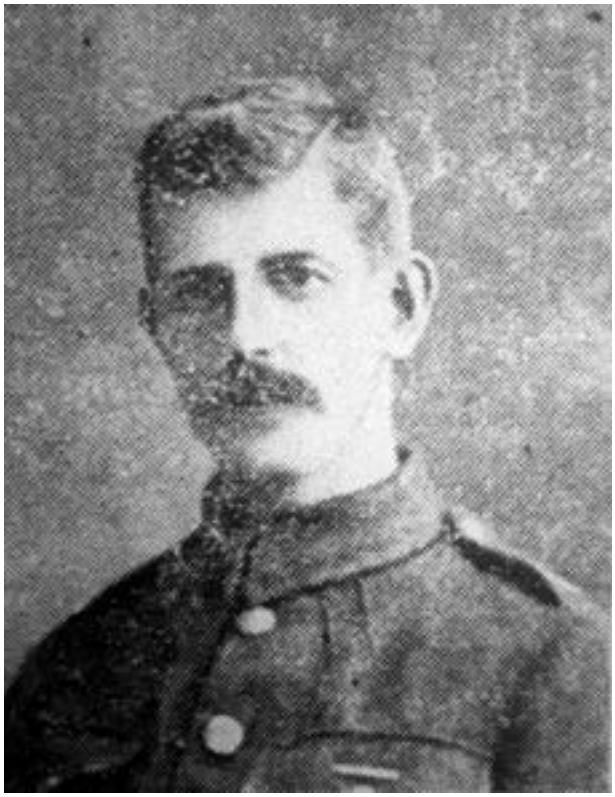
From March 1916 to the end of WW1, Aubigny was occupied by Commonwealth troops and burials were made in the Cemetery Extension until September 1918. The 42nd CCS buried their dead there during the whole period, the 30th CCS in 1916 and 1917, the 24th and 1st Canadian CCS in 1917 (during the capture of Vimy Ridge by the Canadian Corps) and the 57th CCS in 1918. The Extension now contains 2771 Commonwealth burials of the First World War and seven from the Second World War.

**John Seaton**

Private John Seaton was a native of Carriden, the youngest son of William Seaton, a local shoemaker, and Mary Seaton (ms Hamilton). He was born into a big family, with brothers Richard, William Hamilton, Robert and James and sisters Elizabeth, Janet, Margaret and Mary Seaton. In 1891 the family were living at 6 Langhaugh Square in the town. He was married in 1911 to Margaret Seaton (ms Hamilton) in Bo'ness, they had one child, and lived at Philpingstone Terrace. He was employed as a manager in the Danish Dairy Company's branch in Grangepans and was well-known and highly respected. John was also one of the managers of Craigmailen U.F. Church.

He enlisted in 1916 with the Gordon Highlanders, 5th Battalion, service no: 242232, and came under the orders of the 51st (Highland) Division, 153rd Brigade, arriving in France at the start of 1917.

John Seaton was killed instantaneously by an enemy artillery shell near Roclincourt on 10/11th April 1917, during the 51st Highland Division's participation in the First Battle of the Scarpe, the opening phase of the Battle of Arras 1917. He was 30 years old. The local newspapers reported the contents of a letter to Mrs Seaton from Rev. D. Gordon Carmichael, regimental chaplain, containing a first hand account of John Seaton being buried in nearby Roclincourt Military Cemetery (below). It was created by the 51st (Highland) and 34th Divisions in April 1917, and contains many graves of 9th April 1917, the first day of the Battle of Arras, and many of the fallen thereafter. It continued in use, as a front-line cemetery, until October 1918. There is no record of John Seaton held by CWGC being buried in this location - instead he was commemorated on the Arras Memorial, bay 8 and 9. There are, however, 32 unidentified burials in this cemetery, one of which could be John.



**John McGillivray**

Gunner John McGillivray, aged 22, was the son of John and Elspeth W. McGillivray, of 33 North Street, Bo'ness. Tragically his mother Elspeth died of cardiac failure on 15th October 1909, age 47. He had two brothers Findlay J. and Robert F. and three sisters Jane, Annie, and Isabella who were all married. John himself was single, and was an iron moulder by trade.

He enlisted at Aberdeen with the Gordon Highlanders, 2nd Battalion, service no: S/4165 and arrived in France on 9th July 1915. He served at the front, but in early 1917 he was transferred to the Machine Gun Corps (Heavy Branch), "C" Battalion, and was assigned service no: 76679. The Heavy Branch were the first men to operate in tanks, and in July 1917 they separated from the MGC and became the Tank Corps. Gunner McGillivray was involved in the First Battle of the Scarpe, the opening phase of the Battle of Arras. His father was initially notified that John was missing in action in a letter from the Company Sergeant-Major.

> We had . . . two days rather severe fighting, and a number of men including your son made a very gallant fight right in the German lines, enabling our infantry to occupy the desired position. Unfortunately a number of them have not been seen since, and it is possible that they were wounded and picked up by stretcher bearers and taken to some hospital. We are doing our utmost to try and find them and as soon as I know definitely I shall let you know. You have every reason to be proud of him, for he was a very good fellow. One of the officers reported him to me, and praised him very much.

In August, however, Mr. McGillivray received the dreaded news that his son had been officially notified as having been killed in action on 11th April 1917. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Arras Memorial, bay 10.

**William Henderson**

Private William Henderson was 30 years old and lived with his wife Mary (ms Robertson) at Syme's Land, 132 North Street, Bo'ness. They had two children. William was engaged for many years in agricultural work, but before enlisting had been employed as a coal miner at No.2 Grange Pit, Bridgeness Coal Company.

Alongside many of the other local young men, he enlisted at Bo'ness at the outbreak of war in the autumn of 1914 with a battalion of the Royal Scots. With headquarters based at Berwick-upon-Tweed, he was trained with this battalion and engaged on outpost duty along the East Coast of Scotland. In July 1916 he volunteered to be sent to the front, and he went with a large draft to France. He was attached to the Royal Scots Fusiliers, 6th/7th Battalion, and came under the command of 15th (Scottish) Division, 45th Brigade.

William suffered gunshot wounds to the head on the 10th April 1917, during the 15th (Scottish) Division's participation in the First Battle of the Scarpe. He was evacuated from the battlefield to the 8th Casualty Clearing Station. Writing to Mrs Henderson on 14th April, his comrade Private J. Carr, of the R.S.F. said that his dear chum, and her husband, had been wounded but he didn't think it was that serious, adding that they had been involved in hard fighting that month.

Sadly Private William Henderson died of wounds on 13th April 1917. He is buried in Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun, at grave II. E. 12. The area around Duisans was occupied by Commonwealth forces from March 1916, but it was not until February 1917 that the site of this cemetery was selected for the 8th Casualty Clearing Station, with the first burials taking place in March that year. Most of the graves relate to the Battles of Arras in 1917, and the trench warfare that followed.

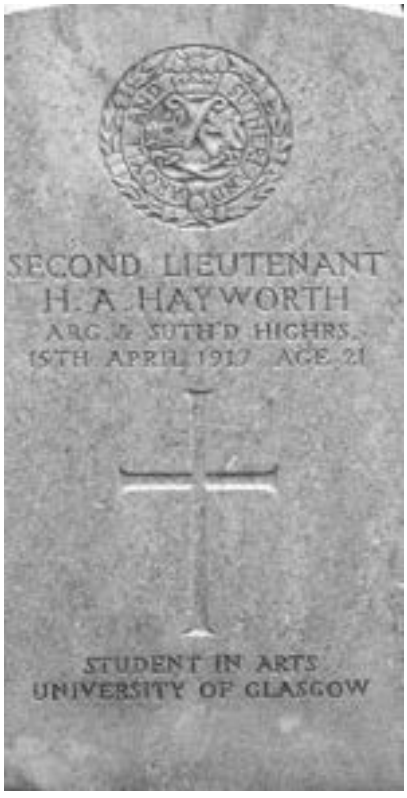
**Harry A. Hayworth**

Second-Lieutenant Harry Asher Hayworth was born on the 5th December 1895, in Dunfermline, Fife, the fourth son of William Hayworth, Bank Accountant, and Jane Hayworth (nee Asher). The Hayworth family had lived previously in Bo'ness from 1889-1894/5, when William was an accountant under Thomas Hope of the Royal Bank. Harry's brother Frederick was born there in 1892. In 1908, aged 12, he moved to Lennoxtown when his father was appointed agent for the Royal Bank of Scotland in the Campsie area. He played cricket for the Lennox Castle Club, taught at the local Sunday School and acted as Deputy Organist at the Campsie United Free Church of Scotland.

In 1914, Harry won the Forfar Classics Bursary and came first in the University of Glasgow Bursary Competition and The United Free Church of Scotland Undergraduate Bursary Competition and went on to study Classics at the University of Glasgow. He was joined by his elder brother Frederick who enrolled in a class for Scots Law. During their studies the two brothers shared a flat at 99 Grant Street, near St. George's Cross. In January 1915, however, his brother Frederick dropped out to enlist in the Glasgow Highlanders. Harry himself enlisted in the same regiment in April 1915, but took advantage of an offer by the University to take his final exams early. Although he failed his first attempt in May, he finally passed his exams in June and was able to proceed with his training in the summer of that year. Harry applied for officer training and, along with his brother, was commissioned in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 7th Battalion, in December 1915. Almost a year later, in October 1916, Harry was finally separated from his brother when the two were posted to different units on the Western Front.

For a period of six months between October 1916 and April 1917, Harry took command of a platoon of 'B' Company of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 10th Battalion. His first experience of trench warfare was in the area of High Wood, near Bazentin-le-Grand on the Somme. In April 1917 he led his platoon into the Battle of Arras, participating in the Capture of Athies (April 9th) and the fighting around the Rouex Chemical Works (April 12th-15th). His eventual fate was recorded in 1931 by his commanding officer, Colonel H. G. Sotheby in the Battalion History:

> On the 15th [of April] the whole Division came out of line being relieved by the 51st. The relief was satisfactorily completed, until as one platoon of 'B' Company was entering Athies it came under heavy 5.9 shell-fire, when Lieut. H. Hayworth, a most gallant young officer, and 6 men were killed and 6 wounded.




Frederick was at home on leave when Harry was killed and he was present when the news reached the family. Despite this he returned to his unit and on 12th May 1917, less than a month after Harry's death, Frederick was killed on the very same battlefield that claimed his brother's life. Harry is buried at Faubourg D'Amiens Cemetery, grave V. A. 12, whilst Frederick's name appears on the Arras Memorial, bay 9. They appear side by side on the memorial tablets in the University of Glasgow's Memorial Chapel. Both men are also listed on the Strathkelvin War Memorial in Lennoxtown. Harry's name also appears on the memorial at Lenzie Academy. Both brothers were connected to Bo'ness, so it is a mystery as to why only Harry, born in Dunfermline, is commemorated on the Bo'ness War Memorial, and Frederick, born in Bo'ness, is not.

**James John Hunter**

Private James John Hunter was born in 1895 in Bo'ness, the son of James Hunter, a railway marshal from Lanarkshire, and Mary Hunter. He came from a big family, with sisters, Christina, Maggie, Ann and Janet and brothers John, George and David Hunter. The family stayed at various addresses in Bo'ness over the years - Corbiehall, North Street and 41A Richmond Terrace - but latterly the family home was at Commissioner's Buildings.

Nesle Communal Cemetery

He was employed as a pawn broker's assistant at Mr Waddell's Loan Office, Meuse Lane, Bo'ness, and on 7th April 1916, James appealed to the local military tribunal in Bo'ness that being called up would cause serious hardship. This appeal was dismissed, and he enlisted at Bo'ness and initially served with the Royal Regiment of Artillery (Royal Field Artillery), service no: 134013. He was then transferred to the Highland Light Infantry, 17th Bn, and assigned a new service no: 42850. This Battalion had been in France since 23rd November 1915, and came under the orders of 32nd Division, 97th Brigade.

Private Hunter was wounded during 32nd Division's participation in what is known as the Pursuit of the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line. He was wounded in action near the village of Fayet, in the front line north west of St Quentin.

He was removed to No.21 Casualty Clearing Station at Nesle but sadly died of wounds on the 16th April 1917. He is buried in the nearby Nesle Communal Cemetery, grave C. 4., alongside 133 other identified Commonwealth casualties.

**John Queenan**

Able Seaman John Queenan was born on 14th December 1888, the eldest son of John and Annie Queenan. He came from a large family, with brothers William, Robert, James and Alexander and sisters Lizzie, Christine and Annie Queenan. John's father was a Railway Guardsman and the family had lived in Carlisle at the turn of the century, eventually moving to live at Hardie's Buildings, Corbiehall, Bo'ness. John followed in his father's footsteps by working with the North British Railway Company as a checker.

He enlisted with the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, Clyde Division, service no: Z/4037 on 22nd April 1915. On the 21st September 1915 he was drafted to the Royal Naval Division (RND), 5th (Nelson) Battalion, as part of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, bound for Gallipoli. He was only in the actual theatre of war for a very short time, being stuck down with dysentery one month after arriving, and was removed on 23rd October 1915 to No. 15 Stationary Hospital at Mudros on the Greek island of Lemnos. From there he was invalided back to Plymouth, England, on board the Hospital Ship Aquitania, arriving on home soil on the 4th December that year.

After making a full recovery John Queenan was attached to RND 1st (Drake) Battalion, C Company. On the 10th July 1916, he arrived in France, and in September he transferred to 8th Entrenching Battalion remaining with them until 3rd March 1917, returning thereafter to 2nd Battalion. This was just in time to participate in the Battle of Arras as part of the Royal Naval Division, 2nd Royal Naval Brigade, now redesignated the 189th Brigade.

In April 1917, John's father was still reeling from the news that another son, John's brother Robert, a stoker in the Royal Navy, had been severely burned on the neck and back by boiling lead when further tragic news was to reach him in Bo'ness. John Queenan had been severely wounded in the legs and thighs by an artillery shell during the Division's participation in the Second Battle of the Scarpe on 23rd April 1917. He was removed to 1st Canadian General Hospital in Etaples, but sadly died there of his injuries on 30th April 1917. He is buried in Etaples Military Cemetery, at grave XVIII. F. 6. On the 20th May a note of sympathy was sent to John's parents from the National Union of Railwaymen, of which John was a member.

**George Grant**

Private George Grant was born 9th July 1880, in Corbiehall, Bo'ness. He was the son of John Grant, a quarryman, and Mary Dobbie Grant (ms Hill), who were married on Hogmanay 1868 at 50 Calder's Buildings, Corbiehall. At the time of his enlistment, George was still living with his mother at Calder's Buildings, and worked as a fireman in one of the Kinneil Coal Company's pits. He had six brothers, John, Alexander, Thomas, David Hill, William and James and one sister named Janet Hill Grant, who was also the youngest in the family. He enlisted at Bo'ness in January 1915, with the Gordon Highlanders, 9th Battalion, service no: S/8495, and came under the orders of 44th Brigade in 15th (Scottish) Division. He arrived in France on 4th August 1915, and saw plenty of action, being wounded in action no less than three times, the last injury allowing him back to Bo'ness to see in the New Year of 1917.

He was wounded during the early hours of 23rd April 1917 during 15th (Scottish) Division's participation in the Second Battle of the Scarpe, a phase of the Battle of Arras. He died later that day aged 36. Mrs Grant received a letter from one of George's comrades, Private Alex Stevenson, saying,

> I am extremely sorry to announce that my best pal Geordie has been taken away from my side. He was my best mate for nearly two years, ever since he joined the Gordons.

He went on,

> It was early on the 22nd, about one o'clock in the morning, George was wounded and he died on the 23rd. I helped to carry George down to the dressing station, and he was unconscious for he said is that Steven and I said yes, Geordie, it is me.

He finished the letter by saying,

> I am very sorry but it was God's time and we can't help it. Mrs Grant try and cheer up, I know it is hard.

Private George Grant is buried at Faubourg D'Amiens Cemetery, Arras, grave V. B. 26.

**Thomas Leishman**

Second Lieutenant Thomas Heugh Leishman was the second son of Alexander Leishman, dock labourer, and Janet Leishman (ms Heugh) of Union Terrace, Stewart Avenue, Bo'ness. Interestingly Janet's father was the Linlithgow Town Drummer in the 1850s. Thomas came from a large family with four brothers Alex, James (or Jimmie), Robert (or Bob) and David, along with two sisters, Janet and Margaret. Tom, as he was better known, was born in Bo'ness on 14th September 1883, and was educated at the Anderson Academy, Bo'ness (the present day Public Primary School). He was employed as a Traveller by Messrs. John Denholm & Company, Pitwood Importers, Bo'ness, and before that worked in the offices of Messrs. R. Mickel and Company, Victoria Sawmills.

He was well known and highly respected, being one of the members of the YMCA, and Assistant Scoutmaster to the St Andrew's troop of Boy Scouts, who also lost two other supporters in WW1, Robert Dott and Robert N. Brown. Both were good friends of Tom Leishman. Robert Dott and Tom were also heavily involved with Bo'ness Bowling Club.

Tom enlisted in the Highland Light Infantry on 13th September 1914, and trained at Gailes on the Ayrshire coast becoming a Signalling Instructor. He obtained a commission in the Royal Scots Fusiliers, 5th Bn, on 14th October 1915, and was attached to the 2nd (21st Foot) Bn and served in France from January 1917, coming under the orders of the 30th Division, 90th Brigade. Only three months later, after a baptism of fire, Tom was killed in action at Monchy on the 23rd April 1917. This was during the 30th Division's participation in the Second Battle of the Scarpe, a phase of the Battle of Arras. He is commemorated on the Arras Memorial, bay 5.

In a letter to his parents, his battalion commander Major Campbell wrote,

> It is with deepest regret that I write to inform you that your son was killed in action on the 23rd April, while valiantly leading his platoon in the first waves of the attack against the German first-line trenches. Your son had not been long with the battalion, but he proved himself a most gallant officer. The regiment can ill afford to lose officers like him.

In another letter a comrade wrote,

> He was leading his men when he fell, and the loss is felt by the company. As a man he was quiet and unassuming, and as an officer had a deep sense of duty. He showed much courage in the time of danger and handled his men with skill…An honourable death was his.

His brother Robert Leishman was also killed during WWI and is commemorated on the Bo'ness War Memorial, the two men's names appearing side by side. His brothers Alex, Jimmie and David also saw active service and survived the war.

POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHS.

TO

**Harry Harris**

Private Harry Harris was born in Burslem, Staffordshire on 28th February 1881, the third son of Frank Harris and Elizabeth Harris (ms Jackson). He had two brothers, James and Arthur Clement, and three sisters, Lilian Laura, Annie and Adelaide Alice. Another brother and sister, Percy and Rose, had died in infancy. Sadly his mother had also died in 1900.

His father Frank was a well-known and highly respected figure in the pottery industry, and prior to WW1 he was for some years the Manager of the decorative department of Messrs C. W. McNay and Sons, Bridgeness Pottery, Bo'ness. From a young age Harry followed in his father's footsteps and he became a pottery kilnman, also working at Bridgeness Pottery, and living at Gladstone Terrace, Philpingstone Road, Bo'ness in 1915. Both men were very well-known in the town. Frank Harris died in Staffordshire on 9th May 1916, aged 69 years old.

Harry was married in 1906 to Florence Louisa Harris (ms also Harris) at St. Machar, Aberdeenshire. Before enlistment he had set up home at 40 Broad Street, Denny, Stirlingshire, where he lived with his wife and four children. He worked in Denny as a Picture House Manager.

He initially enlisted with the Royal Scots, 5/6th Battalion, was assigned service no: 201622, and was attached to 10th Entrenching Battalion. This was a temporary unit used as a pool of men, from which drafts of replacements could be drawn by conventional infantry battalions. Eventually he found himself serving with the Highland Light Infantry, 2nd Battalion, service no: 353051, who were part of 2nd Division, 5th Brigade.

Harry Harris was notified as missing, presumed dead, on 27th April 1917, as the 2nd Bn HLI was preparing for an attack north of Monchy-le-Preux, between Oppy Wood and Arleux. This was just prior to the 2nd Division's participation in the Battle of Arleux, a phase of the Battle of Arras. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Arras Memorial, bay 8.

**James McIlroy**

Private James Brewster McIlroy was born on the 20th April 1897, in Bo'ness, the son of James McIlroy and Mary McIlroy (ms Brewster), who were married in Dunfermline on 5th June 1894. His father James was a Check Clerk with the Bo'ness Co-operative Society, and sadly passed away at the family home at 9 Braeside Terrace, Bo'ness on 12th February 1911, aged only 42. James had four brothers, John, Robert, William and George, a sister Jeanie and a half-sister Maggie. Before the War, James was employed as a coal miner at Kinneil Colliery, and was unmarried.

He enlisted with the Royal Engineers, service no: 174166 in June 1915, and transferred to the Royal Berkshire Regiment, 5th Battalion, service no: 33680, in May 1916, coming under the orders of 12th (Eastern) Division, 35th Brigade. James arrived in France in January 1917, after the 12th Division were notified that they would be participating in the Battle of Arras. He fought valiantly through the opening phases of the battle but was killed in action when the 5th Battalion were holding the front line near Fampoux and were subjected to continuous heavy artillery shell fire.

James McIlroy was killed a week after his 20th birthday, on 27th April 1917. His body was not recovered and his name appears alongside comrades and other men from Bo'ness on the Arras Memorial, bay 7. At the time of official notification of his death, his mother, who had remarried in 1914 to a Nathaniel Gray, was living in Stenhousemuir and James is also remembered on the Larbert War Memorial.

**Alexander D. Anderson**

Lance-Sergeant Alexander D. Anderson was born in 1881, the son of James and Isabella Anderson. He was married to Julia Anderson in 1902 at Bo'ness and they lived at Helen Place, Grangepans, with their seven children. He was an ironmoulder by trade and was well known in Bo'ness along with his two brothers John Anderson and William Anderson, who carried on a business as a joiner and contractor.

He had been a territorial for some time and in 1915 he was awarded the Territorial Force Efficiency Medal, given after 12 years service, with war service counting as double. He was mobilised as a Corporal with the Royal Scots, 1/10th (Cyclist) Battalion at the beginning of the war, and was sent to France in May 1916, where some time later he was attached to Royal Scots Fusiliers, 1st Battalion. His battalion came under the orders of 3rd Division, 8th Brigade.

In a letter home to his wife from a comrade called Lance-Corporal James Kelly, Alexander Anderson was reported as having been killed in action east of Monchy during the 3rd Division's participation in the Third Battle of the Scarpe on 3rd May 1917, during the Battle of Arras. Official intimation was not received until one year later on 10th May 1918.

Alexander's body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Arras Memorial, bay 5.

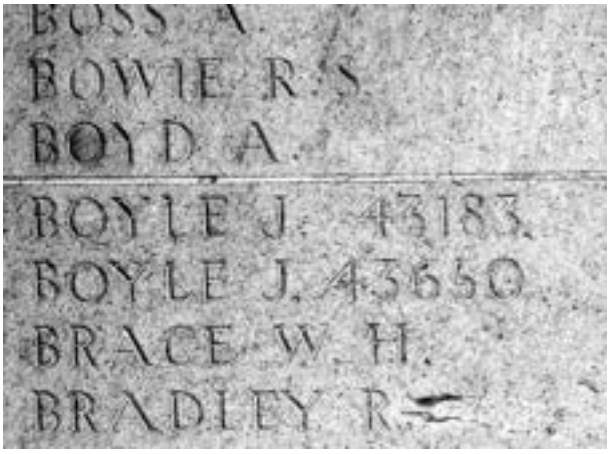
**John Boyle**

Private John (Jack) Boyle was born in Glasgow, and was a grandson of Mr John White, undertaker, 16 South Street, Bo'ness. He was unmarried, 5'5" in height, and aged 25 years old. He was a woodworker by trade and worked at Messrs. John Denholm & Co., at their woodyard in Bo'ness.

He enlisted on 14th April 1914, at the Drill Hall, Bo'ness with the territorial Royal Scots, 1/10th (Cyclist) Battalion, 'B' Company, signing up for a period of four years, and was initially assigned service no: 1018. After carrying out coastal duties in East Lothian, Jack volunteered for overseas service and after a period of training he arrived in France on 29th July 1916. Two months later he was posted to Royal Scots, 2nd Battalion, service no: 43183, as part of 3rd Division, 8th Brigade.

He was notified as missing in action on 3rd May 1917, during the 2nd Royal Scots disastrous advance in the area of Monchy-le-Preux. His half-sister Miss Christina W. Boyle of 70 Ashley Terrace, Edinburgh, was also serving with the armed forces in London when she was notified that Jack was missing in action. She notified Jack's aunt in Edinburgh who made frantic requests for any further news. Sadly official confirmation was received some time later that Jack had indeed been killed in action on 3rd May.

His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Arras Memorial, bay 1 and 2.



**James D. Broom**

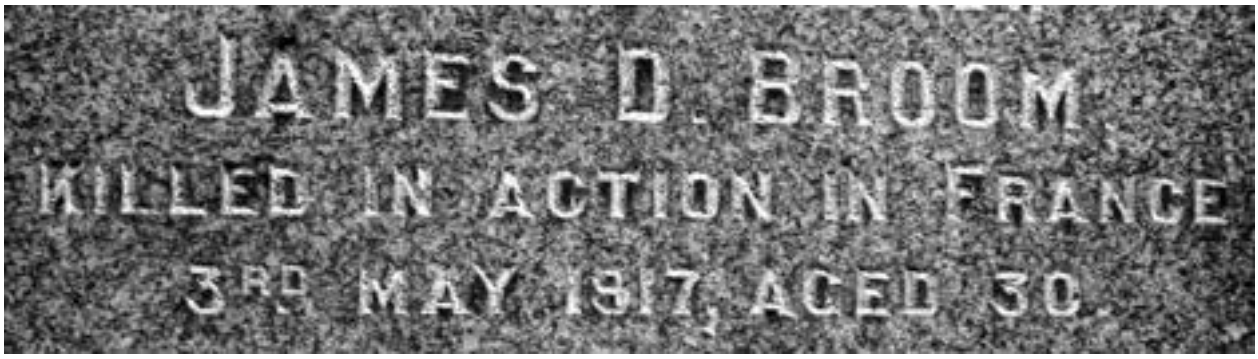
Private James Douglas Broom was born in 1887 in Linlithgow and resided with his uncle George Miller and auntie Elizabeth Miller (ms Broom), King's Terrace, Braehead, Bo'ness. They had previously stayed at Belford Place, Stewart Avenue and Charlotte Place, East Bog. George Miller was a coal trimmer at the Dock Pit, but James was employed as an iron moulder in a local foundry. He was 5'8" and weighed 140lbs, with blue eyes, dark brown hair and a fresh complexion.

James enlisted on 26th September 1914, at Bo'ness with the territorial Royal Scots 1/10th (Cyclist) Battalion, service no: 2122. He volunteered for overseas service and went to France on 29th July 1916, where two months later he was transferred to 2nd Battalion Royal Scots, service no: 43185, as part of 3rd Division, 8th Brigade.

He was posted missing on 3rd May 1917, near Monchy-le -Preux during the Third Battle of the Scarpe, but his aunt and uncle had to wait until late February 1918 before official confirmation of his death was received from the Army.

James Broom and Jack Boyle's service numbers are very close in sequence, and they enlisted, trained, arrived in France and fought in the same battalion together. They also died fighting alongside each other on 3rd May with the 8th Brigade.

James Broom's body was also not recovered and his name is commemorated on the Arras Memorial, bay 1 and 2, near to that of his comrade Private Jack Boyle. He is also commemorated on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery. He was 30 years old when he died.



**Alexander S. Morrison**

Private Alexander Morrison was born in Bo'ness on 22nd July 1895, the son of Alexander and Maggie Morrison (ms Wilson), Dark Close, South Street, Bo'ness. His parents had been married in the town on 13th June 1890. He had four brothers James, Andrew, John and David, and two sisters Mary and Maggie Morrison. Three other siblings Thomas, Robert and William had died in their younger years. Prior to enlistment, alongside his father, he was in the employment of Robert Kilpatrick, slater and plasterer.

Alexander enlisted at Glencorse, Midlothian, with the Royal Scots, 2nd Battalion, service no: 38067, on 3rd October 1916, and upon joining the action in France he came under the orders of 3rd Division, 8th Brigade. He was posted missing on 3rd May 1917, near Monchy-Le-Preux during the Third Battle of the Scarpe, but a letter to Alexander's mother a year later from a comrade who had been a prisoner of war in Germany revealed the horrific circumstances of her son's death. In the letter, sent via the Red Cross and Order of St. John, Private David Cathcart from Glasgow said,

> There were four of us in a German trench, Morrison and I being of the same company, and both of us wounded. It was impossible for us to regain our own trenches owing to the ground intervening being heavily shelled. Suddenly a party of Bosches appeared and noticing that Morrison and the other two had rifles in their hands they fired upon them without giving them the chance of surrender. I tried to throw myself on Morrison to save him but the Germans pulled me off and finding that he still breathed they savagely plunged their bayonets into his body until death mercifully ended his sufferings. Pte. Morrison...passed safely through many fierce engagements and had never been wounded until he met his death at the hands of these barbarians in the month of May, 1917.

Alexander Morrison's body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Arras Memorial, bay 1 and 2, alongside the names of the three other Bo'ness men who fell on 3rd May 1917.

**Peter Potter**

Private Peter Duncan Potter was born in Bo'ness in 1890 the youngest son of Alexander Potter, carter, and Annie Potter (ms Duncan) of George Terrace, Bo'ness. His parents were from Uphall, West Lothian, and were married there in 1878. His brother Robert Potter had already been an early casualty of the war, dying of illness when home on leave at the New Year in 1915, his internment being the first military funeral of the war in Bo'ness. There was further tragic news to come, as Peter's mother Annie also died in February that year, aged 61. An elder brother, Alexander, also served in the armed forces and survived the war. He also had three sisters, Annie Hunter, Jessie Arthur and Elizabeth Potter.

Peter Potter was a joiner to trade and for some time had been employed on Government work in Staffordshire. He returned to Bo'ness prior to the outbreak of the war and enlisted in the town at the end of November 1915. He arrived in France early in 1916 and eventually found himself serving in the London Regiment (London Scottish) 1st/14th Battalion, service no: 512018 (formerly 5740) coming under the orders of 56th (London) Division, 168th Brigade.

Peter Potter was killed in action on 13th May 1917, during the attempt by 56th Division to capture Cavalry Farm and surrounding trenches, just after the Third Battle of the Scarpe, the concluding part of the Battle of Arras. He was aged 27 years old. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Arras Memorial, bay 10.

He is also commemorated on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery.

**Robert Leishman**

Private Robert Leishman was the son of Alexander Leishman, dock labourer, and Janet Leishman, the daughter of Thomas Heugh of Linlithgow. He was unmarried and lived at Union Terrace, Stewart Avenue with his parents. He came from a large family with four brothers Alex, James (or Jimmie), Thomas and David, along with two sisters, Janet and Margaret. He was born on 4th May 1897, at Bo'ness and brought up in the town, attending Bo'ness Academy. He was employed as an apprentice architect with Mr. Thomson, Architects, in the town. He enlisted in November 1915 at Bo'ness with the Highland Light Infantry, 1/9th Battalion, service no: 332233, and served with the British Expeditionary Force, arriving in France in July 1916. His Battalion came under the orders of 33rd Division, 100th Brigade. Robert was killed in action, aged 20, on the 16th May 1917, at Croisilles near Arras during the final phases of the Battle of Arras. His death was described in a letter to his mother from Lieutenant Glen, a commanding officer with the Highland Light Infantry. He wrote,

> Somewhere in France
> 16/5/1917
>
> Dear Mrs Leishman,
>
> It is my painful duty to inform you that your son (No. 332233) was killed the last night by a shell which landed close to the carrying party of which he was a member. The shell killed the sergeant, your son and another, and wounded (seriously) two others. As his platoon commander the news of your son's death came as a great shock to me, but my feelings can be nothing to yours on learning of your great bereavement and my heart goes out to you and I pray you may be granted the necessary strength to bear the great burden that has been placed upon you. Your son died nobly for his King and country, and it is well to remember this for the comfort it may bring. It may lighten your cross even so little. He was much respected by all in the platoon. He was buried by his sorrowing comrades at 3:30pm this afternoon in the military cemetery in [*name redacted]*, close to where he fell. He was killed instantaneously and his personal effects will be forwarded to you, later, through the proper channels. Once more I tender to yourself and all sorrowing friends my sincere sympathy, and if I can be of any further assistance to you I will be only too pleased to hear from you and furnish what information you desire.

The two other casualties in the carrying party were Sgt. Simpson Boyle Yuille 330757 and Pte. Alexander Watt Taylor 332998. As indicated in the letter, Robert's body was buried near to where he fell, which was in a cemetery east of Croisilles, north of the road to Bullecourt. After the Armistice his body was exhumed and reburied, as part of grave concentration, at the Honourable Artillery Company (H.A.C.) Cemetery, Ecoust-St. Mein, grave VI. E. 3.

News of Robert's death was a double tragedy for the Leishman family as his brother Second-Lieutenant Thomas Leishman had been killed only the previous month. Both brothers appear side by side on the Bo'ness War Memorial.

**Joseph Rocks**

Petty Officer Joseph Rocks was born on 19th May 1895, in Armagh, Northern Ireland, the son of Michael Rocks, 55 Edward Street, Lurgan. He was married to Bridget V. Rocks (ms Breen) in 1917 and lived at Calder's Buildings, Corbiehall, Bo'ness, where his wife's family also resided. Prior to enlistment he was employed at Messrs. James Calder & Co. Ltd., Bo'ness Distillery. He was 5'6" in height, had dark brown hair, blue eyes and a had a woman's face tattooed on his right arm.

He enlisted on 12th May 1915, with the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, Royal Naval Division, service no: Clyde Z/4397. He arrived in France in July 1916, but moved between battalions and spent some time in hospital, firstly through illness and then through suffering a gunshot wound to his left leg in November 1916. He was evacuated from France on board the Hospital Ship Asturias and spent some time back in England recovering at the R.C. Hospital, Bunbury, Tarporley.

He eventually recovered and returned to the Western Front on 21st March 1917, joining 1st (Drake) Battalion. One month later, Joseph Rocks was killed in action on 19th May 1917, in the Gavrelle Sector, towards the end of the Battle of Arras. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Arras Memorial, bay 1.

The ruins of the Rue de Gare, Arras from an old postcard

**W. Currie**

Lance Corporal William Curry (spelling is incorrect on Memorial) was not a native of Bo'ness, but was employed for about two years before the war broke out as chauffeur to Mr. D.K. Harrower, Elmpark, Bo'ness. Mr Harrrower was a local councillor and Justice of the Peace, as well as the president and chairman of Bo'ness and Carriden Unionist Association who met regularly at the club rooms in Corbiehall. He later served as the Chairman of the Bo'ness Gas Light Company Ltd.

William enlisted on 17th February 1915, at Bury St Edmunds, where he was born and brought up, with the Army Service Corps, Motor Transport (M.T.) Company, service no: M2/054285. The "M2" prefix meant that the person was a professional or trained driver before attestment who required no, or very little, additional driving training.

William had just enough time before going to the Front to get married to Emma Curry (ms Frith) at Tunstall, Stoke-on-Trent on 25th April 1915. The couple lived in the same town and had one child called Norman William Curry, who was born in February 1916. William was 33 years old, 5'7" in height and weighed 160lbs.

He arrived in France on 18th July 1915, and saw action through 1915 before returning to No:1 Reserve, Motor Transport Depot, Grove Park in Lewisham, London. He again returned to France on board the SS Onward, arriving in Boulogne on 19th April 1916. The nature of his work meant he transferred regularly between ASC companies. He initially joined 637th M.T. Coy, ASC, attached to the Royal Garrison Artillery, 80th Siege Battery, and had spells with 562nd and 406th Coys, before joining 283rd Coy.

He was killed on the 26th May 1917, during the final phases of the Battle of Arras whilst conveying ammunition to and from the front line trenches east of Arras. He is buried at St. Martin Calvaire British Cemetery, St. Martin-Sur-Cojeul, at grave I. B. 11. The village had been taken by 30th Division on 9th April 1917, on the opening day of the First Battle of the Scarpe.

Lance Corporal William Curry is also remembered on the Tunstall War Memorial.

**John Jackson**

Private John Jackson was the son of Vair and Jessie Jackson (ms Gloag), of 242 Leith Walk, Leith, Edinburgh, who were married there on 29th September 1893. He had two brothers, Vair and George and six sisters, namely Sarah, Alice, Jessie, Catherine, Margaret and Christina. He was unmarried and stayed at 5 Mayfield Terrace, Bridgeness, Bo'ness prior to enlistment. He was 5'6" in height and weighed 147lbs.

He enlisted at Bo'ness on 4th December 1914, and initially joined the Royal Scots, 1/5th Battalion, service no: 2882. His Battalion came under the orders of the 29th Division, 88th Brigade of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force in Egypt in January 1916 and then headed to France arriving on 15th March 1916. He was discharged from the Territorial Force on the 24th April 1916, and re-enlisted into the Machine Gun Corps (Infantry) 88th MG Company, service no: 20680. Still coming under the orders of 29th Division, he saw action as a machine gunner at the Somme in October 1916 at the Battles of Albert and Transloy.

In 1917 he also participated in the Battle of Arras, but was eventually wounded on 25th May 1917, as the hostilities in this sector were drawing to a close and died of wounds the next day. John Jackson was 20 years old when he died.

He is buried at Faubourg D'Amiens Cemetery, Arras, at grave V. F. 22.

**William McCurrach**

Sub-Lieutenant William McCurrach was the only son of George McCurrach, a tailor's cutter, and Elizabeth McCurrach (ms McWilliam) of George Terrace, Bo'ness. He was born at Bogmoor, Fochabers, Banffshire, on 25th November 1887, and was educated at Bo'ness Academy and Skerry's College, Edinburgh. He was married in 1915 to Annie Porteous, the fourth daughter of William Porteous of Bo'ness, and they had two young children, George and Sheila. The family lived at Library House, Bo'ness.

He served his apprenticeship as a law clerk in Bo'ness, subsequently entering the Town Office where he served as Deputy Town Clerk to Mr. A. Stewart Jamieson, who himself was a staff paymaster in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, stationed at Dorset. William McCurrach was one of the prime movers in the institution of the Sea Scout movement in Bo'ness, and acted as Scoutmaster. Many of the former Sea Scouts in Bo'ness had already enlisted and had already appeared in the casualty lists. At the start of the war, a communication was received by William McCurrach from the Scouts Headquarters in Edinburgh, requesting that he furnish Sea Scouts for the staffing of coastguard stations in Scotland, and around sixteen boys aged 16 to 18 had volunteered from Bo'ness.

He enlisted on 14th April 1915, with the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, Royal Naval Division, and

became a qualified 1st Class Machine Gun Instructor at Hythe School of Musketry in July 1915. He then saw action in the Gallipoli Campaign with 1st (Drake) Battalion where he was hospitalised with illness and invalided home in March 1916 travelling between the Dardanelles and Alexandria on Hospital Ship HS Dongola, between Alexandria and Naples on board the HS Neuralia, and eventual transfer to England on HS Aquitania. He rejoined his Division on recovery and served in France from 1st August 1916, joining 63rd Royal Naval Division, 188th Brigade Machine Gun Company. Due to further illness he went back and forth from France to England, and even spent a few weeks back in Bo'ness, but on 6th May 1917, he was posted to 190th Brigade Machine Gun Company.

He was severely wounded in the legs and thigh on 25th May 1917, during the end phases of the Battle of Arras, whilst at an advanced outpost close to German lines. Despite the severity of his injuries, William was able to write a cheerful note back home, reaching his family a few days after his death which occurred two days later at 30th Casualty Clearing Station, Aubigny. His Commanding Officer wrote, "It will be a consolation for you to know that William died the death of a very brave man, a death he would have desired, fighting in the great cause which we all know to be just".

William McCurrach was buried at Aubigny Communal Cemetery Extension, at grave VI. G. 14.

**Charles Mair**

Private Charles Grant Mair stayed at 25 Castleloan, Bo'ness, with his wife Jeanie McNeill Mair (ms Young). The couple were married in Bo'ness in 1914, and had one child, Annie Young Mair. Charles was born in 1891, the son of Peter Mair, coal miner, and Margaret Mair (ms Grant) who were married in Bo'ness on 3rd April 1885. Sadly Peter's mother died in 1893, age 29, when Peter was only an infant. Like his father, Charles was also employed as a coal miner, and worked with the Kinneil Coal Company.

Charles Mair was an enthusiastic football player, and was well-known in the ranks of local juniors, playing with the Kinneil Ramblers, and Linlithgow Rose, but never became a senior although appearing on several occasions in the Bo'ness ranks. His father Peter Mair, was one of the half-back supports of the old famous Bo'ness team for several seasons.

He enlisted on 4th June 1915, with Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), with the territorial 1/5th Battalion (Queen's Edinburgh Rifles), and initially given service no: 3114, Charles eventually transferred to the 11th (Service) Battalion, service no: 250869. He was sent to France soon afterwards, coming under the orders of 9th (Scottish) Division, 27th Brigade. He was invalided back home and spent a period recovering in Bangour Hospital, Broxburn, West Lothian. Upon recovering he returned to the Front at the end of March 1917.

Charles Mair was killed in action on the 6th June 1917, when the 11th Royal Scots were defending trenches seized from the Germans at Greenland Hill, an area of high ground close to the villages of Gavrelle, Rouex and Plouvain providing a commanding position that was a key feature in the battles of Arras 1917. His body was not found and he is commemorated on the Arras Memorial, bay 1 and 2.

Large bomb crater near Arras

**William Robertson** (2 of 2)

Private William Robertson was born in Drybridge, Dundonald, Ayrshire. He was married to Mrs Jeanie Robertson and the couple stayed at Waggon Road, Bo'ness, with their four children.

Prior to enlistment he was a well-known face in Bo'ness, working as a lorry driver with Messrs J. And J. Allan, Grain Merchants, East Pier Street, Bo'ness. This particular business had been resurrected during the war after an interval of a quarter of a century. With the distillers and other manufacturers providing storage accommodation for their own requirements, the need for large scale granaries had gradually become unnecessary. The outbreak of war saw a reversal, with loft space at East Pier Street accommodating 10000 bags being utilised for the storage of vast quantities of good milling oats. Many of the old grain carriers in Bo'ness were re-employed after many years. Another existing legacy of Messrs J. And J. Allan in the town is the current Post Office building which they funded in 1911.

Having previously served with the Lanarkshire Yeomanry territorials, he enlisted in 1916 with the Highland Light Infantry, 1/9th (Glasgow Highlanders) Battalion, service no: 333004 (formerly 6274). He arrived in France around November 1916 and came under the orders of 33rd Division, 100th Brigade.

William Robertson was badly wounded in the left leg on 28th May 1917, during the 33rd Division's participation in the closing phases of the Battle of Arras, and subsequent actions on the Hindenburg Line. He was evacuated to 16th General Hospital, Le Treport on the French coast, where he had his leg amputated above the knee. The operation made him very weak and, although he held on bravely for a number of days, he died of wounds sustained on 17th June 1917. He was 38 years of age. He is buried in Mont Huon Military Cemetery, Le Treport, at grave IV. G. 7B. There are now 2128 Commonwealth burials of the First World War in this cemetery, and 200 German war graves.

**John Reedie**

Private John Millar Reedie was born on 10th February 1896, the son of David Reedie and Mary Lawson Reedie (ms Millar) who were married in Bo'ness in 1889. He had two sisters, Agnes and Margaret, and two brothers David and James. He was 5'4" and weighed 136lbs, had a ruddy complexion, blue eyes and dark brown hair.

His father David was a joiner who for some time had carried on a joinery business in Bo'ness, but he left Bo'ness in 1907 on board the SS Columbia for New York to make his fortune. His wife and family stayed at home until he was settled but he returned home in April 1912, bringing his wife Mary over to New York one month later. Then Mary brought over her younger children in October 1912. The family stayed in the Bronx area of New York City.

John Reedie was a sailor and, like his brother David, had been employed on board the many tramp steamers belonging to Bo'ness and other Firth of Forth ports. David Reedie served in the Royal Naval Reserve and survived the sinking of HM Torpedo Boat Eden that collided with SS France in the English Channel on 18th June 1916, with 43 men lost, including Stoker John Hardie from Bo'ness. David survived the war and eventually joined the rest of his family in New York in 1920.

John travelled from New York to Montreal, Canada, where he enlisted with the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) on 19th August 1915. He sailed on the SS Scandinavian, and arrived in England on 16th November 1915. After training and brief spell in hospital with illness he embarked for France with 60th Battalion arriving at Le Havre on 21st February 1917. He was transferred in April 1917 to Canadian Mounted Rifles (Quebec

Regiment) 5th Battalion, attached to the 8th Canadian Infantry Brigade, 3rd Canadian Division.

He participated in the various assaults during the Battle of Arras, including the Battle of Vimy Ridge and the Third Battle of the Scarpe. John Reedie was killed in action defending Vimy Ridge from counter-attacks by the Germans. He is buried close to where he fell at Petit-Vimy British Cemetery grave ref: D. 7.

He is also commemorated on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery.

CHAPTER 9

# *1917*
# *France and Flanders*

Messines, Passchendaele and Cambrai

## A Soldier's Grave

Then in the lull of midnight, gentle arms
Lifted him slowly down the slopes of death
Lest he should hear again the mad alarms
Of battle, dying moans, and painful breath.

And where the earth was soft for flowers we made
A grave for him that he might better rest.
So, Spring shall come and leave it sweet arrayed,
And there the lark shall turn her dewy nest.

*Francis Ledwidge*

# Messines, Passchendaele and Cambrai

The period of time between the effective end of the Battle of Arras and the commencement of operations on a new front in Flanders in the summer of 1917 was typical of the political intrigue and strategic manoeuvring at that time by the commanders of the Allied forces and their political rivals.

Even before the debacle of the Nivelle offensive and the ending of the Battle of Arras, Haig had already visualised the framework for his offensive in Flanders, having undertaken preliminary planning as far back as 1916. In May 1917 he had outlined his intentions to commanding officers of the need to move the larger part of the BEF to the area around the Ypres salient. The overall aims to be achieved included the recovering of the high ground adjacent to Ypres from the occupying German forces to make the area safer and more defensible, to break out from he salient and threaten Roulers, some 40km to the east of Ypres, and for some time a crucial German communication hub, and to capture or threaten the coastal areas of northern Belgium. This was intended to help nullify a number of German naval base operations, in turn minimising the havoc to Allied shipping caused by U-boats and warships. This would help to reduce any threat to the Channel ports so crucial for the BEF supply chain. Several objectives had to be achieved including continuing attacks at Arras, a major assault on 7th June 1917 to take the Messines Ridge, the dominant feature around Ypres, and a main assault in the Ypres salient itself. The ultimate objective was to establish a new front line between Zeebrugge and Courtrai.

To ensure the plan would receive political support Haig knew that he would need help from the French. Petain, the French Commander-in-Chief, was not convinced of Haig's plans, nonetheless, he needed a British offensive to take place to divert German attention from threatening Paris by attacking the French Army, who were still in a state of disarray and mutiny. His resources were limited and morale was so bad that very little support was realistically available to support Haig's offensive. But he knew that he had to provide enough support to allow Haig to receive approval from the British Government, so he tightly managed the news of the mutinies in the French ranks, and continued to promise that the French Army were ready to fight. At a conference in Amiens on 18th May he stated categorically to Haig that he would, "fight and support the British in every possible way".

Buoyed by these assurances, Haig continued with his preparations confident of government approval. But only days later disturbing reports of the ongoing French unrest began to reach British Headquarters, with Haig's trusted confidants advising that French support

was unlikely. Petain eventually had to come clean and admitted the French would not be able to provide the necessary support until at least July, but pleaded with Haig to proceed with the offensive to relieve his beleaguered forces from the ever-growing German threat.

Haig was sympathetic and was even more resolute in his belief that his Flanders offensive was essential to allied success. Lloyd George, however, was no fan of Haig's plans, his skills and judgement or the man himself, and was minded to withdraw his support. Careful analysis of the situation by all the protagonists concluded that Petain's entreaties and the protection of the French Army was a priority. Approval for the commencement of a limited assault on the Messines Ridge as planned was given the go-ahead by Lloyd George and the British Government.

The task of recovering Messines Ridge, lost to the Germans since 1914, was given to General Sir Herbert Plumer's Second Army. Plumer was well-respected by commanders for his belief in careful analysis of the battlefield, methodical approach and thorough operational training before an assault, and he planned the Messines attack with meticulous attention to detail, leaving little to chance. His plans were for a limited advance, similar to the successful Canadian assault on Vimy Ridge earlier in the year, behind an artillery barrage of unprecedented scale. 72 tanks would also participate in the attack. Additionally, months beforehand, British and Australian sappers had dug 22 tunnels under the Messines Ridge, unbeknown to the German occupiers, and packed each tunnel with around 21 tonnes of high explosive.

Following an 11 day artillery bombardment as a precursor to the attack, when 3.5 million shells were fired, just before dawn at 3:10am on the 7th June 1917, 19 mines exploded simultaneously with a terrific force that would be unrivalled until the era of atomic bomb testing. A Belgian priest witnessed the explosions in awe from a distance, and remarked, "I suddenly witnessed the most gigantic and at the same time chillingly wonderful firework that ever has been lit in Flanders, a true volcano, as if the whole southeast was spewing fire". The tremors from the explosion were felt in London.

Those German troops that somehow managed to survive the force of the explosions were easy

Haig and his Commanders

Messines Ridge - a destroyed German trench

targets for the three BEF infantry corps who attacked, and objectives were quickly obtained, with over 7000 German prisoners and 200 machine guns captured. Despite German counter attacks over the following days the BEF forces remained in control of Messines Ridge, sustaining only 24500 casualties which was relatively light. No Bo'ness soldiers were killed during this battle. Plumer had masterminded a comprehensive BEF victory and had shown the BEF's effectiveness at bite-and-hold tactics.

He advised Haig that he needed three days to reorganise for an attack on the Gheluvelt Plateau, to take advantage of the situation and a retreating German army. Haig had other ideas, however, and despite the fine summer weather, he decided to delay further attacks for another six weeks and, more controversially, replace Plumer with General Hubert Gough, described as a "thruster", who he felt was more aggressive and would be able to achieve a breakthrough in the main assault at Ypres. Historians have generally agreed that both decisions were major mistakes by Haig.

Reluctance by Haig to push on also gave Lloyd George further time for rumination on the Allied war strategy. With the French still in a state of disorganisation and the effects of the Russian revolution starting to take effect, he considered that the situation had changed so much that a general review of the plans for 1917 was needed. He long-favoured an attack on the Italian front to take Austria out of the war. But Lloyd George was out-manoeuvred by Haig, with the help of assertions by the First Sea Lord Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, that clearance of the Belgian coast was imperative to avoid loss of power at sea and perhaps the whole campaign itself. This tied the success of the whole war effort to Haig's plans for the Ypres campaign, Lloyd George reluctantly relented, and the plans for the Third Battle of Ypres were set in motion.

As preparations commenced at Ypres, so too did the casualties. **Private Andrew Waldie,** Labour Corps, 12th Company, aged only 19 years old, was killed near Dickebusch, south west of Ypres, after feeling the full force of a German artillery shell just prior to the main hostilities on 24th June 1917. A few days later, on 9th July, **Private James Imrie** of the Gordon Highlanders, 9th (Service) Battalion, was wounded and died at a field ambulance unit. Later in the campaign, **Private Archibald Dearie**, Labour Corps, 12th Company, would also be killed by an artillery shell. These men died assisting with the logistics involved with the major assault, demonstrating how hazardous even these mundane tasks were to the ordinary soldier on the Western Front. Even medical staff attending the injured and wounded were not safe - **Private William**

Messines Ridge: the devastation of battle

**McGowan**, 3rd Australian Field Ambulance, belonging to the 3rd Brigade of the Australian Imperial Force, First Division had been at an advanced dressing station near the Menin Road when he was killed by an artillery shell.

On the 20th June 1917, the Fourth Army, XV Corps, including the 32nd Division, under the command of General Sir Henry Rawlinson took over from the French sector of the Belgian coast adjacent to Nieuport. Rawlinson was entrusted to secure the sector in preparation for a future amphibious landing at the poorly defended beach of Middelkerke, called "Operation Hush", initially intended to coincide with the high tides of 7th-8th August. Sensing the danger of the BEF securing the bridgehead at the Yser Canal, the German troops launched a pre-emptive strike, Operation Strandfest ("Beach Party"), on 10th July. In the ensuing immediate counter-attacks, **Private Charles Frew**, Highland Light Infantry, 15th Battalion, was posted missing in action, presumed dead on the 15th July. **Private John Boslem** of the Royal Scots, 5/6th Battalion, was also wounded in the same action and died in hospital on 16th July. Both men were fighting in the 32nd Division, 14th Brigade. The fighting in this area would continue for the rest of the year and claim further Bo'ness casualties including **Private Hugh Muir** of the Cameronians (The Scottish Rifles), 1st Battalion, who was wounded by shrapnel and died on 27th August, and **Private Arthur Porter** of Highland Light Infantry, 17th (Service) Battalion, who was killed on 6th September. In the end, despite extensive preparations, Operation Hush was cancelled on 14th October 1917.

The Third Battle of Ypres, or Passchendaele as it is more infamously known, is undoubtedly the most horrific military engagement in British history. Words such as harrowing, terrifying or appalling are inadequate to convey the visceral nature of the battle. Imagery from the time shows a desolate, pockmarked landscape with shattered trees, and endless fields of mud and water-filled shell holes, caused by incessant rain, that would both claim the lives of many wounded soldiers, unable to clamber to safety or struggle free. Add to the this the sights, sounds and smell of constant bombardment, death and the effects of troops blown to pieces, resulting in shattered, slick, white bone and fetid body parts

strewn across the ground, on barbed wire and in trenches, and even only then you begin to get a glimpse of the effect this engagement had on the physical and mental health of all those who had the misfortune to experience it. Passchendaele witnessed an estimated 310000 British and Imperial casualties; 70000 of them killed or drowned in mud. The Germans suffered an estimated 260000 casualties.

Preparatory skirmishing commenced at Ypres towards the end of July, and during a raid on the German front line trenches on 25th July, near the hamlet of Verlorenhoek, located 3km east of Ypres, **Private Alexander Stevens**, Highland Light Infantry, 12th Battalion, was posted missing in action, presumed dead. Following a preparatory bombardment from 16th July, one of the heaviest of WW1, Passchendaele officially commenced at 3:50am on 31st July with what is known as the Battle of Pilckem Ridge. It was a joint attack by British and French forces, eventually provided by Petain, and commanded by General Francois Paul Anthoine, on the northern left flank, and Plumer's Second Army on the southern flank. Gough's Fifth Army, undertook the main assault, specifically II Corps, across the Gheluvelt Plateau, with XIX Corps, containing the 15th (Scottish) Division, immediately to the north of II Corps, on the Ypres-Roulers railway.

During the opening assault 15th (Scottish) Division, 46th Brigade was in the lead attack near Frezenberg, and during this action **Private Andrew Watters**, Highland Light Infantry, 12th Battalion, was killed in action. 45th Brigade were given a supporting role as the attack unfolded. **Private Alexander M. B. Harley**, known in Bo'ness by his middle name of Marquis, was fighting with the Royal Scots Fusiliers, 6th/7th Battalion in 15th Division, 45th Brigade, when he was killed in action. He died alongside **Private Andrew McLean** and **Private William Pow** of the same Battalion. The three men had been part of the same draft that went to France, fought together and died together on that fateful day. As the Battle of Pilckem Ridge continued into the 1st August, 45th Brigade continued to sustain casualties as German counter attacks ensued, and **Private Richard N. Hamilton**, Royal Scots, 13th Battalion was also posted missing in a action, presumed dead on that date.

The battle also involved every British Mark IV tank available at the time, and Gough deployed 120 on the opening day, with 48 in reserve. They were mainly used as infantry protection to attack pillboxes, blockhouses and other strongpoints as they were very vulnerable to German artillery and new armour piercing bullets. Unfortunately the Mark IV tank did not favour muddy, heavily shelled ground, the exact conditions they encountered east of Ypres. As a result the battlefield became a tank graveyard. The salvage of tanks, and tank material, was recognised and the Tank Corps formed special companies in this regard in response to the challenging conditions in the Ypres Salient. At Passchendaele, 544 tanks were reported for salvage, 269 tanks were saved and £1.3 million worth of stores were recovered. But this was dangerous work. German gunners had time to hone their range finding on abandoned machinery and consequently 21 year old **Gunner William Brown**, Tank Corps 1st Salvage Company, was killed carrying out such salvage operations on 1st August.

In a defining moment of the Passchendaele campaign, at 4:00pm on the opening day it also started raining heavily, and would continue to do so for days. With storm drains on the flat lands shattered by artillery, the shell-cratered landscape soon filled up with water and mud, over three metres deep in places. The Germans just had time to reorganise their defences and Eingreif (counter-attack) Divisions of Group Ypres were able to hit back and reclaim battleground. A halt was called to the battle by Gough due to the impossible weather conditions. "What a perfect bloody curse this rain is!", he famously exclaimed. Once the deluge of rain had finally stopped on 6th August, further actions were ordered by Gough, mindful of the need to avoid a delay to the proposed operations on the coast. Haig urged him on when the weather improved to carry out a series of further attacks.

**Private Thomas Young** of the Machine Gun Corps (Infantry) 59th Company was killed during the Battle of Langemarck on 16th October, when 20th (Light) Division in XIV Corps captured the town. **Private Hugh Rose McIntosh**, Royal Scots, 13th Battalion, was wounded in the same action, fighting for the 15th (Scottish) Division and died of wounds five days later. The 15th (Scottish) would also take part in what is known as the Action of 22nd August and a number of Bo'ness men lost their lives that day, fighting in 45th Brigade. **Second Lieutenant Eric Liewellen Jamieson**, was leading the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders, 2/7th Battalion, in the front line north of the Ypres-Roulers Railway line. When the Battalion came out of the line with Jamieson among the missing, there was some hope that he might be a prisoner. But a month later it was reported that it was believed he had fallen on the day he went missing. Other casualties that day included **Private Daniel Lowrie** (Lourie)**, Private George Burnett Miller**, **Private David Rutherford**, and **Private Neil M. Stanners**, all of Royal Scots, 13th Battalion, the four men killed during a fruitless attack by the 15th and 61st Divisions at the front line near Frezenberg. There were 272 other casualties in the 13th Royal Scots that day. The Scottish Memorial commemorating the Scottish contribution and efforts to the fighting in Flanders during the Great War is located on the Frezenberg Ridge (shown in photo).

**Private Michael McGowan**, the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, 8th Bn (B Coy), fell alongside four other comrades moving up to the front line trenches west of Hooge around the 25th August. **Private George Robertson**, Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) 10th Battalion, attached to 44th Brigade in the 15th (Scottish) Division, was fighting in the front line near Beck House and Iberian Farmhouses, just north of Frezenberg. He was killed, along with two comrades, by a bursting artillery shell on the 26th August.

As a reminder that the Ypres campaign was not taking place in isolation, further south, in an area south of Cambrai, an attack was launched on 26th August by 34th Division near Hargicourt, involving both 15th and 16th Battalions of the Royal Scots in the 101st Brigade. With incessant rainfall mirroring the situation at Ypres, **Private Andrew Bell** of the 16th Battalion was wounded in the abdomen and legs as they attacked Cologne Farm and Pond Trench east of Hargicourt. He was removed for medical treatment but died on the 28th August. Back at Ypres, **Private Herbert Broome**, Royal Warwickshire Regiment, 2/5th Battalion, was posted missing in action on 1st September 1917, on the front line near Bank Farm. Several unsuccessful attempts were made to rush the adjacent Hill 35 by his Battalion, fighting with 61st (2nd South Midland) Division, 182nd Brigade. On the 2nd September 1917, the 15th (Scottish Division) moved from the Ypres Salient back down to the Arras sector, but there was no respite. **Private Alexander Forbes**, Royal Scots, 13th Battalion, was killed in the front line trenches north of Roeux on 11th September, whilst **Private James Grant**, Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), 9th Battalion, who had won the Military Medal on 2nd September, was killed in action on 13th November by an artillery shell. He was one of a party resting in a dugout immediately behind the front line, when the shell exploded burying the whole squad of men. **Private Andrew Porteous**, in the same Battalion, was struck down by illness and died on 17th November.

By the early September, the Fifth Army under Gough had fought to a standstill. There had been many individual gains, but crucially the main objective of the Gheluvelt Plateau was still occupied by the German 4th Army, and British casualties were heavy. Back in London, although Haig managed to convince Lloyd George and others that the Ypres campaign had to continue, he knew that a drastic change in strategy was needed, and as a result he

Private John Middleton (holding mallet) with comrades

turned once again to Plumer's Second Army to take charge of the campaign, and capture Gheluvelt Plateau. Plumer asked for three weeks preparation, to allow time for recuperation amongst the battle worn troops and also to give the waterlogged battlefield a chance to dry out.

The first action of this second phase was the Battle of Menin Road Ridge commencing on 20th September, where Plumer favoured a stunning artillery bombardment, with four divisions of infantry following on behind to capture a series of limited objectives, and other divisions providing support to protect the flanks. This was known as bite and hold tactics and had been successfully employed at Messines by Plumer. During this Battle, Kinneil miner **Sergeant George Brodie**, Royal Scots, 12th Battalion, fighting in 9th (Scottish) Division, was killed when the 27th Brigade attacked and captured the Potsdam Works, east of Frezenberg. **Private John Middleton**, Machine Gun Corps (Infantry), 28th Company, South African Brigade, was also killed in action at the same location. The attack was seen as a great victory for the British but at great cost with 21000 casualties. The bite and hold tactics brought similar success at Polygon Wood on 26th September, but again with heavy casualties of 15000. These included **Private Andrew Sharp**, Machine Gun Corps (Infantry), 22nd Company, attached to 7th Division, 22nd Brigade who was killed on 1st October repulsing wave after wave of German counter attack at Jetty Trench along the east side of Polygon Wood. A similar success story unfolded three days later at the Battle of Broodseinde, primarily an ANZAC operation, involving I and II Corps, with the objective of capturing the remainder of Gheluvelt Plateau by winning back Broodseinde Ridge and Gravenstafel Spur. That day, the 1st Australian Infantry Division routed the opposing forces and quickly captured their objectives, advancing over 1200m into enemy territory. Unfortunately, one of the casualties of the attack was Bo'ness emigrant **Private James Goodall**, who was severely wounded in the legs and face, and died in hospital on 8th October. Broodseinde had been another outstanding success, described by the Germans as a "black day".

Crucially, though, the rains returned just prior to Broodseinde, turning the battlefield once again into the quagmire seen in August. The Germans called the deluge "their greatest ally in the campaign". Having captured the Plateau, buoyed by the gains made under Plumer and believing the Germans were on the brink of defeat, Haig once again, however, elected to continue the campaign and press on to capture the Passchendaele Ridge, another controversial decision. The First Battle of Passchendaele began on 12th October and found exhausted troops fighting in the mud just 72 hours after Broodseinde had ended. Hastily prepared and with a lack of artillery cover, the failure of the attack was inevitable. The attacking troops faced intense German firepower and the carnage that ensued in the mud of Passchendaele is forever associated with the campaign. **Private John Mulholland**, the Royal Scots, 11th Battalion, from a well-known Bo'ness

family, was killed in action fighting with the 9th (Scottish) Division, 27th Brigade, during the attack. 27th Brigade were sent in as reinforcements to 26th Brigade, attacking from north of Goudberg to north of the Lekkerboterbeek stream adjacent to the northern boundary of the Second Army. Many of wounded troops were trapped up to their waists in the mud and left to die of exposure. Others drowned in water-filled craters. Crowding of men on the few strips of passable ground were easy targets for German machine gunners. John's body was never recovered. His comrade **Sergeant Alexander Thomson** of the same Battalion fared little better, suffering shrapnel wounds in the neck and hand on the same date. He was evacuated to a casualty clearing station but died of wounds the next day. The Fifth Army continued to support Plumer's Second Army with a series of minor attacks. **Private John Bishop**, Royal Scots, 17th Battalion, coming under the orders of 35th Division, 106th Brigade, was killed on the 20th October in the front line, north east of Langemark near Houtholt Forest. **Private George Smith,** Royal Scots, 12th Battalion, was killed in action on the 22nd October when the 34th Division attacked up the Watervlietbeek and Broenbeek valleys, north of Poelcapelle.

With incessant rain flooding the battlefield even further both Plumer and Gough advised that the campaign should be halted but Haig, realising that the objectives of capturing Roulers and the northern amphibious landings were now impossible, insisted on a continuation to capture the remainder of the Passchendaele Ridge and the village itself. The main reasons were to provide a better defensive position for the 1918 offensive commencing in Spring, to provide suitable ground for the troops to over-winter, and to keep the Germans occupied whilst Third Army under Byng carried out a surprise attack at Cambrai. The Battle of Cambrai itself resulted in two Bo'ness casualties, **Private Robert Dalrymple** and **Private Joshua Reid**, both of the Gordon Highlanders 6th Battalion. They were both killed on 23rd November 1917, when the 6th Gordons were ordered to recapture the village of Fontaine Notre Dame from the Germans.

The final attack at Ypres, named the Second Battle of Passchendaele was carried out by the Canadian Corps of over 100000 troops that had been transferred from the Arras sector in mid-October under the command of the battle-hardened Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Currie. Despite grave misgivings over the attack, Currie made diligent preparations for the assault, concentrating on the importance of artillery support and commenced his set-piece attack on 26th October. On that day, 23 year old bank clerk **Private Alexander Walker**, the son of a well-known Bo'ness butcher, was wounded fighting with the Canadian Infantry (Cameron Highlanders), 43rd Battalion in the 9th Brigade of the Canadian 3rd Division on the left flank of the attack at Bellevue Spur. He died later that night. The battle was fought until 10th November, by which time the Canadians had sustained over 15500 casualties, dead and wounded. Subsequent skirmishing and counter-attacks saw Bridgeness miner **Private James King**, Cameron Highlanders, 1st Brigade, killed by artillery fire whilst manning a Lewis Gun in an advanced position north of the main Canadian attack. **Private James Blackly** (Blackley), Northumberland Fusiliers 22nd, 3rd (Tyneside Scottish) Battalion, was taken ill and had been taken to hospital in Rouen, where he died on 27th November. The final casualty was **Private John Carlaw**, Machine Gun Corps, 146th Company, who was fighting with the 49th Division at Broodseinde Ridge when he was wounded in action by artillery fire. He was transferred to Boulogne Hospital, but died of his wounds on 27th November 1917.

Passchendaele, a vicious, bloody, filthy campaign that could and should have been avoided, had ended after 16 weeks, with more than 70000 British dead, many lying deep in the unforgiving mud, stacked on top of the remains of their comrades, unlikely to be found, their sacrifice never to be forgotten.

**Andrew Waldie**

Private Andrew Waldie was the son of Robert and Catherine Waldie (ms Taylor) who were married on 20th September 1895, at Carriden. He had several brothers and sisters including Cecilia, Janet, Edmund Paterson, Catherine and Margaret. His youngest sister Margaret Waldie sadly died in 1916 in infancy and Andrew registered the death as his father was on active service at the time. The family lived at Magdalene Place, Grangepans.

Andrew Waldie's father Robert Waldie was a Corporal in the Royal Garrison Artillery, service no: 4990. He enlisted in November 1914 and was discharged on 7th April 1916, having been found medically unfit for service. He was awarded the Silver War Badge and returned to his civilian job as a Dock Labourer. He survived the War.

Andrew enlisted at Glencorse, Midlothian, in March 1917, prior to which he was employed by Messrs Cochrane Brothers, Bo'ness. He enlisted with the Seaforth Highlanders, 1st Infantry Labour Company, service no: S/18324.

The Labour Corps was formed in January 1917, and was made up of officers and other ranks who had been rated as medically unfit for front line service, or who had been previously wounded. By the end of the war the Labour Corps consisted of nearly 390000 personnel, around half of whom were serving in the various theatres of war. In April 1917, several infantry battalions were transferred to the Corps, and Andrew Waldie was transferred to 12th Company Labour Corps, service no: 7048.

He was killed in action after feeling the full force of a German artillery shell just prior to the Battle of Ypres on 24th June 1917. His body was recovered and he is buried near to where he fell at Dickebusch New Military Cemetery Extension, just south east of Ypres, at grave II. A. 37. He was 19 years old when he died.

**James Imrie**

Private James Wittet Imrie was born in Denny, Stirlingshire, in 1891, the son of John Imrie an iron moulder from Perth. He married Alice Imrie (ms McCarthey) in 1913 at Cowdenbeath, Fife. They had two children and lived at 28 Furnace Row, Kinneil. James was employed as a coal miner at the nearby pit owned by Kinneil Coal Company Ltd. James enlisted just after the outbreak of war on the 29th August 1914 at Bo'ness. He joined the Gordon Highlanders, 9th (Service) Battalion, service no: S/2908, initially coming under the orders of 15th (Scottish) Division, 44th Brigade. On 12th January 1915, the 9th Battalion became a Pioneer Battalion in the same Division.

These battalions were created in response to the great demand for labourers in the armed forces. In accordance with an Army Order in late 1914 each infantry Division were to have a battalion of trained soldiers capable of fighting but reserved for labouring works. These battalions were made up of men from trades backgrounds such as miners, road men, blacksmiths, joiners, bricklayers, stonemasons, engine drivers and fitters, and others.

James Imrie landed in France early in the conflict on 9th July 1915, and would have been close to many of the important battles that the 15th (Scottish) Division participated in during 1915 to 1917, including the Battle of Loos, the Somme and the Battle of Arras. The Division was regarded by the enemy as one of the most formidable in the British Army. James died of wounds, aged 26 years, near Ypres on 9th July 1917, and his body was buried at Vlamertinghe New Military Cemetery, grave ref: IV. G. 9. The village of Vlamertinghe was just outside the normal range of German shell fire and was used both by artillery units and field ambulances.

**Archibald Dearie**

Private Archibald (Archie) Dearie was born in Bo'ness in 1897, the son of Michael Dearie, an iron dresser originally from Glasgow, and Mary Dunlop Dearie (ms Stevenson) of Kirkwood's Close, 102 North Street, Bo'ness. His parents had been married in 1873 at Carriden. The family had formerly stayed at Society Wynd. Archie came from a large family, with several brothers and sisters, namely Agnes, John, Matthew, Mary, Thomas, James and Annie. Before enlisting he was employed in the horseshoe factory of Messrs Cochrane Brothers, Bo'ness.

He enlisted on 28th February 1917, with the Seaforth Highlanders, and was assigned to their Labour Battalion, 1st Infantry Labour Company, service no: S/18307. A number of infantry regiments formed Labour Battalions during the First World War for work on the lines of communication, or at home, and the Seaforth Highlanders had four Labour Companies. In April 1917, Archie's Company was transferred to the newly formed Labour Corps, 12th Company, and he was assigned service no: 6753. Labour Corps units often worked within range of the enemy artillery for dangerously prolonged periods.

He was participating in this important labour work in the Ypres Salient during the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele) when he met his fate. His parents received a letter early in September signed by three comrades of Archibald, including the writer Private David Wilson of Bo'ness, informing them that he had been killed by artillery fire on 1st September 1917. Expressing his heartfelt sympathy to Archie's family, Private Wilson stated that he had suffered no pain, with death being almost instantaneous, and that he had received a reverent burial in a military cemetery with a Church of England chaplain officiating. Official confirmation that their son had indeed been killed in action on that date was received by telegram from the War Office on 22nd September 1917. Private Archie Dearie was 20 years of age when he died, whilst David Wilson survived the War.

He is buried in The Huts Cemetery, 6km south west of Ypres, grave: IV. C. 11. This cemetery takes its name from a line of huts strung along the road from Dickebusch to Brandhoek, which were used by field ambulances during the 1917 Allied offensive on this front.

**William McGowan**

Driver William McGowan was born in 1889, in Holytown, Lanarkshire, the son of Robert and Ann McGowan. The family moved to Bo'ness when William was 9 years of age. He had two brothers, James And Henry McGowan. William was educated at Bo'ness Public School, and was a member of the local company of 10th Royal Scots (Territorials) gaining distinction as a marksman, having been the winner of many prizes. In terms of appearance, he was 5'9" in height and weighed 141lbs, had blue eyes, light brown hair and a fresh complexion, with 4 tattoo dots on each hand.

He emigrated to Australia in 1912. Prior to this he had worked up through the ranks in the North British Railway Company at Bo'ness as a flag-boy, porter then goods guard, a position he held for four years. His older brother James still worked as a railway goods guard in Bo'ness, and lived at Stewart Avenue. Down under in Australia he became employed on the work of railway construction in Queensland, and, after a varied career in the course of which he worked in the coal mines, he joined the engine room staff of the Brisbane Tramway Company.

He was married to a Bo'ness girl in Queensland on 20th August 1913, his wife Elizabeth Markie (Bessie) Stevens being a daughter of Mr Andrew Stevens, formerly a baker at Commissioners Buildings, Bo'ness. They had one child, a boy also named William. Prior to joining up, William and his family stayed at Dovercourt Street, Toowong, Queensland. After the outbreak of war William McGowan enlisted with 7th Field Ambulance, Australian Imperial Force, on 6th August 1915, and after training sailed for the Gallipoli campaign on 21st October. William joined the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force at Alexandria on 4th December 1916. From there he sailed for the Dardanelles, and was attached to 1st Australian Stationary Hospital at Mudros. After the campaign was over he returned to Alexandria on 21st December 1916. He was then transferred to 3rd Australian Field Ambulance, service no: 6331, at Tel-el-Kebir, Egypt, on 2nd

February 1916. During the First World War Tel-el-Kebir was a training centre for Australian reinforcements and the site of a very large prisoner of war camp. The 3rd Field Ambulance was the Field Ambulance Company that belonged to the Third Brigade of the First Division, comprised of 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th Battalions, all of which were drawn from Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania respectively.

From there William was sent to the Western Front, disembarking at Marseilles in April 1917. He was then allowed a period of leave in the UK and took the opportunity to return to his family and friends in Bo'ness from 19th July to 5th August 1917. It would be the last time he set foot in his former home town. On 18th September 1917, during the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele), William had been at an advanced dressing station when he was killed by an artillery shell and was 27 years old. He was buried in the Menin Road South Military Cemetery, grave: I. U. 23. , aged 27 years.

**Charles Frew**

Private Charles Frew was born in Coatbridge in 1896, the son of Robert Frew and Helen Frew (ms Morrison), of 36 Paddock Street, Coatbridge, who were married there in the same year. Charles Frew's mother Helen (Nellie) Morrison was born in Bo'ness in 1873 and was brought up in the town, and the Frews had lived at 20 Forth Place, Bo'ness for a number of years before returning to Coatbridge. Charles had two brothers, William and Robert, and two sisters Maggie and Nellie.

He enlisted in November 1915, with the Highland Light Infantry, 15th (Service) Battalion (1st Glasgow), service no: 36642, who were also known as the Glasgow Tramways Battalion, with many recruits coming from the city Tramways Department.

In France and Flanders they came under the orders of 32nd Division, 14th Brigade. In June 1917, the 32nd Division relieved French troops stationed at Nieuport in preparation for planned Allied landings on German-held territory along the Belgian coast. However, German marines launched a pre-emptive attack against the British forces on the river Yser in July.

Charles Frew and seven other 15th HLI comrades were posted missing in action on the 15th July 1917, during a night-time counter-attack near Lombartzyde. He was later officially notified as missing, presumed dead, aged 21 years. The planned Allied landings, codenamed 'Operation Hush', never took place. He is named on the Nieuport Memorial that commemorates 566 Commonwealth officers and men who were killed in Allied operations on the Belgian coast during the First World War and have no known grave. Most of those commemorated fell in heavy fighting in the region of Nieuport in the summer of 1917.

Charles Frew is also commemorated on the Highland Light Infantry 15th Battalion Memorial in Glasgow Museum of Transport.

**John Boslem**

Private John Boslem was the eldest son of Mr Thomas Boslem, a pottery kilnman, and Mrs Jane (Jeannie) Boslem (ms Marr), who were married in Bo'ness in 1890. John was born in the town in 1892. He was 5'7" in height and weighed 140lbs (10 stone). He had two brothers, David and Thomas (who sadly died in 1912 aged 6) and two sisters, Catherine and Mary Boslem, who both lived until the mid-1980s in Bo'ness. The family lived at 11 Liston Terrace, Bridgeness.

John Boslem worked as a shipbreaker, and was one of the many men who offered themselves for enlistment from the Forth Shipbreaking Company, Bridgeness in September 1914. Initially rejected, he managed to successfully enlist at Bo'ness on 6th December that year, joining the Royal Scots 1/5th Battalion, service no: 2906. He left to join the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force in Egypt in January 1916, but was transferred back to France three months later. In June 1916 his battalion amalgamated with 1/6th Battalion to become 5/6th Battalion, and John Boslem's service number changed to 250789. The Royal Scots 5/6th Battalion came under the orders of 32nd Division, 14th Brigade in July 1916. John fought at the Battle of the Somme and survived.

In June 1917, Commonwealth forces, including the 32nd Division, relieved French forces on 6 kilometres of front line from the sea to a point south of Nieuport and held this sector for six months. It was during the defence of Nieuport by the 32nd Division that John Boslem was wounded in action on 14th July 1917, and died two days later. He was 25 years old. His comrade Private Thomas Rutherford, also a Bo'ness lad, wrote a letter to John's family from the front, confirming his death. He wrote,

> John died of wounds on Monday, the 16th. It was a great blow to all the boys in the platoon when we came out of the line and were told of his death, and I myself have felt it as much as many, for he was such a cheery lad and I will miss his company very much. He was buried beside some of his comrades who had also fallen, in a small military cemetery, back from the line a bit. I am sorry I cannot mention the name of the place in this letter, but if I have the luck to get home you will get full particulars.

He is buried at grave ref: I. J. 41. at Coxyde Military Cemetery. The village of Coxyde sits about 10 kilometres behind the front line and was used for troop rest billets. It was occasionally shelled by the Germans, but the cemetery, which had been started by French troops, was found to be reasonably safe. 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.

John's brother David Boslem was also in the armed forces and died of wounds after being taken prisoner by the Germans in 1918. He is also commemorated on Bo'ness War Memorial. Both brothers are also remembered on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery.

**Hugh Muir**

Private Hugh Muir was the middle son of John Muir and Christina Muir (ms Robertson) who were married at Carriden in 1890. He was born in the town of Falkenberg, Sweden, which was a town with strong links to Bo'ness through the pit prop trade and it is likely that Hugh's family had a shipping connection. He had two brothers James an iron moulder, and John who worked as an office boy in a law firm, and who had also been born in Sweden. Prior to enlistment he was employed as a clerk in Messrs. A. Ballantine & Son, New Grange Foundry. The family lived at 1 Livingston Terrace, Bo'ness.

He enlisted in July 1915 and joined the Royal Scots, 1/6th Battalion, Service no: 3311, and was for a time stationed on the east coast of Scotland. His first taste of action was with the Western Frontier Force, disembarking in Egypt on 15th September 1915. After a stay of over 9 months he was invalided home. On recovering he was sent to France in July 1916, but again returned home on sick leave at the end of January 1917 with trench foot, and spent some time at Bangour War Hospital.

On his return to the Western Front in May, he joined the Cameronians (The Scottish Rifles), primarily 5/6th Battalion then 1st Battalion, service no: 202522. Both Battalions came under the orders of 33rd Division, 19th Brigade.

On the 25th August 1917, the 1st Scottish Rifles were fighting in the front line trenches near Nieuport when Hugh Muir was severely wounded by shrapnel in the back and hips by an artillery shell explosion. He was taken to 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station but died two days later of his injuries. He was 24 years old. News of his death was confirmed in a letter from Sister McGregor MacDonald of the 1st Canadian CCS, who stated that, despite every effort being made to save his life, Hugh had died at three o'clock in the morning on the 27th August.

He was buried in nearby Adinkerke Military Cemetery, grave B. 19. This cemetery is located about 20 km east of Dunkirk, in the community of De Panne, just across the border into Belgium. There are 168 commonwealth soldiers from the Great War buried in this cemetery. From June to November 1917 the Commonwealth XV Corps held a front spanning from the Belgian coast to St. Georges.

Hugh Muir is also commemorated on the family headstone Carriden Cemetery.

**Arthur Porter**

Private Arthur Porter was born in Glasgow, the son of Mr and Mrs James Porter. He was, however, better known in Carriden through visiting his brother John Porter, whose wife Elizabeth Balquanel Downie Porter was a daughter of Walter and Agnes Stanners of Burnfoot. John and Elizabeth were married at Carriden on 6th June 1902, and lived at Foredale Terrace with their two daughters.

He enlisted soon after the outbreak of war with the Highland Cyclist Battalion, service no:1742, and was attached to 21st Infantry Base Depot (IBD) at Etaples, France. An IBD was a holding camp situated near to the Channel ports used to keep troops in training while they awaited being posted to their units at the front. At some point he was transferred to the Highland Light Infantry, 17th (Service) Battalion (3rd Glasgow), coming under the orders of 32nd Division, 97th Brigade. He was wounded near Beaumont-Hamel at the Battle of the Somme in November 1916, but returned to his Battalion in 1917.

In June 1917, Commonwealth forces, including the 32nd Division, relieved French forces on 6 kilometres of front line from the sea to a point south of Nieuport and held this sector for six months. Arthur Porter was killed in action early on the morning of 6th September 1917, near Nieuport. The 17th Highland Light Infantry Battalion war diary records, "Sept 5th - "A working party which left for duty at night met with casualties near ALBERT

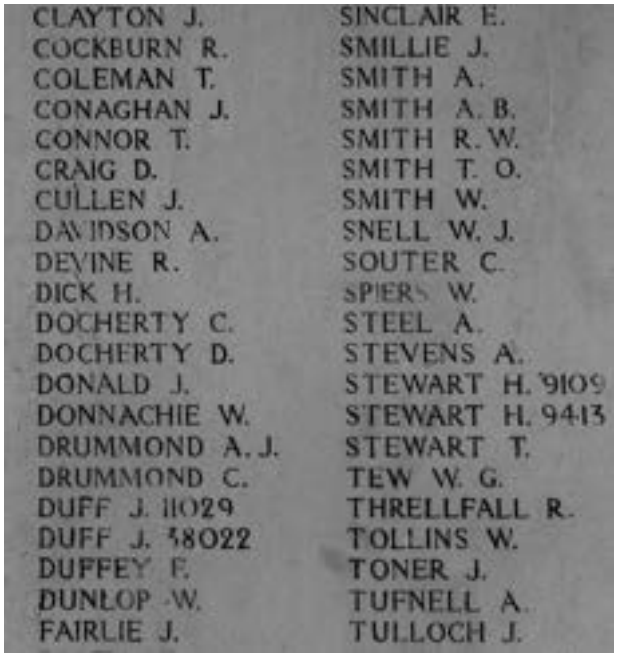
BRIDGE. 2nd Lieutenant M. Fletcher being seriously wounded (since dead); one O.R. killed, and 5 O.R. wounded". The single ordinary rank fatality was Private Arthur Porter. He was 22 years of age. He is buried at Coxyde Military Cemetery, grave: III. F. 5, near to Private John Boslem who also appears on the Bo'ness War Memorial

**Alexander Stevens**

Private Alexander Stevens lived in Edinburgh with his wife Janet D. Stevens (ms Stewart), the couple having been married in Bo'ness in 1915. They had one child. Private Stevens was the son of the late Alexander and Marrion Stevens of Forth Place, Bo'ness. He had several brothers and sisters, namely Richard, William M., Magdalene, Janet Moodie, (or Marion), Andrew, Elizabeth, James and Mabel Stevens.

Before enlisting Alexander Stevens was employed as a tailor with Messrs Griffiths and Oliver in the town centre. He enlisted with the Royal Scots, 2/10th (Cyclist) Battalion, service no: 2198, in September 1914, and was deployed to Berwick for coastal defence. In 1916, he volunteered for overseas service and was transferred to the Highland Light Infantry, 12th Battalion, service no: 43489, arriving in France in July 1916 with a large draft of men. The 12th Battalion came under the orders of 15th (Scottish) Division, 46th Brigade. He survived the horrors of both the Battle of the Somme in 1916 and the Battle of Arras in 1917.

Alexander Stevens was reported missing on 25th July 1917, just after the 15th (Scottish) Division's raid on German front line trenches near the hamlet of Verlorenhoek, located 3km east of Ypres. The hamlets Verlorenhoek and Frezenberg were latter fully captured by the 15th (Scottish) Division on 31st July 1917, during the Battle of Pilckem, a phase of the Third Battles of Ypres (Passchendaele).


CLAYTON J. SINCLAIR E.
COCKBURN R. SMILLIE J.
COLEMAN T. SMITH A.
CONAGHAN J. SMITH A. B.
CONNOR T. SMITH R. W.
CRAIG D. SMITH T. O.
CULLEN J. SMITH W.
DAVIDSON A. SNELL W. J.
DEVINE R. SOUTER C.
DICK H. SPIERS W.
DOCHERTY C. STEEL A.
DOCHERTY D. STEVENS A.
DONALD J. STEWART H. 9109
DONNACHIE W. STEWART H. 9413
DRUMMOND A. J. STEWART T.
DRUMMOND C. TEW W. G.
DUFF J. 11029 THRELLFALL R.
DUFF J. 38022 TOLLINS W.
DUFFEY F. TONER J.
DUNLOP W. TUFNELL A.
FAIRLIE J. TULLOCH J.

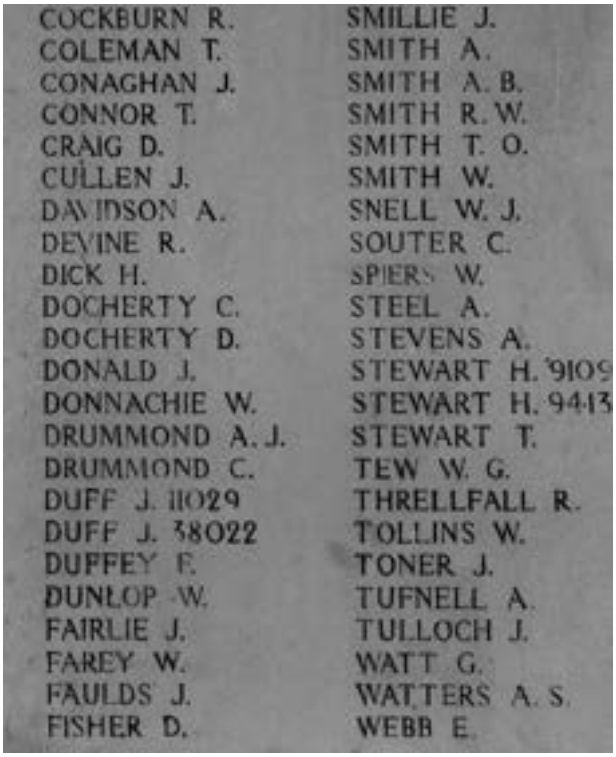
Like many of the men who fought in the Ypres Salient, Alexander's body was not found, and after a period of time he was officially notified as presumed dead. No burial could take place, instead, his name is commemorated on panel 38 of the Menin Gate Memorial at Ypres.

**Andrew S. Watters**

Private Andrew Smith Watters hailed from Fife, being born in Burntisland in 1893. He was the son of Mr Alexander Watters, a grocer from Hill of Beath, and Mrs Isabella Watters (ms. Smith) who were married at Kirkcaldy in 1887. He had two brothers, James and Thomas, and one sister Helen (Nellie).

His family moved to Bo'ness, staying at Helen Villa, Braehead. As a young man Andrew had been employed at Bo'ness Distillery, and from there he went to the Victoria Sawmills of Messrs Robert Mickel & Company where he was employed as a woodworking machine man.

At the outbreak of war he enlisted with one of the Royal Scots Territorials, service no: 980, but was later


COCKBURN R.
COLEMAN T.
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CULLEN J.
DAVIDSON A.
DEVINE R.
DICK H.
DOCHERTY C.
DOCHERTY D.
DONALD J.
DONNACHIE W.
DRUMMOND A. J.
DRUMMOND C.
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DUFF J. 38022
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DUNLOP W.
FAIRLIE J.
FAREY W.
FAULDS J.
FISHER D.
SMILLIE J.
SMITH A.
SMITH A. B.
SMITH R. W.
SMITH T. O.
SMITH W.
SNELL W. J.
SOUTER C.
SPIERS W.
STEEL A.
STEVENS A.
STEWART H. 9109
STEWART H. 9413
STEWART T.
TEW W. G.
THRELLFALL R.
TOLLINS W.
TONER J.
TUFNELL A.
TULLOCH J.
WATT G.
WATTERS A. S.
WEBB E.

sent to France in early 1916, joining the Highland Light Infantry, 12th Battalion, service no: 43495, coming under the orders of 15th (Scottish) Division, 46th Brigade.

Andrew Watters survived the Battles of the Somme and Arras, but was killed during the 15th (Scottish Division)'s participation in the Battle of Pilckem Ridge, on 31st July 1917, the opening attack of the main part of the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele). His mother received the news unofficially early in August, in a letter from a comrade who fought with Andrew at the Front.

He is commemorated with other Bo'ness men from the 15th (Scottish) Division on the Menin Gate Memorial, panel 38.

British soldiers at the Battle of Pilckem Ridge

**Alexander M. B. Harley**

Private Alexander Marquis Black Harley was known locally as "Marquis". He lived at 12 Main Street, Bo'ness, with his wife Mary Middleton Harley (ms Hardie), who he married in 1912, and their one child. He was born at Carriden in 1893 the son of John Clark Harley and Marion Harley (ms Black), who were married in Bo'ness in 1889, and who lived at School Brae, Bo'ness. Sadly his mother Marion died in 1910, aged 45. His father John owned a fruiterer shop in South Street in the town centre. He had one elder brother, John, and one sister Jane (Jeanie) Black Harley. Prior to going the Army, Marquis worked as a motorman at the Kinneil Coal Company.

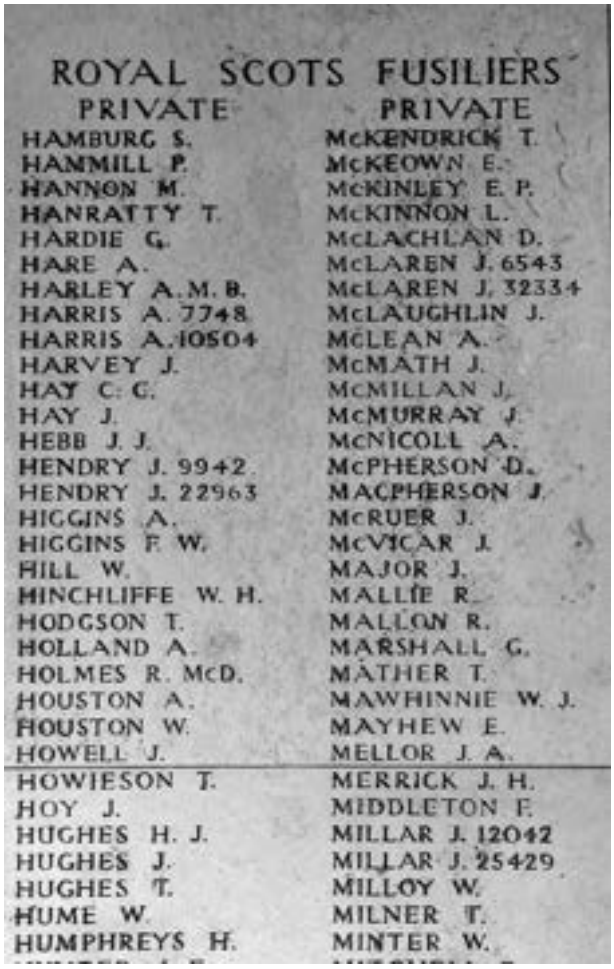
He enlisted at Bo'ness in June 1915 with the Royal Scots, 1/10th (Cyclist) Battalion, service no: 2791, and after spending some time on coastal defences at Berwick he volunteered for overseas service. He was drafted to France in July 1916, joining the Royal Scots Fusiliers, 6th/7th Battalion, service no: 43018. The 6/7th Battalion came under the orders of 15th (Scottish) Division, 45th Brigade. Marquis was wounded during the Battle of the Somme and returned to Bo'ness to recuperate, rejoining the fray in Spring 1917. He was killed in action, aged 24, on 31st July 1917, at the Battle of Pilckem Ridge, the opening attack of the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele). News that Marquis had been killed reached Bo'ness soon after, when a letter was received from one of his comrades, Private Kindred, in the same regiment, stating that he had witnessed him being killed in action. On the morning of Wednesday 15th August, Private Harley's wife received an official telegram. It read simply,

> Regret Private Harley killed in action 31/7/17. - War Office.

An officer of the Royal Scots Fusiliers then wrote to Mrs Harley saying,

> I deeply regret to inform you that your husband was killed in action during the recent advance. We had a very hard job to tackle, and your husband was one of the splendid "boys" who helped us to succeed, but by glorious death was deprived of satisfaction of knowing how well we had done. The whole company share with me in the sorrow caused by your great loss. Please accept our deepest sympathy. We hope that you will find something comforting in the thought that your husband died like a man and a soldier.

Marquis Harley's body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial, panel 19 and 33.



ROYAL SCOTS FUSILIERS

| PRIVATE | PRIVATE |
|---|---|
| HAMBURG S. | McKENDRICK T. |
| HANMILL P. | McKEOWN E. |
| HANNON M. | McKINLEY E. P. |
| HANRATTY T. | McKINNON L. |
| HARDIE G. | McLACHLAN D. |
| HARE A. | McLAREN J. 6543 |
| HARLEY A. M. B. | McLAREN J. 32334 |
| HARRIS A. 7748 | McLAUGHLIN J. |
| HARRIS A. 10504 | McLEAN A. |
| HARVEY J. | McMATH J. |
| HAY C. G. | McMILLAN J. |
| HAY J. | McMURRAY J. |
| HEBB J. J. | McNICOLL A. |
| HENDRY J. 9942 | McPHERSON D. |
| HENDRY J. 22963 | MACPHERSON J. |
| HIGGINS A. | McRUER J. |
| HIGGINS F. W. | McVICAR J. |
| HILL W. | MAJOR J. |
| HINCHLIFFE W. H. | MALLIE R. |
| HODGSON T. | MALLON R. |
| HOLLAND A. | MARSHALL G. |
| HOLMES R. McD. | MATHER T. |
| HOUSTON A. | MAWHINNIE W. J. |
| HOUSTON W. | MAYHEW E. |
| HOWELL J. | MELLOR J. A. |
| HOWIESON T. | MERRICK J. H. |
| HOY J. | MIDDLETON F. |
| HUGHES H. J. | MILLAR J. 12042 |
| HUGHES J. | MILLAR J. 25429 |
| HUGHES T. | MILLOY W. |
| HUME W. | MILNER T. |
| HUMPHREYS H. | MINTER W. |

**Andrew McLean**

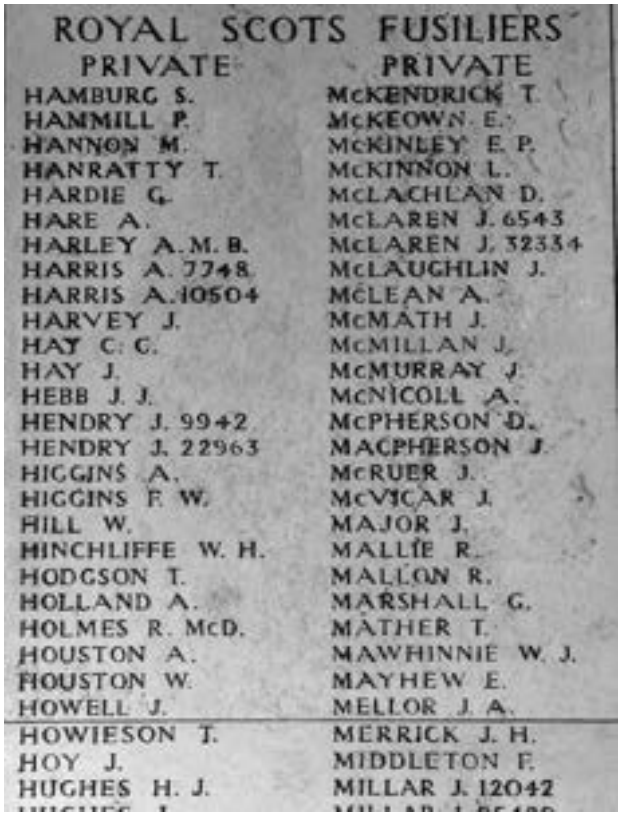
Private Andrew McLean was born in 1883 in a small village called Kirn, near Dunoon, situated on the west shore of the Firth of Clyde on the Cowal peninsula. He was the son of John McLean, a master joiner, and Jane McLean (ms Kennedy) who were married in Glasgow in 1875. Andrew had three elder brothers Hugh, John and William, and two younger sisters Bessie and Jane (Jeanie) McLean. Sadly Andrew's father died in 1885 aged 54 and his mother Jane died in 1902 aged 55.

At that time the village of Kirn had a pier and was a regular stop for the Clyde steamers, meaning relatively easy access to Glasgow and the central lowlands. Andrew, who had served his time as a plasterer, ended up in Bo'ness to further his career.

He enlisted in the town and eventually was drafted to France in July 1916, joining the Royal Scots Fusiliers, 6th/7th Battalion, coming under the orders of 15th (Scottish) Division, 45th Brigade. His service no: 43018 is very close to those of other Bo'ness men who died during the Great War, namely Alexander M.B. Harley (43018), William Henderson (43202), Duncan Middleton (43207), William Pow (43217), Thomas Sneddon Kennedy (43235) and William Robertson (43244), suggesting they were in the same draft that volunteered for overseas service and found themselves fighting in the 6/7th RSF alongside each other.

Andrew McLean was killed in action on 31st July 1917, aged 24 years, at the Battle of Pilckem Ridge, the opening attack of the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele) alongside his comrades Private Harley and Private Pow. His body was not recovered and he is also commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial, panel 19 and 33.

Andrew is also commemorated on the Dunoon War Memorial.


ROYAL SCOTS FUSILIERS

| PRIVATE | PRIVATE |
|---|---|
| HAMBURG S. | McKENDRICK T. |
| HANMILL P. | McKEOWN E. |
| HANNON M. | McKINLEY E. P. |
| HANRATTY T. | McKINNON L. |
| HARDIE G. | McLACHLAN D. |
| HARE A. | McLAREN J. 6543 |
| HARLEY A. M. B. | McLAREN J. 32334 |
| HARRIS A. 7748 | McLAUGHLIN J. |
| HARRIS A. 10504 | McLEAN A. |
| HARVEY J. | McMATH J. |
| HAY C. G. | McMILLAN J. |
| HAY J. | McMURRAY J. |
| HEBB J. J. | McNICOLL A. |
| HENDRY J. 9942 | McPHERSON D. |
| HENDRY J. 22963 | MACPHERSON J. |
| HIGGINS A. | McRUER J. |
| HIGGINS F. W. | McVICAR J. |
| HILL W. | MAJOR J. |
| HINCHLIFFE W. H. | MALLIE R. |
| HODGSON T. | MALLON R. |
| HOLLAND A. | MARSHALL G. |
| HOLMES R. McD. | MATHER T. |
| HOUSTON A. | MAWHINNIE W. J. |
| HOUSTON W. | MAYHEW E. |
| HOWELL J. | MELLOR J. A. |
| HOWIESON T. | MERRICK J. H. |
| HOY J. | MIDDLETON F. |
| HUGHES H. J. | MILLAR J. 12042 |

Dunoon War Memorial

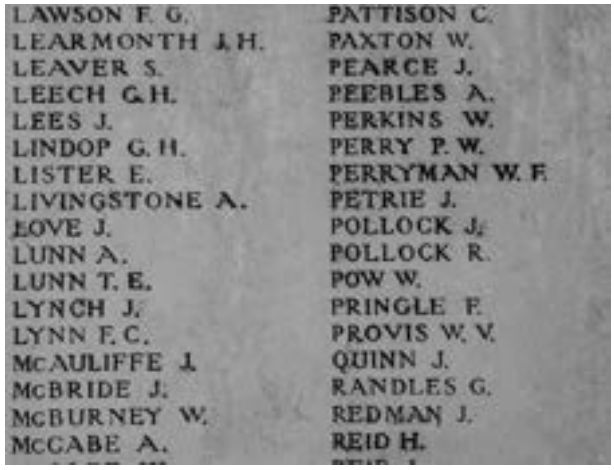
**William Pow**

Private William Pow was born in Bo'ness in 1881, the only son of Mr John Pow, Newtown, Bo'ness, a coal miner, and Agnes Pow (ms Kirkwood). Sadly Agnes died in 1891, aged 29, when William was only a 9-year-old child. His dad was left to take care of William and three younger sisters, Jane, Annie and Mary, who was only an infant when her mother died. William was soon out working to support the family and followed in his father's footsteps becoming employed as coal miner at Kinneil Coal Company. William met and married his wife Margaret Pow (ms Brewster) and the couple were married in the town in 1905. The couple had four children and lived at 44 Newtown, Bo'ness.

William Pow enlisted in September 1914 initially with the Royal Scots, 2/10th (Cyclist) Battalion and would have spent some time on coastal defence work. In July 1916, he volunteered for overseas service alongside a number of other Bo'ness men and Andrew found himself fighting alongside his comrades in the Royal Scots Fusiliers 6/7th Battalion, service no: 43217, coming under the orders of the 15th (Scottish) Division, 45th Brigade. Andrew was gassed at the Battle of the Somme in October that year, and was invalided home. He returned to France in March 1917 and saw action at the First and Second Battles of the Scarpe, during the Battle of Arras, before the 6/7th RSF moved north to the Ypres Salient.

He was 36 years of age when he was killed on the 31st July 1917, fighting side-by-side with Bo'ness men Alexander Harley and Andrew McLean during the Battle of Pilckem Ridge, the opening attack of the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele). He was initially reported as wounded but official notification of his death was received by his wife almost one year later in May 1918.

His body could not be found and he is also commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial, panel 19 and 33.


LAWSON F. G.
LEARMONTH J. H.
LEAVER S.
LEECH G. H.
LEES J.
LINDOP G. H.
LISTER E.
LIVINGSTONE A.
LOVE J.
LUNN A.
LUNN T. E.
LYNCH J.
LYNN F. C.
McAULIFFE J.
McBRIDE J.
McBURNEY W.
McCABE A.
PATTISON C.
PAXTON W.
PEARCE J.
PEEBLES A.
PERKINS W.
PERRY P. W.
PERRYMAN W. F.
PETRIE J.
POLLOCK J.
POLLOCK R.
POW W.
PRINGLE F.
PROVIS W. V.
QUINN J.
RANDLES G.
REDMAN J.
REID H.

Soldiers in the mud

**Richard N. Hamilton**

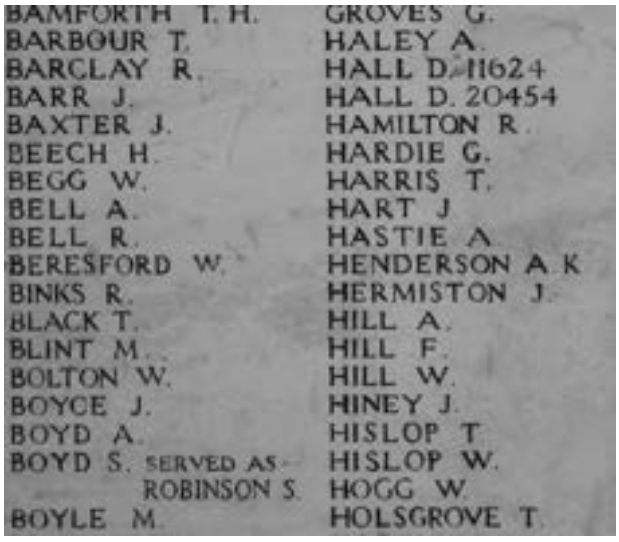
Private Richard Nisbett Hamilton was born in Bo'ness in 1888. He was the son of Thomas and Annie Hamilton, and lived with them at Beechmount Cottage, Borrowstoun, Bo'ness. He had one sister, Annie Cant, who was married and stayed at 106 West View Road, Barrow-in-Furness, England. Richard was a tall lad, 6 foot in height and weighed 169lbs.

He was time served as an iron moulder in one of the local foundries, but succeeded his father as agent for the Scottish Legal Assurance Society. His job had brought him into contact with working class people for miles around Bo'ness and he was held in high respect by all who knew him.

He enlisted at Bo'ness on 11th December 1915, initially with the Royal Scots, 3/5th Battalion, service no: 3733. The 3/5th was a territorial training battalion that was redesignated as 9th Reserve Battalion a month later. On 28th February 1916, he was mobilised and arrived in France on 5th July 1916, initially with 1/5th Battalion but he was soon posted to 12th Battalion Royal Scots, coming under the orders of 9th (Scottish) Division.

Richard fought with the 9th Division at the Battle of the Somme and suffered a serious gunshot wound to the right arm during the Battle of Transloy Ridges on 20th October 1916. He was evacuated back home and found himself being treated in 1st Scottish General Hospital in Aberdeen. After recovering at the end of November, he enjoyed one last visit to Bo'ness on leave, returning to service in early December. He eventually returned to the Western Front on 20th May 1917, and joined the Royal Scots, 13th Battalion, service no: 43277, coming under the orders of 15th (Scottish) Division, 45th Brigade.

Richard Hamilton was notified as missing in action on the 1st August 1917, at the Battle of Pilckem Ridge the opening attack of the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele). His paybook was received from the German Government by the authorities, raising the family's hopes of him being a prisoner of war. Unfortunately Mrs Hamilton received official intimation from the War Office in early March 1918 that all hope for Richard had faded and he was now presumed dead. His body was never found and he is commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial, panel 11.



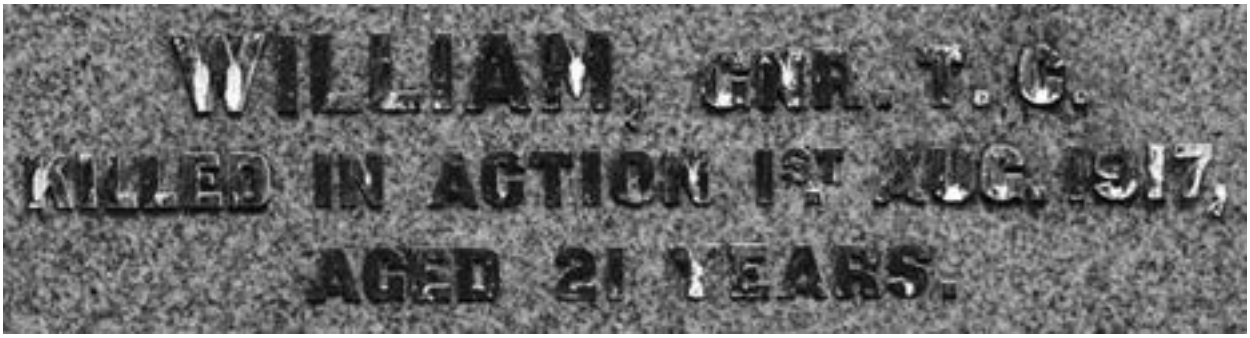
**William Brown** (2 of 3)

Gunner William Brown, the second of three men with the same name on the Bo'ness War Memorial, was born at Carriden in 1896, the only son of Alexander and Margaret Brown (ms Bell), of Swordie Mains, which sits on the left hand side of the road midway between Bo'ness and Linlithgow known locally as "The Flints". His father Alexander was assistant gardener to Mr Cadell of the Grange. He had two sisters, Nellie and Janet. Prior to enlistment he was a junior clerk in the office of Messrs James Calder and Company Limited, Bo'ness Distillery.

William enlisted at the age of 17 in September 1914. He joined the Gordon Highlanders, 9th Battalion, service no: 4169, and arrived in France on 8th July 1915. He had a baptism of fire at the Battle of Loos, and took part in most of the heavy fighting on the Western Front through 1916, including the Battle of the Somme. He managed to survive unscathed and went home to Bo'ness on leave to enjoy Christmas 1916 with his family before returning to active service on New Year's night. Early in 1917 he qualified as a machine gunner and was subsequently transferred from the Gordons to the Tank Corps 1st Salvage Company, service no: 77449.

William Brown was only 21 years of age when he was killed in action on 1st August 1917, the second day of the Battle of Pilckem Ridge, the opening attack of the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele). The news was conveyed back home in a letter from Battery Major R. P. Butler dated 2nd August 1917, in which he described William as a "thoroughly good and reliable man". Butler himself would survive the war and later wrote a book entitled, "Reminiscences of Salvage Work" for the Royal Tank Corps in 1932.

William's body was never found and his name is commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial, panel 56. He is also commemorated on the family headstone at Carriden Cemetery.



**Thomas Young**

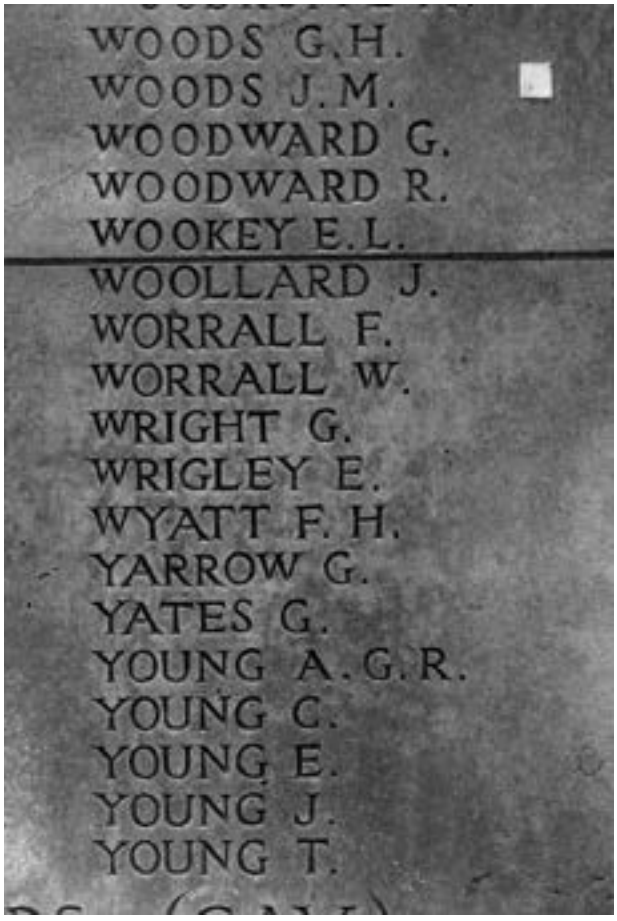
Private Thomas Young was born in Bo'ness in 1896. He was the son of Lewis E. Young, a baker, and Jane Young, of Grange Cottage, High Bonnybridge, Stirlingshire. His mother Jane (ms Waldie) was a native of Carriden, and his parents were married in Bo'ness in 1878. He had three brothers, Andrew, Lewis and Robert and two sisters, Margaret and Helen. Prior to enlistment Thomas was employed as a blacksmith with Bonnybridge Silica and Fireclay Company Ltd. He was also a member of High Bonnybridge U.F. Church Choir, and had played for a number of seasons with Bonnybridge Victoria Football Club. He enlisted soon after the outbreak of war, initially with the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders, then transferring to the Machine Gun Corps (Infantry) 59th Company, coming under the orders of 20th (Light) Division, 59th Brigade.

Thomas Young was killed in action on 16th August 1917, during the first day of the Battle of Langemark, the second Allied general attack of the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele). An officer writing to his mother said,

> I regret to say that early on the 16th your son, Pte. T. Young, was killed in action during the recent advance. Death was instantaneous and we buried him close to the place he lost his life. Our commanding officer sent up a cross with all the proper details on it and I placed it on his grave. I cannot say how sorry I am to have lost him; he was greatly respected and very popular with all the officers and men of this company. He was always cheerful and the best shot with the machine gun I had in my section. War is an awful thing, and anyone may be killed at any moment, but the lucky ones don't get touched or get nicely wounded and got home to England. It may interest you to know that the section your son was in and another section and had all the dangerous work to do, and did it splendidly. I am very proud of the men – especially your son. The shelling was awful; the wonder is any of us came out alive. The officer of the other section was wounded, and I had a piece of my face removed, but luckily it wasn't bad. The company had 34 casualties.

The whereabouts of Thomas Young's body was later forgotten and his body remains unrecovered, somewhere near Ypres. His name is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial, panel 154 to 159 and 163A.

He is also remembered on the Bonnybridge War Memorial.



**Hugh Rose McIntosh**

Private Hugh Rose McIntosh was born at Carriden in 1881, the son of Alexander James McIntosh, a well-known gas worker, and Jane McIntosh (ms Rose), Kinglassie Terrace, Bo'ness. His parents had been married in Bo'ness in 1877. He had one brother John, and one sister Agnes. He had enlisted at the outbreak of the war but as an attested man he was allowed to carry on his employment as a woodyard worker at Messrs Harrower, Welsh & Co., Pitwood Importers in the town.

He was called up to the Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 13th Battalion, service no: 376676, and went to France with a draft of men in mid-July 1917, coming under the orders of 15th (Scottish) Division, 45th Brigade. He had only been there for a month when he was severely wounded moving up to the front line during the 15th Division's participation in the Battle of Langemarck. He suffered gunshot wounds in the abdomen, together with a compound fracture of the left forearm. He died of these wounds, aged 36, at a Casualty Clearing Station on 21st August 1917. He is buried in Brandhoek New Military Cemetery No.3, at grave I. D. 25.

Brandhoek was within an area comparatively safe from shell fire which extended beyond nearby Vlamertinghe Church and field ambulances were continuously posted in this area. Up until July 1917 burials had been made in the Military Cemetery, but the arrival of the 32nd, 3rd Australian and 44th Casualty Clearing Stations, in preparation for the new Allied offensive at the Ypres Salient launched that month, made it necessary to open the New Military Cemetery. The New Military Cemetery No 3 opened in August 1917 and continued to accept burials until May 1918. It contains 975 First World War burials.

**Eric Jamieson**

Second Lieutenant Eric Liewellen Jamieson was born at Bo'ness in 1883, the son of Robert James Jamieson and Isabella Glass Jamieson (ms Richardson). His father Robert J. Jamieson was a prominent solicitor and had served as Bo'ness Town and Harbour Clerk since 1866 before his somewhat sudden death on 19th August 1910, aged 75 years.

Eric Jamieson was one of eight children. He had four brothers, Andrew Stewart, Robert, George and Ion Campbell, and three sisters Jean, Wilfreyda and Isa Jamieson. His twin brother Ion became an expert in traditional Scottish country dances in the 1930s, and one of the founding members of the Scottish Country Dance Society. His elder brother Andrew Stewart Jamieson was also Staff Paymaster in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, and his brother Robert James was a Private in the Gordon Highlanders.

He initially enlisted with the territorial Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders, 2/7th Battalion, but was selected for officer cadet training, and after passing out he was commissioned into the 3rd (Reserve Battalion) in late March 1917. He was soon transferred to France to join the 11th Battalion of the regiment, coming under the orders of 15th (Scottish) Division, 45th Brigade.

Second Lieutenant Jamieson was leading his men in what is known as the Action of 22nd August 1917, in the front line north of the Ypres-Roulers Railway line, during the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele) when he was posted missing in action. After frantic efforts over the following months by his family to determine his whereabouts, a letter was received on 29th April, 1918, from the War Office confirming that Eric was now presumed dead.

In October 1920 his body was found in an unmarked battlefield grave, identified by his disc, badge and pince-nez glasses. He was exhumed and reburied in Dochy Farm New British Cemetery, at grave II. C. 17. The inscription on his headstone reads simply, "Sine Metu". His name is also commemorated on the large family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery.

Sadly, there was further tragedy for the Jamieson family when brother Robert James was also later killed in action in France on 26th July 1918.

**Daniel Lowrie**

Private Daniel Sneddon Lourie (spelling of surname is incorrect on Bo'ness War Memorial) was the son of Alexander Lourie and Jane Lourie (ms Leitch) of Miller Pit Cottage, Bo'ness, who were married at Carriden in 1883. Daniel was born at Carriden in 1896 and had two brothers, John and Robert, and one sister Margaret Lourie. Prior to enlistment Daniel was employed as a coal miner with the Bridgeness Coal Company. He was 5'5' in height.

He had attested as a territorial with the Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment) in 1913, when he was 17 years old, and was called up at the outbreak of war and later drafted to France in 1916. He joined the Royal Scots, 2nd Battalion, service no: 43158, and whilst fighting with 3rd Division, 8th Brigade, he was wounded at the Battle of Ancre. He spent months in field hospitals before being evacuated back home in April 1917. He soon recovered to return to the Western Front, arriving back in France on 18th July 1917, initially joining the 12th Battalion but was posted to the 13th Battalion in early August. This Battalion came under the orders of 15th (Scottish Division), 45th Brigade.

Only two weeks later he was officially posted missing during the Action of 22nd August 1917, part of the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele). It wasn't until almost one year later that his family were officially notified by the War Office that all hope of his return was lost, and that he was now presumed dead.

His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial, panel 11 to 14 and 162.

**George Burnett Miller**

Private George Burnett Miller was born on 13th March 1891, at Bo'ness, the son of John and Janet Miller (ms also Miller) who were married in the town in 1886. He had three brothers, William, James and John, and two sisters, Catherine and Elizabeth. George was unmarried and lived with his parents and family at Royal Bank House, 27 Waggon Road, Bo'ness. Prior to enlistment, he worked as a coal miner in the local pits. He was 5'6" and weighed 147lbs.

He had previously enlisted as a territorial, but at the outbreak of war volunteered for overseas service and found himself very quickly disembarking in France on 11th August 1914, with the Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 2nd Battalion, coming under the orders of 3rd Division, 8th Brigade.

Private Miller was a violinist in the band of the 2nd Royal Scots, but this did not remove him from the action. He took part in the major battles of late 1914, and was wounded in action in November 1914 at the First Battle of Ypres. George was a prolific writer of letters from the front line. In one such letter, written on 13th November 1914, when he was recovering in a military hospital, he wrote to his parents to describe how a shell had wounded him and decimated his fellow Royal Scots Bandsmen. He said,

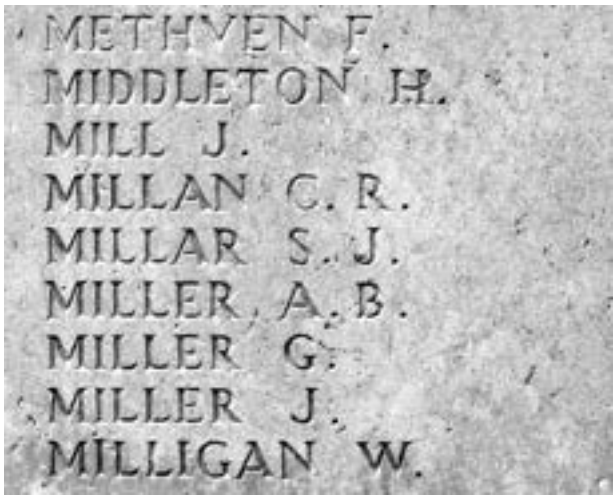
> It was about 5pm on a very nasty day. It had been rather quiet, when all at once, the shells came tearing over. The first two or three went bang into our hospital, and others took bits out of the roof of the place I was in. Then one cannoned off the wall and burst in the centre of us. Our clarinet player and trombonist were killed, whilst the big drummer, another two chaps and I were wounded. I got a piece of shell in my right thigh and hope to be all right soon.

He was wounded again at Vierstraat in February 1915, and once more wrote back home with an account of what happened, saying,

> I have been hit again, but not seriously. The bullet passed through the top of my shoulder and then through the right side of my jaw, fortunately breaking no bones, and only giving me a swelled face. I will soon be alright again.

He returned to France once again on 9th March 1917, and was back at the front line in April, this time joining the Royal Scots, 13th Battalion, service no: 11399, and coming under the orders of 15th (Scottish) Division, 45th Brigade.

Sadly this time he was not so lucky, and he was posted missing during the Action of 22nd August 1917, a fruitless attack by the 15th and 61st Divisions at the front line near Frezenberg. Again, like so many other Bo'ness families, a long wait had to be endured before official confirmation was received from the War Office of George Miller's death, in this case not until July 1918. He was 26 years old. His body was not found and he is one of the many casualties commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial, panel 11 to 14 and 162.



**David Rutherford**

Private David Rutherford was the second son of Thomas Rutherford, a local postman, and Jane Williamson Rutherford (ms Cattanach), who were married in Bo'ness in 1878. Sadly though his father had died in 1911. He had three brothers, Charles, James and Thomas, and one sister Catherine Rutherford. David was unmarried and lived with his family at Bankhead, Bo'ness.

Before enlisting David was employed as a woodyard worker at Messrs John Denholm and Company sawmills, Bo'ness. He was one of the many men who enlisted following the recruiting campaign in Grangepans in 1915. He joined the Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 5th Battalion, service no: 2902, the number being close in sequence to the other Bo'ness recruits at that time, many of whom were also killed during the Great War. He was sent to France in 1916 and saw plenty of action until he was wounded in the early summer of 1917, when he was invalided home to Bo'ness. After recovering from wounds, he again set off for France, arriving in the trenches at the end of July, after being posted to the Royal Scots, 13th Battalion, service no: 250803, coming under orders of 15th (Scottish) Division, 45th Brigade.

He was one of four Bo'ness men in the 13th Royal Scots who fell during what is known as the Action of the 22nd August 1917, part of the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele). His family was officially notified that he was missing in action on 19th September 1917, but it wasn't until August 1918

that he was officially declared missing presumed killed in action. David's body was never found and lies buried somewhere near Frezenberg. He is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial, panel 11 to 14 and 162. David Rutherford was aged 33 years old.

He is also commemorated on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery.

**Neil M. Stanners**

Private Neil McCallum Stanners was the son of Thomas Stanners and Christina Stanners (ms McCallum) of Hopetoun Terrace, Bo'ness, and the second of three sons in the Stanners family to be killed during the Great War. Neil was born in 1883 in Slamannan, the second oldest son, and came from a large family, with four brothers Gilbert, Thomas Williamson, James and Alexander, and four sisters Julia, Janet, Christina and Margaret Stanners. He was married to Isabella Hislop Stanners (ms Hunter), in 1912, at Morningside in Edinburgh and lived at 7 Bruntsfield Avenue, Edinburgh with their one child.

Neil was employed as a traveller, nowadays called a sales rep, for McVittie and Price, Biscuit Manufacturer, Edinburgh. During World War One, this firm was called on by the government to use its knowledge and production facilities to supply plain biscuits for the soldier's iron rations. It had to open a new bakery in Manchester to satisfy the increased demand.

At the outbreak of war he enlisted with the Scots Greys, service no: 5244, a regiment he had previously served with in the Boer War. He was eventually transferred to the Royal Scots, 13th Battalion, service no: 40462 and coming under the orders of 15th (Scottish) Division, 45th Brigade.

He was the last of the four Bo'ness men in the 13th Royal Scots who died during what is known as the Action of the 22nd August 1917, part of the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele). He was wounded whilst risking his life as a stretcher bearer for other wounded soldiers and was transferred to a Canadian Casualty Clearing Station, where he died on the same date. He was 35 years old. Neil Stanners is buried in Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, at grave XVIII. B. 17A.

He is also commemorated on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery, alongside his brother Gilbert, who was killed in action in 1916, and his younger brother Thomas who was killed in 1918 near the end of the War.

**Michael McGowan**

Lance Corporal Michael McGowan was the son of Daniel McGowan and Robina McGowan (ms Peebles), who both worked in the pottery trade. His parents were married at Bo'ness on 31st December 1891, and Michael was born a year later. He had three sisters, Jenny, Fanny and Robina and two brothers Andrew and Denis McGowan. The family lived at Corbiehall, but latterly lived at Foredale Terrace, Bo'ness.

Michael was previously employed at Messrs A. Ballantine and Sons, New Grange Foundry, but in later years worked in the yard of the Forth Shipbreaking Company at Bridgeness.

He enlisted in 1915 with the Royal Scots, 1/5th Battalion, service no: 3680, and had arrived in France in the summer of 1916. He had been wounded later that year and returned home to recuperate. On returning to the Front in early 1917, he was transferred to the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, 8th Bn (B Coy), service no: 38232, coming under the command of 23rd Division, 70th Brigade.

There is some confusion over the date of Michael's death. It is officially recorded as 25th August 1917, although the battalion war diaries fail to confirm this. Further information suggests he may have died during action in the early hours of the 26th August. His Captain, in conveying the sad news to Michael's parents, wrote,

> He was always a good soldier and his loss will be deeply felt among his comrades in his company. I hope the fact that he died instantaneously and suffered no pain may be some help to you in your great sorrow.

Michael was 24 years old.

He was buried near to where he fell, alongside four other comrades in the 8th KOYLI - Privates J.H. Buffey (16734), J.T. Barnes (202677), T. Grogan (16349) and J.W. Rowley (21149). As part of grave concentration after the war, on the 14th March 1919, the five men were exhumed and relocated to separate graves in Perth Cemetery (China Wall). Michael is buried at grave II. B. 35. Burials at this cemetery were initiated by the French in 1914, but the cemetery was adopted by the 2nd Scottish Rifles in June 1917. Renamed Perth (as the predecessors of the 2nd Scottish Rifles were raised in Perth), and China Wall (from the communication trench known as the Great Wall of China). The cemetery was used for front line burials until October 1917. It was not used again until after the Armistice, when graves were brought in from the battlefields around Ypres.

**George Robertson**

Private George Robertson was born in 1898, the younger son of George Robertson and Janet Robertson (ms Hamilton), 23 Rattray Street, Grangepans. His parents were married at Carriden in 1891.

He had an elder sister Christina, and an elder brother James Robertson, a former fitter with Messrs A. Ballantine and Sons, New Grange Foundry. James had already enlisted in the Army in early 1915, seeing action at the Western Front with the Royal Engineers. Before enlisting, George Robertson, was employed at Messrs R. Mickel and Co., Victoria Sawmills, Bridgeness.

George had to wait until he turned 18 years of age to enlist, and this duly occurred in March 1917. Oblivious to the horrors that lay ahead, he eagerly joined the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) 10th Battalion, service no: 37759, coming under orders of 15th (Scottish) Division, 46th Brigade. He was granted a short period of leave at the end of June 1917, journeying home to be with his family for one last time at the Bo'ness Fair holidays.

Returning to the action he found himself fighting in the front line near Beck House and Iberian Farmhouses, just north of Frezenberg, during the Third Battle of Ypres. He was killed, along with two comrades, by a bursting artillery shell on the 26th August 1917, when attached to 44th Brigade. The sad news was conveyed to his parents back home in Grangepans by a Lieutenant in command of his platoon.

His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial, panel 68 to 70 and 162 and 162A.

Tea-time in a shell crater

**Andrew Bell**

Originally from Lochgelly in Fife, Private Andrew Bell was a native of Grangepans and was married to Elizabeth Bell (ms Ferguson) at Carriden in 1911. They had three children and lived at 47 Foundry Square, Grangepans. He was the eldest son of John Bell of Rattray Street, Grangepans. Prior to enlistment he was employed as a coal miner at No:2 Pit, Grangepans.

He enlisted with the Royal Scots on 15th November 1914, at Blackness Castle, alongside Thomas Barnett who was killed in the Gretna train disaster, and who also appears on the Bo'ness War Memorial, and John Ferguson who was later discharged disabled from the Army. He first crossed to France on 29th January 1917, and was wounded in the left arm during fighting on 7th April. After being removed to hospital in the UK, and spending ten days back home in Grangepans recuperating, he returned to the front on 30th July. He found himself posted to the Royal Scots, 16th Battalion (McCrae's Battalion), service no: 270172, coming under the orders of 34th Division, 101st Brigade.

On the 27th August 1917, the 16th Battalion were involved in what is known as the Fighting at Hargicourt, and Andrew Bell was wounded during this action. He was taken to 55th Casualty Clearing Station at Tincourt but died of his wounds the following day, and this was confirmed by official telegram from the Records Office in Hamilton to Andrew's wife in September 1917. The matron of the CCS also wrote a letter to Mrs Hamilton stating,

> I regret to inform you that your husband, who was admitted to hospital yesterday suffering from a gunshot wound in the abdomen and legs, died this morning. I can assure you that everything possible was done in an effort to save him. You will like to know that he had very little pain, and passed way in his sleep.

Andrew Bell was 27 years old. He is buried at Tincourt New British Cemetery, at grave I. G. 16. The villages of Tincourt and Boucly were occupied by British troops in March 1917, during the German Retreat to the Hindenburg Line. From the following May until March 1918, Tincourt became a centre for Casualty Clearing Stations.

**Herbert Broome**

Private Herbert Broome was born in Bo'ness on 3rd August 1890, the son of Thomas Ainslie Broome, a potter's turner, and Margaret Broome (ms Rae). His parents were married at Bo'ness in 1880 and the family resided at Thomson Place, Corbiehall. He had four sisters Jeanie, Maggie, Mary and Isabella, and two brothers, William and Francis, both of whom were also on active service during the Great War and survived.

Herbert enlisted with the Royal Scots, 1/10th (Cyclist) Battalion, service no: 2023, when it was formed at Linlithgow in August 1914, and spent some time on coastal duties at Berwick-upon-Tweed. He volunteered for overseas service and was part of a draft containing many other Bo'ness men who arrived in France in May 1916. He was attached to the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, 2/5th Battalion, service no: 202530, coming under the orders of 61st (2nd South Midland) Division, 182nd Brigade.

Herbert Broome was posted missing in action on 1st September 1917, during the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele), on the front line near Bank Farm, when several unsuccessful attempts were made by his Battalion to rush the adjacent Hill 35. It wasn't until almost one year later, in August 1918, that official confirmation was received by Herbert's family from the War Office that he had been confirmed killed in action on that date.

Herbert was buried on the battlefield near to where he fell but in 1919, as part of CWGC concentration of graves, his body was exhumed and reburied at Tyne Cot Cemetery, grave: V. E. 4.

**Alexander Forbes**

Private Alexander (Sandy) Forbes was the son of Alexander Forbes and Isabella Stanners Forbes (ms Brown). His parents were married on 21st December 1879, in Bo'ness and lived at Foredale Terrace where they were well known. Sandy was born in Carriden on 17th January 1883. The member of a large family, he had seven sisters, Isabella, Margaret, Marion, Annie, Agnes, Elisabeth and Thomasina, and one brother, William. Sandy was 5' 8" tall and weighed 152lbs. Prior to enlistment he was self-employed as a gardener in the Carriden district.

Sandy enlisted on 17th February 1915, with the Royal Scots, 1/5th Battalion, service no: 3219, and was posted to France on the 8th December 1916. His Battalion had at that time joined together with the 6th Bn, after heavy losses at Gallipoli, to become the 5/6th Bn. They came under the orders of 32nd Division, 14th Brigade.

He suffered a gunshot wound to his left leg on 5th February 1917, during the Operations on the Ancre. He arrived at 7th Canadian General Hospital in Etaples and then sent back to the UK on the Hospital Ship HS Stad Antwerpen, eventually arriving at the Military Hospital, Bethnal Green, London. After a period of convalescence, he was posted back to France on 24th July 1917 rejoining the 5/6th Bn on the 29th July. However he was transferred to 13th Royal Scots on the 8th August 1917, and assigned new service no: 250912.

His unit was in the trenches north of Roeux, when on the 13th September 1917, he was wounded and killed by enemy fire, the only casualty on that particular day. He is buried at the Level Crossing Cemetery, Fampoux at grave I. C. 41. Sandy was 34 years old.

Fampoux village was taken by the 4th Division (passing through the 9th (Scottish) Division) on 9th April 1917. The cemetery was started in June 1917 when numerous casualties of April and May were brought in from the battlefield. In addition to the 9th and 51st Division, the 15th (Scottish) Division fought in the area, and over half the graves are those of soldiers of Scottish regiments.

**James Grant**

Private James Grant was born in Bathgate, but belonged to Newtown, Bo'ness. He was the husband of Mary Grant (ms Cullen), and the couple lived at Inver Cottage, Newtown. He was a coal miner, and was one of the contingent of miners from Kinneil Colliery who enlisted in the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), 9th Battalion at the end of 1914. He held service no: S/4246 and first arrived in France on the 14th July 1915. His Battalion came under the orders of 15th (Scottish) Division, 44th Brigade.

He enlisted at the start of hostilities, and had a long and creditable record in the fighting line. He had previously been wounded in the left arm in September 1915 during the Battle of Loos. He also fought at the Somme in 1916, the Battle of Arras and at the Third Battle of Ypres in 1917.

On the 2nd September 1917, the 9th Battalion moved from the Ypres Salient back down to the Arras sector and James was awarded the Military Medal, in October 1917, for bravery in the field. He then returned to Bo'ness on leave to marry his wife Mary. He had arrived home on Thursday 10th October, was married on the Friday and went back to France again on the following Wednesday.

One month later, however, James Grant was dead, killed in action on 13th November 1917, by an artillery shell. He was one of a party resting in a dugout immediately behind the front line, when the shell exploded burying the whole squad of men. It was a double tragedy for his wife Mary, as her own brother Thomas Cullen, Cameron Highlanders 5th Battalion, had been killed by a sniper on the 7th December 1915.

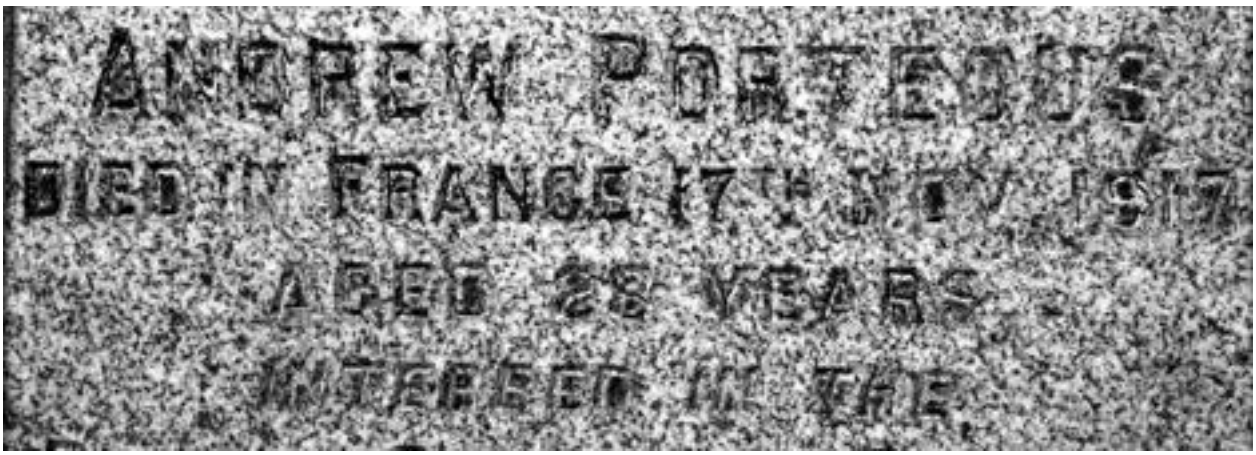
James Grant's body was recovered and is buried at Level Crossing Cemetery, Fampoux, at grave II. C. 9. Private James Grant, MM, was 26 years old when he died.

**Andrew Porteous**

Private Andrew Porteous was the son of William Scobbie Porteous and Elizabeth Porteous (ms Galloway) who were married in 1880 in Bo'ness. He had three brothers, David, Scobbie and William, and five sisters, Elizabeth, Annie, Nettie, Margaret and May. The family lived at Blackford Cottage, Kinglass Avenue, Bo'ness, opposite the Chance Park. The house was named after the town in Perthshire where his father was born. William Porteous was originally a shoemaker, but had become a spirit dealer and the owner of the Cross Keys Inn, North Street, Bo'ness, where Andrew worked as the manager. As well as the pub, William also owned a shop in Grangepans and two other houses in the town. Andrew was married in the spring of 1917 in Edinburgh to Jean Lillie and the couple

lived for a while in Berwick-upon Tweed, before moving to Amble, Northumberland.

Andrew had enlisted at Linlithgow with the Royal Scots and spent some time on the east coast training and on coastal duties. He was sent to France in July 1917 and found himself in the Royal Scots, 13th Battalion, D company, coming under the orders of 15th (Scottish) Division, 45th Brigade. He participated in the Third Battle of Ypres and had returned to the Arras Sector before falling ill with acute nephritis. He was taken to 8th Casualty Clearing Station at Etrun, about 9km west of Arras. His father received intimation that Andrew was dangerously ill, but his condition deteriorated and Andrew died of the illness on 17th November 1917. He was 28 years of age. He is buried at Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun, at grave VI. D. 35, and also commemorated on the large family gravestone in Bo'ness Cemetery.



**George Brodie**

Sergeant George Brodie was born in Bo'ness on 11th September 1891, the son of Thomas Brodie, a colliery fireman, and Elizabeth Betsy Malloch Brodie (ms Campbell) of 61 Castleloan, Bo'ness. His parents were married in the town on 23rd December 1888. He was the eldest child in a large family, with four sisters, Helen, Catherine Peacock, Margaret and Annie, and one brother Duncan.

George was the husband of Elizabeth Brodie (ms Meikle), of 2 Hope Street, Bo'ness. The couple were married in the town on 25th October 1912, and had two daughters, Helen and Elizabeth. George was 5'6" in height and weighed 143lbs, with a sallow complexion, grey eyes and dark brown hair.

Before enlisting, he was employed as a miner at Kinneil. He joined up just after the outbreak of war on 13th November 1914, with the Royal Scots, 12th Battalion, service no: 16039. After a period of training he was sent to France, arriving on 11th May, 1915, coming under the orders of 9th (Scottish) Division, 27th Brigade. Miraculously, he fought and survived all the major battles from 1915 to 1917, including the Battles of Loos, the Somme and Arras without even receiving a minor wound. He reportedly gained promotion to Sergeant for his gallantry and fine soldierly qualities on the battlefield.

His luck finally ran out on 20th September 1917, the opening day of the Battle of Menin Road Ridge, the third major conflict of the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele), when the 27th Brigade attacked and captured the Potsdam Works, east of Frezenberg. He was 26 years of age.

Lieutenant T. Keith Clifford of his Battalion wrote to his widow conveying the sad news and saying,

> Your husband was killed in action in the great advance. He died like a true British soldier facing the enemy. He was killed instantly…He has been my right hand man for the last two months, and was very popular both with men and officers.

His body was recovered and laid to rest near to where he fell late on the evening of the 20th September. The location of his final resting place has subsequently been forgotten, and he is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial, panel 11 to 14 and 162. George Brodie is also commemorated on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery.

**John Middleton**

Private John Middleton was the son of Allan Middleton, a dock labourer, and Jessie Middleton (ms Weir) who were married in the parish of Leith North in 1890. John was born in Granton, Edinburgh, in 1897, and was part of a large family with sisters Catherine and Mary, and brothers William, Duncan, James, Allan and Robert. The family latterly lived at 246 Thornhill Road, Falkirk, but John was brought up in Bo'ness by Mr and Mrs David Murdoch at Braehead, a couple with connections to the Middleton family. For several years he worked as a milk boy, for Mr Hill of Hawthorn Bank Dairy, but prior to enlistment he worked as a fitter.

John enlisted, aged 17 years, at Bo'ness on 5th December 1914, initially joining the Royal Scots, 7th Battalion, service no: 2692. He spent two years training and carried out coastal defence work until he volunteered to go to the Western Front. He arrived in France on 8th January 1917, and was posted to the Machine Gun Corps (Infantry) 28th Company, coming under the orders of the 9th (Scottish) Division, South African Brigade.

John was killed in action east of Frezenberg, on 20th September 1917, the opening day of the Battle of Menin Road Ridge, the third major conflict of the Third Battle of Ypres. He was 20 years of age. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial, panel 154 to 159 and 163A.

John Middleton back row right hand side

His elder brother Duncan Middleton also enlisted with the Royal Scots and had been killed in action at the Battle of the Somme in October 1916. The names of the two brothers appear side-by-side on the Bo'ness War Memorial.

John Middleton with shaving soap

**Andrew Sharp**

Private Andrew Smart Sharp was the son of John Gibb Sharp, draper & clothier, and Jemima Sharp (ms Smart), who were married in Denny, Stirlingshire, in 1879. He was born in Bo'ness in 1890. Andrew had three brothers Charles, John Smart and James Smart Sharp, as well as sisters, Agnes Boag, Janet Gibb and Isabella Sharp, and another sister called Janet who had died in infancy. He was married to Janet Sharp, and the couple had one child.

He enlisted initially with the Royal Scots Fusiliers, service no: 32101, and was then transferred to the Machine Gun Corps (Infantry) 22nd Company, who were attached to 7th Division, 22nd Brigade. He was then assigned new service no: 99005.

Andrew Sharp was killed, aged 27 years old, on the 1st October 1917, in or near to Jetty Trench during the 7th Division's participation in the Battle of Polygon Wood, part of the second phase of the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele). His body was not recovered from the battlefield and he is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial, panel 154 to 159 and 163A. He is also commemorated on the large family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery.

By the time Andrew was killed in France his mother Jemima had already suffered more than her fair share of tragedy. She had already lost her husband John and son Charlie, aged 17, both in 1897, as well as her daughters Agnes (6) and the aforementioned infant Janet (15 months), and finally her second husband William Chapman, who died in 1916.

Highland machine gunner ready for action

**James Goodall**

Private James Robert Goodall was the fourth son of William Goodall, a well-known seaman or "old salt" in Bo'ness, and Ellen Goodall (ms Fraser), of 31 Ann Terrace, Bridgeness, Bo'ness. His parents had been married at Carriden in 1884. He had three younger brothers, Robert, John and George Goodall. James left for Australia in 1913 and he lived at 89 Bourke Street, Redfern, Sydney, New South Wales, and worked as a coal miner. He enlisted on 22nd June 1915, with the Australian Infantry, 1st Battalion, service no: 2839, and was later sent with the first Australian Imperial Force (AIF) to Egypt. Some time afterwards he sailed to France on board the troop ship HMT Ivernia, arriving at Marseilles on the 28th March 1916. He was severely wounded in action, sustaining gunshot wounds to the left hand and left thigh, on 18th August 1916 at the Pozieres Ridge during the Battle of the Somme. He lost the toes of his left foot, two fingers and a thumb of his left hand and a finger of his right hand. He returned back to the UK to recuperate at Fakenham, and whilst there he found love with a girl named Miss Lily Smith. He was able to visit his former family home at Ann Terrace in late October, but soon returned again to France and rejoined his unit on 21st July 1917. He was wounded in action again on 4th October 1917, when Australian 1st Division took part in the Battle of Broodseinde, part of the Third battle of Ypres (Passchendaele). On 8th October 1917, he was admitted to 22nd General Hospital Dannes-Camiers with gunshot wounds to thigh, and compound fractures of both femur and jaw. He died of his wounds at 1:00am. Sister Helen Indan at 22 GH sent a letter to James's father, William, expressing her deepest sympathy and saying,

> On the afternoon of his death he asked me if I would write to you for him. He had the highest regard for you and he said to me, "He's such a fine fellow-and 68 years of age". He did not realise he was so ill and was expecting to go home to Blighty…We gave him a narcotic so that he would not suffer and the end came very peacefully.

Tragically, William Goodall did not get the chance to read the contents of his son's last letter. Despite his age he had been serving his country himself as a seaman in the Mercantile Marine and had been missing presumed drowned since August 1917 following his ship SS Heatherside being torpedoed in the Bay of Biscay. His father's name is also listed on the Bo'ness War Memorial. Private James Goodall, aged 26 years, was buried with military honours at Etaples Military Cemetery, at grave XXX. A. 3A.

**John Mulholland**

Private John Mulholland was born on 22nd December 1885, at 30 Smithstown, Cumbernauld, the son of John Mulholland, a checkweighman at Kinneil Colliery, and Susan Mulholland (ms Maxwell). His parents were married in Kilsyth on 4th May 1882. He came from a large family with brothers James and Richard, and seven sisters, Anne, Catherine, Jane, Susan, Margaret, Mary and Theresa Mulholland. Many of the descendants of the Mulholland family still reside in Bo'ness.

John married Rebecca Rodgers, a domestic servant from East Whitburn, on 2nd January 1911, and they had four children, Elizabeth, John, Henry and Francis. He was also employed as a miner and prior to the war worked with Messrs Forrester and Company, Whiterigg Colliery, East Whitburn. The family lived in the nearby miner's rows.

John Mulholland was a member of the County Battalion, and was an old Territorial holding the volunteer long service medal (which he is wearing in the photo), and he belonged to the National Reserve. Upon mobilisation he joined the Royal Scots, 11th Battalion, service no: 375043, and he was stationed for a period in the quartermaster's department at the central headquarters of the battalion at Linlithgow. He was then stationed at North Berwick from where he left for France in June 1917, coming under the orders of 9th (Scottish) Division, 27th Brigade.

John was killed in action on 12th October 1917, during the First Battle of Passchendaele, part of the Third Battle of Ypres. He fell during the 27th Brigade's attack near the Northern end of the Passchendaele Ridge. His body was not recovered and he is remembered on the Tyne Cot Memorial, panel 11 to 14 and 162. He is also commemorated on the East Whitburn War Memorial. John Mulholland was aged 31 years old when he was killed.

**Alexander Thomson**

Sergeant Alexander McIntosh Thomson was the son of John Thomson, who was born in Sandwich, Kent, and Helen Edmonston Thomson (ms Ferguson), of 31 Corbiehall, Bo'ness. His parents were married in the town in 1887. Sadly his mother died in 1896 at the young age of 28, but his father was remarried to Elizabeth Adams in 1900. Alexander was unmarried and had one brother by the name of William. His father John had also enlisted as a Sapper with the Royal Engineers.

Alexander Thomson had enlisted on 5th March 1912, as a territorial in the local Royal Scots 1/10th (Cyclist) Battalion. He was called up on mobilisation on 5th August 1914, and spent a few years in training and on coastal duties before volunteering to be drafted to the Western Front, arriving in France on 8th June 1917. There he was transferred to the Royal Scots, 11th Battalion, service no: 375063, coming

under the orders of 9th (Scottish) Division, 27th Brigade. On the 21st October 1917, he was fighting in the front line trenches near Mousetrap Farm, during the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele), when he suffered shrapnel wounds in the neck and left hand and was transferred to a nearby casualty clearing station. He died of these wounds on the 22nd October and was buried later that day in the nearby Dozinghem Military Cemetery at Westvleteren north of Poperinghe, in grave XI. E. 21. Alexander Thomson was 21 years of age.

Westvleteren was outwith the front held by Commonwealth forces in Flanders during the First World War, but in July 1917, in preparation for the coming Ypres offensive, groups of casualty clearing stations were placed at three locations, named with typical black humour by the troops as Mendinghem, Dozinghem and Bandaghem. The 4th, 47th and 61st Casualty Clearing Stations were posted at Dozinghem and the military cemetery was used by them until early in 1918.

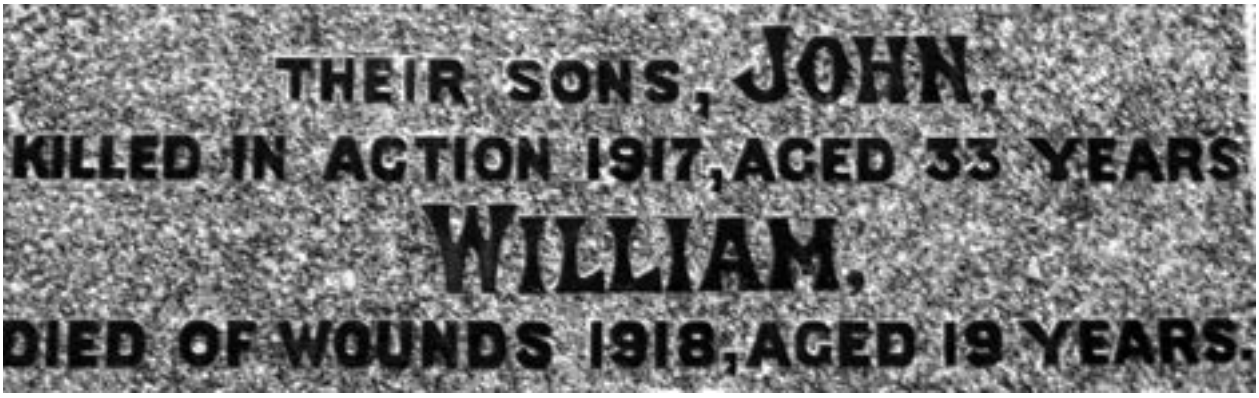
**John Bishop**

Private John Bishop was the son of Robert Bishop, a coal miner, and Jemima Bishop of 10 Kinneil Lane, Bo'ness. John had three younger brothers, Robert, James and William and four sisters, Jessie, Agnes, Bella and Marion.

He was married to Andrina S. Bishop (ms Gibb) in 1908 in Bo'ness, and the couple lived with their three children, Maggie, Jemima and Robert, at 32 Furnace Row.

John Bishop enlisted with the Royal Scots, 5th Battalion, service no: 3047, on 21st December 1914, and was sent to the Dardanelles, disembarking at Gallipoli on the 24th May 1915. He had fought alongside his brother James with the 5th Royal Scots at Gallipoli and both brothers had been wounded during the campaign. James had been slightly wounded in the back with a piece of shrapnel from an artillery shell that burst behind him during a charge. He was able to walk back to the hospital. John suffered more serious wounds, a gunshot wound to the knee on 29th June 1915, and was invalided home, where he gave a full account of the action he had been involved in to the local newspapers.

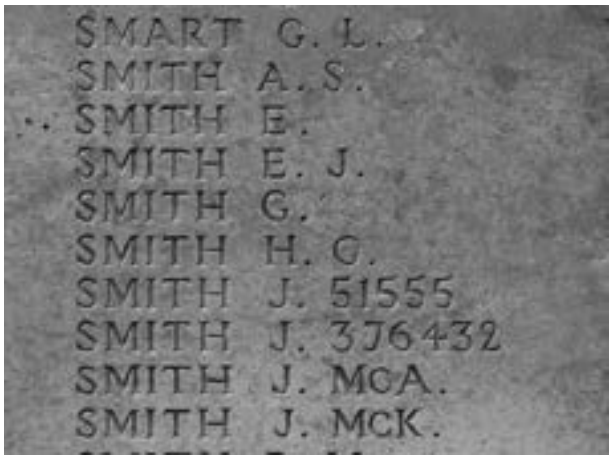
After recovering he was sent to the Western Front, arriving in France on 16th March 1917, and was transferred to the Royal Scots, 17th Battalion, coming under the orders of 35th Division, 106th Brigade. John Bishop was killed on the 20th October 1917, in the front line, north east of Langemark near Houtholt Forest, during the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele). He was one of four men in the Battalion killed that day. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial, panel 11 to 14 and 162. He is also commemorated on the large family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery, alongside his brother William, who died of wounds in 1918. His other brother James survived the war.



**George Smith**

Private George Smith was born in 1880 in Bo'ness, the son of Thomas Smith, pottery printer, and Elizabeth Smith (ms Low), King's Cottage, Braehead, Bo'ness. His parents were married in the town on 19th December 1862. He was 5'6" in height and weighed 138lbs. George came from a big Bo'ness family and had three brothers, Thomas, John and William, and five sisters, Elizabeth, Jane, Agnes, Edith and Janet. He was unmarried, and an iron moulder to trade, but Smith was employed for almost ten years as a gardener under the supervision of Mr Clark at Bo'ness Cemetery.

He enlisted on 15th November 1915, at Bo'ness, and was with the Army Reserve until mobilisation on 21st March 1916, initially with the Royal Scots 3rd Battalion. After a period of training at Edinburgh, George was posted to France on 8th May 1917, with the Royal Scots 15th Battalion, service no: 30221, coming under the orders of 34th Division, 101st Brigade.


SMART G. L.
SMITH A. S.
SMITH E.
SMITH E. J.
SMITH G.
SMITH H. C.
SMITH J. 51555
SMITH J. 376432
SMITH J. MCA.
SMITH J. MCK.

George Smith was killed in action on 22nd October 1917, after heavy machine gun fire and shelling from the enemy during the 34th Division's participation in the fighting for the Broenbeek, part of the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele). He was one of 235 casualties that day sustained by the 15th Royal Scots. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial, panel 11 to 14 and 162. He was 37 years of age.

**Robert Dalrymple**

Private Robert Dalrymple was born at the Drum Farm, Bo'ness in 1897. He was the eldest son of Henry Dunsmore Dalrymple, a farm foreman, and Agnes Dalrymple (ms Nimmo), who were married at Carriden in 1896. Robert came from a big family - his siblings were Mary, Jane, Amelia, Frances, James, Alexander and Minnie. The family had moved from the Drum Farm owned by Mr Cadell, to Mannerston Farm, Linlithgow, where Henry worked for the farm owner Mr Robertson. He was educated at Carriden and Grange Schools, and then worked as a ploughman under the watchful eye of his father at Mannerston.

Robert enlisted at Linlithgow on 15th June 1915, with the Gordon Highlanders, 6th Battalion, service no: 202943. He was sent to France in May 1917 and came under the orders of 51st Highland Division, 152nd Brigade. He was killed in action on the 23rd November 1917, during the Battle of Cambrai, when the 6th Gordons were ordered to recapture the village of Fontaine Notre Dame from the Germans.

He was 20 years and 6 months old when he died. His father received a letter from the Rev. Henry Coulter, Army Chaplain, who wrote that Robert had been killed in an attack upon the German lines and said,

> I have always regarded him as an exceedingly nice fellow, quiet and genuine. He used to speak to me of how the men will enjoy their homes after the war. I am very sorry indeed to lose him and the other boys who have fallen, but the greatest loss must be yours, who mourn for them.

Robert Dalrymple's body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Cambrai Memorial, Louveral, panel 10. He is also commemorated on the Blackness War Memorial and the Abercorn Church Memorial.

**Joshua Reid**

Private Joshua Reid was the son of William Reid, "Tynron", Adele Street, Motherwell. He had one brother, also called William, and five sisters, Elizabeth, Joan, Jane, Isabella and Janet. Although a native of Motherwell, he had worked for some five years an accountant in the Clydesdale Bank at Bo'ness under the watchful eye of Mr Fallow, the Bank Manager. While he was located at Bo'ness he lived at Manse Place, and was also a Sunday school teacher at Craigmailen Church. He was 5'6" in height and weighed 140lbs.

Joshua enlisted on 22nd February 1916, initially with the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders, 10th Battalion, service no: S/20886. He was posted to France on 21st August 1917, and transferred days later to the Gordon Highlanders, 6th Battalion, service no: S/41496, coming under the orders of 51st (Highland) Division, 152nd Brigade. He was killed in action at the Battle of Cambrai on 23rd

November 1917, in the same assault that claimed the life of comrade Private Robert Dalrymple. The 6th Gordons had taken their objective, and were digging themselves in when a shell landed in their midst killing or wounding the majority of the party in that part of the line. Private Reid's death was caused by shell concussion.

His body was buried near to where he fell on the battlefield, near the village of Cantaing-sur-Escaut, south west of Fontaine-Notre-Dame, and marked with a simple cross. He was buried alongside a comrade Lance Corporal A. Hunter who died on the same date. In February, 1920, both bodies were exhumed as part of grave concentration and reburied at Flesquieres Hill British Cemetery. Joshua Reid is buried at grave VIII. G. 5.

Joshua was one of three employees of the Clydesdale Bank who appear on the Bo'ness War memorial, the others being Archie Dunlop and Robert Sharpe, who both died towards the end of the war.

**Alexander Walker**

Private Alexander Walker was born on 5th July 1894, the son of John and Marion Walker (ms Kirkwood), of Knowepark, situated on Braehead Avenue, Bo'ness. His parents were married in the town in 1889. John Walker had worked as a master butcher for many years at his premises in Market Square, and was one of the most successful businessmen in Bo'ness. Alexander had several living brothers and sisters, James, William, Robert, Peter, George, Marion, Agnes and Elizabeth. Several other siblings had died previous to 1917, including John, Liston, Isabella and Alexina. Alexander was 5'9" in height and had a fair complexion, blue eyes and fair hair. He was unmarried.

He served his apprenticeship at the Union Bank in Bo'ness and emigrated to Canada in 1912 to take up a job as an accountant in a branch of the Montreal bank in Outlook, Saskatchewan. He enlisted at Manitoba, Winnipeg on the 22nd November 1915, and joined the Canadian Infantry (Cameron Highlanders of Canada), 79th Battalion, but was later transferred to 43rd Battalion, service no: 859354.

On arrival in England on 13th October 1916, on board the SS Saxonia, he was granted leave and had completed preparations to come back for a visit to his home town, when the leave was suddenly cancelled, and he was sent to France on 14th November 1916. His family were obviously deeply disappointed at this turn of events, and in fact they would never have the opportunity to see Alexander again.

79th Battalion fought in France as part of the 3rd Canadian Division, 9th Canadian Infantry Brigade, and Alexander took part in many of the main Battles at Arras in 1917, including the Battles of Vimy Ridge and Hill 70.

The Canadian Corps, a 100000 strong fighting formation, were then ordered to the Passchendaele front in mid-October 1917. It was during the 3rd Canadian Division's participation in the Second Battle of Passchendaele on 26th October 1917, that Alexander was wounded. He was admitted to 10th Casualty Clearing Station, with a compound fracture to the right thigh caused by a gunshot wound, and despite their best efforts, he died later that night. He was 23 years of age.

Alexander Walker is buried in grave XXII. F. 8. at Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery. The village of Lijssenthoek, situated on the main communication line between the Allied military bases in the rear and the Ypres battlefields, and out of the range of German artillery, was an ideal location for a number of casualty clearing stations during the First World War.

**James S. King**

Private James Strachan King was the son of William King, a blacksmith from Carnock in Fife, and Janet King (ms Strachan) who lived at 16 Philpingstone Terrace, Bridgeness, Bo'ness. James was born in the town in 1896. He had seven brothers, Alexander, John, Andrew, William, Robert, David and Thomas and two sisters, Jane and Janet. Prior to enlistment James worked as a coal miner with the Bridgeness Coal Company.

At the outbreak of war James King enlisted at Bo'ness with the Cameron Highlanders, 1st Battalion, service no: S/21294, and he was sent to France in 1915 coming under the orders of 1st Division, 1st Brigade. Three other brothers also enlisted. His brother John was a well-known local footballer and enlisted with the Royal Engineers, whilst another brother Thomas also joined up, suffering wounds at the Somme, but returning to the action soon after. The other brother's details are unknown, but these three brothers survived the war.

James was not so lucky. He fought at the Battle of Loos and the Somme, and was twice wounded, but returned to the Western Front at the earliest opportunity. He was fighting with the 1st Division, just after the Second Battle of Passchendaele, during the Third Battle of Ypres when he was killed in action on 17th November 1917. James was in a Lewis Gun section in an advance position when it was hit by an artillery shell.

Captain Pattison of the 1st Battalion wrote to his parents confirming his death and saying,

> . . . he died as you would have him die, with his face to the enemy, upholding the traditions of our dear country and the famous regiment that now mourns his loss. I have known your son for some time, and always noticed how cheery he was in the most trying circumstances. It is a loss that can never be replaced.

James King is buried at Tyne Cot Cemetery, at grave LXII. B. 11. He is also remembered on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery. He was 21 years old when he died. On the Bo'ness War Memorial, James King is wrongly described as "MM", signifying a recipient of the Military Medal. This appears to be a mistake, and may relate to James Grant, who died four days earlier, and who did receive this gallantry award.

**James C. Blackly**

Private James Cunningham Blackley (name is incorrect on Memorial) was born in the town of Biggar, Lanarkshire, in 1885, the son of James Blackley and Catherine Blackley (ms Cunningham). The parents were married in 1882 at Fauldhouse, West Lothian. Sadly, his father died on 23rd October 1902 in Ratho, Midlothian, at the age of 42. He had four brothers Thomas, Hamilton, David and Robert, and four sisters, Catherine, Agnes, Anabella and Janet. His mother latterly lived at Grougfoot Cottages, near Champany, Linlithgow. James was formerly an agricultural labourer like his father but prior to enlisting worked for Linlithgow District Committee as a roadman. He married Catherine Hosie McKendrick on 6th June 1913, in Edinburgh, and the couple had one son, named John.

He enlisted with the Army Service Corps, service no: RTS/6200, signifying that he was in the Remounts Service, responsible for the provision of horses and mules to army units. A Remount Squadron consisted of mainly about 200 older, experienced soldiers who obtained and trained 500 horses.

James arrived in France on 1st April 1915. At some point he was transferred to the Northumberland Fusiliers 22nd (3rd Tyneside Scottish) Battalion, service no: 56177, coming under the orders of 34th Division, 102nd Brigade (Tyneside Scottish). During the 32nd Division's participation in the Third Battle of Ypres, he was taken ill and was eventually admitted to hospital at Rouen on the 25th November 1917, suffering from pneumonia and nephritis. Various allied camps and hospitals were stationed on the southern outskirts of Rouen. A base supply depot and the 3rd Echelon of General Headquarters were also established in the city. Almost all of the hospitals at Rouen remained there for practically the whole of the war. They included eight general, five stationary, one British Red Cross and one labour hospital, and No. 2 Convalescent Depot. A number of the dead from these hospitals were buried in other cemeteries, but the great majority were taken to the city cemetery of St. Sever. In September 1916, it was found necessary to begin an extension, where the last burial took place in April 1920. Sadly Private Blackley passed away on the 27th November 1917, and was buried in St. Sever Cemetery Extension, near Rouen, at grave P. III. T. 6A. He was 32 years old.

James Blackley is also remembered on the Blackness War Memorial.

**John Carlaw**

Private John Carlaw was the son of James Carlaw, a stevedore at Bo'ness docks, and Elizabeth Carlaw (ms Holmes), of Arthur Place, Bo'ness. His parents had been married in the town in 1882. John was 5'8" with a fair complexion, fair hair and grey eyes. He had several brothers and sisters, namely James, Alexander, Charles, William, Elizabeth and Marion. Sadly John's brother William died in 1911, whilst his father James died in 1913. Two other siblings had died in infancy. More untimely death was to follow.

He was a native of Bo'ness, born in 1887, was educated at Bo'ness Academy and served his apprenticeship as an iron moulder with Messrs A. Ballantine and Sons, New Grange Foundry. Thereafter he emigrated to the United States in 1907, returning in 1915 to join up. He enlisted with the Royal Scots, 5th Battalion, on the first anniversary of the outbreak of war. He was transferred to the Machine Gun Corps, 146th Company, who came under the orders of 49th (West Riding) Division, 146th (West Riding) Brigade. He was assigned service no: 36722.

He had crossed to France in July 1916 and had fought at the Somme in 1916, the Operations on the Flanders Coast, and at the Battle of Poelcapelle, during the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele). No wonder then, upon returning on leave to Bo'ness in October 1917, John was proud to say that he had escaped without a scratch. This luck would desert him within a month. Whilst fighting with the 49th Division at Broodseinde Ridge, east of Ypres, John Carlaw was wounded in action by artillery fire. He was transferred to Boulogne Hospital, but died of his wounds on 27th November 1917. He was 30 years of age. John's mother received confirmation of his death in a letter from Lieutenant Cyril P. Smith of the MGC 146th Company. John was buried at Boulogne Eastern Cemetery, grave VII. I. 122. He is also commemorated on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery.

His younger brother, Alexander, of an army engineering unit, was at the same time lying in hospital in Birmingham suffering from gas poisoning, whilst another younger brother, Lieutenant Charles Carlaw, was operating in the same Ypres salient as that in which his brother was mortally wounded. Both survived the war, but there was further tragedy for the family as their mother Elizabeth passed away just before the end of the war in October 1918.

Royal Scots at Training Camp: Pte Alexander Marquis Harley, second from left standing, was killed in action 31st July 1917 at the Battle of Pilckem Ridge, the opening attack of the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele).

CHAPTER 10

# *Other Campaigns*

Mesopotamia  Palestine  Salonika  Italy

**Lines Before Going**

Soon is the night of our faring to regions unknown,
There not to flinch at the challenge suddenly thrown
By the great process of Being - daily to see
The utmost that life has of horror and yet to be
Calm and the masters of fear. Aware that the soul
Lives as a part and alone for the weal of the whole,
So shall the mind be free from the pain of regret,
Vain and enfeebling, firm in each venture, and yet
Brave not as those who despair, but keen to maintain,
Though not assured, hope in beneficent pain,
Hope that the truth of the world is not what appears,
Hope in the triumph of man for the price of his tears.

*Alexander Robertson*

# *Mesopotamia 1914-1918*

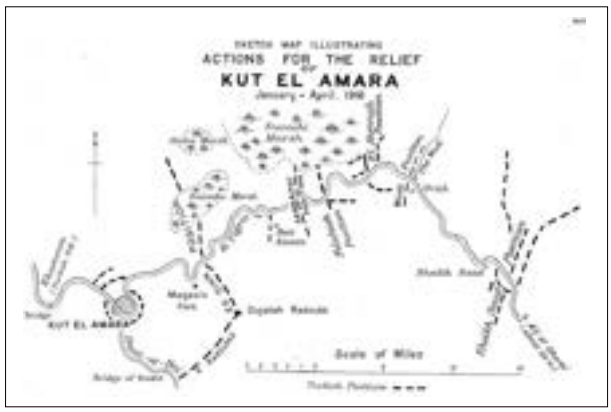
British troops during the Mesopotamian campaign

The British campaign in Mesopotamia, modern day Iraq, in 1914-1918 was initially an operation to safeguard Britain's oil supplies, particularly essential for the Royal Navy fleet. It began shortly after the outbreak of war and the primary focus was on a limited operation to secure the oil refinery and pipelines around Abadan. The 6th (Poona) Division formed the British Indian Expeditionary Force (IEF) and were given this task, landing on 6th November 1914, at the point where the Shatt-al-Arab, the river formed by the confluence of the Euphrates and the Tigris, meets the Persian Gulf. To further consolidate their position against any Ottoman advances a decision was made to move further inland, and on 22nd November 1914, the IEF occupied the city of Basra after a short battle with Turkish troops. The main Turkish forces were centred around the capital, Baghdad, some 275 miles to the north west.

Further successes against the Turks were achieved in Spring 1915 by pushing further up the Euphrates and the Tigris, and following victories at Amara and Nasiriya the British high command ordered Major-General Charles Townshend to push his forces even further up the Tigris to capture Kut-al-Amara. He achieved this in late September, but was encouraged to harry the retreating Ottoman forces and to capture Baghdad. This left a very thinly stretched supply line between the front line and Basra. Following a five day battle at the historic town of Ctesiphon, 25 miles south of Baghdad, Townshend gave 6th (Poona) Division the orders to retreat in an orderly fashion to Kut-al-Amara. Although a tactical stalemate, the battle provided to be a strategic advantage for the Ottomans.

They pursued the 6th (Poona) Division who were by now exhausted and poorly supplied. Rather than make for Basra, Townshend decided to halt his forces at Kut-al-Amara. In retrospect this is seen as an ill-fated decision as Kut-al-Amara was isolated and difficult to resupply. As a result the Division was besieged by the Turks on 7th December 1915. The Turkish commander Colonel Nureddin sent forces down the Tigris to defend against any attempts to relieve the town.

The Siege of Kut, as it is known, lasted for five long months. In early 1916 several attempts were made to relieve the siege by the newly designated Tigris Corps, British forces reinforced by the arrival of the experienced 3rd (Lahore) and 7th (Meerut) Divisions from the Western Front. Attacks took place at the Battle of Sheikh Sa'ad, the Battle of the Wadi, the Battle of Hanna, and at the Battle of Dujaila Redoubt, where Tigris Corps suffered almost 4000 casualties, including Bo'ness man **Private John McPhee**, Highland Light Infantry, 1st Battalion, who was wounded during the battle whilst fighting with 3rd (Lahore) Division, 9th (Sirhind) Brigade. Under new command, and with further reinforcements from the Western Front, this time in the shape of the 13th (Western) Division, Tigris Corps were emboldened to try several more attempts to relieve the Kut Garrison in a series of attacks collectively referred to as the First Battle of Kut. Fallahiyeh was captured on the 5th April, and




Sketch map showing the actions for the relief of the siege of Kut-al-Amar in 1916

Bait Aisa on 17th April, but with very high casualties. These included **Private Thomas Finlay**, Highland Light Infantry, 1st Battalion of the 3rd Division, who was killed in action at Bait Aisa on 15th April 1916. The position of the besieged garrison in Kut was now desperate, with food running dangerously low, adverse weather conditions and disease rife.

The final effort to break the siege came on the 22nd April 1916 at the Battle of Sannaiyat. The Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), 2nd Battalion were heavily involved in this attack. The weather had been atrocious. They found themselves clambering over the sodden parapets at 7:00am after a very limited bombardment, and into the mud and water of no man's land. They were immediately exposed to heavy machine gun fire from the Turkish third line, and unfortunately, "friendly-fire" from their own British machine gun positions who were unsighted. Those lucky enough to make it to the enemy front and second line trenches found themselves floundering through water-logged and mud-filled holes, at the same time exposed to an incessant hail of bullets and shrapnel. The Turks were nowhere to be seen in these trenches, and had reorganised to mount a major counter-offensive. By this time the Highlanders were severely depleted in number, and were deprived of support by a prematurely retiring composite English Battalion, who themselves were almost obliterated in their retreat. With grenades having run out and rifles clogged up with mud, the attack was at an end and the order to retreat was given.

Four Bo'ness members of the 2nd Black Watch gave their lives at the Battle of Sannaiyat, namely **Lance-Corporal James A. McKay**, and **Privates William T. Ford**, **Malcolm N. Paul** and **Robert McPhee**, the brother of Private John McPhee who had been killed earlier in the campaign. In all the Black Watch lost 10 officers and 321 other ranks in the assault. Almost 1200 British casualties were sustained in total.

Speaking of the 2nd Black Watch, a Turkish officer during the truce after the fall of Kut said he had never seen such infantry. "My men are good in defence", he said, "but I have not seen men who will advance repeatedly like yours over open ground under such punishment. Only real devotion to duty will make men do that". The men of the 2nd Black Watch had failed in their objective to relieve Kut, but "they had failed magnificently". Depleted troop numbers meant that no further attempts at relief were made - except for a final, desperate effort to send 270 tons of supplies through to Kut via an armoured supply ship, the Julnar. This attempt also failed, the ship ending up in Turkish hands.

On 29th April 1916 Townshend surrendered the 13000 men in Kut-al-Amara to Turkish commander Khalil Pasha. The survivors of the siege were marched to imprisonment at Aleppo in modern-day Syria, a distance of 555 miles, during which many men died. Townshend himself saw out the rest of the war in comparative luxury on the island of Heybeliada on the Sea of Marmara and was largely vilified. The surrender was received with shock and horror back home in Britain, and was widely considered as the greatest humiliation ever to befall the British Army. This prompted a major rethink of the Mesopotamian Campaign by the British high command and resulted in the appointment in December 1916 of Lieutenant General Sir Frederick Stanley Maude as Commander-in-Chief for the region. He was a steady hand who set about improving logistics and improving morale. He steadily drove the Turks back and in February 1916 he recaptured Kut, advancing on to capture Baghdad one month later. To consolidate hard fought gains, and safeguard Baghdad itself, Maude then ordered the Samarrah Offensive in which **Private Alexander Heath** (or Heigh), Seaforth Highlanders, 1st Battalion was killed in action on the opening day, 21st April 1917, at the Battle of Istabulat. He was just one of nearly 2000 men killed on each side during this action.

General Maude leads the Indian Army into Baghdad

Conditions in Mesopotamia were appalling with extremes of temperature, flooded trenches, mud, mosquitoes and vermin all factors in the terrible levels of illness and disease. Military records suggest over 12000 men died of illness and these figures included **Private Alexander Robertson**, 2nd Black Watch, a member of the Bo'ness & Carriden Band, who died on board the Hospital Ship Dongola in July 1916. For medical staff in the field, the risk of

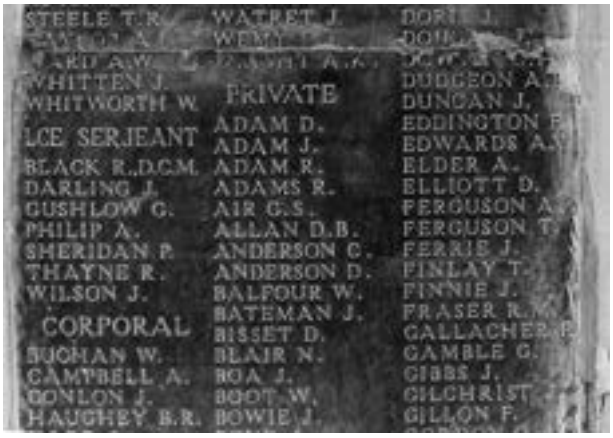
occupationally acquired diseases always cast an ominous shadow. **Driver John Edgar**, Army Service Corps who was attached to the Royal Army Medical Corps, 8th Field Ambulance contracted dysentery during the autumn of 1916. He was removed to Deccan War Hospital in Poona, India, but died there on the 11th January 1917. Another victim of this dreaded disease was Bo'ness Distillery worker **Private Arthur Stephenson** (not Alexander as appears on the Memorial), Royal Army Medical Corps, 3rd Northumbrian Brigade, who succumbed to the illness in Baghdad on 30th July 1917. Lieutenant-General Maude also succumbed to cholera in November 1917. His replacement Lieutenant-General Sir William Marshall saw the campaign through to a conclusion. The Ottoman forces eventually surrendered on 30th October 1918, following the Armistice of Mudros, although despite international protests, the British marched on to claim the oilfields near to the city of Mosul on 14th November 1918 when the campaign was officially ended.

**Thomas Finlay**

Private Thomas Finlay was the son of William and Jane Finlay of 190 Overton Road, Pathhead, Kirkcaldy, Fife. Thomas had been born in Bo'ness but the family relocated to Fife in 1914. He had an elder brother called William. He was 23 years of age and unmarried. When living in Bo'ness he was employed as a coal miner in the pits owned by Bridgeness Coal Company.

He was previously a member of the 10th Royal Scots but at the beginning of the war he enlisted at Kirkcaldy with the Highland Light Infantry, 1st Battalion, service no: B/21327. He arrived in France on 16th June 1915, where his battalion was attached to 9th (Sirhind) Brigade of 3rd (Lahore) Division. Although he had been luckily too late to have been involved in the deadly fighting of the Battle of Festubert, Thomas saw some action in the Artois region as skirmishing continued. The replacement of Indian casualties became increasingly difficult, however, and it was decided to send the Division to Mesopotamia on 8th December 1915. Headquarters were established on 16 January 1916 and the 3rd Division came under the orders of the Tigris Corps. 1st Highland Light Infantry were then attached to 8th (Jullundur) Brigade, and ordered to help relive the 6th (Poona) Division which was besieged at Kut-al-Amara.

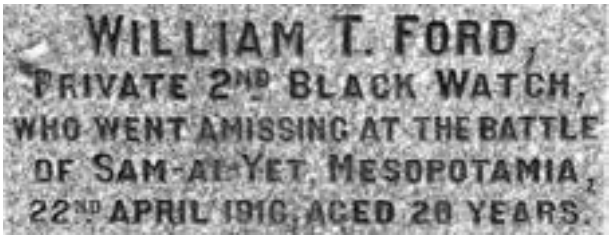
The 8th Brigade fought in the Attack on Dujaila Redoubt on 8th March, and in the Action of Bait Aisa, 17th-18th April 1916. Thomas Finally was killed in action just before this date on 15th April 1916. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Basra Memorial, panel 35 and 64. The Basra Memorial commemorates more than 40500 members of the Commonwealth forces who died in the operations in Mesopotamia from the Autumn of 1914 to the end of August 1921 and whose graves are not known. The memorial was designed by Edward Warren and unveiled by Sir Gilbert Clayton on the 27th March 1929. Until 1997 the Basra Memorial was located on the main quay of the naval dockyard at Maqil, on the west bank of the Shatt-al-Arab, about 8 kilometres north of Basra. Because of the sensitivity of the site, the Memorial was moved on the orders of Saddam Hussein. The Basra Memorial is now located 32 kilometres along the road to Nasiriyah, in the middle of what was a major battleground during the first Gulf War



**William T. Ford**

Private William Thomson Ford was the only son of Hugh and Agnes Ford (ms Nisbet), residing at 67 Catherine Place, Corbiehall. He was born in Bo'ness and had two sisters, Christina and Betty C. Ford. He was a blacksmith by trade. William was described as "the light and joy of his home" and had interests of a "refined description", being "a member of the Station Ambulance Corps".

He initially enlisted in November 1915 at Bo'ness with the Cameron Highlanders (formerly service no: S/21440) then transferred to the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), 2nd Bn, service no: S/10581.



He was immediately sent to Inverness. He spent a day there before being transferred to Richmond, Yorkshire, for three months. From there he was sent directly to Mesopotamia where he came under the orders of 7th Indian (Meerut) Division, 21st Brigade.

Private William Ford was declared missing, presumed killed in action on 22nd April 1916, at Sannaiyat, during the third and final unsuccessful assault by the 7th Division to relieve the Siege of Kut-Al-Amara, also known as the First Battle of the Kut.

His body was not found and he is also commemorated on the Basra Memorial, panel 25 and 63. He was not officially declared dead until November 1917, compounding his family's grief for over a year.

William is also commemorated on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery. He was 20 years of age, and unmarried.

**James A. McKay**

Lance-Corporal James Adams McKay was one of five sons of Mr John McKay, carter, and his wife Williamina McKay (ms Adams) South Street, Bo'ness. He was married to Isabella Grant McKay (ms Gibb) at Bo'ness in 1907. They had three children and the family lived at Philpingstone Terrace. Before enlisting James was in the service of Mr Robert Gunn, spirit merchant, South Street, for whom he acted as barman. James was well known and very popular in Bo'ness where he was born in 1880. He had two older brothers, Archibald and William, and two younger brothers, Alexander and Thomas McKay. The younger brothers had a narrow escape on 9th April 1916, when the ship they were on board, the SS Avon of Grangemouth, hit a mine and sank in the Thames Estuary. Both brothers survived although three other shipmates were not so fortunate.

James enlisted in November 1915, at Bo'ness. Records suggest that he had previously enlisted in the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders (16926) but for the duration of the war he was in the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), 2nd Battalion, service no: S/10598. He arrived

in Mesopotamia to join the 2nd Battalion soon after their landing at Basra on Hogmanay, 1915. He came under the orders of 7th Indian Division, in the renamed 21st Brigade.

James was one of more than 120 Black Watch men killed on 22 April 1916, at the Third Assault during the Battle of Sannaiyat, another attempt to relief the besieged 10000 troops at Kut. His body was recovered from the waterlogged ground and he is buried in Amara War Cemetery, grave ref: XVII. G. 14. He was 36 years old.

Amara was occupied by the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force on 3 June 1915 and it immediately became a hospital centre. The accommodation for medical units on both banks of the Tigris was greatly increased during 1916 and in April 1917, seven general hospitals and some smaller units were stationed there. Amara War Cemetery contains 4621 burials of the First World War, more than 3000 of which were brought into the cemetery after the Armistice. 925 of the graves are unidentified. In 1933, all of the headstones were removed from this cemetery when it was discovered that salts in the soil were causing them to deteriorate. Instead a screen wall was erected with the names of those buried in the cemetery engraved upon it. In 2016 reports suggested that that the cemetery had seriously deteriorated, with plaques falling from the memorial wall and the Cross of Sacrifice smashed, apparently having been blown up ten years earlier. CWGC continue to monitor the situation.

**John McPhee**

Private John McPhee was the son of John and Robina McPhee of Miller Pit Cottages, Bo'ness. He married Mary Stewart McPhee and resided in Lumphinnans, Fife, where he was employed as a coal miner. He had four sisters, Jessie, Margaret, Robina and Alexandrina, and two brothers, Edward and Robert. He enlisted soon after the outbreak of the war with Highland Light Infantry, 1st Battalion, service no: 2134. He arrived in France on 1st June 1915, and came under the orders of 3rd (Lahore) Division, Sirhind Brigade. This was just after the Battle of Festubert. The fighting continued, and John would have seen some action in France, but 3rd Division were sent to Mesopotamia in December 1915, where they were needed to relieve the 6th (Poona) Division that was besieged at Kut-al-Amara.

John died of wounds on 15th March 1916, which were probably sustained in the Battle of Dujaila Redoubt one week previously on 8th March 1916.

He is buried in Amara War Cemetery, grave ref: II. C. 1. He was 27 years old when he died. Tragically, John's brother Robert McPhee, who had enlisted with the Black Watch, 2nd Battalion, also died of wounds in Mesopotamia one month later (see next entry). They both rest near to one another in Amara, and their names appear together on the Bo'ness War Memorial.

**Robert McPhee**

Private Robert McPhee was the younger brother of Private John McPhee and was the youngest son of John and Robina McPhee, of Miller Pit Cottages, Bo'ness. He was born in Kirkcaldy in 1890 and was unmarried. He was a reservist and although he had completed his full term of service with the colours, he loyally remained on at the outbreak of war, enlisting at Dunfermline. He was a member of the special reserve of the 3rd Black Watch, but on the outbreak of hostilities enlisted with the 1st Battalion. He came under the orders of 1st Division, 1st Guards Brigade.

He arrived in France on 19th September 1914, and would have participated in many of the major battles in 1914 -1915 on the Western Front. In March 1915 he had a narrow escape, a bullet piercing his side quite close to his heart. He recovered, and returned to the fighting line at the end of May 1915 only to be wounded again, this time in the left hand, by shrapnel. He was transferred back to a hospital in Birmingham, where he wrote to his mother to tell her about his war wounds and to reassure her he was well. At some point Robert was transferred to Black Watch, 2nd Battalion, and came under the orders of 7th (Meerut) Division, Bareilly Brigade. This Division were transferred to Mesopotamia in December 1915. Before this happened, Robert, along with many other men in the 2nd Black Watch,

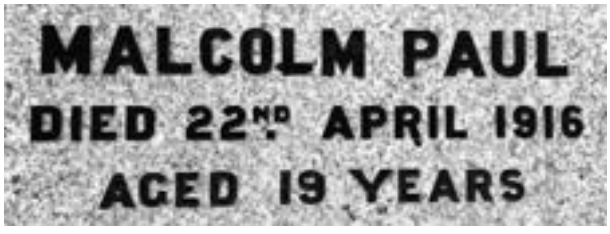
took the opportunity to return to Bo'ness on several days furlough.

He fought alongside James McKay (see earlier entry in this Chapter) on 22nd April 1916, at the Third Assault on Sannaiyat, another attempt to relieve the besieged troops at Kut. He died of wounds two days later, aged 25 years old, and is also buried in Amara War Cemetery, grave ref: XVI. G. 5. He lies near to his brother John McPhee, two Bo'ness brothers buried together in the Iraqi soil.

**Malcolm N. Paul**

Private Malcolm Naismith Paul was born on 29th December 1896, in Bo'ness, the second son of Mr John Paul and Mrs Jane Paul (ms Naismith), Man 'O' War Street, 4 Thirlestane Place, Grangepans. His parents were married on the 11th March 1892, at Carriden, but sadly his mother died on 6th March 1911, aged 41 years. Further tragedy was to follow soon after when his elder brother William was drowned on 5th October 1912, after falling off dockside staging in the Danish port of Horsens. William was serving as a merchant seaman on board the Bo'ness based steamer the SS Lovart. He is buried in Denmark. He also had a younger brother called John. Malcolm was formerly employed as an iron moulder in Messrs A. Ballantine and Sons, New Grange Foundry.

He enlisted at Bo'ness in November 1915. Records suggest that he was previously enlisted in the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders (C/21439) but for the duration of the war he was in the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), 2nd Battalion, service no: S/10586. Note that this number is close in series to that of James A. McKay, suggesting they enlisted in the 2nd Black Watch at the same time. After three months training he was sent to join his Battalion in Mesopotamia, and was immediately sent to the front line, coming under the orders of 7th Indian Division, in the renamed 21st Brigade. Despite being in the thick of the action, his parents received regularly very cheerful letters from him, and the morning after the arrival of the official notification of his death there was handed in at the house a letter written by him just the day before he was destined to fall in the service of his country.




His death occurred on 22nd April 1916 alongside his comrade James McKay at the Third Assault of the Battle of Sannaiyat. His body was recovered and he was buried in Amara War Cemetery, grave ref: XVII. G. 19. Malcolm was 19 years of age and he is also commemorated on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery

**Alexander Heath**

Private Alexander Heigh (or "Heath" as it appears on the War Memorial, the two spellings appear interchangeable in official records) was born on 4th July 1892, at 66 Furnace Row, Bo'ness. He was the son of James Heigh, Ploughman and Bridget Heigh (ms Biston), who were married in Doune, Perthshire on 23rd May 1890. His brother James resided at 17 Waggon Road, Bo'ness, whilst another brother John lived at 30 Dalderse Avenue, Falkirk, but had also enlisted in the Army as we shall read later.

Alexander enlisted as a soldier in the Regular Army in 1912, in the Seaforth Highlanders, 2nd Battalion. He had a great affection for his home town, and especially for the annual Bo'ness Fair Festival, so much so, that he overstayed his week's leave in June 1913 to partake in the festivities. He was arrested and charged at Bo'ness Police Court with desertion from his regiment that was then stationed at Shorncliffe Barracks in Kent.

In August 1914, 2nd Battalion, which had been back in Britain since 1903, deployed straight from Shorncliffe to the Western Front with the 4th Division, staying there throughout the war. 1st Battalion Seaforth Highlanders joined it there in October 1914, as part of the 7th Meerut Division.

At some point Alexander transferred to the 1st Battalion, "C" Company. The 1st Battalion then moved to Mesopotamia in December 1915, where it took part in the Siege of Kut later that month and the Fall of Baghdad in March 1917. Alexander Heigh was killed in the Battle of Istabulat on 21st April 1917. He was 24 years of age. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Basra Memorial, panel 37 and 64.

His brother Private John Heigh or Heath, Royal Scots, 1st Battalion was reported by the War Office to have been killed in action in France on 2nd March 1915. The family were in mourning when a postcard was received from the man himself, via the Red Cross. The postcard revealed that, although he had lost a leg, John had actually been taken prisoner of war, and was recovering in a German Hospital. He survived the war and made it back.

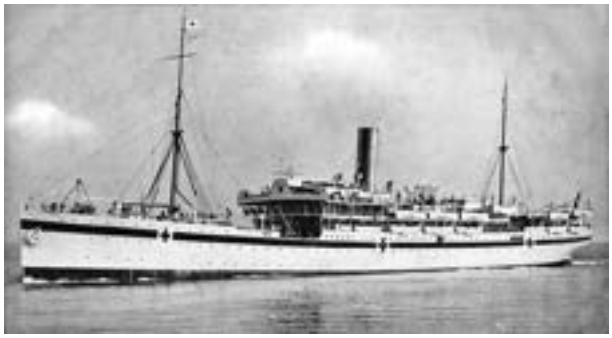
**Alexander Robertson**

Private Alexander Robertson was born in Kirkcaldy but had lived in Bo'ness for number of years where he was well known as being connected with Bo'ness and Carriden Band. He was formerly an iron moulder at Messrs A. Ballantine & Sons, New Grange Foundry but joined up in 1907 as regular soldier, with the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) 2nd Battalion, service number: 883, and had spent many years serving in India.

At the outbreak of war he was under the orders of the 7th (Meerut) Division, Bareilly Brigade in India. On 21st September 1914, the 7th Division moved to France, landing at Marseilles on 12th October 1914. The Division were involved in the

Battles of La Bassee, First Messines and Armentieres in October–November, 1914, and the Battles of Neuve Chapelle, Aubers Ridge, Festubert and Loos in 1915, until the decision was made that they should be withdrawn from the Western Front and sent to Mesopotamia. The Division arrived in Basra on 31st December 1915, but before the journey Alexander took advantage of a week's furlough to travel back home to Bo'ness and get married to Miss Isabella Easton White, daughter of John White the baker.

In February 1916, Alexander was wounded by a Turkish bullet in the face. After recovering, he was sent back to Mesopotamia, and had only been in the trenches for several weeks before he took ill. He was removed to HM Hospital Ship Dongola where he died on 19th July 1916, aged 28 years. He was buried at sea, but is commemorated on the Basra Memorial, panel 25 and 6



**John Edgar**

Driver John Edgar was a native of Kirriemuir, Angus, but had lived in Bo'ness for sixteen years where he was employed as a gas stoker at the Bo'ness Gas Light Company Limited (Bo'ness Gas Works). In 1904 he was married to Mrs Annie Edgar (ms Beagley) who was a native of the town and they had three sons, Peter, Andrew and David. The family lived at 18 North Street, Bo'ness.

He enlisted in his home town on 10th June 1915, with the Army Service Corps, service no: T4/092078. The T4 prefix signifies that John was part of the Horse Transport for the 4th New Army.

Despite being the most mechanised of all the forces in WW1, the British Army still relied largely

on horses for the transportation of supplies, guns, ammunition and men. Each Division of the army had a number of transport resources under its command, known as the Divisional Train, doing the essential logistical work of carrying supplies, and providing the main supply line to brigades of infantry and artillery and other attached units being transported to the front. He arrived in France on 24th September 1915 and his Company was attached to the 8th British Field Ambulance who were part of the 3rd (Lahore) Division.

John Edgar had a short time on leave back in Bo'ness before the 3rd (Lahore) Division were sent to Mesopotamia in December 1915 to help relieve the besieged garrison at Kut-al-Amara. Due to the insanitary conditions in the region, disease and illness were rife, and John was struck down with the dreaded and debilitating disease of dysentery in the autumn of 1916. He was evacuated from Mesopotamia to the Deccan War Hospital, Poona, India. He died of dysentery and jaundice on 11th January 1917, and is buried in Kirkee New Cemetery, plot C. row D. grave 12. He was 46 years of age.

John Edgar is also remembered on the Kirriemuir War Memorial.

**Alexander Stephenson**

Private Arthur Stephenson (not Alexander as recorded on the War Memorial) was the son of Mr Edwin and Mrs Harriet Ann Stephenson, of 7 Williams Terrace, Waller Street, Holderness Road, Hull. He was born in Wilmington, Hull, in 1892. He had four sisters, Emily, Maude, Gertrude and Alice, and three brothers, William T., John and Edwin. Edwin also appears on the War Memorial.

At some point after 1911, Arthur and Edwin left their family home to move to Bo'ness to live with their brother William, who had married and was living at 64 Braeside, Stewart Avenue. Both men found work in Bo'ness Distillery operated by Messrs James Calder & Co. Ltd.

Arthur Stephenson enlisted with the Royal Army Medical Corps, 3rd Northumbrian Brigade, service no: 12090, and first saw action in the Balkans, arriving there on the 15th September 1915. Later he found himself in Mesopotamia, attached to the Cheshire Regiment, 8th (Service) Battalion, where it had been under the orders of the 13th (Western) Division, 40th Brigade, since February 1916.

Having no doubt selflessly attended to so many casualties suffering with injury and disease, he unfortunately succumbed to illness himself, dying of dysentery in Baghdad on 30th July 1917. He is buried in Baghdad (North Gate) War Cemetery, grave ref: XII. B. 12. Arthur was 25 years of age. There is no doubt that this is the correct man, but a possible explanation for Arthur's name being wrongly recorded was that Arthur's brother William T. Stephenson resided at Braeside on the valuation rolls in 1915, but does not appear on 1920 valuation rolls. This indicated that the family had left Bo'ness sometime between June 1918 and 1920. The family were from Hull, Yorkshire so probably returned there. "Arthur" could also have been mistaken for the shortened form of Alexander, "Alxdr." In 1924 when the list of names was being finalised by the War Memorial Committee, there would have been no-one around from the family to correct this.

# *Palestine 1914-1918*

The Palestine Campaign is the description commonly given to the action that took place during WW1 in modern-day Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Syria. These lands had been for four centuries part of the Ottoman Empire, although Egypt had been occupied and protected by the British since 1882, following the Anglo-Egyptian War. Of vital strategic importance in the area was the Suez Canal, linking the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, and it had to be defended at all costs to safeguard shipping and reduce journey times of troops and supplies from India, New Zealand and Australia en route to the Western Front and other theatres.

Germany had long been an ally of Turkey and they encouraged the Ottoman forces to resist British attempts to make gains in the region. Several battles took place from late 1914 to 1916, such as the Defence of the Suez Canal, 26th January – 12th August 1915 and the Battle of Romani, 3rd - 5th August 1916. The latter Battle involved the 52nd (Lowland) Division, still recovering from its efforts in Gallipoli, and the ANZAC Mounted Division of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF). Victory over a combined force of the Ottoman and German Armies signified the end of the Defence of the Suez Canal, and ensured its safety from the threat of future attacks or capture.

At the same time the Germans agitated muslim Arab and Berber tribes hostile to the British to undertake a Jihad, or Holy War. Operations in the Sinai Peninsula and against the Senussi Arabs in the Western Desert would commence and continue into 1917, including the encouragement of an Arab Revolt in the Hejaz to distract the Ottoman forces, aided by British assistance in intelligence and artillery facilitated by, amongst others, Lieutenant T. E. Lawrence, more commonly known as 'Lawrence of Arabia'.

In early 1917, reinforcements were now sufficient and logistics were in place for the EEF to mount a serious attack eastwards on the Ottoman forces that had amassed and fortified their positions in Palestine. The ancient city of Gaza was heavily defended by the Ottoman Army and stood in the way of the British advance into Palestine and the capture of Jerusalem. An initial attempt in March 1917 to capture the coastal town was unsuccessful but sufficiently encouraged British command to try another attempt one month later. This optimism was misplaced.

The Second Battle of Gaza, fought over three bloody days from 17th to 19th April was another defeat and casualties were heavy, much heavier than the British public was told. The 52nd (Lowland) Division participated in the battle and one casualty was **Second Lieutenant Andrew Scott Duncan Clark**, the son of the Bo'ness postmaster, who was fighting with the 1/4th Battalion Royal Scots Fusiliers, part of the 155th (South Scottish) Brigade. He was wounded on 19th April 1917 as the 155th Brigade secured an area called Outpost Hill, and moved to a military hospital at Kantara. Sadly he died of wounds three days later. Another casualty in this assault was **Private William Hislop**, also in the 155th (South Scottish) Brigade, but who was fighting for the Royal Scots Fusiliers, 1/5th Bn. He later died of wounds at 15th General Hospital, Alexandria, Egypt. A change in command and tactical thinking eventually saw Gaza captured in October 1917, and the British Government provided the new EEF commander General Sir Edmund Allenby with significant reinforcements with their eyes firmly on the prize of capturing

Ottoman Machine Gunners, front line, Second Battle of Gaza

the city of Jerusalem. Sadly, the movement of these reinforcements to Egypt provided a tragic misadventure for two Bo'ness men.

Before the war, the troopship HMT Aragon was originally used for transatlantic sailings by the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company. The ship was built by Harland and Wolff in Belfast and was launched as RMS Aragon on 23rd February 1905. The ship was 9588 gross tonnage and was powered by two four cylinder quadruple expansion engines making a top speed of 16 knots. In 1913, amidst increasing naval tensions between Britain and Germany, the ship was fitted with two 4.7 inch (120mm) naval guns on the stern, making it the first defensively armed merchant ship in the British merchant fleet. After being requisitioned in World War One, and renamed HMT, the ship participated in troop movements in the Gallipoli Campaign including evacuating nearly 1500 wounded troops to Alexandria and Malta. In November 1917 the ship was at Marseille in the south of France to ferry almost 2200 troops, 150 officers, and 160 members of the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD), bound for Alexandria as reinforcements for the EEF. After a stopover to celebrate Christmas in Malta, she continued with another ship, HMT Nile, in a convoy escorted by the Royal Navy destroyer HMS Attack and two Imperial Navy Japanese destroyers. Once off the coast of Egypt, the two Japanese ships escorted the Nile into Port Said. Aragon sailed onwards to the maritime approaches to the destination port known as the Alexandria Roads, where Attack searched ahead for German mines.

The sinking of the Aragon

At this point an armed trawler HMT Points Castle signalled to Aragon to follow, however, Attack swiftly intercepted and ordered Aragon back out into the Roads. This delay in getting into Alexandria was to prove costly, as soon after, the Aragon was torpedoed by the German submarine UC-34, hitting her port side and causing massive damage. The ship began listing and the troops were ordered into lifeboats. After 15 minutes the Master, Captain Bateman, gave the orders to abandon ship, and two minutes later the ship started sinking. A second explosion as cold seawater flooded the ship's boilers caused further mayhem. Attack and Points Castle rushed to aid the many survivors in the sea and were soon overcrowded. More death and destruction was to follow as Attack was then torpedoed amidships, exploded and broke into two pieces that sunk within minutes. This left the sea thick with black fuel oil, covering the men and women who had somehow survived until this point. Many were engulfed with oil or overcome by the noxious fumes. Despite other vessels rushing to aid the stricken ships, of those originally aboard Aragon, 610 were killed including Captain Bateman, nineteen crew and six VADs. Of the four Bo'ness men known to have been on the Aragon two were killed, **Private Joseph P. Boyd**, the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) 1st/7th Battalion, who was drowned, and **Corporal Terris H. Mair**, Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders, 1/5th Battalion, who somehow managed to survive the attacks but died the following day of wounds and internal injuries. Two others, Private Finlay McGillivray and Private James Olsen, both Royal Scots, were survivors of what was known as the Mediterranean Disaster.

Those reinforcements that did get through ensured that Jerusalem was captured in December 1917, before the EEF forces pushed on into the Jordan Valley in 1918. It was here, near the town of Jericho that **Second Lieutenant M. Stanley Macaulay**, who was attached to the General Headquarters, EEF, was killed on 7th May 1918 by a bomb dropped by an enemy aeroplane. Eventually the EEF captured the whole of Palestine and went on to pursue the Turkish forces, who were now in a state of near collapse, into Syria taking both the cities of Damascus and Aleppo, the third largest city in the Ottoman Empire, in October. This effectively marked the end of the Palestine Campaign. The Ottoman government signed the Armistice of Mudros on 30th October 1918 that officially brought hostilities to an end.

**Andrew S.D. Clark**

Andrew Scott Duncan Clark, known as Duncan to family and friends, was born on the 16th December 1896 in Montrose, Forfarshire. He was the second son of Post Office Clerk and Telegrapher John Clark and his wife Helen. He was educated at Montrose Academy, and after leaving school, began his legal career in Glasgow as an apprentice with Messrs McClure, Naismith, Brodie & Company at their office in St Vincent Street. In 1914, aged 18, he matriculated at the University of Glasgow, enrolling in the classes of Civil Law and Jurisprudence.

At that time his father was the Postmaster at Uddingston, where the family lived at 'Clydeview' on Main Street, though he later returned to the Lothians to be Postmaster at Bo'ness, residing at Helen Villa, Braehead. He was a member of the University of Glasgow Officers' Training Corps and was perhaps already distracted from study by unfolding events of the Great War, although he made the effort to pass his exams in the October resits before applying for a commission. He was planning to return.

However, he did not return for the 1915-16 semester and instead chose to enlist in the Army. By October of 1915 he had been commissioned as

Second Lieutenant in the Royal Scots Fusiliers, 9th Battalion. He was first sent to France on the 31st May 1916, and by April 1917 he was attached to the 1/4th Bn Royal Scots Fusiliers in Egypt.

From April 17th-19th 1917, Duncan took part in the attacks of the 52nd (Lowland) Division during the 2nd Battle of Gaza. Duncan was badly wounded in the fighting on the 19th April and he was evacuated to the hospital base at Kantara on the east bank of the Suez Canal. In the early part of the First World War, Kantara was an important point in the defence of Suez against Turkish attacks and marked the starting point of the new railway east towards Sinai and Palestine, begun in January 1916. Kantara developed into a major base and hospital centre. It was here, five days later on the 22nd April 1917, that Duncan finally succumbed to his wounds. He was only 21 years old. He is buried in Kantara War Memorial Cemetery in Egypt, grave: C. 58. The cemetery was begun in February 1916 for burials from the various hospitals, continuing in use until late 1920.

Duncan's name also appears on the Montrose War Memorial and he is also commemorated on his father's gravestone in Rosehill Cemetery, Montrose.

**William Hislop**

Private William Hislop was born in Aberdeen, the son of Mrs Margaret Hislop, latterly resident at 14 Eastfield, Leith, Edinburgh. He also lived in Leith and enlisted there with the Royal Scots Fusiliers, 4th Battalion, service no: 10971, but eventually joined 1st/5th Battalion, service no: 202426. The Battalion came under the orders of the 52nd (Lowland) Division, 155th (South Scottish) Brigade.

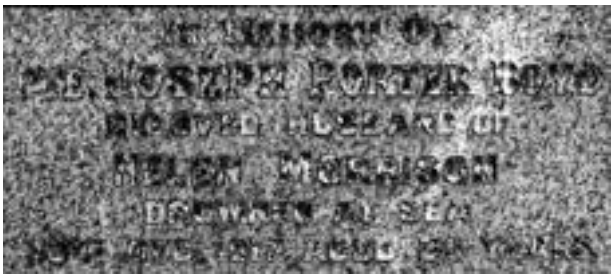
William took part in the attacks of the 52nd (Lowland) Division during the 2nd Battle of Gaza, from April 17th-19th 1917. It is thought that he was wounded during this battle and was passed through the medical evacuation chain, eventually arriving at 15th General Hospital, Alexandria, Egypt. After the Gallipoli campaign of 1915, Alexandria remained an important hospital centre during operations in the Palestine theatre and the port was much used by hospital ships and troop transports bringing reinforcements and carrying the sick and wounded out of the theatres of war.

He died there of his wounds, aged 20, on 20th June 1917 and is buried in Alexandria (Hadra) War Memorial Cemetery, grave ref: A. 57. This cemetery was begun in April 1916 when it was realised that the cemetery at Chatby would not be large enough. Most of the burials were made from the Alexandria hospitals.

On Wednesday 25th July 1917 the Scotsman newspaper published the following, "Previously Reported as Wounded, now Reported Died of Wounds - Royal Scots Fusiliers - Hislop, 202426, W. (Bo'ness)". This is the only connection that links William to Bo'ness.

**Joseph P. Boyd**

Private Joseph Porter Boyd, or "Joe", was the son of a local tailor, Joseph Porter Boyd Snr and the late Helen Reid Boyd (ms Anderson), who were residents of Carriden, and latterly Stewart Avenue, although Joseph Junior was born in Carluke, Lanarkshire on 12th October 1882. He was married to Helen Allison Boyd (ms Morrison) on 12th October 1906 at Linlithgow, and they had two children. The family lived at 11A Church Wynd, Bo'ness.




He served his apprenticeship as a compositor and mechanical typesetter in the Bo'ness Journal newspaper office. His exemption under the Derby scheme was withdrawn by the local military tribunal in June 1917. An appeal was made to the tribunal by his employer W.W. Broome of the Bo'ness Journal on the grounds that losing Joe could mean that there was no-one left to typeset the newspaper, and production would have to cease. The appeal was ultimately unsuccessful and Joe Boyd was called up in June 1917.

He joined the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) 1st/7th Battalion, and came under the orders of 52nd (Lowland) Division, 156th (Scottish Rifles) Brigade. Joseph Boyd was chosen to be amongst 2200 troops

drafted to reinforce the Egyptian Expeditionary Force in the Palestinian Campaign against the Ottoman Empire. He sailed on board HMT Aragon from Marseille in France, heading for the action, but he did not make it to the front. He was drowned following a German submarine attack on the Aragon on the 30th December 1917 as the troopship waited to dock in Alexandria Egypt. He was drowned at sea but his body was recovered and he is buried in Port Said War Memorial Cemetery, grave ref: C. 45. He was 35 years of age when he died. He is also remembered on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery

**Terris H. Mair**

Corporal Terris Haggie Mair, came from a big family and was the sixth son of the late Mr. William Mair and Mrs Isabella Mair (ms Haggie), who were married in the town in 1876. They lived at Rosehill Place, Bo'ness. Terris was born in Muiravonside, Stirlingshire in 1888, and his brothers were Alexander, John, William, Charles and Thomas. He also had four sisters, Jane, Isabella, Sarah, and Rachel. He was unmarried and was employed by the Carron Line as a checker at Bo'ness Docks.

He had previously served as a Territorial for 4 years in the 10th Battalion, Royal Scots, but rejoined with the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders, service no: 276935. He was initially attached to 2/7th Battalion, but on 20th October 1917 he was posted to 1/5th Bn, and found himself bound for the Palestinian Campaign, under the orders of 52nd (Lowland) Division, 156th (Scottish Rifles) Brigade.

He was also amongst the draft of 2200 troops sent from Marseille to bolster the EEF, but also died following the torpedoing and sinking of the ship he was on, the HMT Aragon, off Alexandria, Egypt. He is listed as having died of wounds and internal injuries the day after the attack on 31st December 1917. He was 29 years old and is buried in Alexandria (Hadra) War Memorial Cemetery, grave ref: A. 120. He is also remembered on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery.

**M. Stanley Macaulay**

Second Lieutenant Maxwell Stanley Macaulay was born at Strathpeffer, Scotland, on 4th July 1887, the son of James Faulds and Sophia Emma Macaulay. He had three brothers, Clarence, Malcolm and Gordon, and one sister Norah Elizabeth Macaulay.

Stanley's father was factor on the Kinneil Estate for more than 20 years, and in 1910 became the Ducal Chamberlain for the Duke of Hamilton's estates at Hamilton and Kinneil. A dinner was held in the Clydesdale Hotel in his honour at which many local dignitaries, colleagues and friends spoke highly of the man. Latterly the parents lived at Cairncraig House, Tollcross, Glasgow. Stanley was educated at Kinneil School in Bo'ness until 1897, and then Daniel Stewart's College, Edinburgh, until 1902. He served an apprenticeship of seven years with Messrs. Lobnitz and Company, Limited, of Renfrew, and also studied during the session 1905-6 at the Heriot-Watt College, Edinburgh, and in 1906-7 at the University of Edinburgh. He was elected a Graduate of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers in 1907, and an Associate Member in 1913.

In April 1910 he took up the appointment of assistant manager to the Egyptian Engineering Co., Ltd., Mansourah, but not before he was given a hearty send-off in the East Pier Restaurant in Bo'ness by friends and family, when he was presented with a walking stick as a keepsake.

In December 1911 he became head of designing works in the Egyptian Irrigation Department, being stationed at Zifta. In 1914 he went to Athens and started as a civil and consulting engineer, but the war put an end to the development of his business, and for a time he gave his services in various capacities to the Expeditionary Forces at Gallipoli and Salonica.

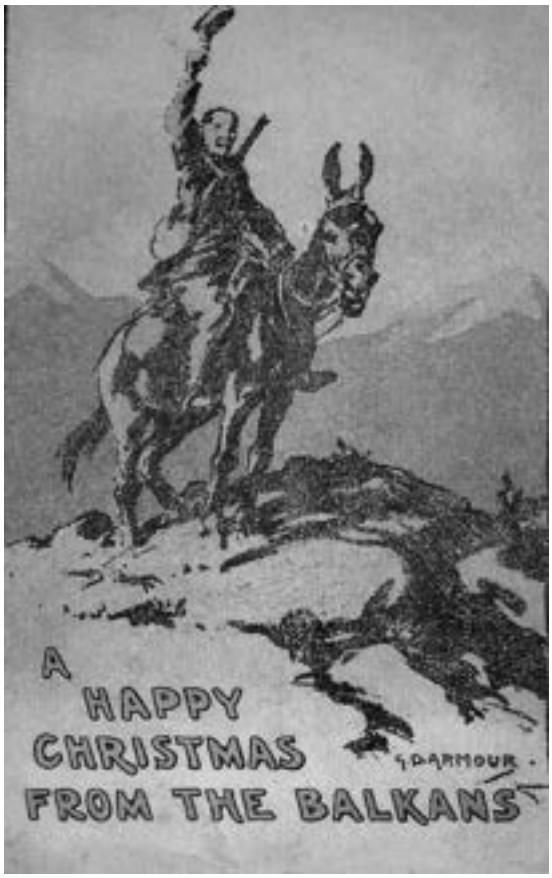
Failing to join the Forces while abroad — owing to the regulations — he returned to Scotland in 1916 and immediately joined the Lothians and Border Horse, and after a period of training received his Commission, returning to Salonica in December 1916. He was married in March 1918 to Alexandra Coracas, the daughter of a prominent Greek General, and they lived at 18 Mavromichali Street, Athens, Greece.

Subsequently he was attached to the General Staff Intelligence, 1st Echelon, General Headquarters, EEF in Palestine. Stanley Macaulay was killed by a fragment of bomb dropped by an enemy aeroplane near Jericho on 7th May 1918, in his thirty-first year. He is buried in Jerusalem War Cemetery, grave ref: O. 69.

# *Salonika 1915-1918*

The Salonika Campaign, also known as the Macedonian Campaign, was fought as the Allies sought to aid Serbia against the threat of an invasion by a joint force of the armies of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria, who had signed a treaty with Germany, and mobilised for war in September 1915. At the invitation of the Greek government, Anglo-French forces started arriving at the Greek port of Salonika (modern day Thessaloniki) in the Aegean Gulf on 5th October 1915. This included the 10th (Irish) Division from Gallipoli. But the help came too late to save Serbia, and the Serbian Army and Allied forces withdrew to Salonika with the British minded to withdraw completely. The French command were convinced that strategic advantages could still be gained in the Balkans, and their British compatriots stayed on for the fight.

The Germans ordered the Bulgarian Army not to cross the border into Greek Macedonia, to avoid antagonising neutral Greece. This gave the Allies time to reinforce. Salonika was heavily fortified for defence and then Allied forces moved into the Macedonian countryside. Further troops from Italy, Russia and the remnants of the Serbian Army arrived in 1916 to bolster offensive operations, and a Greek revolution in Salonika resulted in the Greek national army also joining the Allies.




The second major offensive in Salonika took place during the early part of 1917, and saw the British participate at the First Battle of Doiran (22nd April-9th May 1917), but throughout the year the Bulgarians held firm. Indeed the front line moved very little until a third offensive was commenced in the autumn of 1918, with the British again attacking Doiran (18th-19th September 1918), when the Serbs broke through Bulgarian lines at the River Vardar and forced a general retreat. The Salonika Campaign concluded on 30th September 1918 when the Bulgarians surrendered.

Salonika was a challenging wartime theatre with malaria, disease and illness being a constant headache for manpower and logistics. 10th (Irish) Division suffered 7000 cases in August 1916 alone. In total the British forces suffered 162517 cases of the disease and in total 505024 non-battle casualties. The only two Bo'ness men to die in the Salonika Campaign were also victims of illness. **Private David Golder,** who died of appendicitis at 40th Casualty Clearing Station near the Struma River on 29th December 1917, and **Private Andrew Dickson**, a driver in the Army Service Corps, attached to the 37th Heavy Artillery Group, who died of dysentery.

**David Golder**

Private David Golder was the only son of Mr James Golder and Mrs Margaret Golder (ms Jack), Innes Terrace, Bo'ness, who were married at Dalkeith in 1888. David himself was born in Dalkeith, and he also had two sisters named Elizabeth and Annie. The family had moved to Bo'ness from their previous address at 21 Dunlop Terrace, Penicuik.

David was employed as a baker with the Bo'ness Co-operative Association, whilst his father was a blacksmith at Messrs. Cochrane Brothers, Limited.

He enlisted in February 1916 with the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders, 1st Battalion, service no: 16046. He was sent to join his Battalion in Salonika, coming under the orders of 27th Division, 81st Brigade. After seeing action at various attacks, David was unfortunately taken ill and died of appendicitis at 40th Casualty Clearing Station (CCS) on 29th December 1917.

40th CCS was established in the autumn of 1916 not far from the road that ran from the Allied base at Salonika to Seres crossing the Struma River in a north-easterly direction. The Struma River flows through Bulgaria southward to the Greek frontier, then south-east into the Aegean Sea. The right wing of the Allied army used this road as a main artery route for the movement of troops and supplies to the Struma front during the Salonika Campaign.

David Golder was originally buried in nearby Struma Military Cemetery, Plot I, but this Plot was set too close to a ravine and the graves in it were moved after the Armistice in 1919 to the present plots VIII and IX. David's body was one of those exhumed and relocated. He is now buried at grave ref: VIII. C. 9.

He is also remembered on Penicuik War Memorial and on the Roll of Honour within Penicuik North Church.

**Andrew Dickson**

Private Andrew Dickson was born in Leith, but lived in Bo'ness with his wife Agnes Currie Dickson (ms Brodie) and family at Muirhouses, Carriden. He was 37 years old and was employed as a woodyard worker by Messrs Mickel and Company, Victoria Sawmills, Bridgeness.

He enlisted with the Army Service Corps, Motor Transport service no: DM2/179288, and was

attached to 37th Heavy Artillery Group who had become part of the British Salonika Army on 3rd March 1917.

The heavy guns and howitzers of the artillery brigades, with attendant equipment and ammunition, needed motorised transport to haul them and the larger calibres of artillery shells required special mechanical handling equipment. The Motor Transport Companies, called Ammunition Parks, operated these ammunition stores.

Like many men in the Salonika campaign, Private Andrew Dickson was taken ill and sadly died of dysentery on 3rd December 1917. Salonika contained, from time to time, eighteen general and stationary hospitals and Andrew died at 42nd General Hospital, which was located on the outskirts of Salonika towards Kalamaria. He was buried in Mikra British Cemetery, Kalamaria, grave ref: 169. This cemetery now contains 1810 Commonwealth burials of the First World War, as well as 147 war graves of other nationalities.

It was a period of unspeakable tragedy for Mrs Dickson. Andrew Dickson's son Charlie had also died earlier that year on 10th March 1917, aged 1 year and 5 days. The in memoriam verse she inserted in the Bo'ness Journal is poignant,

*Only those who have lost can tell,*
*The pain of parting, not saying farewell.*

# *Italy 1917-1918*

The Italians declared war on Austria-Hungary on 23rd May 1915, entering the war on the side of the Allies after being given various political assurances, with the objective of seizing territories in their northern borders. Initial gains were soon lost and the campaign developed into the trench warfare so commonplace on the Western Front. The main difference being the high altitudes and more extreme frozen weather conditions, leading to exceptionally high casualties.

In November 1917 the arrival of British and French troops helped to shore up the Italian defences in the face of the enemy, who had themselves been bolstered by the Germany Army. The Germans were armed with improved battle tactics and poison gas, and the Italians were forced to retreat some 12 miles to the Tagliamento River after the Battle of Caporetto on 24th October 1917. More significantly, however, much needed Franco-British coal, steel and other strategic materials also starting arriving in Italy.

On 4th December 1917, the British XI and XIV Corps relieved the Italians in the Montello sector of the Piave front, with the French on their left. The Montello sector was the main focus for the Italian front line, connecting the section facing north from Mount Tomba to Lake Garda with the defensive line of the River Piave covering Venice, that was held by the Third Italian Army. The Allied troops on the sector were not involved in any large scale operations, but they carried out continuous offensives at the Piave, as well as much successful counter battery work.

In March 1918, the Commonwealth troops on the Montello sector were relieved. Three Divisions (7th, 48th and 23rd) reinforced the mountainous Asiago sector north of Vicenza, and two Divisions (5th and 41st) were sent back to France to counter the final German offensive. In October, the 7th and 23rd Divisions were withdrawn to take over the northern portion of the XI Italian Corps front on the River Piave. These Divisions took a prominent part in the final Battle of Vittorio Veneto (October-November 1918).

The Battle of Vittorio Venetto: British and Italian convoys passing abandoned Austro-Hungarian Artillery

Only one Bo'ness man died in Italy during WW1 and that was **Private Alexander Valentine**, Army Service Corps, Motor Transport Section, who was attached to the 176th Siege Battery Royal Garrison Artillery in LXXX Heavy Artillery Group, near Giavera. He died of pneumonia on 1st November 1918, tragically just three days before the Armistice of Villa Giusti saw the ending of the Italian Campaign.

Austrian troops in the Alps

**Private Alexander Valentine**

Private Alexander Learmouth Valentine, was the son of John Valentine, a grocer's vanman, and Elizabeth Valentine (ms Lemon), of Polmont, Stirlingshire, who were married on 20th January 1876 in St Andrews, Fife. He was born on 25th June 1889 at Gardenhead, Polmont. He had four sisters, Diana, Mary E, Jane and Helen Valentine and a brother, James McGowan Valentine. He was married to Agnes S. Orr on 5th November 1915 at St Andrew's Church Manse in Bo'ness.

He worked as a motor driver and it was no surprise that he enlisted at Stirling with the Army Service Corps, Motor Transport section, service no: M2/138686. He was eventually attached to 176th Siege Battery of the Royal Garrison Artillery, providing mechanised transport resources to this artillery unit consisting of four 6" Howitzers (weighing over one tonne each) and other ordinance.

In the Italian Campaign 176th Siege Bty. RGA were part of LXXX Heavy Artillery Group, arriving there on 30th November 1917, and staying until the end of the War.

Alexander Valentine took ill at some point during the winter of 1918. He died of pneumonia at 39 Casualty Clearing Station, Italy, on 1st November 1918, tragically just three days before the Armistice of Villa Giusti ended warfare between Italy and the Allies and Austria-Hungary.

His death was likely to have been a result of the Influenza pandemic that was raging through Europe in 1918 at the time. He is buried Giavera British Cemetery, Giavera del Montello, Provincia di Treviso, at plot 6, row F, grave 1. The cemetery contains 417 Commonwealth burials of the First World War. Within the cemetery also stands the Giavera Memorial, that commemorates more than

150 members of the Commonwealth forces who died in Italy in 1917 and 1918 and whose places of burial are unknown.

Alexander's brother James was also on active service and after the Armistice inserted the following verse in the Bo'ness Journal in remembrance:

When last I saw his smiling face,
He looked so strong and brave,
I little thought how soon he would,
Be laid in a British soldier's grave,
Though his voice is ever silent,
And his true heart ceased to beat,
Yet I'll miss the well-known footsteps,
Of the brother I used to greet.

CHAPTER 11

# *1918*
# *France and Flanders*

## The German Spring Offensive

## Reflections

I stand on the track at sunrise,
Gazing towards the west,
In fancy I see the old home,
In the land that I love best.
I picture again the old folks
Waiting there for me;
But in the midst of war I stand
And survey war's misery.

My boyhood days come back again,
And once again I roam
Beside the Forth I love so well,
That flows just past my home.
But still the guns they thunder on,
And never seem to cease;
While all around is desolate,
And still no sign of peace.

The birds sing sweetly overhead,
The sun shines bright and clear,
On graves nearby where lie the dead
To us for ever dear;
Lads who have fought and nobly fallen
In this our sacred cause;
They've earned a nation's gratitude,
A world-wide grand applause.

When the great war is ended,
And peace rules o'er the land,
To the lads who have defended
Please give a helping hand.
They've kept the old flag flying
Through storms of shot and shell,
Their trials and their sufferings,
No human tongue can tell.

The track is now deserted,
The sun has gone to rest;
The birds have ceased they singing,
And gone home to their nests.
But still the guns are booming,
And never will they cease,
Till we have won the victory
And everlasting peace.

*J.B., R.F.A., B.E.F. (Bo'ness)*

"Made up by your humble in a pillbox near Passchendaele, on February, 27, 1918".

# The German Spring Offensive

Frustrated with progress in 1917, the Allies were now suffering from a shortage of troops, and were on the defensive. Italy had been beaten at the Battle of Caporetto. Russia was in turmoil due to the Bolshevik Revolution and had withdrawn from the war. The Americans had promised help, but they were taking a long time to arrive. Little wonder then that in early 1918, the German Supreme Command saw their chance for a decisive victory on the Western Front.

In fact the wheels had been set in motion by the Germans on 11th November 1917 at a conference of the Chiefs of Staff in Mons arranged by General Erich Ludendorff. The Germans had their own concerns on the home front with political and social unrest, strikes and food shortages. Germany was also running out of troops, but a defensive strategy proposed by some German commanders would only play into the Allies' hands, with the American troop numbers increasing monthly. With the ability to draw upon nearly 50 divisions of soldiers and firepower freed up by the Russian campaign, the Germans had a window of opportunity in the Spring of 1918 and intended to exploit it. Ludendorff echoed the thoughts of his strategist Lieutenant Colonel George Wetzell that he wanted to deliver an annihilating blow to the British before American aid became effective. The decision was taken to have one last roll of the dice and attempt to break through the Allied lines. It was to prove a fatal gamble.

The campaign, now known as the 1918 German Spring Offensive, consisted of four main attacks, known as Operations Michael, Georgette, Blücher-Yorck and Gneisenau. The initial plan proposed for the main attack, Operation Michael, named after the patron saint of the German people, was to target the British Fifth and Third Armies near the old Somme battlefield in the area of the Front where the British and French armies met. The Germans hoped to break through the Allied defensive line, separate the British forces from the French, who would then retreat and seek an armistice. They then hoped to force the British to the coast and encircle them there. The other subsidiary attacks up and down the front line were designed to divert troops and resources away from the Somme area.

The main priority of the British over the winter of 1917/1918 was defensive – to repair the roads and construct new supply lines, hospitals and light railways, as well as digging more trenches and installing more barbed wire opposite the Hindenberg Line. As with many tasks at the Western Front, these preparations also came with huge personal risk. The first Bo'ness man to die at the Western Front in 1918 was **Private George Kyles**,

Field Marshall Paul von Hindenburg reviewing one of his regiments

Moving big guns up to the Front

Labour Corps, 13th Labour Company. He was killed on 9th January 1918, when a German aircraft dropped a bomb on a nearby ammunition truck bound for the front in the Ypres Salient. The resultant explosion killed George and many of his comrades in his working party, who were mostly former Seaforth Highlanders. Minor skirmishes and raids were also commonplace, with both sides testing each other's defences. On 27th February 1918, **Private Adam Hastie**, Royal Scots, 5/6th Battalion, who worked before the war in the Bridgeness timber yards, was declared missing in action during a raid on enemy trenches at Houthulst Forest, north of Ypres. His body was never found and he was declared missing presumed dead later that year. **Pioneer David Miller,** Royal Engineers, 70th Motor Air Line Section, was tasked with the job of installing air line telephone cables on light poles to facilitate communications to and from the battlefield. David, and a number of comrades, were injured by a bomb dropped from an enemy aeroplane at 8:30pm on 21st March 1918. He was removed to a Casualty Clearing Station at Lillers, but did not regain consciousness and died later that night.

On the battlefield, Haig was forced to follow a defensive strategy, reducing the number of battalions in each division from twelve battalions to nine, and choosing to keep most of his forces north of the Ypres area to defend the channel ports. The Fifth Army, under the command of General Sir Hubert Gough, found themselves very vulnerable, with only 12 infantry divisions expected to hold a 68km front at the southern end of the British line. The Germans had amassed 62 divisions in the area and the British were hopelessly outnumbered three-to-one. A storm was coming.

On the 21st March, at 4:40am, Operation Michael began with a massive bombardment of more than 6600 artillery guns, trench mortars, and mustard, chlorine and tear gas, spanning 60km of the British front line, in front of the Fifth Army and to the right flank of the Third Army. More than 3.5 million shells were fired, one of the most intense bombardments of the war to date.

The first offensive phase, known as the Battle of St. Quentin, saw the furious barrage, followed five hours later by infantry attack. Here, the Germans employed new tactics, which saw greater usage of *Sturmabteilung,* or storm troopers, where instead of

a general attack across the front line, smaller mobile units would seek out weak points in the Allied lines, directing infantry and avoiding strong areas of resistance in the process. The theory was that the attacking troops would be able to penetrate quickly and deeply into Allied lines. Having been on the attack since 1915, the British were unfamiliar with the principles of defence and the new German stormtrooper tactics served to heighten confusion. The strategic plan for Operation Michael was for the German Eighteenth, Second and Seventeenth armies to assault the British Fifth Army, before wheeling northwards through the Third Army area.

The 16th (Irish) Division were in the Fifth Army reserve at Villers Faucon when the German bombardment began. In spite of the heavy fog, a very large number of shells rained down on the village. A large shell hit the limber of a field kitchen, throwing the cook in the air, but he picked himself up and continued cooking the men's breakfast. By lunchtime the village in front of them, Ronssoy, had been lost. A gallant, but ultimately ill-fated counter attack with the 1st Battalion Royal Munster Fusiliers to retake the village from the marauding Germans at 3:45pm in the afternoon resulted in heavy casualties, including **Private Henry McEwan**, Connaught Rangers, 6th Battalion. Ultimately the 16th (Irish) Division would suffer 7149 casualties during Operation Michael and be virtually wiped out as a fighting force. With the aid of a thick fog on the battlefield, the Germans made good progress, capturing most of the defences in the Fifth Army area, who were ordered by Gough to retreat to behind the Crozat Canal. They were also successful in capturing 500 artillery pieces and taking over 21000 prisoners on day one, with British casualties at 38500.

To the north, the German Seventeenth Army were finding things more difficult. The front from Arras down to the Flesquières Salient was held by the Third Army, under the command of General Byng, who had in the previous year had successfully commanded the Canadian Corps at Vimy Ridge and British forces at the Battle of Cambrai. He was similarly determined that his forces show stubborn resistance to the Germans attacking his sector, and they mostly succeeded.

One of the most notable Bo'ness casualties in this area of the front on the opening day of Operation Michael was **Sergeant William J. Martin, DCM**, Gordon Highlanders, 8/10th Battalion. Hailing from Bridgeness, William had won the Distinguished Conduct Medal for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty at Passchendaele. He was killed in action by artillery fire early on the 21st March 1917, when the 8/10th Gordons were holding the front line South of Monchy-le-Preux, west of Arras. At 5:10am on the morning of the 21st March, the Germans opened up a massive bombardment of gas and high explosive artillery shells in this area. There were 30 casualties, including William Martin, but this was considered slight in view of the fierceness of the attack. The bombardment lasted four hours, but was not followed by any ground assault by infantry, and appears to have been a prelude to the main attack in this sector on the following day. **Second Lieutenant William Dickie Andrew**, Royal Scots, 15th Battalion**,** a veteran of the Salonika campaign, was fighting with the 34th Division as they stubbornly held the front line near Croiselles, east of Arras. He was recorded as being missing in action on the 22nd March 1918, and his body was never recovered.

The Fifth Army conceded even more ground on following two days, with more casualties being sustained in the retreat, including **Private Andrew Watson**, Royal Scots, 1/9th (Highlanders) Battalion, who was declared missing in action on 22nd March at the commencement of the chaotic but ultimately successfully withdrawal of the 61st (South Midland) Division in the face of three German Divisions. **Private John W. Harper**, Seaforth Highlanders, 7th Battalion, was at 39 years old already a veteran of the major battles on the Western Front, but lost his life on 22nd March after being hit by an artillery shell at Manancourt, south east of Cambrai, whilst fighting with the 9th (Scottish) Division, 26th Brigade. **Private Edward B. Stewart**, Royal Scots, 11th Battalion, was fighting with the 27th Brigade of the same Division when he was killed on the front line near Heudecourt on the same date. **Private John Kidd**, Royal Scots, 12th Battalion, also in the 27th Brigade was killed in action on the following day, the 23rd, again near Manancourt. Well-known Bo'ness baker **Private Hugh Thomson**, a machine gunner in the Machine Gun Corps, (Infantry) 20th Battalion, was killed on the same day as the 20th (Light) Division fought near Hombleux. During the next major battle, known as the Actions at the Somme Crossings, Bo'ness distillery worker **Private Thomas Gibb**, Royal Scots Fusiliers, 1st Battalion, was posted missing, presumed dead on 24th March 1918. Another distillery worker, **Private James A. Whitelaw**, Royal Scots, 17th Battalion, was killed in action on the 27th March in the front line trenches near Dernacourt, south west of Albert, following the 35th Division's participation in the First Battle of Bapaume. Albert itself would fall to the Germans the same day during the Battle of Rosières.

General Haig and Marshal Foch walking through a guard of honour of Gordons

The first phase of Operation Michael was deemed a spectacular success by the Germans. Back in Germany church bells rang out to proclaim the victory and the Kaiser was overjoyed, awarding the Iron Cross with golden rays to Hindenburg. A victory of the monarchy over democracy, in his eyes, was within his grasp. A number of important events occurred at this point in the offensive. Firstly, frustrated with the lack of progress by his Seventeenth Army at Arras, Ludendorff changed his strategy, giving the Eighteenth Army a more prominent role, even though it was initially intended to support the flanks of the main attack. To the Allies this signalled that Amiens and then Paris were the objectives, and panic ensued. Suspicions arose between the British and the French commanders. The French thought the British had retreated too easily and were abandoning them to protect the coastal ports. The British on the other hand thought the French would turn away from the BEF to defend their capital. Unity of command was needed and at an emergency session of the Allied Supreme War Council on 26th March at Doullens, French General Ferdinand Foch was appointed the overall Allied commander, with the support of Haig. It was a crucial decision in terms of the outcome of the War. Another significant decision made was the replacement of Gough with Sir Henry Rawlinson as the commander of the Fifth Army (becoming Fourth Army on 2nd April) commander, and this, together with reinforcements sent by Foch helped to shore up the defences.

A major attack by 29 Divisions of the German Army then occurred near Arras on the 28th March. Known as the First Battle of Arras, also called Operation Mars, the attack was decisively defeated by Third Army, however many casualties were sustained, especially amongst the various Brigades of the 15th (Scottish) Division who were in the thick of the action. **Second Lieutenant Joseph McVeigh**, Black Watch, 9th Battalion, was leading his men in the 44th brigade when he was cut down by a sniper's bullet. **Corporal John Middleton** of the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles), 10th Battalion, 46th Brigade was posted missing, presumed dead during the attack, and **Private Frederick Tait,** Royal Scots, 13th Battalion in 45th Brigade was also killed in action near Monchy-le-Preux. Nineteen year-old **Private (John) Boyd Ballantine** (not Ballantyne as incorrectly inscribed on the Bo'ness War Memorial) of the Gordon Highlanders, 9th Battalion, a Pioneer Battalion in the 15th (Scottish) Division, was killed instantly by an artillery shell burst on the 29th March. As one of the youngest Bo'ness

men to die, his death was keenly felt in the town. Other Divisions also suffered casualties such as **Sergeant John Hamilton, MM**, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 10th Battalion who was fighting with the 31st Division near Adinfer when he suffered wounds from which he would not recover, and he died two days later. The commanding officer of his platoon, Captain D. Adamson, conveyed the sad intelligence in a letter to John's father that his son had died of wounds, received on 16th April. It read,

> It is with the very deepest regret I have to tell you of the loss of my very best, N.C.O., Sergt. Hamilton, your son. I feel his loss very keenly, and more importantly as he was my first platoon sergeant. An officer will write home at times about a man being everything that is good whether he deserves it or not, but this I can say with the truth about your son, that he was great value in the trenches, and a splendid organiser out of the line. His courage was undoubted, and he was always a good soldier and an example to others.

**Lance-Corporal David Reid**, Highland Light Infantry, 2nd Battalion, was killed in action on 1st April 1918, near the village of Mesnil, about 6.5km north of Albert, fighting the Germans with the 2nd Division. He too was also only a young man of 19 years. Meanwhile, as the Fifth Army continued to withdraw in response to the German Eighteenth Army who had now captured some 60km of Allied territory, sawmill worker **Private John McKenzie Bell**, Royal Scots, 9th Battalion, had been killed in action on the 28th March, near Lamotte, during the 61st (South Midland) Division's retreat across the Somme that had began 6 days earlier.

Following final German attacks at the Battles of the Avre and Ancre, both easily repulsed, the offensive stalled outside of Villers-Bretonneux, and Ludendorff called an end to Operation Michael on 5th April, realising that the now familiar position of the infantry outrunning artillery and supply lines had been reached. Initial jubilation at the expectation of an easy victory had soon dissipated upon the realisation that although significant ground had been gained, key objectives of splitting the British and French had failed. Although several important French towns including Bapaume, Albert and Pèronne were captured, Amiens and Arras remained in Allied hands. Around a quarter of a million men on each side were killed during Operation Michael.

The ruins of Bethune, April 1918

Having drawn the British forces towards the defence of Amiens, Haig's suspicions that the Germans would next attack in Flanders proved correct. On 9th April 1918, 55 Divisions of the German Fourth and Sixth Armies attacked British lines south of Ypres, the commencement of Operation Georgette, also known as the Battle of the Lys 1918. The main objective was the capture of the critical Allied rail junction at Hazebrouck, putting the channel ports in jeopardy. In the opening phase, known as the Battle of Estaires, the Germans had lost many of their elite stormtrooper divisions during Operation Michael and although they were tactically hindered, they were opposed by two tired and poorly trained Portuguese Divisions, who retreated almost 11km almost immediately, and were virtually wiped out. The British 40th Division on the northern flank of the Portuguese also capitulated and retreated to the north.

Fighting with the 40th Division, **Private Gordon Hogg**, Highland Light Infantry, 10/11th Battalion, was notified as missing presumed dead during this attack. One day later **Private Peter Thomson**, Machine Gun Corps (Infantry) 34th Battalion, was killed in action as the 34th Division valiantly held the northern flank south east of Armentières. **Private James Cuthell,** Royal Scots, 16th (Service) Battalion, fighting with 34th Division, 101st Brigade, was also posted missing in action around this time. By the 11th April, the Germans had advanced up to 8km and had taken Armentières. **Private Herbert Robertson**, King's Own Scottish Borderers, 1st Battalion, was killed in action on the front line between Estaires and Steenwercke. Despite stubborn defence, the 29th Division had to fall back and sustained many casualties, with 17 confirmed killed, 207 wounded and 243 missing.

Meanwhile, on 10th April, the German Fourth Army had attacked the British 19th Division at the Battle of Messines, capturing the town. To the south, the 25th Division were outflanked on both sides and had to retreat 4km. Things looked increasing bleak for the BEF and on 11th April Haig issued his now famous "backs to the wall" order, stating:

SPECIAL ORDER OF THE DAY
By FIELD-MARSHAL SIR DOUGLAS HAIG
K.T., G.C.B., G.C.V.O., K.C.I.E.
Commander-in-Chief, British Armies in France.

To ALL RANKS OF THE BRITISH ARMY IN FRANCE AND FLANDERS.

Special Order of the Day: Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, 11th April 1918

> 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

**Second-Lieutenant Jack Watt,** Worcestershire Regiment, 4th Battalion, valiantly held true to these words but was killed on 12th April, during 29th Division's participation in the Battle of Messines, when 88th Brigade were sent to assist 25th Division and 34th Division between Messines and Ploegsteert.

Further south, in the First Army area, 3rd and 4th Divisions were defending the Hinges Ridge on 12th April at the Battle of Hazebrouck. The Germans were attacking towards the crucial supply hub and had already captured the town of Merville. **Private William John Finlay,** and **Private William Wallace**, both of the Royal Scots, 2nd Battalion, were fighting with the 3rd Division when the Germans swarmed down on their front line in overwhelming numbers. Both were killed in action.

On the 24th April, even before Operation Georgette had ended, the Germans began another attack, known as the Second Battle of Villers-Bretonneux, taking place east of Amiens. This battle is famous as the first tank versus tank skirmish in history, the Germans using their AV7 tanks for the first time in serious action. A swift counter-attack by Rawlinson's Fourth Army, mainly by two Australian Brigades, saw off any threat, but Carriden-born sawyer **Private Alexander Mitchell,** Machine Gun Corps (Infantry), 8th Battalion, part of 8th Division was notified as missing in action during this attack.

As Operation Georgette petered out to a stalemate, there was more consternation in the British command when, on 25th April, the Germans attacked and captured Mount Kemmel overlooking the Ypres Salient. **Private Samuel Rowland,** Machine Gun Corps (Infantry), 9th Battalion, was severely wounded during the 9th (Scottish) Division's participation in what is known as the Second Battle of Kemmel Ridge, and died on the opening day of the attack. The gallant machine gunners that day were noted in the Divisional history for their doggedness with which they kept their guns in action until the last possible moment.

Ludendorff called an end to Operation Georgette on 29th April, but there then followed many more deaths amongst Bo'ness men from wounds and disease. **Private Richard King**, Royal Scots, 15th Battalion, who had been wounded during Operation Georgette, succumbed to his wounds on 25th April at a Casualty Clearing Station near Lijssenthoek. **Private James E. Culbert**, Royal Scots, 5/6th Battalion, "A" Company had received serious gunshot wounds to the chest, left leg and right arm on 15th April in a sector between Quesnoy Farm and the town of Ayette, just after the 32nd Division's participation in the Battle of the Ancre. He died of his wounds on 29th April at 12th General Hospital in Rouen. After the close of the main offensive, the 32nd Division were in the front line near Saulty engaged in rewiring and improving the trenches. On 27th May woodyard worker **Private John Grant**, Royal Scots, 5/6th Battalion, a veteran of the Gallipoli campaign, was wounded and removed to 3rd CCS, where he died the next day. The final casualty in the 5/6th Battalion was **Private John McKinnon**, from Grangepans who was killed in action on 31st May. **Sapper James Burnett**, who was a steam locomotive driver for the Royal Engineers, Railway Operating Division (ROD), 45th

Broad Gauge Operating Coy died of pneumonia, on 13th May at 17th Casualty Clearing Station, near St. Omer. **Private Thomas Reilly**, Border Regiment, 1/5th (Cumberland) Battalion was wounded when the 32nd Division, 97th Brigade were in the front line on 21st May. He was removed for treatment but died on 27th May.

Operation Georgette had led to more heavy casualties on each side, but once again the Germans had failed to break through. Ludendorff next turned his attention to a new two-stage offensive that began with a diversionary attack on the Chemin des Dames, primarily against the French Sixth Army commanded by General Denis Duchêne, towards Reims and Paris. The hope was that Allied reserves would be drawn southwards from the Ypres sector, where the main thrust of the second stage of the attack would happen.

The surprise attack was known as Operation Blücher-Yorck, or the Third Battle of the Aisne. In addition to the French Army, the Germans also faced four divisions of the British IX Corps, led by Lieutenant-General Sir Alexander Hamilton-Gordon, had been posted to the region to rest and refit after surviving Operation Michael, in exchange for fresh French divisions that went north.

Preceded by the heaviest German artillery barrage of the War to date, with 4000 guns firing more than two million shells in under 5 hours, Operation Blücher-Yorck began on 27th May. Once poison gas clouds had cleared, German stormtroopers attacked in strength. **Lance Corporal James M. Rhynas**, Royal Engineers, 126th Field Company, was killed in action on 28th May during the first day of the Battle. He was fighting with 21st Division in a position between Hermanville and Trigny. The small and tired British force was struck and virtually destroyed, and the Germans smashed through the Allied lines between Reims and Soissons, seized bridges over the River Aisne, and forced an Allied retreat to the River Vesle, stopping their attack near Fismes having advanced over 16km on the first day.

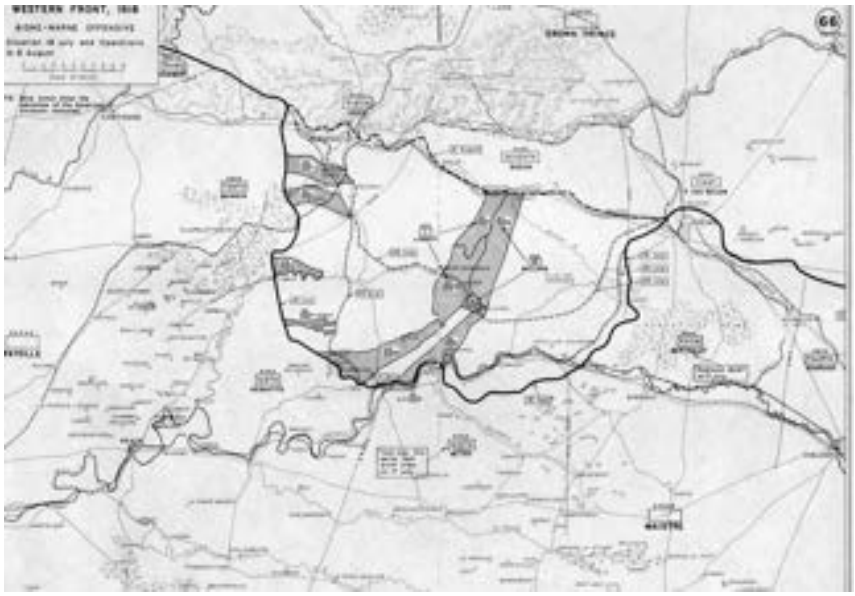
Whilst this new phase of the German Spring Offensive was taking place, skirmishing in other areas was also leading to further casualties. **Corporal Thomas Carr**, was with the Royal Scots, 11th Battalion, who were moved to Meteren after Operation Georgette. He was wounded in the left leg on the front line at Meteren and was removed to one of the local casualty clearing stations. He died of his injuries in the afternoon of 1st June. **Private Edwin Stephenson** of the same Battalion was killed one day later in a rest camp at Meteren when the building he lay in was hit by an artillery shell, and **Private John Veitch** was also killed by artillery fire on the 3rd June. **Private Walter Neill (or McNeill)**, Royal Scots, 15th Battalion, was fighting with 39th Division, 116th Infantry Brigade, in the front line at Busseboom near Poperinghe, east of Ypres. He was declared missing in action on 3rd June. **Lance Corporal Alexander Potter MM**, who had won his gallantry award in 1917 at the Battle of Arras, was acting a stretcher bearer for the 15th Battalion when he suffered serious gunshot wounds. He was admitted to No:2 CCS at Ebblinghem, but died on 3rd June. Further south in the Somme sector, on 1st June, the 17th Battalion Royal Scots relieved the Durham Light Infantry on the right front of Aveluy, left sub-sector, north of the town of Albert. During active patrolling and work on defences on the 15th June, **Corporal Charles Trew**, a native of Linlithgow Bridge, was declared missing in action, presumed killed two days later.

Back at the Aisne, by 3rd June the Germans had reached the Marne River at Chateau Thierry, only 90km from Paris. **Private William Yates**, a machine gunner with the Machine Gun Corps (Infantry), 50th Battalion, was posted missing on the 3rd, presumed killed in action, following the 50th (Northumbrian) Division's participation in the Battle. Victory for the Germans was within touching distance but General Foch was outwardly unconcerned as he felt the ground seized was unimportantly strategically. He shrewdly moved enough Allied reserves, including newly arrived American troops, to defend Chateau Thierry. The sight of the Americans fighting at last proved a welcome tonic for the Allied troops.

With the German front line troops now being some 145km from their logistical centres, the now familiar supply chain problems, tiredness and lack of troops meant that Operation Blücher-Yorck ground to a halt on 6th June. Another 100000 casualties on each side were recorded. But Ludendorff was still confident of victory, and again made a strategic decision, without reasoning, that was to prove costly. Rather than strike the British in Flanders, he turned his attention to capturing Paris. He launched Operation Gneisenau on 9th June, between Noyon and Montdidier, pitting his Eighteenth Army against the French Third Army, with the objective of joining the salients created by Operations Michael and Blücher-Yorck. But the Allied forces had regrouped and learned to counter against the German tactics during the Spring Offensives. On 11th June, five Allied Divisions undertook the first significant counter attack of the

spring and shocked the Germans into the defensive. Ludendorff cancelled Operation Gneisenau on 13th June having lost a further 40000 casualties for little gain. The Germans had been "at the gates of Paris" but they had failed to push through.

The German High Command insisted that the attacks in the Chemin de Dames should be continued to stretch the Allied reserves and pave the way for the planned attack in Ypres, codenamed Operation Hagen, to be commanded by Crown Prince Rupprecht. Ludendorff had lost 209000 men in the June attacks, but once again committed his exhausted forces to another attack around Reims in July. Allied intelligence identified the forthcoming attack and this allowed Foch to gather reserves and ensure the main French forces were ideally prepared. The plan was to allow the Germans to advance into the forward zone and then counter strike at the sides of the newly formed Aisne-Marne Salient. The Allies committed virtually all their reserves to the forthcoming offensive, a massive gamble, but one that would pay off, underlining Foch's ability as supreme commander. As the Germans attacked in mid-July, General Petain and Haig became increasingly anxious, demanding reserves be reallocated to other areas. But as they lost their nerve at a crucial moment, Foch held firm and this set the scene for the massive Allied counter offensive known as the Second Battle of the Marne, a turning point in the Great War.



Second Battle of the Marne

On the morning of 18th July 1918, the French 10th and 6th Armies attacked Soissons and the western flank of the salient whilst the 9th Army, containing American troops, attacked the southern flank and the Marne bridgehead. The Germans were almost immediately pushed back 6km, with the 10th Army capturing 15000 prisoners and 400 artillery pieces. The eastern flank was left to the 5th Army, supplemented by two British Divisions, the 62nd and 51st (Highland), who had taken over from a beleaguered Italian Corps who had suffered heavy casualties. This phase of the attack was known as the Battle of Tardenois and took place in Courton Wood in the Ardre Valley, south west of Reims. During this battle **Private Robert Jamieson**, Gordon Highlanders, 1/7th Bn, was killed in action along with 39 of his comrades, on his way up to the front line on 27th July. The Germans continued to retreat, and by 3rd August had been forced back to a line along the Aisne - Vesle rivers, back to where the German Spring Offensive had started in this area. As they dug in the great Allied counter-offensive was brought to an end on 6th August. It was one of the greatest Allied victories of the war. Although casualties were high on each side, most importantly the Germans had lost the strategic initiative in the war and handed it to the Allies. As a direct result, the Germans cancelled their proposed offensive in Flanders and instead planned a gradual retreat in the face of the Allied Hundred Days Offensive.

It had been a multinational effort with troops from France, Britain, America, Italy, Morocco and Senegal taking part. Another casualty was **Private James W. Sneddon (or Snedden)**, Seaforth Highlanders, 1/6th Bn**,** from Grangepans, who was fatally wounded on the 26th July. He lies in France alongside a comrade who died in the same action. His name is Alexander Duff from Linlithgow. They are the only two British war graves in the Fleury-La-Riviere Communal Cemetery. Two local lads from neighbouring towns, who fought and died in one of the most decisive actions of World War One.

**George Kyles**

Private George Hendrie Kyles was born in Portobello, Edinburgh in 1894, the son of David Kyles of 25 Snab Row, Bo'ness. His father was a coal miner and had moved to Bo'ness to work in the pits. He had one older brother, called William. George was 5'3" in height and weighed 120lbs, with a sallow complexion, brown eyes and brown hair. He was a labourer by trade and lived in Kirkcaldy before the war.

He had initially enlisted at the outbreak of war on 2nd September 1914 with the Black Watch, service no: 3911, but was discharged on 30th October, after being deemed not likely to become an efficient soldier, in accordance with paragraph 392 (iii)(c) of the King's Regulations. Later in the war, however, as the need for men became more urgent, he re-enlisted, this time with the Seaforth Highlanders, 1st Infantry Labour Company, service no: 19205. The Labour Companies consisted of personnel who were medically assessed as below the "A1" condition needed for front line service, but nonetheless could be put to good use with a pick and a shovel or in a particular trade. In April 1917, George's battalion were transferred to the new Labour Corps, 13th Labour Company and he was given service no: 7625.

He was carrying out valuable work in the Ypres Salient on 9th January 1918, when an aerial bombing raid was carried out by German aircraft on George's working party. One of the aircraft dropped a bomb on a nearby truck laden with ammunition for the Front. The massive explosion ripped into George and 40 of his comrades from the 13th Labour Company, many of whom were also former Seaforth Highlanders. Many were killed instantaneously, others were removed for medical treatment. George Kyles is buried in

Duhallow Advanced Dressing Station Cemetery, in Plot II alongside his 40 comrades, at grave F.12. The Cemetery, situated 2km to the north of Ypres, was started in July 1917, on the day of the Battle of Pilckem Ridge, and Plots I and IV were completed by November 1918.

George is also commemorated on the Kirkcaldy War Memorial shown below.

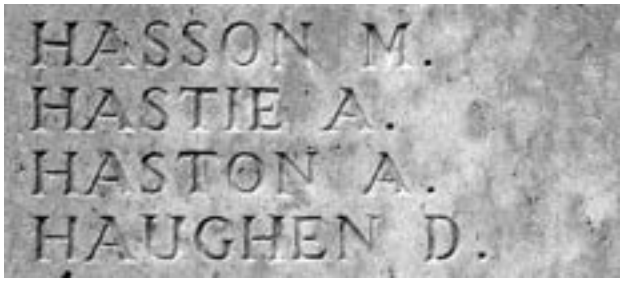
**Adam Hastie**

Private Adam Hastie was the son of James Hastie and Annie Hastie (ms Loudon), of Woodend Cottage, Bridgeness, Bo'ness. His parents were married at Carriden in 1895. He had two brothers, James and Robert and four sisters Margaret Brown, Annie, Bethia and Mary Hastie. Adam was 5'8" in height and weighed 164lbs, and was employed as a woodyard worker in the Bridgeness timber yards. He was unmarried.

He enlisted during a recruiting boom at Grangepans, Bo'ness on the 2nd December 1914 with the Royal Scots, 5th Battalion, service no: 2841. He volunteered for overseas service and arrived in France on 7th May 1916. In 1917 he transferred to the newly formed 5/6th battalion, service no: 250749, coming under the orders of 32nd Division, 14th Brigade. He managed to get back to Bo'ness on leave for a short while in August 1916, but it was the last time he would see his home and family.

He was declared missing in action during a raid on enemy trenches at Houthulst Forest, north of Ypres, by the Royal Scots on 27th February 1918. His parents received a letter dated 2nd March from a Lieutenant in the battalion informing them of Adam's circumstances and stating, "He was last seen at our final objective, and I have been unable to find any trace of him since. It is of course, possible that he may be a prisoner of war and I hope this is so". But such messages usually gave false hope and, indeed, Adam was declared missing, presumed killed in action, later that year.

His body was never found, and he is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial, panel 11 to 14 and 162. He was 25 years of age.




**David Miller**

Pioneer David Gold Miller was born in Inverkeithing, Fife in 1894, the son of Captain George Welch Miller, master mariner and spirit merchant, and Ann Miller (ms Gold). The family lived at Hopetoun Terrace, Bo'ness. The oldest child in the family, he also had two sisters, Agnes Welch, and Annie Gold Miller, and two brothers, George Welch and John Miller. Prior to enlistment, David was employed as an electrician at Messrs James Calder & Co. Ltd., Bo'ness Distillery.

He enlisted in April 1917 with the Royal Engineers, service no: 268449 and eventually arrived in France early in 1918. Following a reorganisation of the Signal Service in December 1918 he was assigned to the newly formed 70th Motor Air Line Section. Each Army Corps Signal Company had at least one air line section, and Army Signal Companies normally had at least two. Their job was to string air line telephone cables on light poles to facilitate communications to and from the battlefield.

During these operations, David Miller and a number of comrades were injured by a bomb dropped from an enemy aeroplane at 8:30pm on 21st March 1918, the opening day of the German Spring Offensive known as Operation Michael. He was removed to a Casualty Clearing Station at Lillers, but did not regain consciousness and died later that night. He was buried two days later at the nearby Lillers Communal Cemetery, grave V. E. 35 when a number of his officers and comrades were in attendance. He was 24 years of age. He was buried alongside his comrade Pioneer Martin Monaghan, from Manchester, who died in the same incident and coincidentally had the preceding service no: 268448.

Mr and Mrs Miller received a letter from the officer in charge of 70th Motor Air Line Section expressing his deep sorrow at his death. He went on to say, "I have only been in charge of the section two weeks…but during this short time I had come to know your son and admired him exceedingly as a straight and good lad, and one on whom I could always rely".

David Gold Miller is also commemorated on the Inverkeithing War Memorial and on the family headstone in Inverkeithing Cemetery.

**Henry McEwan**

Private Henry McEwan was one of the eleven children of Henry McEwan, a Bo'ness bricklayer, and Elizabeth McEwan (ms Agnew) who were married in Old Monkland in 1871. Henry was born in Bo'ness in 1886. Prior to enlistment he worked as a marine fireman, and for over eight years worked on the American passenger liner Hugo. During his work at sea he became renowned for life-saving. He was presented with a gold medal by the Argentine Republic after one incident, and his gallantry was similarly recognised for a rescue at Rothesay on the Isle of Bute, receiving a silver medal and 50 dollars as a reward. He was paid off when the ship was docked in Cork, Ireland, in December 1914, and decided to join up initially with the Army Cyclist Corps, service no: 7821. Sadly, his mother Elizabeth died in Bo'ness one month later.

After a period of training William arrived in France on 18th December 1915, and on 12th May 1916 he was transferred to the Connaught Rangers, 6th Battalion, new service no: 4778, coming under the orders of 16th (Irish) Division, 47th Brigade. Henry was mentioned in dispatches for gallant conduct and devotion to duty in the field in France on 2nd July 1916, during the Battle of the Somme. During this action he suffered a minor gun shot wound to the chest but soon returned to the fray. He was promoted to Corporal following this campaign but later asked to be reverted back to the rank Private. He then spent some time in 1917 at the Divisional Bomb Store, and fought with the 16th Division at Passchendale and Cambrai. During the latter battle, Henry was involved in a remarkable incident when, after hand-to-hand fighting with the Germans, a dying Prussian officer handed him his Iron Cross, parchment certificate and leather pouch. He sent the medal back home to his sister Mary who lived in Torphichen, with a note saying that the German died in his arms and that he buried him in an unmarked grave. Some 17 years later Henry's sister managed to return the medal to the dead soldier's family, a tale told later in this book.

On March 21st 1918 the Connaught Rangers, 6th Battalion, was caught in the middle of the great German offensive known as Operation Michael, during the Battle of St Quentin. An ill-fated counter attack in the afternoon resulted in heavy casualties,

including Henry McEwan, so much so that that battalion was disbanded in April 1918, the 300 remaining soldiers joining the Leinster Regiment, 2nd Battalion. Along with many of his comrades, Henry was buried on the battlefield but in July 1919 his body was exhumed and reburied at Ste. Emilie Valley Cemetery, Villers-Faucon, grave: I. F. 2. Villers-Faucon was captured on 27 March 1917, lost on 22 March 1918, and retaken by the III Corps on 7 September 1918. On the site of this cemetery at the Armistice, there were three large graves of Commonwealth soldiers buried by the Germans, which now form part of Plot I. The remainder of the cemetery is composed almost entirely of graves brought in from an older cemetery of the same name or from the battlefields. A large proportion of these concentrated graves were those of soldiers of the 16th (Irish) Division who died in March 1918. Henry is also commemorated on the Torphichen War Memorial. His headstone epitaph reads,

*Whispering Sister Do Not Fret I Did My Duty To The Last.*

**William J. Martin DCM**

Sergeant William James Martin was born in Linlithgow in 1895, the son of William Martin, of 72 Furnace Place Buildings, Bridgeness, Bo'ness, but had lived in the town for over 20 years. His father worked as an engineman at Bridgeness Coal Company. William had one brother John, who lived in Saskatchewan, Canada, and two sisters, Agnes and Annie. He was employed as a wood machineman at Messrs Mickel & Company, Victoria Sawmills, Bridgeness.

He enlisted soon after the outbreak of war on 4th December 1914 and joined the Gordon Highlanders, 8th Battalion, service no: S/7972. After a period of training at home, in Aldershot and Bordon, he was posted to France on 10th May 1915 and came under the orders of 9th (Scottish) Divison, 26th Brigade, seeing action at the Battle of Loos in September that year. Soon afterwards William was appointed Lance Corporal. On 7th May 1916, the 8th Battalion moved to Bethune and were transferred to the 15th (Scottish) Division, 44th Brigade, amalgamating with the 10th Battalion to become the 8/10th Battalion. He was wounded in action in June 1916 but returned to the front to participate in the Battle of the Somme, being appointed Corporal and then Sergeant thereafter. He also had a lucky escape during a raid on enemy trenches when a piece of shrapnel was stopped by a small bible and his pay book he was carrying in his breast pocket.

On the 31st August 1917, William Martin was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty at Passchendaele during an attack east of Ypres during 31st July to 3rd August. The medal citation reads, "During an advance he displayed the greatest courage and determination, locating hostile machine guns and so skilfully handling his platoon that the emplacements were rushed with a minimum of casualties. At one moment, when the crew of a gun was knocked out by shell fire close to his position, he dashed to the spot under heavy machine-gun fire, carried away the gun and brought it into action,

inspiring his own platoon and all around him by his coolness and fearless bearing".

He was granted leave during March 1918 and returned to Bo'ness in April, where he was presented with a gold watch by his workmates at Victoria Sawmills, in recognition of his gallantry award. One month later, however, William was dead. He was killed in action by artillery fire early on the 21st March 1917, when the 8/10th Gordons were holding the front line South of Monchy-le-Preux, west of Arras, during the Battle of St. Quentin, on the opening day of the great German offensive known as Operation Michael. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Arras Memorial, bay 8 and 9. After William's death various personal items were returned to his father, including letters, photographs, pocket book, 2 religious books, cards, calendar, note book, safety razor blades, and a leather cigarette case.

**William D. Andrew**

Second Lieutenant William Dickie Andrew was born on the 19th May 1894, at Carriden School House, Bo'ness. His parents were William Smith Andrew who was the schoolmaster, and Marion Forbes Andrew (ms Nelson). William had two brothers, Robert and William, and two sisters, Catherine Robertson and Jane Young Andrew. William attended Linlithgow Academy, and then went to Edinburgh University in 1913 to study a law degree.

At the outbreak of war, however, his studies were interrupted, and William enlisted as a Private in the 1/1st Lothians and Border Horse Yeomanry, service no: 1366. He was mobilised and arrived in France on 6th September 1915. He was then drafted to Salonika, fighting with the 22nd Division, where he was recommended for a commission and came home for further training. He received his commission as Second Lieutenant and was gazetted to the Royal Scots, 10th Battalion, service no: 120178, arriving back in France in December 1917. Latterly he was attached to 15th Battalion, coming under the orders of 34th Division, 101st Brigade.

William Andrew was fighting with the 34th Division as they held the front line near Croiselles, at the battle of St Quentin, during the German Spring offensive known as Operation Michael. He was recorded as being missing in action on the 22nd March 1918, and his body was never recovered. He is commemorated on the Arras Memorial, bay 1 and 2 and on the family headstone in Carriden Cemetery, Bo'ness. He is also commemorated on

the University of Edinburgh WW1 Roll of Honour. William Andrew was 23 years of age.

After the war, his father used money received in his retirement in 1922 to initiate the William D. Andrew War Memorial Prize, for the best scholar each year in the Grange School, to perpetuate the memory of his son lost in the war (example shown below).

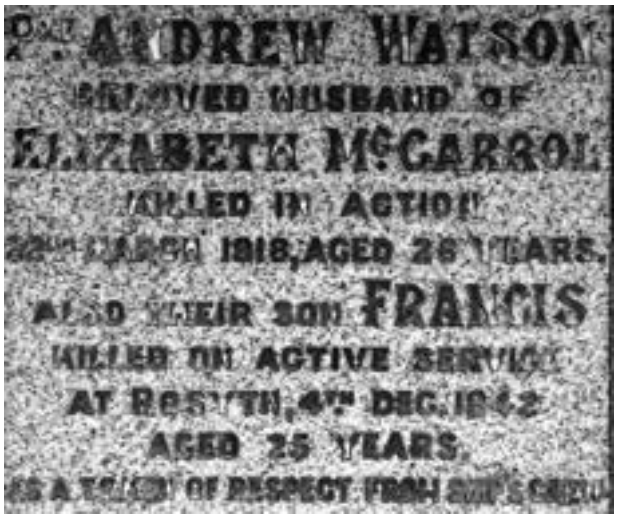
**Andrew Watson**

Private Andrew Watson was born in Edinburgh in 1892, the eldest son of Francis Watson, a wood yard worker from Newington, and Elizabeth Watson. He had three brothers, Frank, William and George and two sisters Christina and Elizabeth Watson. He was the husband of Elizabeth McCaroll , who were married in Bo'ness in 1914 and the family lived during the war at 4 Thirlestane Terrace, Grangepans. They had one daughter named Helen McCaroll Watson, who was born in 1914, but who sadly died two years later. They also had one son named Francis, born in 1917 at Carriden. He enlisted at Linlithgow with the Royal Scots, 1/9th (Highlanders) Battalion, and was assigned service no: 375295. This battalion was initially formed in Edinburgh as part of the Lothian Brigade for coastal defence work, but were soon sent to the Western Front. On 6th February 1918, the 1/9th Battalion came under the orders of the 61st (South Midland) Division, 183rd Brigade.

Andrew Watson was declared missing in action, presumed dead, on 22nd March 1918, during the Battle of St Quentin, the opening phase of the German Spring Offensive, known as Operation Michael. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated alongside other Bo'ness men on the Pozieres Memorial, panel 13 and 14. He was 26 years of age.

In further tragic circumstances, Andrew's son Francis Watson was killed during World War 2. He was a a fireman in the Mercantile Marine, on board the Royal Fleet Auxiliary freighter, the SS War Afridi. On 4th December 1942, the ship was at Rosyth Dockyard in Fife. Francis was working at height when he fell and suffered a fractured skull. The injuries proved fatal.

Both men are commemorated on the family headstone, itself provided as a token of respect by the crew of the SS Afridi, in Bo'ness Cemetery, section BN, lair 17.



Cyclist scouts going forward on a muddy road

**John W. Harper**

Private John Wilson Harper was born in Leith in 1878, the son of Robert and Mary Harper. His father was a blacksmith to trade. John was married to Elizabeth Cairns Harper (ms Johnston) in Bo'ness in 1900, and the couple lived in North Street, Bo'ness with their three children, Jeanie, Margaret and Robert. Sadly Elizabeth died in 1911, and when John enlisted, the three children went to live with their grandmother, Mrs Johnston, St Andrew's Buildings, Bo'ness. Before enlisting John was employed as an iron moulder at the New Grange Foundry owned by Messrs A. Ballantine & Sons.

He enlisted at the outbreak of the war with the Seaforth Highlanders, 7th Battalion, service no: S/2103. A period of training at Aldershot then followed, and in January 1915 his Battalion went into billets in Alton. He then moved on to Bordon in March 1915 and was sent to France, landing at Boulogne on 10th May 1915, and coming under the command of 9th (Scottish) Division, 26th Brigade.

John fought with the 9th Division in the major battles between 1915 and 1918, including the Battles of Loos, the Somme, Passchendaele and Cambrai. He was killed in action by artillery shellfire on 23rd March 1918 at Manancourt, south east of Cambrai. This was during the Battle of St Quentin, the opening phase of the German Spring Offensive, Operation Michael. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Pozieres Memorial, panel 72 and 73. John Harper was 39 years old when he died.

**Edward B. Stewart**

Private Edward Brown Stewart was born in 1897, the son of John Brown Stewart, an iron foundry range fitter, and Elizabeth Ramage Stewart (ms Kidd), of Foredale Terrace, Carriden. His parents were natives of Carriden, and married there on 31st December 1891. Edward had five brothers, named David, James, William, Charles Kidd and John Stewart and two sisters, Elizabeth and Mary Ramage Stewart. He was unmarried.

Edward enlisted, at the age of 17 years, during the great recruiting drive in Grangepans in December 1914, by the Royal Scots, 5th Battalion, when he was one of 150 men to enlist. He was eventually transferred to the 11th Battalion, service no: 40809, coming under the orders of 9th (Scottish) Division, 27th Brigade.

Edward Stewart was killed on the front line near Heudecourt on 22nd March 1918, during the 9th (Scottish) Division's participation in the Battle of St Quentin, the opening phase of the German Spring Offensive known as Operation Michael. He was 20 years old when he died.

His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Pozieres Memorial, Panel 13 and 14. He is also commemorated on the family headstone in Carriden Cemetery. The photo below was taken prior to the headstone being toppled over.

**John Kidd**

Private John Kidd was born on 19th March 1896 and raised in the parish of Carriden, living for many years at 14 Rattray Street, Grangepans. He lived there with his parents James Kidd, a coal miner, and Agnes Kidd (ms Snaddon or Sneddon). His parents were married in Carriden on 15th October 1880. He had six sisters, namely Christina, Julia Grant, Thomasina Forbes, Agnes, Rachael and Maggie Kidd. He also had two brothers by the name of Robert Snadden and James Kidd. In 1912, John married his fiancée Harriet R. Gray in Carriden and they lived at Craigfoot Terrace, Bridgeness.

He was previously occupied as a coal miner's drawer in one of the Bo'ness pits, but prior to enlisting had been employed as a carter in the business of John Henderson, carting contractor, Grangemouth. In June 1916 Mr Henderson appealed to the local Bo'ness Recruiting Tribunal to try and prevent John being called up on the grounds that he was his leading man in the business and, on the account of Mr Henderson only having one leg, could not run the business without him. He went further to say that he would have to close the best part of his business. The appeal received was refused, the Tribunal panel suggesting that an older man should be employed, and John was sent to the Front.

He enlisted with the Royal Scots in 1916, initially with the 11th Battalion, service no: 34295, although he was eventually transferred to the 12th Battalion, both battalions coming under the orders of the 9th (Scottish) Division, 27th Brigade. He was killed in action on 23rd March 1918 during a rearguard action by the retreating 9th Division near Manancourt, South East of Cambrai. This was during the Battle of St Quentin, the opening phase of the German Spring Offensive, known as Operation Michael.

His body was not recovered and he is one of the many men who fell in the Spring of 1918 commemorated on the Pozieres Memorial (below), Panel 13 and 14. He was 22 years of age, and John's death only served to add more grief to the Kidd family who had also recently lost their husband and father James Kidd, who had died on 6th November 1917.

Troops at the Battle of St Julien

**Hugh Thomson**

Private Hugh Wilson Thomson was the son of Alexander Thomson, a pastry baker originally from the Gorbals in Glasgow, who had moved back to his hometown during the war. His mother's name was Agnes Thomson and he had two brothers, George and Alex, and two sisters, Jeanie and Agnes Thomson. The family was well-known in Bo'ness on the account of their bakery premises at West Partings in the Town Centre. Both Hugh and his brother George had worked as bakers in the family business prior to enlistment.

George Thomson enlisted as a Gunner with the Royal Field Artillery, service no: 133837, and despite seeing action in Mesopotamia, where he was wounded in action, and on the Western Front, miraculously, he survived the war. His brother Hugh was not so fortunate. He initially enlisted with the Highland Light Infantry early in 1917, service no: 33991, but undoubtedly due to his skill as a marksman, he was eventually transferred to the Machine Gun Corps, (Infantry) 20th Battalion and assigned a new service no: 119321. 20th MGC Battalion were formed on 15th March 1918 and were attached to the 20th (Light) Division. Hugh Thomson was killed near Hombleux on the 23rd March 1918, during the 20th Division's participation in the Battle of St Quentin, the opening phase of the German Spring Offensive, Operation Michael. He was 19 years old.

Hugh Thomson was originally buried at Roye Old British Cemetery that was 1.6 km south of the town. It was made in March 1918, by the 53rd Casualty Clearing Station, but there was little time to mark the graves before the town was captured by the Germans, who extended this cemetery for the burial of their own dead. In 1920 the Commonwealth graves there, including that of Hugh Thomson, were moved to Roye New British Cemetery. Hugh is buried at grave III. C. 10.

Machine gunners prepare to defend their position

**Thomas Gibb**

Private Thomas Gibb was born on 28th March 1898, the son of John Gibb, and Jane Gibb (ms Meldrum), who were married in Carriden parish in 1890. John Gibb was well-known in Bo'ness as a Ship's Captain, who sailed vessels carrying timber to and from the town and the Baltic and North America. He retired when steam ships started to become common as he felt he was too old to start studying for a steam ticket. He worked as a foreman for loading ships in the dock with coal, probably due to his vast knowledge and experience of how to trim a ship.

Thomas had three sisters, Maggie, Jane and Susan Gibb and two elder brothers, John (who was Jane Meldrum's son from a previous marriage) and William. The family lived at 67 Hardie's Buildings, Stewart Avenue, Bo'ness. Sadly his mother Jane died on 26th May 1904, aged 37 years. Father John Gibb remarried on 23rd February 1906 to Margaret Orrock Edwards. Margaret had a son Edward, from a previous marriage, and later that year they had a further son, also called John. There was double tragedy in the family when his sister Maggie also passed away, aged 15 years, on 9th June 1906, followed by Margaret's son Edward who died by coincidence only three days later.

Prior to enlistment Thomas Gibb was employed as a distillery worker at Messrs James Calder & Co. Ltd., Distillers, Bo'ness. He was only 5'2" in height, weighed 119 lbs and was unmarried. Thomas enlisted at Edinburgh on 13th May 1916 with the Royal Scots Fusiliers, 1st Battalion, service no: 23720. He arrived in France on 13th April 1917, and was soon transferred to the 2nd Battalion, coming under the orders of 30th Division, 90th Brigade. His knowledge of wireless telegraphy and of Morse Code was developed, and he went through a special course of signalling, eventually being attached to his regiment as a signaller. Thomas Gibb was posted missing, presumed dead on 24th March 1918, during the 30th Division's participation in the Actions at the Somme Crossings, in the opening German Spring Offensive, named Operation Michael. His family had to endure a wait of over a year until finally, on the 31st July 1919, they received official confirmation that he had indeed been killed in action. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Pozieres Memorial, Panel 34 and 35. He died aged 19 years old.

His brother William Gibb also enlisted at the start of the war with the Royal Scots and attained the rank of Sergeant. He was educated at Kinneil School and worked with the North British Railway Company in Bo'ness up to the outbreak of war. He had fought through the major battles of WW1, and had been twice wounded and gassed. In September 1917, he was awarded the Military Medal when he courageously led his platoon into action. He survived the war and died in Bo'ness in 1973, aged 77 years.

Both brothers are commemorated on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery.

**James A. Whitelaw**

Private James Anderson Whitelaw was the son of Cornelius Whitelaw, a distillery worker, and Mary or Jessie Whitelaw (ms Anderson), who were married in Bo'ness in 1895. His mother was a native of Kinneil. The family lived at 59 Furnace Rows, Bo'ness, and indeed James was born there in 1897. He had two brothers, Neil Anderson and John Anderson Whitelaw. Prior to the war the family had moved to 3 Crown Place, Leith, but his aunts Mrs Cobban and Mrs Knowles still lived in the town, the latter at Foredale Terrace, Carriden.

He enlisted with the Royal Scots, 2nd Battalion but was subsequently transferred to the 13th and then the 17th Battalion. His service number was 22579. His brother Neil also enlisted and became a Lance Corporal in the King's Own Scottish Borderers, 6th Battalion. In 1917, Neil was awarded the Military Medal and then suffered a shattered right arm during a subsequent battle. He survived the war.

After just returning to the Front after being home on leave, on the 27th March 1918, James Whitelaw was killed in action in the front line trenches near Dernacourt, South West of Albert during the immediate aftermath of the 35th Division's participation in the First Battle of Bapaume. This was during the German Spring Offensive, known as Operation Michael.

His body was not recovered and his name is commemorated alongside other Bo'ness men on the Pozieres Memorial, panel 13 and 14.

The Whitelaw family had already experienced tragedy. His father, Lance-Corporal Cornelius Whitelaw, of the Royal Scots, 1/7th Battalion, service no: 1863, was an experienced soldier and had seen active service in the Boer War. He died of wounds received at the Dardanelles on 2nd July 1915, and was buried at sea.

Both father and son are commemorated on the Bo'ness War Memorial. They are also included on the Leith Roll of Honour, created by a resolution of the Leith Town Council in 1920, that lists the 2206 officers and men who were killed in the Great War.

Pozieres Memorial

**Joseph McVeigh**

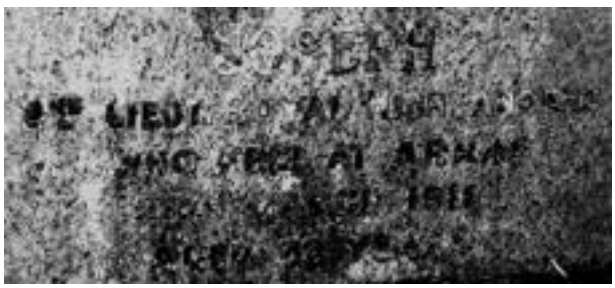
Second Lieutenant Joseph (Joe) McVeigh was the third son of Joseph McVeigh and Annie McVeigh (ms Moore), 17 Forthbank Terrace, Bo'ness. He was born in Crumlin, Northern Ireland, and formerly lived at Glenavy, County Antrim. His father was the manager of the Forth Shipbreaking Company, Ltd., Bridgeness. Prior to enlisting young Joe worked as a shipping clerk in the offices of Messrs John Denholm & Co., Pitwood Importers. He had five brothers named Hugh, Thomas, Frank, James and Robert and one sister, Annie McVeigh. He also had an uncle called Thomas McVeigh who lived at Perth Street, Belfast.

He was considered to be the ideal type for a Scottish Soldier, described as being "broad, brawny and dashing and he wore the kilt with distinction". At the outbreak of war, when he was aged 16, he was one of several young Bo'ness men in the Sea Scouts who volunteered for coastal duty in the North of Scotland. Before long, though, he joined up initially with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. After participating in various campaigns where he saw plenty of heavy fighting, he was rewarded with a commission as an officer. He came home for that purpose and he paid visits to the local Volunteer Company in Bo'ness, and put them through their paces in a way that commanded admiration. He became a Second Lieutenant and was transferred to the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), 3rd Battalion, who were a training unit of the Special reserve, based in Aberdeen. He returned to France and was attached to the Black Watch, 9th Battalion, who had joined the 15th (Scottish) Division, 44th Brigade in February 1918.

Joseph was killed in action on 28th March at the First Battle of Arras 1918, during Operation Mars, when the Third Army was attacked by twenty-nine divisions of the German Army around Arras. The circumstances under which he laid down his life were described in a letter to Joe's parents from the Rev. Wm Crawford, chaplain to the 9th Seaforths. It read, "Dear Mr. McVeigh, I have learned with the deepest regret of the death of your son in the Black Watch. I am told he was killed in the morning of the 28th March, when the Germans attacked the Brigade and ultimately captured our front line trenches. He was killed on a parapet. I can imagine how it was. At the first warning of attack he would be up looking after his men. He was killed instantly, I believe". His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Arras Memorial, bay 6. He was 20 years of age.

The McVeigh family would experience further tragedy soon after the war when Joe's relation John Marmion McVeigh was killed in action in the Gulf of Finland, when his ship HMS Gentian was struck by a mine and sunk during the British Campaign in the Baltic.

Both men are commemorated on adjacent family headstones in Carriden Cemetery.



**John Middleton**

Corporal John Middleton was born in Bo'ness in 1882. He was married to Lawson Aitken Dunlop at Bo'ness in 1903. The family had lived at 6 James Watt Avenue, Bo'ness and then moved to 63 South Street in the town. They had two children, Elizabeth and Isabella Middleton. In pre-war days John was employed as a hydraulic crane operator at Bo'ness Docks by Messrs John Denholm & Co., Pitwood Importers.

As a territorial he was mobilised with the Royal Scots at the start of the war and was stationed for more than three years on the East Coast. He volunteered for the Front, enlisting with the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles), 10th Battalion, service no: 235344, and arrived in France in February 1918. His battalion came under the orders of 15th (Scottish) Division, 46th Brigade.

John Middleton was notified as missing in a action near Arras on the 28th March 1918, following the 15th Division's participation in repulsing the Germans during the First Battle of Arras, part of the major German Spring Offensive known as Operation Mars. His wife made frantic efforts to ascertain his fate, but a letter received in June 1918 from a commanding officer stated that careful enquiries regarding the whereabouts of her husband had failed to obtain any trace of him. He was officially notified as killed in action soon after. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Arras Memorial, bay 6. He was 36 years of age.

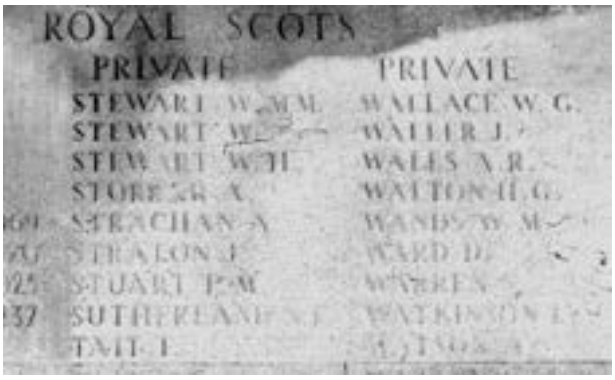
He is one of two men named John Middleton listed on the Bo'ness War Memorial, the other John being killed in action in 1917.

**Fred Tait**

Private Frederick Tait was the son of Joseph Tait, a tailor originally from Falkirk, and Janet S. J. Tait. Fred had one sister called Charlotte. The couple had lived for a while in Brechin and Fred was born there in 1889. The family then moved to Bo'ness and lived at 6 Stark's Buildings, Grangepans. In 1910, Fred married Annie L. Ritchie at Carriden, and they lived at 17 Mayfield Terrace, Bridgeness. They had one daughter called Margaret. Prior to the war he worked as a clerk in the Bo'ness offices of the Carron Company Ltd.

Fred enlisted in December 1916, initially with the Royal Scots 2nd Battalion, service no: 38397, and arrived in France early in March 1917. On 9th April 1917 he was hospitalised with trench nephritis, a common illness amongst the troops. He was sent from 1st Canadian General Hospital to No:2 General Hospital at Le Havre. He spent three days there receiving treatment before being transferred to HM Hospital Ship Lanfranc on 13th April for evacuation back to the UK. During the crossing to Southampton on 17th April 1917 the ship was attacked and torpedoed by German U-Boat U-40. There were 576 people on board - 409 British, including 234 wounded, 123 crew and 52 medical staff, along with 167 German prisoners of war. The ship was sunk with 22 British and 12 Germans being killed.

Fred Tait had had a narrow escape but he was soon back at the Western Front after recovering, joining the Royal Scots, 12th, and then the 13th Battalion, coming under the orders of the 15th (Scottish) Division, 45th Brigade. He was killed in action near Monchy-le-Preux during the First Battle of Arras, in the 15th Division's defence against the major German Spring Offensive known as Operation Mars. His body was never found and he is commemorated on the Arras Memorial, bay 1 and 2.



**Boyd Ballantyne**

Private John Boyd Ballantine (spelling is incorrect on War Memorial) was born in 1898 at Bo'ness. He was known simply as Boyd. He was the third and youngest son of the late James McLean Ballantine, a partner in the prominent local business of Ballantine & Duguid, Joiners, and of Elizabeth Ballantine (ms Johnston) who for some time was the housekeeper at No:6 Cottages, Grahamsdyke, Bo'ness for Clement Ernest Albert, First Class Officer, Inland Revenue. His two elder brothers were William and James Johnston Ballantine, and the family lived at Avonmuir, 15 Dean Road, Bo'ness. Prior to the war he had enjoyed a stint working in the offices of Matthew Steele, the famous Bo'ness architect.

Along with Joe McVeigh and other young Bo'ness men he was a member of the Sea Scouts who were mobilised at the outbreak of war. He was sent to Buckie for coastal duties in the winter of 1914/15, but in the following spring when they were demobilised, many of the lads were emboldened with a strong sense of duty and resolved to enlist with many going to the Army and some to the Navy. Still only 16 years of age, Boyd enlisted with the Gordon Highlanders 3/6th Battalion, service no: 12125. He was heralded at the time back in his home town as one of the youngest men from Bo'ness to enlist.

After a period of training he arrived in France on 2nd December 1915. Luck was not on his side from the start. He suffered from a hernia and was admitted to Abbeville stationary hospital. He recovered but had only been back in the trenches two days when he received a shrapnel wound in the stomach, and the resultant severe haemorrhaging meant his life was in serious danger. He was evacuated to England where he underwent an operation at the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital to remove the offending pieces of shrapnel. He made a full recovery and wrote to his mother to say he was well. He returned to France early in 1917 and was transferred to the 9th Gordon Highlanders, service no: 266277, who were a Pioneer Battalion in the 15th (Scottish) Division. He survived both the Arras and Passchendaele campaigns of 1917, but he would not be so fortunate the following year. Boyd Ballantine was killed instantly by an artillery shell burst on the 29th March 1918 at the First Battle of Arras during the 15th Division's defence against the major German Spring Offensive known as Operation Mars.

Like many of his comrades he was buried near to where he fell but subsequent whereabouts were forgotten. His body was never found and his name appears alongside many Bo'ness men on the Arras Memorial, bay 8 and 9. He is also commemorated on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery. He was 19 years old when he died. His older brother James was a Leading Seaman in the Royal Naval Reserve, engaged in minesweeping, having previously enlisted with the Cameron Highlanders. He survived the War.

**John Hamilton MM**

Sergeant John Hamilton was born in 1893, the son of Alexander Hamilton, a coal miner from Linlithgow, and Marion Hamilton (ms Peebles), who were married in Bo'ness in 1893. Sadly his mother Marion had died in 1905 aged 32 years. John had two brothers, Alexander and Andrew, and two sisters, Janet and Maggie Hamilton, and the family lived at Thomson Place, Corbiehall, Bo'ness. He was unmarried.

He was a native of Corbiehall and worked for many years at the woodyard at Slag Hill, owned by Messrs Harrower, Welsh and Co. Already a member of the local Territorial Cyclist Battalion of the Royal Scots, he decided to become a regular soldier and enlisted at Stirling Castle towards the end of 1912 with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 3rd (Reserve) Battalion, service no: 1099. This was a depot/training unit formed at Stirling, and on mobilisation it moved to Woolwich. For a time John acted as a drill instructor at Woolwich to newly enlisted members of Kitchener's Army, but in the autumn of 1915 he was sent to France with a draft of troops, arriving there on 17th August, and joined

10th Battalion in the 9th (Scottish) Division, 27th Brigade. He took part in some of the hardest fighting, and had been highly recommended for gallantry awards on two separate occasions. He was wounded at the Battle of the Somme in July, 1916, but on recovering volunteered to return again to join his regiment in the fighting line. He was finally awarded the Military Medal for gallantry and devotion to duty on 9th April 1917 at the First Battle of the Scarpe, during the Arras campaign. Another Bo'ness soldier, Corporal James Hammond also received the Military Medal that day. He was fortunate to survive the conflict, but John was not so lucky.

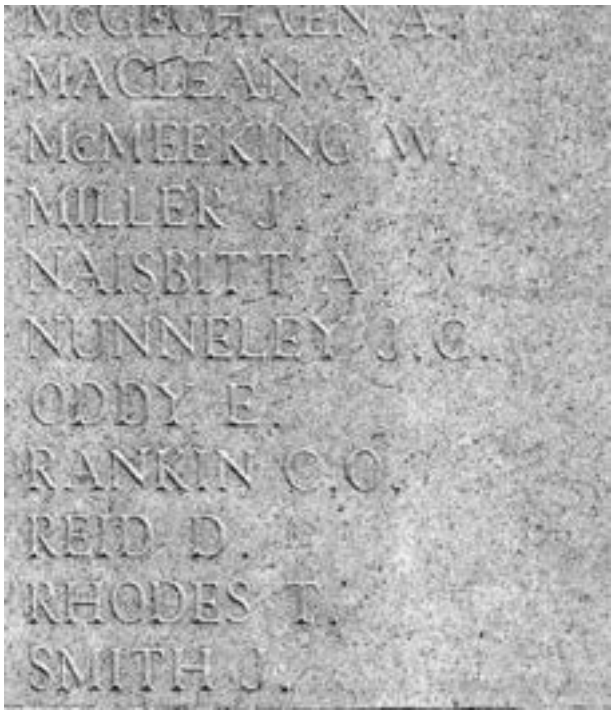
In February 1918, the 10th Argylls transferred to the 32nd Division, 97th Brigade. John Hamilton was wounded near Adinfer during the 10th Argylls participation in the First Battle of Arras, when the 97th Brigade was attached to the 31st Division. He was quickly removed from the battlefield for treatment, but died of his wounds on 30th March 1918. He was 24 years old. He is buried at Bac-du-Sud British Cemetery, Bailleulval, grave Ref: II. A. 21. The village is about 13km southwest of Arras, and in March 1918 the 7th, 20th and 43rd Casualty Clearing Stations were located nearby.

**David Reid**

Lance-Corporal David Reid, was born in Falkenberg, Sweden on 30th July 1898. He was the fourth son of William Reid and Jeannie Reid (ms Hogg) who were married in 1886 at Grangemouth. His father William Reid was a partner in the Bo'ness office of Messrs. Love and Stewart, Ltd., Glasgow. The business of importing pitwood, props and coal to Bo'ness from the Baltic Sea meant that some of the employees were based in Falkenberg for a time.

David had three brothers, Robert, James Hogg and Henry Paul Reid and four sisters, Margaret, Jane Wilson, Mary Christine and Rachel Paul Reid. The family had resided at Redlands, Grahamsdyke Road, Bo'ness for a number of years, before moving to "Wester Clyde View", Langbank, Renfrewshire. David was also a nephew of Baillie Hogg, his mother's brother, who was instrumental in making the Bo'ness War Memorial a reality.

David, who was unmarried, enlisted in Glasgow with the Highland Light Infantry, 2nd battalion, service No: 54443. He arrived in France in February 1918, coming under the orders of 2nd Division, 5th Brigade. He was killed in action on 1st April 1918, near the village of Mesnil, about 6.5km north of Albert, just after 2nd Division's participation in the First Battle Arras 1918, during the defence against the part of the major German Spring Offensive known as Operation Mars. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Arras Memorial, bay 8. He was 19 years old when he was killed.




Two of David's brothers were also in the forces. Lieutenant James Hogg Reid was in the Royal Naval Reserve and had been commended for his services in Gallipoli. He survived the war, but the eldest brother Robert Reid was not so fortunate. He was a Second Lieutenant in the Black Watch, 2nd Battalion. He was killed on 30th July 1916 while leading his men in an attack on High Wood during the Battle of the Somme. Both David and Robert Reid are commemorated on the Bo'ness War Memorial.

Cavalry passing the ruins of Albert Cathedral

**John McKenzie Bell**

Private John McKenzie Bell was born at Carriden in 1896, the son of Adam Ronald Bell and Catherine Bell (ms McKenzie), who had been married in 1885 at Auchterderran in Fife.

John had three brothers, David McKenzie, Hector and Henry, and two sisters, Violet and Bessie Bell. The family lived for a while at Grangepans, Royal Buildings on East Pier Street, and then moved to 29 Waggon Road. Before joining up John was employed at the sawmills of Messrs Harrower, Welsh and Co.

He enlisted at the outbreak of war with the Royal Scots, 8th Battalion and was then transferred to the King's Own Scottish Borders. Eventually he returned to fight with the Royal Scots, 9th Battalion, service no: 335851.

Despite the events around him he had retained a typical Bo'ness sense of humour. The photograph shows him in the uniform of a Canadian comrade, with whom he had arranged to exchange uniforms for the purpose of getting his photograph taken.

He had been through some very heavy fighting at the Battle of the Somme and Vimy Ridge. On 6th February 1918 his Battalion was transferred to 183rd Brigade of 61st (South Midland) Division. John Bell was killed in action on the 28th March 1918, near Lamotte during the 61st Division's participation in countering the German Spring Offensive, Operation Michael. His body was never recovered and he is commemorated on the Pozieres Memorial, panel 13 and 14. He was 22 years of age.

This was the second tragedy to befall the Bell family during the War. His elder brother David was a stoker in the Royal Naval Reserve, and was lost at sea following the sinking of HMS Invincible at the Battle of Jutland in 1916. The two brothers are commemorated side by side on the Bo'ness War Memorial.

British troops at Lamotte

**Gordon Hogg**

Private Gordon Hogg was born in Edinburgh, the son of George Hogg, a native of Selkirk in the Borders and a gardener by trade, and Agnes Hogg (ms Gordon), originally from Forfar. His parents were married in Newington in the south side of Edinburgh in 1874. Gordon had four brothers, namely William, John, James and Thomas, and three sisters, Grace, Elizabeth and Agnes Hogg. Prior to the war he lived with his family at Muirhouses in Carriden (known locally as the Murries), but latterly his parents resided at 9 Blackford Road, Edinburgh.

He enlisted initially with the Royal Scots, 16th (Service) Battalion (2nd Edinburgh), service no: 29940. This was the famous McCrae's Battalion, and was manned in large part by players and supporters of Heart of Midlothian Football Club. He was eventually transferred to the 17th (Service) Battalion (Roseberry) and then after May 1916, he found himself fighting for the Highland Light Infantry, 10/11th Battalion, service no: 45326. After seeing action with the 15th (Scottish) Division at the Somme, Arras and Passchendaele, the 10/11th were transferred to the 40th Division in February 1918.

Gordon was notified as missing presumed dead on 9th April 1918, during the first day of the Battle of Estaires, the opening phase of the Battles of Lys. Also known as Operation Georgette, this was the next major part of the German Spring Offensive. During this Battle the 40th Division collapsed and had to fall back to the north. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Ploegsteert Memorial, panel 9. He was 31 years of age.

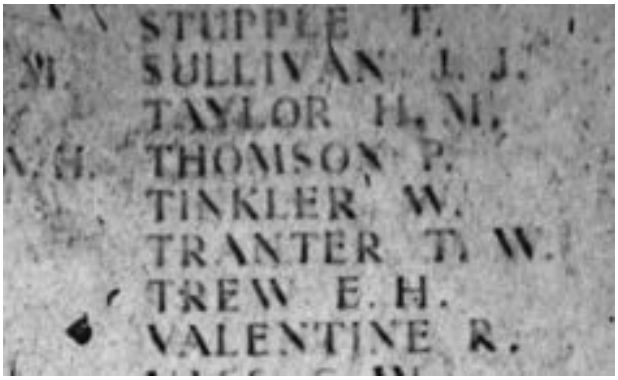
The Hogg family would suffer further tragedy later that year. Gordon's elder brother James Hogg had also enlisted with the Royal Scots, but had moved to serve with the 171st Chinese Labour Corps. Days before the end of the war, he became part of the pandemic influenza outbreak and contracted the illness. He never recovered and died on 23rd October 1918. Deaths in very different circumstances, but both brothers are commemorated in France and are also listed on the Bo'ness War Memorial.

Ploegsteert Memorial

**Peter Thomson**

Private Peter Thomson was born in Polmont, in 1895, the son of Henry Thomson, a colliery engine man, and Mary Thomson (ms Smith). His parents were married in Polmont on 10th June 1892. He had three sisters, Lizzie, Agnes and Thomasina Thomson. The family latterly stayed at 2 Brighae (Bridgehaugh), Stirling, but had lived for some time in Bo'ness, at Furnace Row, Snab Pit and Dean Brae.

Peter enlisted with the Royal Scots, 1/5th Battalion, service no: 2776, and first saw action with many Bo'ness comrades in Gallipoli, arriving there on 27th May 1915 as part of 29th Division, 88th Brigade. Conditions in the Dardanelles were insanitary and disease was rife. He fell ill with influenza and was evacuated on Hospital Ship Nevasa to Malta where he was admitted to hospital on 14th October 1914. At the end of the Gallipoli campaign the 1/5th Battalion moved to France, landing at Marseilles on 10th March 1916, and later they amalgamated with 1/6th to become 5/6th Battalion, coming under the command of 32nd Division, 14th Brigade.




Just after 32nd Division's participation in the Battle of the Ancre at the Somme, Peter Thomson was wounded by accident along with several other comrades. This happened when two bombs exploded under a makeshift fire on the front line near the Serre Road in 19th November 1916 at 9:00am. Two men were killed. The incident led to a Board of Inquiry being set up. The Inquiry concluded that buried bombs were to blame for both explosions and that all precautions had been taken to avoid the accident.

Peter Thomson was not so fortunate in 1918. He had joined the Machine Gun Corps (Infantry) 34th Battalion, service no: 148079, supporting 34th Division. He was killed on 10th April during the 34th Division's participation in the Battle of Estaires, the opening phase of the Battles of the Lys, 1918. The 34th were holding the northern flank at Armentieres, but capitulated under the strong German offensive known as Operation Georgette. His body was not recovered from the battlefield and he is commemorated on the Ploegsteert Memorial, panel 11. He was only 23 years of age.

British gas casualties after Estaires

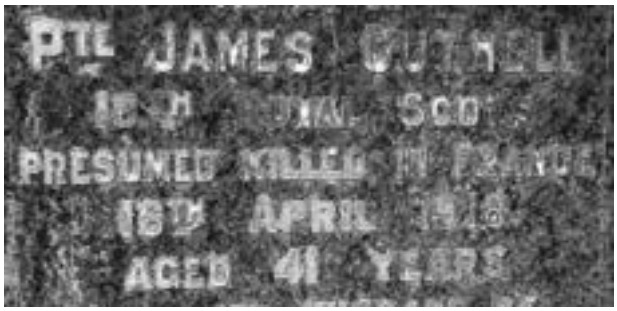
**James Cuthell**

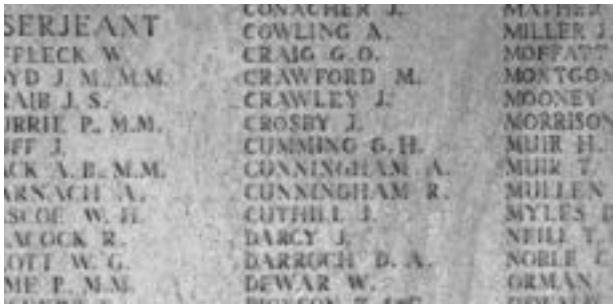
Private James Cuthell (or Cuthill in some records) was born in Bo'ness in 1878, the son of David Cuthell and Mary Ann Sloan, who were married in Bo'ness on 1872. James was the eldest of six brothers, alongside him were Alexander, David, John, Thomas and William Cuthell. He also had an elder sister called Sarah Cuthell. The family lived for many years at 136 North Street, Bo'ness. James was married to Agnes Cuthell (ms Walker), on 6th December 1915, at Carriden Manse. The couple lived at 21 Rattray Street, Grangepans and they had one child, named David, who was born on the 18th April 1918, sadly two days after his father was killed in Flanders.

He was a grocer, and worked as manager at the Newtown Branch of the Bo'ness Co-operative Society. His manager, Mr. King fought hard at the local Bo'ness Military Tribunal to retain his employee, as the Army were constantly looking for new recruits. Initially his argument, that the Co-op had provided more than enough employees, was accepted by the Bo'ness Tribunal but the Army appealed successfully to the Lothians Appeal Court in Edinburgh and James Cuthell was ordered to enlist.

He did so, age 39 years, soon after on 23rd July 1917 initially with the Royal Scots, 3rd Battalion, service no: 48608. He was sent to France later that year, disembarking at Boulogne on 15th December. Early in 1918 he was posted to the Royal Scots 15th, then the 16th (Service) Battalion (2nd Edinburgh), also known as McCrae's Battalion, coming under the command of 34th Division, 101st Brigade. Right away he was exposed to the rigours of life at the front, receiving treatment for trench foot at 104th Field Ambulance two days after joining.

James Cuthell was posted missing in action sometime between 9th and 16th April 1918 during the 34th Division's participation in the Battle of Estaires and the Battle of Bailleul, phases of the Battles of the Lys, when the Germans carried out their spring offensive known as Operation Georgette. His wife, mother and family had to wait until August 1919 before official confirmation was received from the War Office, with the latter date of 16th April being chosen as his date of death. His body was not recovered and he is listed on the Ploegsteert Memorial, panel 1. He is also commemorated alongside his wife on a large, distinctive family headstone within Bo'ness Cemetery. He was 41 years of age.



**Herbert Robertson**

Private Herbert Robertson was born in Leith, Edinburgh in 1899, the son of David Robertson and Helen Moffat Robertson (ms Craise). His parents were married in Selkirk in 1889. He had two sisters, Mary and Elizabeth and three elder brothers, David, Robert and John Robertson. For several years Herbert had lived in Bo'ness with his Uncle Walter (Watty) Dickens and Aunt Jane Dickens (ms Robertson) at Muirhouses, Carriden. Watty Dickens was a traffic inspector on the railways for 37 years, only retiring in 1914. He was well known in Bo'ness driving about the town in his pony and trap. No doubt he helped his nephew get a job on the railways as prior to the war Herbert was employed as a goods clerk in the Railway Goods Office, North British Railway, Bo'ness. Sadly his Uncle Watty died on 11th April 1917, aged 66 years.

Herbert then enlisted in September 1917, with the King's Own Scottish Borderers, 1st Battalion, service no: 32963. After a period of training at home, he had been drafted to France early in 1918, coming under the command of 29th Division, 87th Brigade. He had only been at the front a little more than one month when he was killed in action on the 11th April 1918 during the Battle of Estaires, the opening phase of the Battles of the Lys. The 1st Battalion had taken up a position in the front line between Estaires and Steenwercke. Herbert Robertson's body was not found and he is commemorated on the Ploegsteert Memorial, panel 5. He was 19 years old. He is also commemorated alongside his Aunt and Uncle on the Dickens family headstone in Carriden Cemetery.

His three brothers had also enlisted and one of them, Guardsman David Robertson, Scots Guards, service no: 10940, had made the supreme sacrifice, being killed in action on 8th February 1917, aged 25 years. Also his cousin Walter Dickens, the son of his Uncle Watty, had risen from a Sergeant in the Scottish Horse to Second-Lieutenant in the Black Watch. He was a veteran of the Gallipoli campaign, and survived the war.

**Jack Watt**

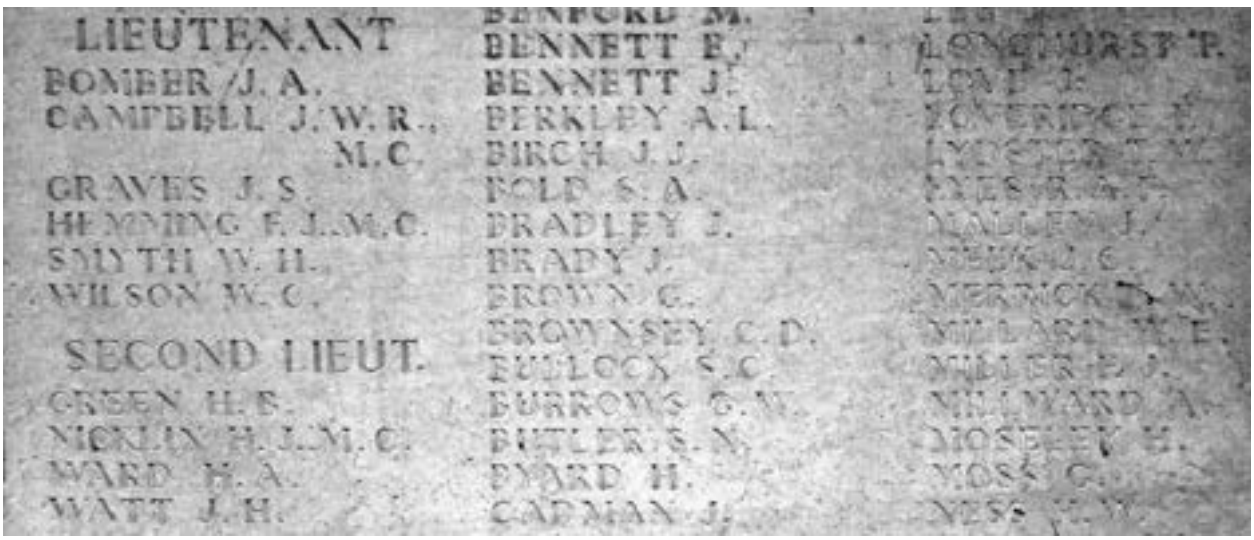
Second-Lieutenant John (Jack) Heigh Watt was born in South Queensferry on 19th August 1891, the son of Charles and Agnes Watt. Charles Watt was for many years well-known in West Lothian as a Sergeant in the local police force, working in Armadale, Whitburn and Bo'ness. Jack Watt was educated at Bo'ness Academy.

The family emigrated to Canada in the early 1900s, and resided at 122 Harriett Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Prior to enlistment, Jack worked as an accountant in the offices of the Imperial Oil Company, Vancouver, British Columbia. He was 5'10" in height, had a dark complexion, with blue eyes and dark brown hair. He was unmarried.

He enlisted aged 23 at Shorncliffe, Kent with the Canadian Expeditionary Force, on 14th September 1915 where a Canadian Training Division had been formed earlier in the year. He was assigned service no: 3281 and after acting as a chauffeur for a while, was sent to the Canadian Army Medical Corps, 5th General Hospital. The unit was sent overseas to join the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, arriving in Salonika on 20th December 1915 on board the Hospital Ship HS Asturias.

He spent two years there before returning to England in March 1917, after being accepted for admission to an Officer Cadet Training Unit. He eventually received an officer's commission on 26th September 1917 in the Worcestershire Regiment 6th Battalion. He is pictured here in the uniform of the Worcestershires.

He was sent to the Western Front soon after and was attached to the Worcestershire Regiment, 4th Battalion, coming under the orders of 29th Division, 88th Brigade. Second-Lieutenant Jack Watt was killed on 12th April 1918, during 29th Division's participation in the Battle of Messines, when 88th Brigade were sent to assist 25th Division and 34th Division between Messines and Ploegsteert. This battle was a phase of the Battles of the Lys, during the German Offensive known as Operation Georgette. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Ploegsteert Memorial, panel 5. He was 27 years old when he died.



**William John Finlay**

Private William John Finlay was born in Bo'ness in 1898 the son of William Miller Finlay, a coal miner, and Annie Finlay, Foredale Terrace, Carriden. He came from a big family, and had six sisters and brothers. Before the war he was employed as a coal miner's shunter in one of the Bridgeness pits. He was 5'4" in height and weighed 133lbs.

He enlisted, aged 18 years and 10 months, with the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles), 3rd Battalion, service no: 37372, on the 2nd July 1917 at Glencorse, Midlothian. He spent some training at Nigg in Easter Ross, where his mischievous Bo'ness nature got him into trouble when he was disciplined for laughing in the ranks during a parade. This earned him a punishment of 3 days confined to barracks. William was sent to the Western Front, arriving in France on the 11th November 1917. He was transferred on 13th November to the Royal Scots, 2nd Battalion, new service no: 42488, coming under the orders of 3rd Division, 8th Brigade.

William Finlay was killed in action three months later on 12th April 1918, near Locon Canal as 3rd Division fought in the defence of Hinges Ridge at the Battle of Hazebrouck, a phase of the Battles of the Lys. To compound that agony still further, his family did not receive official confirmation of his death until 28th August 1919. His body was never recovered and he is remembered on the Ploegsteert Memorial, Panel 1. He was 19 years old.

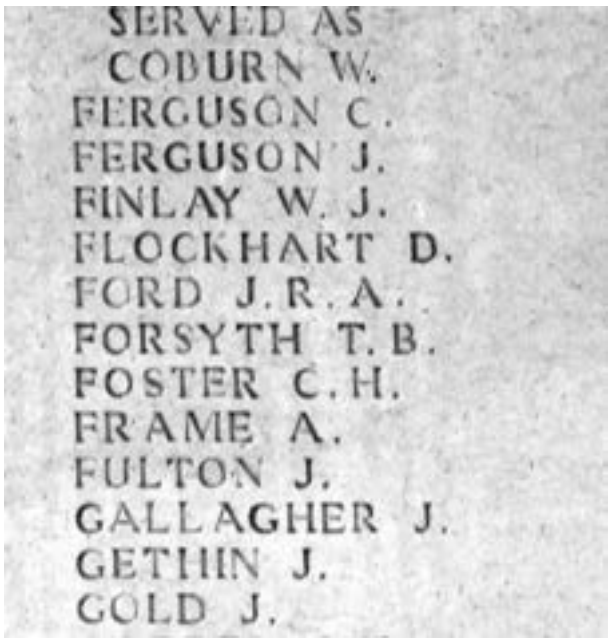
It was more tragedy for the Finlay family as they had already lost William's father William Miller Finlay during the Gallipoli Campaign in 1915. Both father and son are commemorated near to each other on the Bo'ness War Memorial.

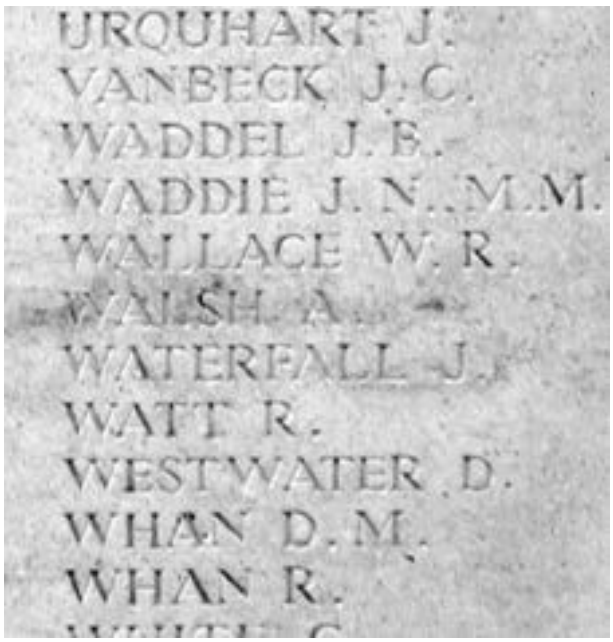
**William Wallace**

Private William Robb Wallace was the son of Henry Geddes Wallace, a pottery fireman originally from Dysart in Fife, and Catherine McLaren Wallace (ms Robb) of Gibson's Wynd, 13 South Street, Bo'ness. His parents had been married in Bo'ness on 22nd July 1897. He had one brother, David and four sisters, Catherine Robb, Marion, Janet and Isabella. William was born in the town on 3rd October 1897. He was unmarried, and was employed as an apprentice iron moulder in Messrs A. Ballantine and Sons, New Grange Foundry.

He enlisted with the Royal Scots, 2nd Battalion, "B" Company, service No: 40428, in December 1914. After a period of training at home he was sent to France in 1916, coming under the orders of 3rd Division, 8th Brigade. He was slightly wounded at Arras in early 1917, but was not invalided home and stayed at the Front.

William Wallace was reported wounded and missing in action on 12th April 1918, near Locon Canal as 3rd Division fought in the defence of Hinges Ridge at the Battle of Hazebrouck. This was a phase of the Battle of the Lys. The Germans had heavily counter-attacked and swarmed down on the front line in overwhelming numbers. Like his comrade in the Royal Scots, 2nd Battalion, Private William John Finlay who fell the same day, his body was never recovered and he is also commemorated on the Ploegsteert Memorial, panel 1. He was 20 years of age.



**Alexander Mitchell**

Private Alexander Mitchell was born in 1898 in Carriden, the son of Robert Mitchell, a stone mason originally from Airth, and Catherine Mitchell of 8 Mitchell's Buildings, Grangepans, Bo'ness. Alexander had two brothers, named James and Robert, and one sister, Mary Mitchell. Prior to enlistment, Alexander worked as a sawyer at the Links Sawmills.

He enlisted with the Machine Gun Corps (Infantry), 8th Battalion, service no: 132185. Machine Gun Battalions were formed in the Divisions in the early months of 1918, by bringing together the four MGC Companies into a single command structure. The Battalions took the number of their Division. The MGC 8th battalion was formed on 20th April 1918. It consisted of 23rd, 24th, 25th and 218th Machine Gun Company. The Battalion used the Vickers machine gun.

Alexander Mitchell had only been in France for about one month before he was reportedly gassed in the trenches. He was then notified as missing in action on 24th April 1918, the first day of the Second Battle of Villers-Bretonneux, during the German Spring Offensive against the Allied lines held by the 8th Division to the east of Amiens. This particular battle is famous for the first major use of tanks by the Germans, and the first tank versus tank battle in history.

Alexander Mitchell's body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Pozieres Memorial, panel 90 to 93. He was 20 years old.

Machine gunners scan the horizon

**Samuel Rowland**

Private Samuel Rowland, was born in 1893 the only son of David Rowland, for many years cashier with Messrs John Denholm & Co., Pitwood Importers, Bo'ness, & Mary Sandilands Rowland (ms Weir). His parents had married in Barry, Angus on 18th June 1891. He had one sister called Isabella Montgomery Rowland. The family had lived in Bo'ness for many years, but had relocated to Glasgow before the war.

After serving his apprenticeship at the Bo'ness branch, under the watchful eye of the manager Mr. McMorran, he was employed with the Royal Bank in Glasgow as a cashier, following in his father's footsteps. He enlisted there with the Highland Light Infantry, service no: 4195, in December 1915. His quickness and attention to duty were soon noted by his officers and he was speedily promoted to rank of Sergeant. He was later transferred to the Machine Gun Corps (Infantry) 9th Battalion, new service no: 127311, and rose to the rank of Quarter-master Sergeant, but eventually reverted back to Private Rowland. After training in England he was drafted to Ireland and went to France in December 1917, coming under the command of 9th (Scottish) Division. MGC 9th battalion were formed from four MGC Companies - 26th, 27th, 28th and 197th, and used the Vickers machine gun.

He took part in many of the Battles fought to resist Operation Michael, but was severely wounded during the 9th (Scottish) Division's participation in the Second Battle of Kemmel Ridge, a phase of the Battles of the Lys, part of the major German Spring Offensive known as Operation Georgette. He died of his injuries on the same day, 25th April 1918, and was buried near to where he fell on the battlefield, his grave marked with a simple cross. Samuel Rowland was 25 years of age.

In September 1919, his body was exhumed and reburied at La Clytte Military Cemetery, about 8km west of Ypres, at grave V. F. 8. He is also remembered on the memorial in Calton Parkhead Church, Glasgow.

Machine Gun post in a barn

**Richard King**

Private Richard Thomas King was born in Bo'ness in 1891, the son of Robert King, an iron moulder and Hume King (ms Malarky). They were married at Carriden in 1871. Sadly his mother Hume King died in 1897 aged 46 years old. The family lived at Main Street in Bo'ness town centre. Prior to joining up Richard followed in his father's footsteps, working as an iron moulder at Messrs A. Ballantine and Sons, New Grange Foundry.

He enlisted at Bo'ness with the Royal Scots, 2/10th (Cyclist) Battalion, service no: 375132, and was sent to Dunbar and Berwick-on-Tweed for coastal defence work, where he was a dispatch rider. Whilst there, he married Peterina Spence, in Berwick-upon-Tweed, in June 1916 and they had one child, Jane Hume King. The family home was at 7 Parliament Close, Tweedmouth in the town, on the south bank of the River Tweed.

He volunteered for the Western Front and was sent to France in March 1918, being transferred to the Royal Scots, 15th Battalion who were under the command of 34th Division, 101st Brigade.

Richard was wounded in action by an exploding German artillery shell whilst he was helping to dig a trench during the 34th Division's participation in the Battles of the Lys, part of the German spring offensive known as Operation Georgette. He was evacuated to a Casualty Clearing Station near Lijssenthoek. As it was on the main communication line between the Allied military bases and the Ypres

battlefields, Lijssenthoek was the convenient location for a number of CCS during the First World War.

Sadly, Richard King succumbed to his wounds, and he died on 25th April 1918. He was buried at the nearby Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, in grave XXVIII. C. 15. He was 26 years old. He is also commemorated on Tweedmouth War Memorial and on a large family headstone in Tweedmouth Cemetery. Four of his brothers also enlisted during the war, and all appear to have survived.

**James E. Culbert**

Private James Edward Culbert was the son of Peter Culbert, a railway engine driver originally from Callander, Perthshire, and Christina Barbara Culbert (ms Newbigging), who were married in Bo'ness in 1886. He came from a big family with six sisters, Helen, Bella, Annie, Christina, Jessie and Isabella, and six brothers, namely Peter, John, Hugh, Richard, Alexander and William. James was unmarried and lived with his mother and family at Bellevue Cottage, Grangemouth Road, Bo'ness. He was 5'6" in height and weighed 132lbs. Prior to enlisting he was employed with Messrs. J. Denholm & Co., Kinneil, as a sawyer.

He enlisted following a recruitment drive at Bo'ness on 6th December 1914 with the Royal Scots, 1/5th Battalion, service no: 2908. After a period of training at home he was sent to France to join the British Expeditionary Force on the 6th May 1916. He fought on the Western Front for two years, surviving the Battle of the Somme and Operations on the Ancre in 1917. He returned to Bo'ness for one last time, in September 1917, after he had been slightly wounded in July that year. He returned to action after recuperation and was transferred to the Royal Scots, 5/6th Battalion, "A" Company. Royal Scots, 5th/6th Bn were formed on 15th June 1916 when 1/5th Bn (Queen's Edinburgh Rifles) amalgamated with the 1/6th Btn. One month later they came under the orders of 32nd Division, 14th Brigade.

James Culbert received gunshot wounds to the chest, left leg and right arm on 15th April 1918 in a sector between Quesnoy Farm and the town of Ayette, just after the 32nd Division's participation in the Battle of the Ancre, the final phase of the major German Spring Offensive known as Operation Michael. He was sent via 92 Field Ambulance Station and 56th Casualty Clearing Station to 12th General Hospital, Rouen, where unfortunately he died of his wounds on 29th April 1918. He is buried at St. Sever Cemetery Extension at grave P. XI. J. 11B. He was 24 years of age.

One month after his death was notified, his mother received a package containing articles belonging to James. These included letters, photos, a religious book, belt, attachments, song book, cup, rubber, knife, chain, whistle, cigarette case, razor, wallet and a piece of souvenir shrapnel.

**John Grant**

Private John Grant was born in Bo'ness in 1896, the son of Richard Grant, a railway fireman on the North British Railway, and Mary Grant (ms Bowman). He had two brothers Robert and Richard Grant and two sisters Agnes and Helen Grant. Sadly John's mother Mary died in 1901 age 43. The family lived at Royal Building, East Pier Street, Bo'ness and they lived there alongside their grandmother Agnes Grant. John worked in one of the many woodyards in Bo'ness. He was a tall man, at 5'11", and weighed 154lbs.

He enlisted just after the war commenced on 6th December 1914, with the Royal Scots, 1/5th Battalion, service no: 2916. After a period of training at home, he was sent to join the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force on 24th May 1915 and fought in the Gallipoli campaign. He then spent some time in Egypt, before being sent to the Western Front and arrived there on 15th March 1916. He then joined the Royal Scots, 5th/6th Bn, who were formed on 15th June 1916 when 1/5th Bn amalgamated with the 1/6th Bn. He was assigned a new service no: 250796. One month later the 5/6th Bn came under the orders of 32nd Division, 14th Brigade.

He fought in the Battle of the Ancre, during the German Spring Offensive known as Operation Michael. Just after the close of the main offensive, the 32nd Division were in the front line near Saulty on 27th May 1918, engaged in rewiring and improving the trenches, when John Grant suffered gun shot wounds to the head and chest. He was removed to 3rd Casualty Clearing Station near Gezaincourt, south west of Arras, and near to the town of Doullens. His grandmother received notification by telegram from the doctors at 3rd CCS on his admission that there was no hope of his recovery due to the nature of his wounds. Indeed he died of wounds the next day, on the 28th May. He was buried at Bagneux British Cemetery, Gezaincourt, grave II. F. 31. He was 23 years old. He is the only casualty from Bo'ness in this cemetery.

**John McKinnon**

Private John Livingstone McKinnon (or Roy) was the son of Janet McKinnon (ms Livingstone), a pithead worker. Janet had been married to John's father Robert Roy in Cambuslang on 5th October 1893. They had two children, Janet in 1894 and John on 17th April 1896, before sadly Robert died on 11th September 1900, at the age of 34. One year later Janet remarried to Edward McKinnon, a coal miner, again in Cambuslang. She had two more sons there, James and John Douglas (Dougal) McKinnon, whereafter the family followed the coal industry to Carriden. Here two daughters were added to the family, Helen and Mary McKinnon. John by this time would have been known by his stepfather's name. The family had stayed at Man O' War Street, 54 Foundry Square and Links Place, all in Grangepans, Bo'ness.

John enlisted at Bo'ness with the Royal Scots, 1/5th Battalion, service no: 4215. He eventually joined the 5th/6th Bn, who were formed on 15th June 1916 when 1/5th Bn amalgamated with the 1/6th Bn. In July 1916, the 5/6th Bn came under the orders of 32nd Division, 14th Brigade. John was given a new service no: 251480.

He fought in the Battle of the Ancre, during the German Spring Offensive known as Operation Michael. Just after the close of the main offensive, the 32nd Division were in the front line near Saulty on 31st May 1918, engaged in rewiring and improving the trenches, when John McKinnon was killed in action.

John was buried in Blairville Orchard British Cemetery, south west of Arras, alongside three comrades from 5/6th Royal Scots who died on the same date, Private A. McVie, 251422, Private J. Cooper, 251406 and Private R. Lauriston, 301870. Another Bo'ness man buried in this cemetery was Private Tom Reilly, Border Regiment, 1/5th Battalion. Just like Tom, however, as part of grave concentration, John's body was exhumed along with many others on 31st July 1923, and was reinterred in Caberet-Rouge British Cemetery, Souchez, grave VIII. M. 2. John McKinnon was 22 years old.

**James Burnett**

Sapper James Burnett was the foster son of Margaret Burnett, 37 Law's Close, Corbiehall, Bo'ness, who cared for him when his parents died. He had one brother named William, but he didn't know much about his whereabouts. Prior to enlisting he worked at Messrs James Calder & Company Ltd, Bo'ness Distillery. He was only 5'0" in height. He enlisted on 11th December 1915 at Bo'ness, initially with the Black Watch, 3rd Battalion, service no: S/13780. He was placed in the Army Reserve and mobilised on 1st May 1916, assigned to 12th Labour Battalion, and posted to France on 27th June 1916. He was transferred to the Royal Engineers, Railway Operating Division (ROD), 45th Broad Gauge Operating Coy, on 26th April 1917, and assigned a new service no: 252251. On 10th May 1917, James Burnett passed his proficiency tests at a ROD workshop in the field to become a locomotive engine driver.

The ROD was formed to operate the numerous railways during the First World War. With as many train engines in operation as the Great Northern Railway, the ROD worked out of 30 depots along one hundred miles of the BEF sector of the Western Front, from Dunkirk in the north, to Chaulnes (between Amiens and St Quentin) in the south.

Having had a lucky escape with his life after being severely gassed during a heavy engagement early in 1917, his lungs would have been damaged, making them susceptible to infection. And so it was that James Burnett died, aged 21 years old, on 13th May 1918, at 17th Casualty Clearing Station, of lobar pneumonia, the disease being aggravated by cold and exposure on active service. He was buried at nearby Longuenesse (St. Omer) Souvenir Cemetery, at grave V. B. 3. As well as being the General Headquarters for the British Expeditionary Force between 1914 and 1916, St. Omer was a significant centre of medical treatment with numerous hospitals and CCS located there during the war.

There is an interesting connection between the ROD and present day Bo'ness. Only two standard gauge railway engines survive from use in the WW1, one being a 2-6-0, preserved at Didcot in England and the other being No.763 *Maude*, preserved by the Scottish Railway Preservation Society (SRPS) at the Museum of Scottish Railways in Bo'ness. In 1917, No.763 was sent to the Western Front to work supply trains for the war effort. To commemorate this service it was named after the famous military leader of the day, Lieutenant General Sir Fredrick Stanley Maude. The engine *Maude* returned home in 1919 and spent the remaining portion of its 75 year working life hauling goods trains on Scotland's tracks, until it was withdrawn from operations at Bathgate in July 1966. Thanks to an appeal by the SRPS the locomotive was saved from the scrap heap and is now the sole surviving example of a typical Scottish freight loco.

**Thomas Reilly**

Private Thomas Owens Reilly or Riley was born in Linlithgow in 1886, the son of Patrick Reilly, a dock labourer, and Jessie Reilly (ms Owens). His parents had been married in Canongate, Edinburgh in 1879. He had four sisters Emily Charlotte, Mary Ann, Elizabeth Jane and Margaret, and two brothers, John and William Reilly. Prior to the outbreak of war he was living with his sister Mary Ann, who had married Andrew Begley in 1903 in Bo'ness. They resided at South Street in Bo'ness town centre. Thomas, or Tom as he was known, was employed as a labourer at Bo'ness Docks.

Tom enlisted with the Royal Scots early in 1915 and was assigned service no: 27748. He arrived in France the same year, but was transferred to the 19th (Labour) Battalion. Each infantry Division would form such a battalion to be trained and capable of fighting as infantry, but that would normally be engaged on labouring work. In April 1917, a number of infantry battalions were transferred to the newly formed Labour Corps, and the Royal Scots, 19th Battalion was transferred to 1st and 2nd Labour Companies. Thomas Reilly's, new service no: 964 indicates that he was in the 2nd Labour Coy. The events of March and April, 1918, on the Western Front saw the Labour Corps being used as emergency infantry and Thomas was transferred to the Border Regiment 6th, 11th and eventually the 1/5th (Cumberland) Battalion, receiving his third and final service no: 29017. On 7th May 1918, 1/5th Battalion transferred to 32nd Division, 97th Brigade and absorbed the remnants of the Border Regiment's 11th (Service) Battalion (Lonsdale).

Caberet-Rouge British Cemetery

Tom fought in many of the battles of early 1918, during the German Spring Offensive known as Operation Michael. Following the main offensive, the 32nd Division, 97th Brigade were in the front line on 21st May 1918, when Tom Reilly was wounded. He was removed for treatment but died on 27th May. He was originally buried in plot I.F. 23 in Blairville Orchard British Cemetery, south west of Arras. As part of grave concentration, however, his body was exhumed along with many others on 27th July 1923, and was reinterred in Caberet-Rouge British Cemetery, Souchez, grave VIII. O. 22. After the war as many as 7000 graves were concentrated here from over 100 other cemeteries in the area. The cemetery is named after a small, red-bricked, red-tiled café that stood close to the site in the early days of the First World War. The café was destroyed by shellfire in March 1915.

**James M. Rhynas**

Lance Corporal James Milne Rhynas was the son of James Rhynas, a heating engineer, and Jessie Rhynas (ms Milne). The family had lived in the British Colony of Natal, South Africa, and James was born there in 1885. He was the eldest child, and had two sisters, Maggie and Jessie, and one brother John Rhynas. The family then lived at 7 Caledonian Crescent, Edinburgh.

Like his father, he was a gas heating engineer by trade, and worked for over seven years for Meikle & Philp, Heating Engineers, Muirieston Road, Edinburgh until he was laid off due to a shortness of work. His employer gave a reference to the military stating that he always found James to be sober, thoroughly honest, and always willing and obliging. He was 5'5" in height.

He was married to Mary McKinnon Rhynas (ms. Hay) at St. Giles in Edinburgh on 28th November 1907. Prior to enlisting, they were living with their two children at 23 Orwell Place, Edinburgh. He enlisted, aged 30 years, on 19th May 1915 at Edinburgh with the Royal Engineers, service no: 100742. He joined 126th Field Company, who were commanded by 21st Division. He arrived in France on 11th September 1915, and fought there for nearly three years, surviving the Battles of the Somme, Arras, Passchendaele and the German Spring Offensive of 1918.

James Rhynas was killed in action on 28th May 1918, during the first day of the Third Battle of the Aisne. He was fighting in a position between Hermanville and Trigny, when a small and tired British force, sent to the Chemin des Dames Ridge in exchange for fresh French divisions that went north, was struck and virtually destroyed as part of another German offensive, Operation Blücher-Yorck. His body was not recovered and he is remembered on the Soissons Memorial, Stone No.2. The Soissons Memorial commemorates almost 4000 officers and men of the United Kingdom forces who died during the Battles of the Aisne and the Marne in 1918 and who have no known grave. James Rhynas was 35 years old when he died.

Sadly, James Rhynas' death meant that his two children Mary and Jessie were orphaned as James' wife Mary had died in childbirth at Edinburgh Maternity Hospital in 1917. The children went to live with James' sister-in-law Jessie Bissett Tod Hay at the family home 73 Stewart Avenue, Bo'ness.

**Thomas Carr**

Corporal Thomas Carr was the son of Thomas Carr and Janet W. Carr. He had two brothers, William and Francis and two sisters Isabella and Janet. The family lived at 11 Victoria Terrace, Bo'ness. Prior to the war he worked in Messrs Love & Stewart's Woodyard, Grangepans.

He enlisted soon after the outbreak of war with the Royal Scots, 1/5th Battalion, service no: 40813, and soon found himself on his way to join the Gallipoli campaign, coming under the orders of 29th Division, 88th Brigade. He arrived there on 25th May 1915, was wounded there almost immediately in the fierce fighting with the Turks, and was sent home to recuperate. He returned to the action in May 1916, this time at the Western Front. In June 1916, 1/5th Royal Scots amalgamated with 1/6th to become 5/6th Battalion, and were then transferred one month later to join 32nd Division, 14th Brigade. Thereafter he was promoted to the rank of Corporal, and transferred to the 11th Battalion, under the command of 9th (Scottish) Division, 27th Brigade.

After the 9th (Scottish) Division saw action at the Battles of the Lys, preventing the German advance in the second great German Spring Offensive known as Operation Georgette, the British strengthened their lines and the 11th Royal Scots were moved to Meteren. Thomas Carr was wounded in the left leg on the front line at Meteren and was removed to one of the local Casualty Clearing Stations (2nd or 15th). His mother and father received a telegram from an Officer in France to that effect but a later report from one of the doctors attending to Thomas was soon received with bad news. In the telegram he stated that the nature of their son's wounds were such that there was no hope for survival and that Thomas

Carr died of his injuries at 12:30pm on 1st June 1918. He was 21 years old.

He is buried halfway between St. Omer and Hazebrouck at Ebblinghem Military Cemetery, grave: I. F. 17, used by the nearby CCS between April and July, 1918. Thomas was one of three brothers who enlisted. His brother Francis Carr, Gordon Highlanders, 1st Battalion, was listed as missing in action in July 1915, but was later accounted for as a prisoner of war. The other brother William served with the Royal Field Artillery in France and Palestine. Both survived the War.

**Edwin Stephenson**

Private Edwin Stephenson was born in Stoneferry, Hull, Yorkshire in 1889. He was the son of Edwin and Harriet Stephenson, of Hull. He was also the brother of Mr and Mrs William T. Stephenson, 64 Braeside, Stewart Avenue, Bo'ness, where he lived. He had two other brothers, Arthur and John, and four sisters, Emily, Maude, Gertrude and Alice (or Lilly) Stephenson. He was employed as a distillery worker at Messrs. James Calder & Co. Ltd., Bo'ness Distillery.

He enlisted on 1st November 1915, with the Royal Scots, service no: 29373, and was sent to France in June 1916. He was eventually transferred to the 11th Battalion, coming under the orders of 9th (Scottish) Division, 27th Brigade. After fighting with the 9th (Scottish) Division at the Battles of the Lys, preventing the German advance in the second great German Spring Offensive known as Operation Georgette, the British strengthened their lines and the 11th Royal Scots were moved to Meteren. Occupied by the British for much of the war, the village of Meteren fell into German hands on 9th April 1918 during the fierce fighting of the Battle of the Lys but was eventually retaken by the 9th (Scottish) Division on 19th July 1918. At the end of the war Meteren was nothing but a field of ruins, even the roads were obliterated.

Edwin Stephenson was killed while at rest camp on 2nd June 1918. During the night the building where Private Stephenson and his comrades lay was struck by artillery shells, and they were killed instantaneously. The bodies were recovered and buried the next day with military honours at La Kreule Military Cemetery, grave I. C. 36. The cemetery is situated west of Meteren, and just north of Hazebrouck. Edwin Stephenson is buried near to Lance Sergeant John Veitch, 11th Royal Scots, who was killed the next day and who also appears on the Bo'ness War Memorial.

Edwin's brother Arthur had also lived with this sister at Braeside and worked alongside him in Bo'ness Distillery. He enlisted with the Royal Army Medical Corps, and had died of dysentery in Baghdad on 29th July 1917, whilst serving in the Mesopotamia Campaign, attached to the Cheshire Regiment, 8th Battalion. He is also remembered alongside Edwin on the Bo'ness War Memorial, although his name is incorrectly recorded as Alexander Stephenson.

The ruins of Meteren

**John Veitch**

Private John Veitch was a native of Bo'ness, born in 1898, the son of John Veitch, a dock labourer originally from Edinburgh, and Catherine Veitch (ms Brown), who were married in the town in 1891. He had two sisters Jessie and Jane and two brothers, David King and James Veitch. Sadly his father had died on 29th July 1910, aged 39 years old, leaving his widow to fend for the family. They lived at 42 Albert Buildings, Main Street, Bo'ness. John followed in his father's footsteps and worked at Bo'ness Docks as a coal hoist man.

Like so many other young Bo'ness men, he enlisted during the big recruiting drive at Grangepans in late 1915. He was only 17 years old at the time. He joined the Royal Scots, 11th Battalion, service no: 40811, coming under the orders of 9th (Scottish) Division, 27th Brigade. He was sent to France in January 1917, and his fine soldierly qualities at the Western Front soon earned him promotion to Corporal and then Lance-Sergeant. He was wounded during the Passchendaele campaign and spent most of winter 1917/1918 recuperating at home, before returning to the action in February, 1918. He helped 9th Division defend their lines against the great German Spring Offensive Operation Michael.

Having survived the worst of the fighting, however, John Veitch, age 20 years, was killed by artillery fire on 3rd June 1918 in the front line near the Belgian town of Meteren. The first news of John's sad demise came in a letter received by his mother from a comrade in France informing her of the death of her son. It read, "It is with the deepest regret that I have to inform you about poor John who was killed on the 3rd inst., by the concussion of a shell which burst near him. His death was instantaneous and his body was carried down at night and buried in a military grave-yard about 15 miles from the line beside another Bo'ness lad who was killed the night before. I am sending this note to you because it might be some time before the War Office notifies you. (Sgd.) Pte. Tom Baillie, Royal Scots". The graveyard mentioned was La Kreule Military Cemetery, situated west of Meteren, and just north of Hazebrouck. John is buried in grave I. B. 20. The other Bo'ness soldier mentioned was Private Edwin Stephenson, 11th Royal Scots, who is also remembered on the Bo'ness War Memorial.

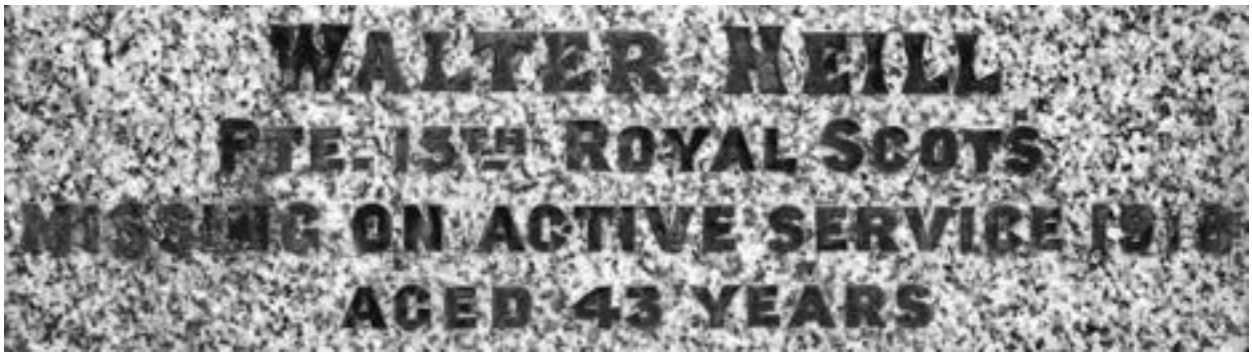
**Walter Neill**

Private Walter Neill or McNeill, was the son of James and Elizabeth McNeill.

He had three brothers, James, William and John, and five sisters, Elizabeth, Susan, Mary, Maggie and Agnes McNeill. He married Julia Gibb Robertson in Carriden in 1909 and the couple had four daughters named Elizabeth, Agnes, Susan and Chrissie. The family lived at 13 Rattray Street, Grangepans. Walter was 5'7" in height and weighed 141lbs.

He enlisted on 20th January 1915 in Edinburgh with the Royal Scots, 1/6th Battalion, and was assigned service no: 2467. On 5th September 1915, his Battalion moved to Egypt, under the command of Western Frontier Force, landing at Alexandria 14th September. In a remarkable and confusing turn of events, Walter signed a declaration stating that he had enlisted in January as Walter Neill and that his true name was Walter McNeill. This declaration was signed by Private Walter McNeill on 28th October 1915 at Abbassia Barracks, Cairo in the presence of Major J. M. Milligan of C Company, 1/6th Royal Scots. He remained there until February, 1916, when he was sent with his comrades to the Western Front, landing at Marseilles 16 May 1916, and amalgamating with 1/5th to become 5/6th Battalion. In September 1916, he was posted to the 15th Battalion, under the orders of 34th Division, 101st Brigade, given the new service no: 43435, and fought in the Arras Offensive and at Passchendaele. He was then granted leave to return back home in October, 1917. He then returned to France with the 15th Battalion and saw action in the resistance to the phase of the German Spring Offensive known as Operation Georgette, specifically during the Battles of the Lys, during which his Battalion sustained heavy casualties. Reduced to cadre strength, the 15th was then attached to 39th Division, 116th Infantry Brigade who were in the front line at Busseboom, near Poperinghe, east of Ypres.

Orders were then received for Walter Neill to be posted to the Royal Scots, 2nd Battalion, but before that could happen he was declared missing in action on or before 3rd June 1918. It is more than likely that he died some time before that date due to heavy artillery shelling by the Germans in that area in the aftermath of Operation Georgette. His wife and family had to wait 12 long months before official notification of his death was received from the War Office. His body was never recovered and he is remembered on the Loos Memorial, panel 10 to 13. He was 43 years old. He is also remembered on the family headstone in Carriden Cemetery, where, to add to the confusion, his name is etched as Walter Neill.



**Alexander Potter MM**

Lance Corporal Alexander (Alec) Potter was born in Broxburn, West Lothian in 1878. He was the son of Alexander Potter Snr, a delivery van driver, and Annie Potter (ms Duncan) who were married at Uphall in 1878, and who lived latterly at George Terrace, Bo'ness. Sadly his mother had died in 1915. He had three sisters, Annie, Jessie and Bessie Potter, and two brothers Robert Potter and Peter Duncan Potter. He was the husband of Christina Potter (ms Hamilton), of 10 Philpingstone Terrace, Bridgeness, Bo'ness. The couple had been married in 1900 at Carriden, and they had four children. Alec was 5'8" tall and weighed 172lbs, and worked as a coal miner with the Bridgeness Coal Company. Alec Potter was a prominent local footballer, athlete and a good all-round sportsman.

Following a local recruiting boom in Grangepans after the outbreak of the war, he enlisted on 20th January 1915 in the Royal Scots, 1/6th battalion, service no: 2466. After a period of training at home, he went to join the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, on 5th September 1915, arriving in Egypt on 14th September, and onwards to Gallipoli. He served there for eight months, before he was sent to the Western Front, arriving in Marseilles in May, 1916. One month later 1/6th Battalion amalgamated with 1/5th to become 5/6th Battalion, and he was assigned new service no: 43436. In September 1916 he was transferred to 15th Battalion Royal Scots, coming under the command of 34th Division, 101st Brigade.

While home on leave, Alec was handed a letter from his officer informing him that he had been awarded the Military Medal on 22nd October 1917. Asked what he did to earn the medal, he modestly replied that he got it for "doing his work". The reply was reportedly characteristic of the man, modest and unassuming and always ready to play the game. He had actually received it for rescuing a number of wounded men who were sheltering in a shell crater during the Battle of Arras. On the 20th May 1918 he was posted to 12th Battalion, "C" Company, and promoted to Lance-Corporal. In January 1918 he was wounded in the face and feet but soon recovered, acting for the most part as a stretcher bearer. It was in this selfless line of duty that he was seriously wounded, on 1st June 1918, with gun shot wounds to the hip, legs and hands. He was admitted to No:2 CCS, that was temporarily situated at the time near Ebblinghem, a village halfway between St. Omer and Hazebrouck. Despite the best efforts of medical staff, Alec Potter died there two days later. He was 40 years old. He is buried in Ebblinghem Military Cemetery at grave I. F. 20. He is also commemorated on the family headstone in Carriden Cemetery.

His two brothers also enlisted. Robert Potter joined the Royal Scots, 5th Battalion but died of illness whilst home on leave on New Year's Day 1915. Peter Potter was with the London Regiment (London Scottish) 1st/14th Battalion. He was also killed in action on 13th May 1917 at the Battle of Arras. The three brothers are commemorated on the Bo'ness War Memorial.

**Charles Trew**

Corporal Charles Trew was born in Linlithgow Bridge in 1897, the son of Robert Trew, a dealer originally from Bo'ness, and Mary Ann Trew (ms Fields), who were married in Linlithgow in 1896. Charles had two brothers, William and Robert, and two sisters, Margaret and Helen Trew. The family lived at Forth Place, Bo'ness.

Charles enlisted with the Royal Scots, 17th Battalion, service no: 30848 at Glencorse, Midlothian. He joined the Battalion in France in 1916, coming under the orders of 35th Division, 106th Brigade. He fought in the Battle of the Somme and informed his father by letter, almost dismissively, that he had been wounded with seven shrapnel wounds on his right side, that he had been operated on, and was getting along well. Early 1917 saw him hospitalised with a fever, although he soon made a full recovery to fight at the Battle of Passchendaele. He also survived the Battle of Bapaume, during the great German offensive in the Spring of 1918, Operation Michael.

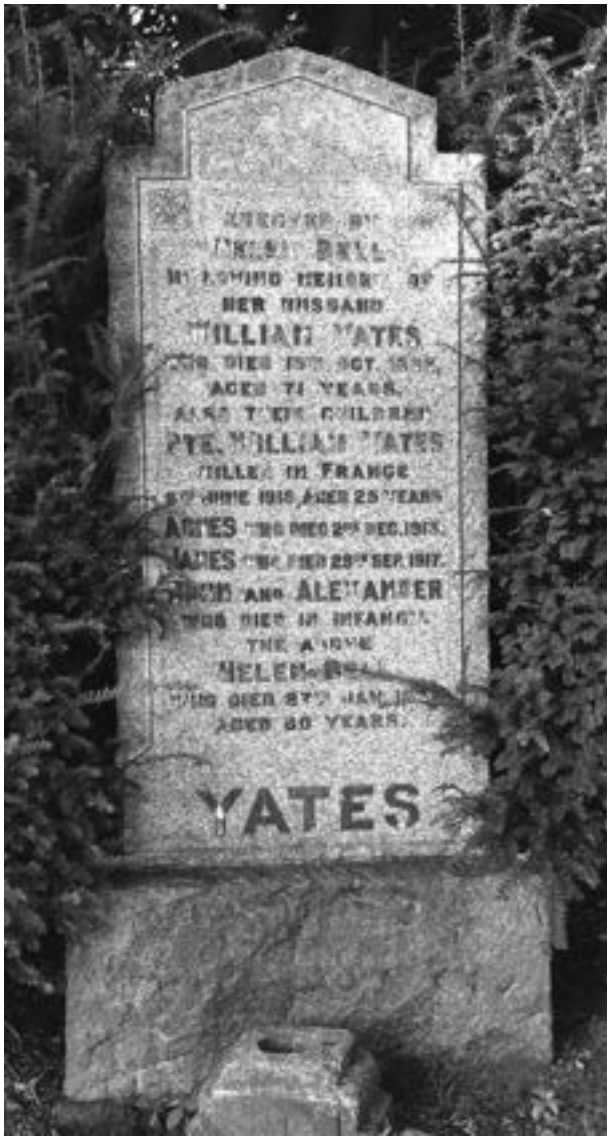
On 1st June 1918 the 17th Battalion, Royal Scots relieved the Durham Light Infantry on the right front of Aveluy, left sub-sector, north of the town of Albert in the Somme area. During active patrolling and work on defences on the 15th June 1918, Charles Trew was declared missing, believed killed. His body was not recovered and he is one of the many missing men commemorated on the Pozieres Memorial, panel 13 and 14. He was 21 years old.

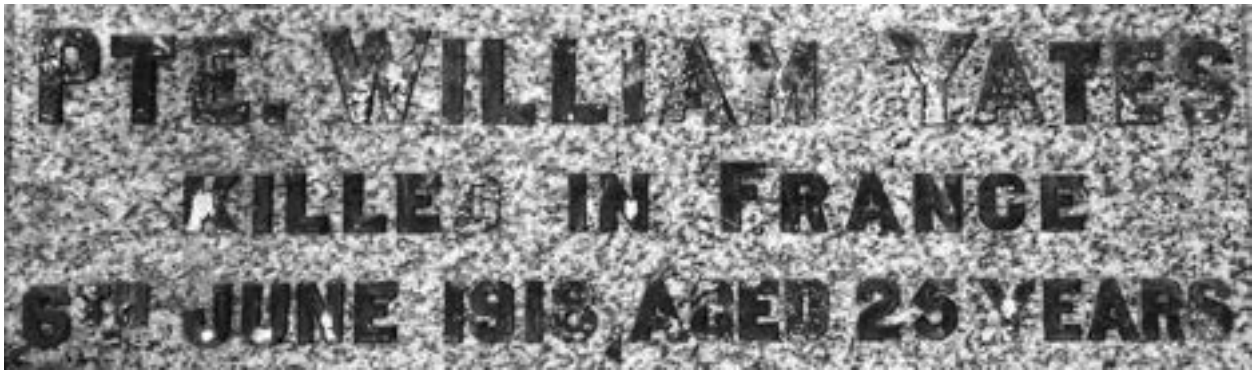
Almost one hundred years later, on 11th February 2018, Corporal Charles Trew's medals and memorial plaque were sold online for £166.00.

**William Yates**

Private William Bell Yates was the son of William Yates, a woodyard labourer originally from Lanarkshire. His father had previously been married to Agnes Grant Yates (ms McLaren) from Bo'ness, and they had four children together. Sadly Agnes died in 1889, aged 26 years. He then married Helen (Nelly) Anderson Bell and they had a further seven children, including William, who was born in 1895 in Carriden parish. The family then lived at Brentwood Terrace, Corbiehall. Just like his father, he was employed as a woodyard worker with Messrs Harrower, Welsh & Co., Pitwood Importers.

He enlisted initially with the Royal Scots, 2/10th (Cyclist) Battalion, service no: 2199, in September 1914, and spent a period of time doing coastal defence duties on the east coast. He volunteered to be sent to France as part of a draft containing a number of Bo'ness men who joined the Royal Warwickshire Regiment in May 1916. His new service number of 5644 was very close to that of Privates Lawrence White, Richard Day, Herbert Broome and Fred Drummond, all of whom were also killed during WW1. No doubt due to his proficiency in shooting William was eventually transferred to the Machine Gun Corps (Infantry), 50th Battalion formed on 1st March 1918, from the machine gun companies in 50th (Northumbrian) Division, namely the 149th, 150th, and 151st Coys, and the 245th Coy. The Battalion served with the 50th Division until the end of hostilities. William was assigned his third and final service no: 73013. He was wounded twice, latterly in the leg on 14th December 1917 and removed to a base hospital, but he soon recovered and rejoined his battalion in the front line. William Yates was found to be missing, presumed killed in action, following the 50th (Northumbrian) Division's participation in the Battle of the Aisne, on 3rd June 1918. His body was not recovered and he is remembered on the Soissons Memorial, that commemorates almost 4000 officers and men of the United Kingdom forces who died during the Battles of the Aisne and the Marne in 1918 and who have no known grave. He is also commemorated on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery. William was 23 years old when he died, not 25 as inscribed on the headstone.



**Robert J. Jamieson**

Private Robert James Jamieson was born in Bo'ness in 1879, the son of Robert James Jamieson and Isabella Glass Jamieson (ms Richardson) who were married on 27th October 1874, in Edinburgh. His father Robert J. Jamieson was a prominent solicitor and had served as Bo'ness Town and Harbour Clerk since 1866 before his somewhat sudden death on 19th August 1910, aged 75 years. The family lived at Dean House in the town. Robert Jamieson was one of eight children. He had four brothers, Andrew Stewart, Eric Liewellen, George and Ion Campbell, and three sisters Jean, Wilfreyda and Isa Jamieson. His brother Ion became an expert in traditional Scottish country dances in the 1930s, and one of the founding members of the Scottish Country Dance Society. His elder brother A. Stewart Jamieson was also Staff Paymaster in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, and his brother Eric served with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 11th Battalion. Prior to the War, Robert had worked as a clerk alongside his father and brother in the Town Clerk's office in Bo'ness.

He initially enlisted at Alloa with the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders, 1/7th Battalion, service no: 276954 coming under the orders of the 51st (Highland) Division, 154th (3rd Highland) Brigade in France. At some point he transferred to the 153rd (2nd Highland) Brigade and fought with the Gordon Highlanders, 1/5th, and then 1/7th Battalion. On the 26th July, the 1/7th battalion left St. Imoges at about 2:30pm to relieve the 7th Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders in Courton Wood, with a view to attacking on the morning of 27th July during the Battle of Tardenois. On the way up to the lines, the Battalion suffered 40 casualties including Robert Jamieson, who was killed in action. He was 39 years old when he died. He was buried near where he fell on the battlefield, but in May 1920, his body was exhumed as part of grave concentration, and he was reburied in Chambrecy British Cemetery, grave VI. B. 2.

It was a double tragedy for the Jamieson family as his brother Second Lieutenant Eric Liewellen Jamieson had earlier been killed on 22nd August 1917, at Passchendaele.

**James W. Sneddon**

Private James Williamson Snedden (not Sneddon as written on the War Memorial) was the son of Charles Snedden, an iron moulder, and Mary Snedden (ms Williamson), 1 Thirlestane Place, Grangepans, Bo'ness. His parents were married at Carriden in 1897, and he was born there in 1899. He had two brothers, Charles and Alexander and three sisters, Elizabeth, Agnes and Mary Snedden.

He initially enlisted with the Royal Scots and was assigned service no: 46285. After a period in the training reserve he was transferred to the Seaforth Highlanders 1st/6th Battalion, new service no: S/25003 and sent to France, coming under the orders of 51st (Highland) Division, 152nd Brigade. The 1/5th Seaforths were fighting south east of Reims, in the Bois de Coutron (Coutron Wood) between Pourcy and Paradis. This was during the Battle of Tardenois, part of the Battles of the Marne. James Snedden was fatally wounded, and died, on 26th July during this attack. He was only 19 years old. He is buried at Fleury-La-Riviere Communal Cemetery, grave 156. Fleury-La-Riviere is 11 kilometres north-west of Epernay.

The only two Commonwealth war graves in this cemetery are located at the end of the 5th row to the left hand side of the centre aisle. James Snedden is buried beside Alexander Duff, Seaforth Highlanders, S/41864 from our neighbouring town of Linlithgow, who died five days earlier on 21st July 1918.

James Snedden is also commemorated on the family headstone in Carriden Cemetery.

CHAPTER 12

# *1918*
# *France and Flanders*

## Amiens, the Hundred Days Offensive and the Advance to Victory

**Soldier from the wars returning**

Soldier from the wars returning,
Spoiler of the taken town,
Here is ease that asks not earning;
Turn you in and sit you down.

Peace is come and wars are over,
Welcome you and welcome all,
While the charger crops the clover
And his bridle hangs in stall.

Now no more of winters biting,
Filth in trench from tall to spring,
Summers full of sweat and fighting
For the Kesar or the King.

Rest you, charger, rust you, bridle;
Kings and kesars, keep your pay;
Soldier, sit you down and idle
At the inn of night for aye.

*A.E. Housman*

# Amiens, the Hundred Days Offensive and the Advance to Victory

The Germans were on the retreat and things were about to get worse. A small scale attack at Le Hamel by the Australian and American forces provided a blueprint for an updated bite-and-hold tactical defeat of the Germans. With reinvigorated Allied troops and a demoralised and weakened German defence, the Allied commanders could tell that the initiative was theirs for the taking, and plans were set in motion for a larger scale attack using this model at the Battle of Amiens on 8th August 1918. This was the opening phase of the campaign later known as the Hundred Days Offensive, actually a series of assaults along the Western Front, that would lead to the end of the war. The plans for its execution were made in the utmost secrecy and some reserve troops were sent north to Flanders to deceive the enemy. Foch's objective was to reduce the Saint-Mihiel salient and secure the railway lines passing through Amiens. The battle would also involve 580 tanks, mostly Mark V and Mark V "Star" versions but also including 72 "Whippet" light tanks and a number of unarmed supply tanks.

The battle commenced in dense fog at 4:20am with 2000 Allied guns firing without a preliminary bombardment and with supreme accuracy against the German gun batteries, a key feature of the surprise attack. Rawlinson's Fourth Army was the focus of the main attack north of the Somme. The tanks moved forward almost immediately with infantry in close support and 800 aircraft flew over the battlefield keeping the enemy occupied with bombs and strafing machine gun fire. During the opening action **Private William Stoddart**, Tank Corps, 14th Bn, a railway porter from Corbiehall, was killed shortly after 7:00am when his tank was struck by an artillery shell killing him and injuring two crew members. Surprised with the ferocity and audacity of the attack, the Germans capitulated readily and in some areas Allied forces captured over 13km of ground. Fourth Army captured all of its

The ruined streets of Amiens

major objectives at the cost of 9000 casualties. Ludendorff famously called the 8th August the "black day of the German Army in the history of the war" and with good reason. On the first day alone, German losses amounted to over 27000 and the Allies captured some 13000 prisoners.

Shell exploding in a building in Amiens in August 1918

The fighting continued over the next two days. On 9th August, **Private James Quarrie**, Tank Corps, 15th Bn, was one of the crew of Tank 9847, O20, "Overland" in Group A2. It suffered five direct hits with an anti tank gun on the Amiens - St Quentin Road between Rainecourt and Framerville and all of the crew were killed. The 32nd Division had been held in reserve by Rawlinson but the plan was for them to push through the initial attacking forces. On 11th August the Royal Scots, 5/6th Bn, in 14th Bde were attacking the village of Parvillers but the attack failed due to the late arrival of tanks, a supporting artillery barrage that fell 400 yards too far and impenetrable barbed wire. The enemy machine gun fire was very heavy and many casualties were sustained, including Kinneil miner **Private Andrew Wright**, who was killed, and **Private William Rose**, who was severely wounded in the chest, but who died later on 19th August. William had won the Military Medal for acts of gallantry earlier in 1918. Ludendorff wavered and offered his resignation to the Kaiser, which he refused to accept, but eventually resolved to fight on to the end.

Meanwhile other advances and diversionary attacks were being undertaken concurrently. Foch wanted to exploit the strategic initiative to the full and planned a series of limited operations across the whole length of the Front. The attacks would be broken off when momentum was lost and then a new attack would be initiated in a different area, placing the enemy under enormous strain. Artillery was kept in close proximity and supply lines were kept short and manageable in contrast to the mistakes made in the German Spring Offensives and, indeed, by the Allies earlier in the war.

In the Ypres sector, the 9th (Scottish) Division were part of Plumer's Second Army who were fighting valiantly to regain ground lost in the Lys valley during the Spring Offensives. On 19th July, they successfully recaptured the village of Meteren, south west of Ypres, after a fortnight of shelling. The village was obliterated in the process. A further offensive was planned to carry out further operations in this sector commencing 18th August, known as the Advance in Flanders. Just prior to this **Private Henry, or Hendry, White**, Royal Scots Fusiliers, 2nd Bn, and **Private John Keith**, Cameronians (Scottish Rifles), 9th (Service) Bn, were killed by enemy artillery shelling. The 9th (Scottish) Division went on to extend their gains with the capture of Hoegenacker and Outtersteene Ridges, south-east of the village, in the Action of Outtersteene Ridge on 18th August, alongside 31st and 29th Divisions. As at Amiens, there was no preliminary bombardment just a short barrage of high explosive and gas shells fired at zero hour of 11.00am by 15th, 17th, 64th and 174th Artillery Brigades. The 9th (Scottish) Division, 7th Bde led the attack, with 11th Royal Scots, 12th Royal Scots and 6th King's Own Scottish Borderers securing all objectives within an hour. A number of casualties were sustained including Grangepans miner **Private William White**, Royal Scots 11th Bn, who was killed in action by an exploding shell. The 29th Division then moved through to take Outtersteene village. There was very little in the way of counter-attack although enemy shelling did occur. Nineteen year old apprentice engineer **Private Joshua (or Josiah) B. West**, King's Own Scottish Borderers, 1st Bn, was fighting in the front line with the 29th Division during this action when he was hit by artillery shellfire and died instantaneously with two of his comrades.

Back in the Amiens sector the Hundred Days offensive was about to enter a new phase with the Second Battles of the Somme 1918, as the British Third and Fourth Armies fought to recapture the same ground over which most of the Battle of the Somme was fought in 1916. On the 21st August, the offensive

Devastation after the Battle of Albert

began with the Battle of Albert during which 3rd Division, under General Byng in Third Army, sought to capture the villages of Courcelles-le-Comte and Gomiecourt north east of Bapaume. During this action in thick fog **Private John G. Couper**, Royal Scots, 2nd Battalion, son of the well-known Bo'ness blacksmith Matthew Couper from Boundary Street, Grangepans, was killed in action.

He was fighting with the 3rd Division, 8th Infantry Brigade, alongside two other Bo'ness men. The first comrade, **Private John Hutton**, Royal Scots Fusiliers, 1st Bn, was wounded on the 23rd August during the same battle. He suffered gunshot wounds to his left thigh which also fractured his femur. He died of these wounds on 4th September at 8th Stationary Hospital, Wimereux. The second was **Corporal Robert Riddell**, Royal Scots Fusiliers, 1st Bn, who would also later be killed by machine gun fire after the 8th Infantry Bde had successfully captured the village of Noreuil on 2nd September 1918. This was during a continuation of the offensive known as the Second Battle of Bapaume. The next day, 24th August, over in the Fourth Army sector, **Private Alexander Grant**, Royal Scots, 5/6th Bn, was acting as a stretcher bearer on the front line near Villers-Carbonnel, when he was hit by shrapnel from an exploding artillery shell and killed instantly.

At the same time, the Third Army had committed forces, alongside General Horne's First Army, to an attack in the adjacent sector to the north, to try to break through the German Drocourt-Queant Line on 26th August, known as the Second Battles of Arras. Kinneil miner **Able Seaman Richard Snedden** (or more correctly Sneddon), Royal Naval Division, Hawke Battalion, 189th (Royal Naval) Brigade was fighting for the 63rd Royal Naval Division in Third Army, XVII Corps on the 3rd September, the final day of the Battle of Drocourt-Queant when he was killed in action near the village of Buissy.

Just after the Second Battle of Bapaume concluded, further minor skirmishes saw more casualties. Former Bo'ness bank clerk **Second-Lieutenant Robert Sharpe, MC**, Lincolnshire Regiment, 2nd Bn, had won the Military Cross for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty the previous month. He had led a bombing party in advance of the assaulting troops with great gallantry, and rushed and captured a machine-gun post, thus enabling the attack to advance without a check. On 8th September, while leading his company into action he was dangerously wounded and later died on the evening of 12th September. On the same date, **Gunner George Millar**, Royal Field Artillery, 129th (Howitzer) Battery, 42nd Brigade, who had been providing artillery support to 3rd Division throughout the battle, was also killed in action.

A letter from a comrade described George's death in more detail. It read, "It happened at 5:30 on the morning of 12th September, 1918. We had only come into action the evening previous for the purpose of making an advance, and it fell to George's lot to do duty at the battery end along with another signaller gunner. The operation had only been in progress a few minutes when the Huns had a direct hit on the signal pit with a 4.2 shell. It penetrated, and as far as I could ascertain, George was hit in two places, death being instantaneous. The other fellow escaped without a wound but was very badly shell-shocked".

The Operations since 8th August had seen the Germans retreat towards their formidable defensive position known by the British as the Hindenburg Line, built during the winter of 1916-17, which ran from Arras in the north to Soissons in the south. Breaking the Hindenburg line was critical if the Germans were to be beaten. Foch had planned a series of attacks designed to do so, called the Grand Offensive, but the remaining German salients had to be addressed first. On 12th September, the Third Army under Byng launched a successful small-scale attack against German forces holding the fortified town of Havrincourt. The ease of victory and lack of fight encouraged Haig to order the Third and Fourth Armies to undertake the Battle of Épehy, on 18th September, against German outposts on the higher ground in front of the Hindenburg Line, with the objective of clearing the way for the main assault on the Line itself.

**Captain Archibald Dunlop, MC**, who had won his Military Cross in October, 1916 at Schwaben Redoubt, was leading his men in the 12th (Eastern) Division, 35th Brigade, when he was critically wounded. The 12th Division went on to capture the village of Épehy on 18th September, but Archie Dunlop died of his wounds on 20th September in hospital. Back home in Bo'ness, he had succeeded

Robert Sharpe as an apprentice in the Clydesdale Bank in Bo'ness. Now he had laid down his life only eight days after him.

As the preparations for the main assault were readied, further skirmishes led to more casualties from Bo'ness. The Gloucestershire Regiment 1st Bn was fighting with 1st Division, 3rd Bde, in the Fourth Army sector when they successfully captured the Maissemy Ridge east of Vermand on 14th September. The next day as they attempted to secure further objectives, 22 year old **Lance-Corporal Thomas B. Simpson**, was killed by an artillery shell. On the 19th September, the 1st Division attempted to capture an area of high ground south of Pontruet near Berthaucourt, when **Corporal Thomas W. Stanners**, Black Watch 1st Bn, was killed by a sniper's bullet. He was the third Stanners brother to make the ultimate sacrifice. In the Third Army sector on the 22nd September, **Private George Gardner**, Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) 5/6th Bn, was fighting with 33rd Division, attempting to capture an enemy strongpoint known as Meath Post, south of the Cambrai to Peronne Road when he was killed in action. His comrade Jack Frater from Linlithgow was also killed on the same date. Despite their deaths the raid was successful, and later described as an example of the clockwork efficiency of the 5/6th Camerons. George and Jack had played their part. Further north, in the Arras sector, **Private Robert W. Crosthwaite**, Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), 4/5th Bn was with the 15th (Scottish) Division near Hulluch when he was fatally wounded by an enemy bombing raid on 16th September, and died later that day. Bo'ness distillery worker **Private William Easton**, Royal Scots, 17th (Service) Battalion (Rosebery's Bantams), was carrying his Colonel in a stretcher to safety on 18th September with a comrade when the three men were blown to pieces by an artillery shell in the front line trenches near Ypres. Well-known Bo'ness postman **Lance Corporal Peter Stanners**, no direct relation to the other Stanners brothers, was fighting with the Royal Scots Fusiliers, 11th Garrison Bn, in the front line near Fauquissart when he too was killed in action by a falling shell.

Foch's plan for his Grand Offensive was to strike the Germans on four main fronts, commencing with a Franco-American attack in the Meuse-Argonne area on 26th September. Then on 27th September, British First and Third Armies would attack towards Cambrai in the Battle of the Canal du Nord. A third joint Allied offensive, known as the Final Advance in Flanders would take place at Ypres on the 28th September, and then the final phase would take place at the Battle of St. Quentin Canal, where Rawlinson's Fourth Army would join French and American troops in attacking the stretch of the canal where it merged with the Hindenburg Line

The first part of the offensive had minimal impact but the attack on the 28th was more significant. **Private Colin Sidley**, Royal Scots, 2nd Bn, however, was killed at Demicourt on 25th September, just as 3rd Division were preparing to participate at the Battle of the Canal du Nord.

The First Army objective was to lead the crossing of the Canal du Nord and secure the Third Army's northern flank as both made for Cambrai. The Third Army was also asked to secure the Scheldt Canal to help support the Fourth Army during the subsequent Battle of St. Quentin Canal. The attack was led by the formidable fighting machine of the Canadian Corps led by General Sir Arthur William Currie and it was no surprise that after only two

The 1st Army crossing the Canal du Nord past a ruined bridge

days fighting the two Armies had gained their objectives and driven 10km into the German defences on a 19km front, capturing 10000 prisoners and stopping the use of Cambrai as a German railhead. Bo'ness born **Corporal Thomas Orr**, Canadian Infantry (British Columbia Regiment), 72nd Bn, (Seaforth Highlanders of Canada) was fighting with 4th Canadian Division during this action when he lost his life, at Bourlon Wood, on the first day, the 27th September. Grangepans-born 19 year old **Private John Robertson**, Royal Scots, 2nd Battalion, was fighting with the 3rd Division in Third Army, and was a comrade of Colin Sidley. He was killed by heavy artillery fire on the same date. He was one of three 2nd Royal Scots posted missing presumed dead, with another 14 killed and 115 wounded during the battle.

The Advance in Flanders commenced on 28th September with the Battle of Ypres when an Allied Army Group containing the British Second Army under Plumer dramatically attacked and broke through the German Front north east and south of Ypres, capturing more ground in a single day than what was so painfully won at great cost in the whole of the Passchendaele campaign in 1917. The Messines Ridge was captured on the 29th. During the advance, **Private Alexander Williamson**, Hampshire Regiment, 2nd Battalion was severely wounded whilst fighting with 29th Division. He died at 36th CCS on 29th September. Bridgeness miner **Private William Melville**, Royal Scots, 17th (Service) Battalion (Rosebery), fighting with the 35th Division, was also killed in action by machine gun fire on the third day of the battle, and buried near to where he fell on the battlefield. **Private John Buchanan**, Cameron Highlanders, 5th Battalion, was fighting with 9th (Scottish) Division during the battle when he sustained a serious wound in the right thigh. He was transported to a stationary hospital at Wimereux but died of his wounds on 27th October.

In the preparations of the next attack, the Battle of St. Quentin Canal, commencing on the 29th September, **Guardsman Robert Baikie**, Scots Guards, 1st Battalion, was wounded in the right thigh, fracturing his leg in the process. He died of his wounds two days later. The assault itself saw the Fourth Army under Rawlinson, with Australian and American troops at his disposal, attempt the most difficult task of breaking through the Hindenburg Line in this sector where the canal was 11m wide and 20m deep in some places. A critical weak point was identified at Bellicourt where the canal went through a tunnel but this area was very heavily defended. This task was given to the Australian Corps under Monash, with two American Divisions as reinforcements. The attack was heralded by the heaviest artillery bombardment of the war up to that point, with 1044 field guns and 593 heavy guns and howitzers, firing over 1 million shells, including for the first time some 30000 British-made mustard gas shells. Highly talented Bridgeness footballer **Gunner Alexander Bernard**, Royal Field Artillery, 466th Battery in 65th Army Brigade, was firing 18 pounder guns during the bombardment when he was wounded and removed to a nearby CCS where he sadly died on 29th September. Initial progress was slow by the Australians but the major breakthrough came just to the south when IX Corps, led by the 46th (North Midland) Division, managed to cross the canal itself in the area between Riqueval and Bellenglise. Improvised use of floating piers and lifeboats from cross-channel ferries to cross the canal and ladders to scale the canal banks were made to great success, the attack aided by thick fog. Bellenglise was captured and this allowed the Australians to capture the tunnel at Bellicourt. Rawlinson wrote at the time: "Had the Boche not shown marked signs of deterioration during the past month, I should never have contemplated attacking the Hindenburg Line. Had it been defended by the Germans of two years ago, it would certainly have been impregnable". In a subsequent attack on 8th October, the First and Third British Armies broke through the Hindenburg Line at the Second Battle of Cambrai. **Private George Cruickshank**, Northumberland Fusiliers, 12/13th Bn was fighting with 21st Division when he was killed in action during an attack on the village of Walincourt, south of Cambrai. The Hindenburg Line had finally been broken, and the German Army was now in retreat. Their commanders began to face up to the situation that the war had been lost.

Meanwhile the Fifth Army under Birdwood had returned to the same theatre of war where they had first entered the fray in 1915, in the area around Loos-en-Gohelle and Hulluch, north of Lens. Alongside VIII corps of the First Army, their objectives were to liberate the French coal mining areas around Lens and Douai, in an action known as the Final Advance in Artois. On 5th October, **Private William Brown**, Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, 6th (Service) Bn, was fighting with 15th (Scottish) Division in the front line west of the town of Vendin-Le-Viel, when he was killed in action during this advance. He was the third and final man named William Brown on the Bo'ness War Memorial.

Back in the Cambrai area the next significant action was called the Pursuit to the Selle. The Allies had advanced over 3km after capturing Cambrai and liberated several French villages. The Germans dug in, however, at Le Cateau, east of the River Selle. The advance halted for a number of days to make adequate preparations for a night-time assault across the Selle. During this period **Private Harry Robertson**, Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment) 9th (Service) Battalion, was wounded on 12th October, south east of Neuvilly. He died at 18th CCS the next day. Railway goods clerk **Corporal Robert Aitken**, King's Royal Rifle Corps, 16th (Service) Battalion (Church Lads Brigade), was with the 33rd Division in Third Army, east of Troisville on 13th October when he was severely wounded in his left side and abdomen, and died the following day. The Germans were now steadily retreating on all fronts, but still showing stiff resistance. In the Ypres Sector Carriden miner **Private Thomas Lapsley**, Royal Scots, 11th Bn, was killed in action on 15th October, when the

German prisoners being brought in by British troops

11th Royal Scots were attacking the objective of Steenbeck Ridge, during the Battle of Courtrai. This battle saw the successful capture of Ostend, Lille, Douai, Bruges and Zeebrugge, with the capture of Courtrai itself on 19th October. There were two further Bo'ness casualties just before the end of the war. Having been wounded in 1915 and surviving the Salonika campaign, **Corporal James Hogg**, 171st Chinese Labour Corps, died on 23rd October 1918 from influenza and pneumonia at 3rd Stationary Hospital Rouen, one of the many people around the world to succumb to the pandemic influenza outbreak. Known erroneously as the Spanish flu, the pandemic was to go on to infect 500 million people around the world from January 1918 to December 1920, one of the deadliest natural disasters in human history. The final Bo'ness man to die at the Western Front was **Private William Youngson**, Cameronians (Scottish Rifles), 8th Battalion. He was killed on the front line whilst the 34th Division, 103rd Brigade were part of Plumer's Second Army forces liberating Anzegem, Belgium, during the Final Advance in Flanders. William was killed 10 days before the Armistice.

Ludendorff had already advised the Kaiser that the Germans had to request an armistice without hesitation. In his view it was not the German Army that had lost the war, rather the German people, who amid social unrest had failed to support the troops in their time of need. He believed that only the German Army would be able to eventually redeem the German nation and it had to therefore surrender before it was completely destroyed. Ludendorff's resignation was accepted by the Kaiser and he was smuggled out of the country to Sweden. His "stabbed-in-the-back" philosophy was widely derided in Germany but became the foundation for the myth that Germany had not been defeated by the Allies but by elements within their own nation. This would be fundamental to the events that gave rise to World War Two twenty years later. Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicated on 10th November on the advice of von Hindenburg and went into exile in the Netherlands.

After a period of negotiation when the fighting continued and casualties mounted, a German delegation agreed to be taken in secret to the forest of Compiègne. There, on board Foch's private train parked in a railway siding, agreement was reached after three days that hostilities must end. At 11:00am on the 11th November, the Armistice between Germany and the Allies came into effect.

The war was over on the Western Front, the allies had won. Bo'ness had more than played its part, without hesitation, without fear.

Cheering soldiers hearing the news of the Armistice

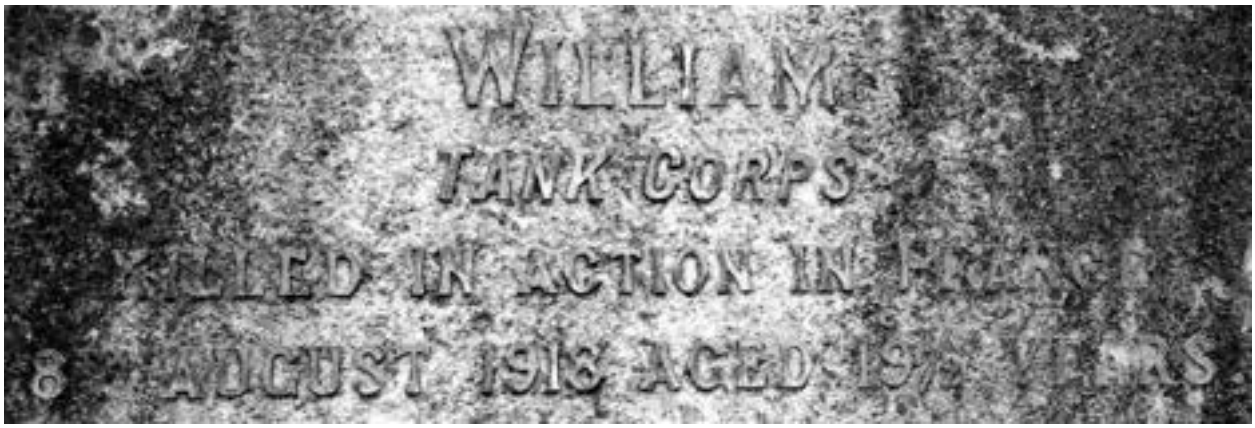
**William Stoddart**

Private William Stoddart was the son of William Stoddart and Agnes Stoddart (ms Strachan) who were married in Edinburgh on 23rd December 1897. His father was a marshalling man with the North British Railway Company at Bo'ness, and prior to enlisting William had followed in his footsteps working as a porter at Bo'ness passenger station. William had three younger brothers, James, Hector and John Sinclair Stoddart. The family lived at Hardie's Buildings, Corbiehall, Bo'ness.

Shortly after turning eighteen years old, in April 1917, William enlisted with the Scottish Rifles, service no: 38279, but he was then transferred to the Tank Corps, 14th Battalion, service no: 305070. 14th Battalion, originally, N Battalion, formed in the Autumn of 1917 and was deployed to France as part of IV tank brigade. He was killed during the Battle of Amiens, also known as the Third Battle of Picardy, which began on 8th August 1918. It was the opening phase of the Allied offensive later known as the Hundred Days Offensive.

His parents received a letter from Second Lieutenant Dickson of William's Battalion, informing them of his death. It read, "He was killed on the morning of Thursday the 8th, shortly after 7 o'clock. We attacked at dawn and succeeded in getting about four miles into the Boche lines, when a battery of enemy artillery opened on us, hit us on the right hand side of the tank. The shell penetrated the side killing your son instantaneously, and wounding two others. Your son was a great favourite with the rest of the crew, and was always very willing and obliging. It may be some satisfaction to you to know that he was one of the best men I ever had".

William Stoddart's body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Vis-En-Artois Memorial, panel 11. He was 19 years old. He is also commemorated on the Stoddart family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery.



**James Quarrie**

Private James Quarrie was born in Bo'ness in 1898, the son of Frederick Aitken Freer Quarrie, a foundry warehouseman, and Mary Ann Quarrie (ms Aitken), who were married in the town on 11th July 1895. He had four sisters, Mary Ann, Nellie, Lizzie and Christina. Another two sisters, Ann and Janet, had died as infants. He also had two brothers, John and Frederick Quarrie. The family lived at 18 North Street, Bo'ness.

He initially enlisted with the Royal Scots. His service number, 2857, is close in sequence to a number of other Bo'ness men who enlisted soon after the outbreak of war with the 1/5th Battalion. This being the case, he was likely to have enlisted when he was 16 years old. He eventually found himself transferred to the Tank Corps, 15th Battalion, service no: 307764.

On 9th August 1918, during the Battle of Amiens, James Quarrie was one of the crew of Tank 9847, O20, "Overland". This was one of four tanks in 15th Battalion, Group A2, the others being 9846, O18, "Octopus", 9825, O16, "Optimist" and 9851, O30, "Omar-Ama". In a hastily prepared operation, Group A2 were given orders to attack Framerville and Vauxvillers, commencing at 4:15pm. All four tanks reached the objective and did extremely good work there; two members of tank 9851 earned Military Medals and Captain Ibbertson (9846) the Military Cross. Tanks 9851, 9846 and 9847 were all knocked out at the objective; all three Officers in Command were wounded along with all the crew of 9847, that had been knocked out between Rainecourt and Framerville on the Amiens - St Quentin Road by five direct hits with an anti tank gun.

James Quarrie was declared missing in action, and the first news of this reached his parents in Bo'ness when the missing lad's pay-book was sent home by an Australian soldier, who found it in the wreckage of a tank, presumably "Overland". He was officially pronounced killed in action by the army council almost one year later in July 1919. His body was not recovered and he is commemoratedon the Vis-En-Artois Memorial, panel 11. He was 20 years old.

**Andrew Wright**

Private Andrew Wright was born in 1895, the son of William Wright, a coal hewer, and Margaret R Wright (ms Watson) of 33 Richmond Terrace, Bo'ness. His parents were married in Bo'ness in 1891. He had one brother Robert, one sister Margaret, and one half brother George Watson. He was unmarried. Before enlisting Andrew was employed as a coal miner with the Kinneil Coal Company, Ltd.

He enlisted, aged 19 years old, on the 4th December 1914 during the great recruitment drive in Grangepans that month. Along with many other Bo'ness men he joined the Royal Scots, 1/5th Battalion, service no: 2887. He arrived in France on 7th May 1916 and in September, because of his mining background, he was attached to the Royal Engineers, 251st Tunnelling Company. Formed at Rouen, this Company took over from 170th Tunnelling Coy in the Loos area in October 1915, around Cuinchy-Cambrin-Auchy, where it remained for a considerable time. The 251st Coy are famous for firing the last mine exploded by the British in the Great War, near Givenchy, on 10th August 1917.

He stayed with the 251st Coy for six months before contracting illness and being hospitalised in early 1917. He rejoined the action in June that year, but joined his original battalion, who had by this time amalgamated with 6th Royal Scots to form 5/6th Battalion, coming under the orders of 32nd Division, 14th Brigade. He was granted ten days leave on 13th September, and returned to Bo'ness for one last visit.

Upon returning to the action, Andrew had fought at the First Battle of Arras on 28th March 1918, but he was killed in action on 11th August during 32nd Division's advance on Parvillers in the midst of the Battle of Amiens. It was the opening phase of the Allied offensive later known as the Hundred Days Offensive that ultimately led to the end of the First World War.

Andrew Wright was buried near to where he fell east of Parvillers and his grave marked with a simple cross bearing his details. In 1920 his body was exhumed and reburied nearby at Bouchoir New British Cemetery as part of grave concentration. He is buried there in grave V. E. 17. Andrew was 23 years old.

**William Rose**

Private William Rose MM was the son of David William Rose, a dock labourer originally from Wales, and Janet Leishman Rose (ms Carr) who were married in Bo'ness on 2nd November 1886. William was born on 5th April 1894. He had two brothers named Richard and Thomas, and one sister Janet, who sadly died during the War at Dock Street, Bo'ness on 15th March, 1916, aged 24 years old. William lived with his parents and brothers at 45 Main Street. William was 5'7" in height and weighed 147lbs. He enlisted on 2nd December 1914 at Bo'ness and joined the Royal Scots, 1/5th Battalion. He spent a period at home training and was then sent to join the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force in Alexandria, Egypt on 21st January 1916. Two months later, he was transferred to the Western Front, arriving in France on 15th March 1916. In June the 1/5th amalgamated with 1/6th to become 5/6th Battalion, and soon after were transferred from 29th Division to 32nd Division, 14th Brigade. In early May 1918, he had been awarded the Military Medal for acts of gallantry in the field during the German Spring Offensive. William was wounded on 11th August in the Battle of Amiens, the opening phase of the Allied attack that became known as the Hundred Days Offensive. He was transferred to 48th Casualty Clearing Station and had time to send a postcard back to his family saying he had been wounded but was well. Sadly he died there on 19th August. He was 24 years old. A letter from the sister in charge, Sister Roy, conveyed the news to his parents. It read,

> It is with great regret that I write to confirm the sad news of the death of your son, Private William Rose, Royal Scots, in this hospital today. He was admitted on the 11th inst., severely wounded in the chest. Everything possible was done for him, and we hoped he might pull through, but he began to become weaker two days ago, and passed away very peacefully at 4 p.m. this afternoon. He did not suffer much pain while under our care. He did not leave any message nor speak of any one at home before the last. I don't think he ever realised how ill he was. All his personal effects will be returned to you later through the War Office. He will be buried in the French Cemetery near this hospital. With sincerest sympathy..

He was originally buried at Dury Hospital Military Cemetery, until, in 1923 his body was exhumed along with 443 others, as part of grave concentration, and reburied at Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery, grave VII. AA. 11. William is also commemorated, along with his sister, on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery. In 1924, his parents set sail on the SS Baradine from London, for a new life in Australia.

**Henry White**

Private Hendry (forename incorrect on the War Memorial) White was born in Bo'ness in 1898. He was the son of John White, who worked variously as a dock labourer, dock gateman and seaman, and Jane Collins White (ms Hendry) who were married on 18th April 1882 in Bo'ness. Hendry came from a large family with brothers John, Lawrence, James, Baziel (or Basil), Robert, and sisters Jane, Mary, Margaret, Elizabeth and Ann White. The family lived at 11 Johnstone's Buildings, Scotland's Close, Bo'ness.

Hendry was employed as a shipbreaker by Forth Shipbreaking Company, Bridgeness before his enlistment in March 1917 with the Royal Scots Fusiliers. He enlisted with 6/7th Battalion and was then transferred to 2nd Battalion, service no: 203265. He was soon sent to the Western Front, his Battalion coming under the orders of 9th (Scottish) Division, South African Brigade. He fought at the Battles of the Lys, but in July 1918, the fighting moved to the area around the village of Meteren. On 19 July, the 9th (Scottish) Division, with Royal Scots Fusiliers, 2nd Battalion and the rest of the South African

Composite Battalion, containing Bo'ness comrade Private John Keith, Cameronians (Scottish Rifles), 9th (Service) Battalion, recovered the village.

Just before the Second Army commenced operations in the Lys Valley to recapture further ground, known as the Advance in Flanders, Hendry White was killed in action during heavy artillery shelling by the Germans of the front line at Fletre, near Meteren, on 9th August 1918. He is buried in La Kreule Military Cemetery, Hazebrouck, grave II. E. 9. He was 20 years old. Hendry's mother received official confirmation two weeks later and his death was a severe blow to Mrs White, who was left a widow when Hendry's father died in 1916. Four sons had enlisted - the eldest, Lawrence White, had been fatally wounded whilst serving with the Royal Warwickshire Regiment and died on 20th December 1916. He is also commemorated on the War Memorial. James, who enlisted in Canada, had also been wounded and disabled.

**John Keith**

Private John Keith was the son of John Keith, a coal miner, and Elizabeth Keith (ms Robertson) who were married in Bo'ness in 1877. John the younger was born in 1899 in Carriden parish. He had a number of older brothers and sisters - Margaret, Johan, William, Christina, Helen and Jane. Sadly John's father had died in 1908 and Elizabeth was left on her own to fend for the family, who latterly resided at 30 Castleloan, Bo'ness.

John enlisted at a young age at Glencorse, Midlothian with the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles), 9th (Service) Battalion, service no: 36990. He was sent to France early in 1918 and been under the command of 14th (Light) Division, 43rd Brigade, when he had been slightly wounded in action. His battalion then came under the orders of the South African Brigade in 9th (Scottish) Division in April

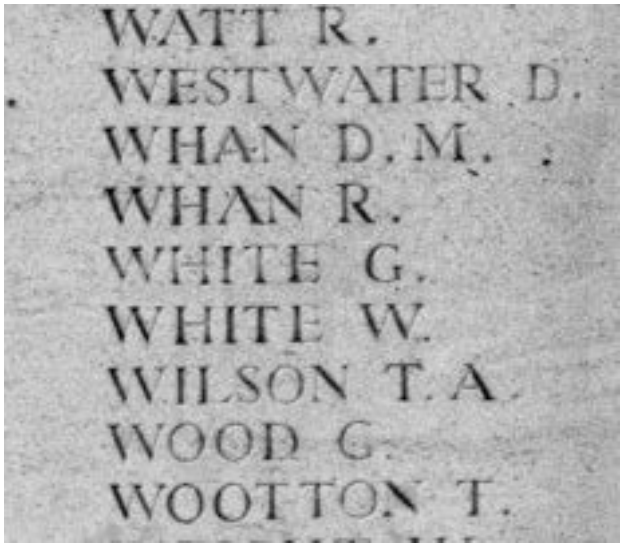
1918 and took part in the various Battles of the Lys. In July, the fighting moved to the area around the village of Meteren that had been in Allied hands until the German Spring Offensive but it was lost on the 16th April. On 19th July, the 9th (Scottish) Division (2nd Royal Scots Fusiliers and John's South African Composite Battalion) recovered the site of the village after a fortnight's bombardment which completely destroyed the houses there.

John Keith was killed in action on 12th August 1918 just before the Second Army commenced operations in the Lys Valley to recapture ground that had been lost in April 1918 during the German Spring Offensive, an action known as the Advance in Flanders. John was 19 years old. He was buried near to where he fell and his grave marked with a simple cross containing his details. In 1919 his body was exhumed and reburied at Meteren Military Cemetery as part of grave concentration. His body was laid to rest there in grave V.H. 804.

**William White**

Private William White lived with his sister Lizzie Wylie and her husband William, along with their two children May and William, at their home in Magdalene Place, Grangepans. He was born in 1887 in Carriden, was 5'10" in height and weighed 173lbs, and was unmarried. Before enlisting he was employed as a coal miner in No.6 Pit, Grange Colliery.

He enlisted on 2nd December 1914 at Bo'ness with the Royal Scots, 1/5th Battalion, service no: 2867. After a period of training at home he was sent to join the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, and first saw action at Gallipoli, arriving there on 10th May 1915. He was wounded twice, firstly suffering a Turkish bayonet wound to the head on 10th June, just prior to the Battle of Gully Ravine, and then a shrapnel wound to the right thigh on 2nd August, leading to his evacuation back to the Deaconess Hospital in Edinburgh. The wound had caused a longitudinal fracture of his femur, and this wasn't helped when he fell when being moved to a different ward, causing the femur to fracture again. He was in hospital for a total of 242 days.


WATT R.
WESTWATER D.
WHAN D.M.
WHAN R.
WHITE G.
WHITE W.
WILSON T.A.
WOOD G.
WOOTTON T.

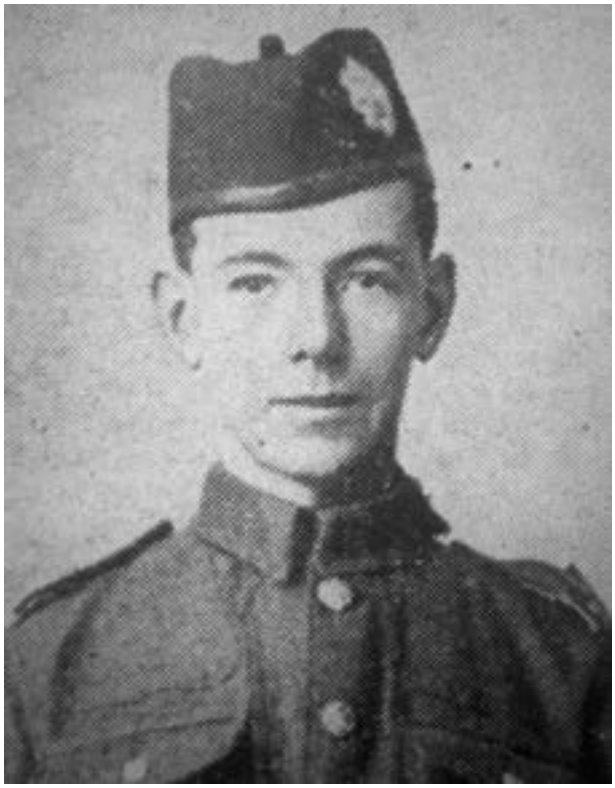
He returned to the action on 9th February 1917, this time joining the Royal Scots, 17th Battalion. On the 1st November 1917, he was gassed and suffered severe artillery shell wounds at Passchendaele leading again to his evacuation back home. He spent a further 203 days recuperating before returning to the action in France on 11th February 1918, this time joining Royal Scots 1/4th, then, in June, to 11th Battalion, service no: 250767. He then came under the command of 9th (Scottish) Division, 27th Brigade.

The 11th Battalion were in new positions south-west of Meteren from May to July, and took part in the capture of Hoegenacker Ridge on 18th August 1918, where William White was killed in action by an artillery shell explosion. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Ploegsteert Memorial, panel 1.

**Joshua B. West**

Private Josiah (Joe) Baird West (not Joshua as indicated on the War Memorial) was born in Linlithgow in 1899, the elder son of John West, an engine fitter from Broxburn, and Isabella West (ms Baird). They had previously lived at High Street, Linlithgow but before the War had moved over the hill to live at 61B Forth Place, Bo'ness. Joe was an apprentice engineer before joining up as soon as he reached enlistment age of 18 years in October, 1917. He initially enlisted with the Highland Light Infantry, 15th Battalion, service no: 52370 but was then transferred to the King's Own Scottish Borderers, 1st Battalion, service no: 41763, coming under the orders of 29th Division, 87th Brigade.

Joe West was notified as missing in action on 18th August during the 29th Division's participation in the Action of Outtersteene Ridge, part of the Advance in Flanders. He was 19 years old. The hamlet of Outtersteene was captured by the Germans on 12th April 1918, and retaken by the



9th, 29th and 31st Divisions, with the ridge beyond it, on 18th and 19th August, but the cemetery was not used again during hostilities. After the Armistice, however, over 900 graves of 1914 and 1918 were brought into Plots I, II and IV from the battlefields surrounding Outtersteene. Joe's body had been one of the original burials in Outtersteene Communal Cemetery, Bailleul, grave ref: II. H. 38.

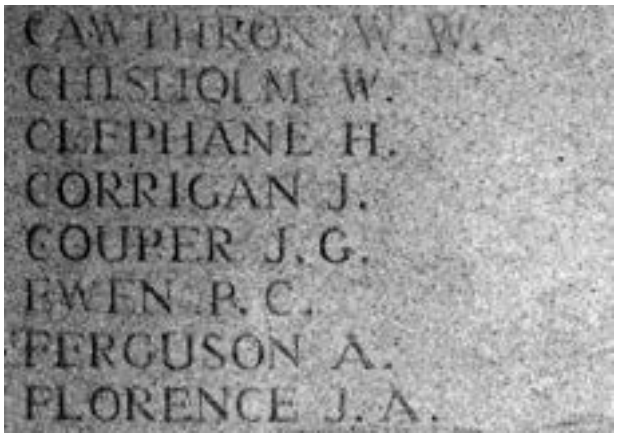
Joe's mother and father, however, had a long agonising wait until March 1919 before they received a letter from her son's Platoon Commander, Lieutenant W.C. Sellar, confirming Joe's death on the 18th August 1918. He informed them that he himself was wounded on the same day but he was unable to write sooner and acquaint them with the fact that their son was killed in the Action at Outtersteene Ridge. He mentioned how much he liked their son and that he was "a perfectly splendid fellow to have in the platoon". He went on to say that Joe West's death was instantaneous, being caused by shellfire which also killed two of West's comrades, after they had advanced bravely and reached their objective.

**John G. Couper**

Private John Gray Couper was born in Bo'ness in 1897, the youngest son of Matthew Couper and Isabella Couper (ms White). His father was a blacksmith originally from Dalmeny, near South Queensferry, but had set up business making horseshoes in Grangepans. He had four surviving brothers, Thomas, James, Robert and Matthew, and two sisters Jessie and Marion. Another brother, William, had died in 1907 aged 11 years old. The family lived at the smithy at 2 Boundary Street, Grangepans, Bo'ness, along with a couple of blacksmith boarders. John was 5'5" in height and weighed 138lbs and was a former member of the Sea Scouts.

John enlisted on 4th December 1914 along with many other Bo'ness men during the recruiting drive in the town at that time. He joined the Royal Scots, 1/5th Battalion, service no: 2885. He spent a period of almost two years at home in preparation for being sent to the Western Front. He arrived in France on 29th March 1916, and in June the 1/5th amalgamated with comrades in 1/6th Royal Scots to become 5/6th Battalion, coming under the orders of 32nd Division, 14th Brigade. He became ill in July that year and was sent home to hospital where he spent more than a year recovering, eventually rejoining the action in December 1917, and joining the 15th Battalion in 32nd Division, in 101st Brigade. He fought at the Battles of the Lys in early 1918, but after the 32nd suffered heavy losses, he was then transferred to Royal Scots 2nd Battalion, service no: 250778, coming under the command of 3rd Division, 8th Brigade.

John Couper was posted missing, presumed dead, on a foggy 22nd August 1918, in the front line near Gomiecourt, north of Bapaume, during the 2nd Battalion's participation in the Battle of Albert, a phase of the Second Battles of the Somme 1918. His body was never found and he is commemorated on the Vis-en-Artois Memorial, panel 3. This Memorial bears the names of over 9000 men who fell in the period from 8th August 1918 to the date of the Armistice in the Advance to Victory in Picardy and Artois, between the Somme and Loos, and who have no known grave. John was 21 years old when he died. Three of his brothers also enlisted during the war and all survived.



**John Hutton**

Private John Hutton was born at Bridgeness, Bo'ness in 1891. He was the son of Annie Hutton, formerly McGahan or McGeachan, a pit head worker. He had one elder brother called William. In 1911, his mother was married to William Patrick Daly, who worked at the Forth Shipbreaking yard, and the family moved soon after from Furnace Buildings, Bridgeness to 52 Inverkip Street, Greenock. He was 5'6" tall, weighed 125lbs, and prior to enlisting worked as a machine man in Walker's Sugar Refinery in Greenock.

John enlisted at Greenock on 10th August 1916 with the Royal Scots Fusiliers, 3rd (Reserve) Battalion, service no: 31976. He spent some time on coastal defence duties on the Clyde, before he was sent to the Western Front on 20th March 1917, transferring to 2nd Bn and then 6/7th Bn and coming under the command of 15th (Scottish) Division, 45th Brigade. Later that year he fought and was wounded during the fighting around Arras. After recovering and a period of furlough back home in early 1918 he rejoined the action in May, this time being transferred to Royal Scots Fusiliers, 1st Bn, under the orders of 3rd Division, 8th Brigade.

On 23rd August 1918, in the Second Battle of Bapaume, a phase of the Hundred Days Offensive, John received gunshot wounds to his left thigh which fractured his femur. He died from his wounds at the 8th Stationary Hospital, Wimereux on 4th September 1918. He is buried at Terlincthun British Cemetery, Wimille, grave III. B. 7. This cemetery is situated on the northern outskirts of Boulogne. Used primarily for burials from the base hospitals, it began in June 1918, when the space available for service burials in the civil cemeteries of Boulogne and Wimereux was exhausted.

John's mother received a few of his possessions on 3rd March 1919, including his identity discs, a pipe, rosary beads, a crucifix, comb, pen, rings, mirror, and other items. She signed the acknowledgement form and added, poignantly, "and we are very thankful for them".

A busy scene outside Bapaume

**Robert Riddell**

Corporal Robert Riddell was born in Glasgow in 1882, the only son of Mr and Mrs Alexander Riddell. His parents formerly lived at Waggon Road, Bo'ness. Before joining up he was employed as a coal miner at Wemyss Pit, Leven. He enlisted in 1914 at Leven with Royal Scots Fusiliers, 6th Battalion, service no: 11763. He was soon sent to the Western Front, arriving there on 11th May 1915, and coming under the command of 9th (Scottish) Division, 27th Brigade. He fought at the Battle of Loos and was wounded there for the first time. During his four years of active service he would be wounded in action five times in total.

Returning to France he eventually found himself transferred to the Royal Scots Fusiliers, 1st Battalion, and came under the orders of 3rd Division, 8th Brigade. He was also promoted to the rank of Corporal. When returning home on leave in the early part of 1918 he found time to get married, in Buckhaven, Fife, to Miss Helen McNaught Johnston, a native of Kinneil. Then, only a few months later, on 2nd September 1918, he was killed in action during the 3rd Division's participation in the Second Battle of Bapaume, a continuation of the Battle of Albert, and a phase of what is known as the Second Battles of the Somme 1918. He died during the 8th Brigade's successful capture of the village of Noreuil, north east of Bapaume.

Robert Riddell's body was not recovered and he is commemorated on the Vis-En-Artois Memorial, panel 6. He was 36 years old. His wife Helen, then living at Furnace Rows, Bo'ness, received intimation from the commanding officer of the Royal Scots Fusiliers conveying the sympathy of all the officers with her in the death of her husband. The note added that "He died doing his duty".

Robert Riddell is also commemorated on the Buckhaven, Methil And Innerleven War Memorial.

**Alexander Grant**

Private Alexander Grant was the husband of Mrs. Maria Grant (ms Sinclair). They had married in Morningside, Edinburgh, on 13th March 1908. They had three children, John, Ann and David Grant and lived at 97 Preston View, Bridgeness, Bo'ness.

He was one of the many Bo'ness men who joined up during the great recruiting rally in the town in December 1914. He enlisted with the Royal Scots, 1/5th Battalion, service no: 2889, a number that is close in series to many other Bo'ness soldiers who fell in WW1. After a period of training and duty at home, he was sent to France in December 1916, and by this time the 5th Battalion had amalgamated with the 6th to form 5/6th Battalion, coming under the orders of 32nd Division, 14th Brigade. He was assigned a new service no: 250780.

In 1917 Alexander fought in the Operations on the Ancre, and the pursuit of the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line. The action continued in 1918, with the 32nd Division's participation in the defence against the German Spring Offensives at the First Battle of Arras, and the counter-attack at the Battles of Amiens and Albert. On 3rd September 1918, the final day of the Second Battle of Bapaume, he was acting as a stretcher bearer when he was hit by shrapnel from an exploding artillery shell and killed instantly. He was 32 years old.

His widow had received word from a comrade that Alexander had been killed, but official notice was received towards the end of September from his commanding officer. In a letter he said,

> I feel I can hardly express to you the great sympathy shown for you in your great loss. Your husband had served a long time with me, and during that time I had grown to have a great fondness for him and for the quiet unassuming way in which he performed his duties. He was very popular with all the units in the battalion, so that in writing you I feel that I am conveying to you an expression of sympathy from all the officers, NCOs and men with me. It is such a blow as that which has befallen you makes us all the more determined to crush the Germans. May God give you strength in this, your great time of trial.

Alexander Grant was buried near to where he fell on the battlefield just north of Estrées-Deniécourt. In 1920, his body was exhumed and reburied in Assevillers New British Cemetery, at grave VIII. A. 7. This cemetery was made after the Armistice by the concentration of graves from the battlefields of the Somme and from other burial grounds. He is one of two men with the same name listed on the Bo'ness War Memorial.

**Richard Snedden**

Able Seaman Richard Sneddon was born in Bo'ness on the 19th September 1894, the son of Robert W. Snedden, and Violet B. Snedden. His parents were married in Bo'ness in 1891, and they stayed at 34 Newtown, Bo'ness. He was 5'2", with dark brown hair and eyes described as "slightly hazel". Richard was unmarried, and prior to joining up he was employed as a coal miner with the Kinneil Coal Co., Ltd., Bo'ness.

Richard enlisted on 7th June 1915, with Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, Royal Naval Division, service no: Clyde, Z/5175. The Division were participating in the Gallipoli campaign, and Richard was sent there in October, joining Nelson Battalion as the galley cook. Due to his background as a miner, he was temporarily transferred to 8th Corps Mining

Company. He then spent some time in hospital in Mudros with bursitis, before recovering and being sent to the Western Front, arriving in Marseilles on 16th May 1916.

The Division fought in the Battle of the Somme later that year, and in 1917 at Arras and Passchendaele. Early in 1918, his mining skills were again in demand as he temporarily joined 7th Entrenching Battalion, before leaving in March to join Hawke Battalion, part of 189th (Royal Naval) Brigade. He took part in the defence against the great German Spring offensive, and was hospitalised again after being gassed during the Battle of St. Quentin on 23rd March. He rejoined his battalion in July.

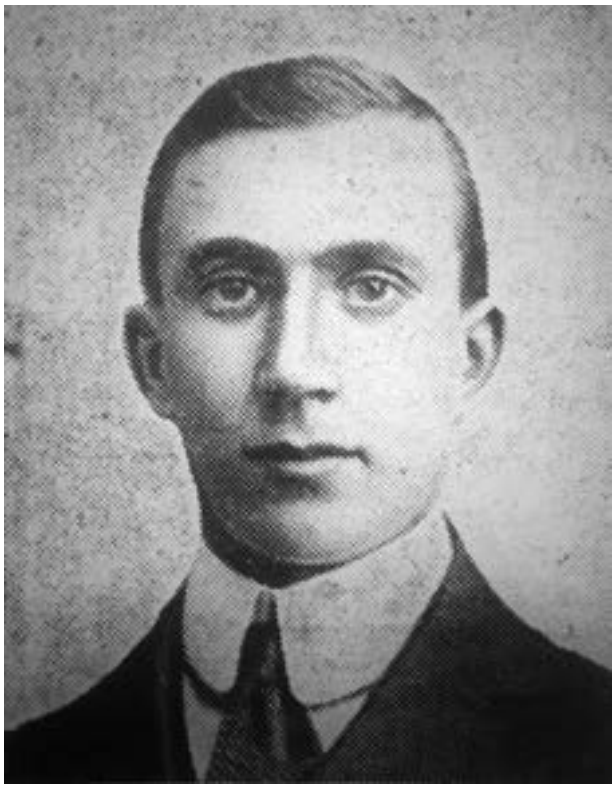
Only a few weeks later, Richard Sneddon was killed in action near Buissy during 63rd (Royal Naval) Division's participation as part of XVII Corps, Third Army at the Battle of Drocourt-Queant, a phase of the Second Battles of Arras 1918. His body was not recovered and he is listed on the Vis-En-Artois Memorial, panel 1 and 2. He was 27 years old when he was killed.

**Robert Sharpe, MC**

Second-Lieutenant Robert "Bobbie" Sharpe was the elder son of Andrew Sharpe and Marion or Minnie Sharpe (ms Johnston). His parents had married in the town in 1891. His father, originally from Govan in Glasgow, was the burgh treasurer, solicitor and fiscal in Bo'ness. He had one brother, Andrew, and one sister, Agnes Frew Sharpe and the family lived at 4 Dean Terrace, Bo'ness.

He was educated at Bo'ness Academy and served his apprenticeship as a bank clerk at the Clydesdale Bank. Thereafter he joined the staff of the National Bank of India in London. When war broke out, Robert and his brother Andrew joined up. Robert joined the London Regiment of Royal Fusiliers, whilst Andrew joined a cavalry regiment. Some time later when the two brothers were stationed at Salisbury Plain, Andrew was transferred to his brother's Regiment and the two left for France in 1915. They were in the thick of the fighting for over two years, with Robert rising to the rank of Corporal. In the summer of 1917, he was successful in obtaining an officer's commission, and spent six months training back in Britain. In January 1918 he was posted to the Lincolnshire Regiment, 10th Bn and returned to France soon after, being attached to the 2nd Bn. He came under the orders of 21st Division, 62nd Brigade. Cheering letters were received by his parents from Robert saying how satisfied he was with the way things were going for the Allies.

Just after the Second Battle of the Bapaume, on 7/8th September, while leading his company into action south west of Heudicourt, he was dangerously wounded in the thigh and his right leg had to be amputated at a Casualty Clearing Station. During this procedure he lost a great deal of blood and he needed a blood transfusion. He remained very weak thereafter and died on the evening of 12th September at 7:30pm. News was conveyed in a letter from a Church of England chaplain, saying that from the outset the matron and medical officers gave him very little hope of survival. He stated that Robert did not seem to suffer much, gradually became unconscious and passed away very peacefully. His parents' grief was compounded by news that his brother Andrew had also been wounded a few days before his brother and was receiving treatment in a Newcastle hospital. Luckily though Andrew survived the war. Robert is buried in St. Sever Cemetery, Rouen, Seine-Maritime at grave C.2.4. He was 26 years old. He is also remembered on the large family headstone, in the shape of a celtic cross, in Bo'ness Cemetery. Robert Sharpe was awarded the Military Cross posthumously for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty.



**George Millar**

Gunner George Black Millar (or Miller) was born in Bo'ness in 1894, the son of Thomas and Helen Millar (ms Black). His parents were married in Bo'ness on 3rd June 1887. His father was a dock labourer in the town. He had two brothers, William and Thomas, and three sisters, Christina, Elizabeth and Helen Millar, and the family lived at 13 South Street, Bo'ness. Prior to enlisting George was employed by R. Waddell & Son, Pawn Office in Bo'ness.

He enlisted at Stenhousemuir in 1915 and eventually found himself with the Royal Field Artillery, 129th (Howitzer) Battery, 42nd Brigade, under the command of 3rd Division. The brigade had been in France since 1914, and was originally formed from numbers 29, 41 and 45 Batteries RFA and the Brigade Ammunition Column. The 9.2 inch Howitzer was Britain's principal counter-battery weapon. It had a range of 10000 metres and a rate of fire of two shells per minute.

On 12th September 1918, he was killed in action just after the 3rd Division's participation in the Second Battle of Bapaume, a continuation of the Battle of Albert, and a phase of what is known as the Second Battles of the Somme 1918. In a letter to George's parents, a Lieutenant in his Battalion expressed his sympathy and wrote, "George was one of our best telephonists. He was always cheery and willing, and especially when things were not going as easily as one would have liked, he always could be relied on to do his utmost unflinchingly".

He was originally buried in Vaulx Churchyard British Extension, but in August 1920 his body was exhumed and reburied at Vaulx Hill Cemetery, grave I. J. 27, as part of grave concentration. This cemetery is situated in the village of Vaulx-Vraucourt, some 6km north east of Bapaume. George Millar was 23 years old.

**Archibald Dunlop, MC**

Captain Archibald "Archie" Ballantine Henderson Dunlop was born on 18th March 1895, the son of James Dunlop, originally from Dalmellington in Ayrshire, and the headteacher of Bo'ness Public School, and Helen Dunlop (ms Henderson). His parents were married on 27th June 1884 in Glasgow. He had four sisters, Helen, Agnes, Margaret and Janette and two brothers, James and Thomas Dunlop, and the family resided at the Public Schoolhouse in Bo'ness, located at the corner of Braehead and School Brae. Archie was employed as an apprentice bank clerk with the Bo'ness branch of the Clydesdale Bank. Described as a tall strapping lad, he had then gone to London to work, where shortly after the outbreak of war he joined the London Regiment, 1/14th (County of London) Battalion (London Scottish), service no: 4315. He soon set his mind on becoming an officer and was gazetted towards the end of 1915 receiving a commission in the Cambridgeshire Regiment, 1/1st Battalion.

He went to France on 31st May 1916, but before doing so still found time to marry his fiancée Violet Marion Bartram in Norbury, Surrey on 29th May, 1916. The couple had one daughter, Violet Bartram Dunlop, who was born on 25th July 1918. In November 1916 Archie was awarded the Military Cross for his gallantry and resourcefulness during the successful assault on the Schwaben Redoubt in October and promoted to Captain in the field - a rare distinction. The feelings of pride by his family were marred a few days later when news reached home of the death in action of his elder brother Sergeant James Dunlop, Highland Light Infantry, who was killed instantaneously by an artillery shell on the final day of the Battle of the Somme.

On the 31st July 1917 Archie was severely wounded in both thighs by a German bullet at St Julien on 31st July, and he spent some time in a Bristol hospital recovering. After a short visit back to Bo'ness he went to camp in Sussex, and spent several of the happier months of his life training officers and men. The great Allied counter-offensive of summer 1918 meant he was to answer an urgent call for officers needed at the Front, and he left again for France on 7th September, his battalion coming under the orders of 12th (Eastern) Division, 35th Brigade. In a letter dated 13th September, he wrote one last time to his

mother back in Bo'ness. He wrote, "I arrived at the battalion yesterday at noon, and found them having a short rest. We will probably be out of the line for a few days longer. It was quite interesting in one way to be out here again. There are quite a lot of officers here I have known, though not many of the men are left". The next communication received by Mrs Dunlop at the Schoolhouse was a telegram delivered at 8:00am on 23rd September. It read, "Regret to inform you Captain A.B.H. Dunlop, Cambridgeshires, died of wounds 20/9/18. Lord Milner expresses his sympathy".

Archie had been wounded during the Battle of Épehy, transferred to a CCS in nearby Doingt where he died of wounds received. He is buried in Doingt Communal Cemetery Extension, grave I. B. 8. He was 23 years old. Archie Dunlop succeeded Robert Sharpe as an apprentice in the Clydesdale Bank in their native town. Both lads joined the Army about the same time, took commissions in different regiments and within a few days of each other, as fate would have it, laid down their lives for King and country. A third man from the same bank, Joshua Reid, was also killed at Cambrai in 1917.

**Thomas B. Simpson**

Lance Corporal Thomas Burnett Simpson was born in Carriden in 1896, the son of Thomas Burnett Simpson Senior and Elizabeth McLaren Simpson (ms Williamson). His parents had been married in Bo'ness in 1892. He had one sister Margaret and one brother John Watt Simpson. The family lived at "Mossgiel", Philpingstone Road, Bo'ness. Prior to the war he was employed in the offices of the Carron Company at Bo'ness and Leith.

He enlisted in May 1915 and joined the Royal Engineers, service no: 1946. Eventually he was transferred to the Gloucestershire Regiment 1st Bn, coming under the orders of 1st Division, 3rd Brigade. In September 1918, the 1st Division were fighting in the Battles of the Hindenburg Line, a series of offensives to try and smash through the formidable German Hindenburg Line system, during the Hundred Days Offensive. On the 14th September, the 1st Gloucestershire Bn, had captured the Maissemy Ridge east of Vermand. The following day further objectives to capture high ground were made. Thomas Simpson was killed in action by shrapnel from an exploding artillery shell during this attack. He was one of 13 men killed that day, along with 50 wounded. Ultimately the action was successful, with many of the enemy killed, nine prisoners taken and 10 machine guns captured.

Thomas Simpson was originally buried near to where he fell just south of Maissemy. His body was exhumed, however, on 27th December 1919, along with two others and re-buried on the same date at nearby Vadencourt British Cemetery, Maissemy, at grave III. C. 35. He was 22 years old.

Thomas Simpson is also commemorated on the family headstone in Carriden Cemetery.

**Thomas W. Stanners**

Corporal Thomas Williamson Stanners was the third son of Thomas Williamson Stanners Senior and Christina Stanners (ms McCallum) of 21 Hopetoun Terrace, Bo'ness. He was born in the town in 1886. His parents had married at Carriden in 1872. His father was a well-known blacksmith in Bo'ness and for many years had operated a smithy at Church Wynd until later in life when he worked for Messrs A. Ballantine and Sons, New Grange Foundry.

Young Thomas served his apprenticeship with, and was for many years on the clerical staff of, Messrs James Calder & Co., Distillers, Bo'ness. Latterly he occupied a responsible position with the firm of R. Hutcheson & Co., Maltsters, Kirkcaldy, and at the outbreak of war was mobilised with the Fife and Forfar Yeomanry, 1/1st Bn. Thomas Stanners is pictured in the uniform of this regiment. He was drafted to Egypt in January 1915, and took part in many of the frontier engagements in that theatre of war. On the disbanding of the Territorial mounted unit, his battalion converted into the 14th (Fife & Forfar Yeomanry) Bn, and Thomas linked up with the Black Watch in April 1917. On the Palestine front his battalion helped in General Allenby's initial military successes up to the eviction of the Turks from Jerusalem in December 1917. After over three years campaigning in Egypt and the Holy Land, Corporal Stanners landed in France in May 1918. He then joined the Black Watch, 1st Bn, service no: 345381, coming under the orders of 1st Division, 1st Guards Brigade. He was home in Bo'ness on his first and only furlough in June, and returned across the channel during the Fair week.

Only a few weeks later Thomas Stanners was killed in action on 19th September 1918 by a sniper's bullet as the 1st Bn attempted to capture an area of high ground south of Pontruet near Berthaucourt during the 1st Division's participation in the Battles of the Hindenburg Line. He is buried at Bellicourt British Cemetery, grave IV. O. 5. He was 31 years of age. The news was conveyed in a letter to his sorely-bereaved parents from Lieutenant John M. Smith. He said, "I very much regret to have to write this letter to inform you that your son Corpl. Stanners was killed in action on 18th Sept [actually 19th]. I regret the delay but circumstances have not permitted my writing before this. Your son was killed by a sniper while nobly doing his duty and I will feel his loss in the company very much. He joined the 1st battalion about five months ago after long service in Palestine, and he was one of my trusted NCOs. I am sure you will feel his loss much, but it is some consolation that he died for a great cause for which we have been striving".

The Stanners family suffered greatly during the Great War. Two elder brothers had already made the supreme sacrifice. Corporal Gilbert Stanners, Royal Scots, 1/10th Bn had been killed in action at the Somme on 17th August 1916, and Private Neil Stanners, Royal Scots 13th Bn, had died of wounds at Passchendaele on 22nd August 1917. It was all too much for their father Thomas Stanners Senior. On hearing that his third son had fallen, he took ill at work and died soon after on 29th September 1918. He was 71 years old, a man of a quiet and retiring disposition, his final years shattered by the loss of his sons, the hidden costs of the Great War.

Thomas, his brothers and father are also commemorated on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery.

**George Gardner**

Private George Gardner was born in Bo'ness in 1898, the eldest son of James Gardner, a distillery cooper, later an aerated water salesman, and Helen Russell Gardner (ms Baird). His parents were married in Bo'ness in 1894. He had three brothers James, William, Thomas and two sisters Janet and Margaret Gardner. Sadly his mother Helen died in 1906. George was unmarried and lived with the rest of the family at Brentwood Terrace, Corbiehall.

He followed the same trade as his father and before enlisting he was employed as a cooper with Messrs Riddell and Smith, Methylators, Bo'ness, a subsidiary company of Bo'ness Distillery. This branch of the business was set up in 1911 using the lower grade spirit from the distilling industry to make methylated spirits. Some 5000 gallons were produced weekly for use by the varnish making industry, dye works and others.

George enlisted in April 1917 with the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles), 1st Bn, service no: 38347. After a period of training at home, he was sent to France in March 1918, was then transferred to 5/6th Bn, coming under the command of 33rd Division, 19th Brigade.

During the 33rd Division's participation in the Battles of the Hindenburg Line, George Gardner was killed in action on 22nd September during the 5/6th Battalion's capture of Meath Post. This was an enemy strongpoint just south of the village of Villers-Guislain, located 2 km south of the main road from Cambrai to Peronne. He is buried in nearby Targelle Ravine British Cemetery, Villers-Guislain, grave G. 35. He was 21 years old when he died. George is buried next to his comrade John (Jack) Frater, Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) 5th/6th Bn, service no: 201077, from Linlithgow who was also killed on the same date.

British troops attack the Hindenburg Line

**Robert W. Crosthwaite**

Private Robert Wilson Crosthwaite was the youngest son of Henry Stainton Crosthwaite and Helen Crosthwaite (ms Howieson). His parents had married in Falkirk, Stirlingshire on 24th November 1859. Robert's father was an Iron Foundry Manager, originally from Larbert, and the family had lived for a time in South Stockton, Stockton-on-Tees, where Robert had been born on 17th July 1879. The family moved back to Bo'ness and had lived at Grange Road, Forth Place and then Panacre Place. Sadly his father had died aged 48 years old on 13th July 1888, but in their short time together the couple had managed to produce 12 children. Robert's brothers and sisters were Helen, William, Mary, Annie, Henry Stainton, John, Agnes and Josephine. Three other siblings died in infancy, namely Henry, Catherine and Margaret. His sister Helen passed away in 1883, aged 23, and is buried beside her father in Larbert Churchyard. Robert's mother lived to the grand old age of 94 years old, passing away in 1932. He had been trained as a butcher by Mr. John Walker of the Co-operative Wholesale Society's fleshing department. He then moved to take up jobs in Dunfermline, Glenfarg and Burntisland where he latterly resided with his family at "Balfern," 5 Heriot Gardens, Burntisland. Robert married Margaret Balfour Lee Doig on 11th September 1906, and the couple had four children, Margaret, Henry Stainton, David Doig and Helen Howieson Crosthwaite. He enlisted at Burntisland in 1916 and joined the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) 8th Battalion, service no: S/22538, coming under the orders of 26th Brigade in 9th (Scottish) Division. He arrived in France in the summer of 1917, just in time to fight at Passchendaele and Cambrai. He somehow survived those campaigns and also the German Spring Offensive of 1918. Robert's brother William, who was the manager of the furnishing department of the Co-operative Wholesale Society in Glasgow, had died in May 1918, and Robert had received special leave to attend his brother's funeral. Little did he think that his own funeral would be five months later.

On his return to the Front, he joined 4/5th Bn, who were transferred to 46th and then 44th Brigade in 15th (Scottish) Division on 5th June. He fought in the Battle of the Soissonnais and of the Ourcq including the attack on Buzancy, a phase of the Battles of the Marne. The 15th (Scottish) Division then moved to the Loos and Hulluch sectors in early September. During a bombing raid by enemy aircraft on 16th September 1918, Robert was fatally wounded and died on the same day at 6th Casualty Clearing Station. He is buried in Houchin British Cemetery, grave III. F. 28., about 5 kilometres south of Bethune. He was 39 years old when he died. Robert is commemorated on the Burntisland War Memorial, on his own family headstone in Burntisland Cemetery and on the large Crosthwaite family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery.

**William Easton**

Private William Easton was born in Torphichen, West Lothian in 1882. He was married to Elizabeth Easton (ms Reilly or Hunter) in Bo'ness in 1916 and they had one child. The family lived at Kirkwood's Close, North Street, Bo'ness. Prior to enlisting he was employed as a distillery worker at Messrs James Calder & Co. Ltd., Distillers, Bo'ness.

He was called up in 1916 and joined the Royal Scots, 17th (Service) Battalion (Rosebery's Bantams), service no: 40904. He was sent to the Western Front soon after, coming under the orders of 35th Division, 106th Brigade. The 35th Division fought at the Somme and Passchendaele. In early 1918 they participated in the defence against Operation Michael, the German Spring Offensive. They were preparing for the Allied offensive known as Final Advance in Flanders when William was killed in action on 18th September 1918 in the front line trenches near Ypres.

In a letter to William's wife, a chaplain described the circumstances of his death. He said,

> You will . . . probably have heard by now of your husband's death… which occurred on Wednesday night last at 10:45. Our Colonel was wounded and your husband was carrying him in a stretcher along with another soldier, when a shell came over and killed all three. Death was immediate, so he did not suffer. It is a dreadful blow to you to have your long anxiety crowned with sorrow in this way and our hearts go out to you in your trouble. Just know you will be able to think of nothing but your loss, but afterwards you will be able to cherish the memory of a brave man who laid down his life for his country and his loved ones.

William is buried in Nine Elms British Cemetery, at grave XV. C. 24. He was 36 years of age.

The two other men that were casualties of the same shell that killed William Easton are buried alongside him in Nine Elms British Cemetery. The man on the stretcher was Lieutenant-Colonel Alec Graham Scougal, aged 30, a recipient of the Military Cross, and the other stretcher bearer was Private David Torrance, aged 31, both of the Royal Scots, 17th Battalion.

William Easton is also commemorated on the Torphichen & Westfield WW1 Memorial.

**Peter Stanners**

Lance Corporal Peter Stanners was born in Linlithgow in 1879, the son of Robert Stanners, a shoemaker, and Annie Stanners (ms Leishman), who resided at 75 High Street Linlithgow, and who had been married in Larbert on 18th June 1866. He came from a large family, with two sisters Annie and Helen, and eight brothers John, Robert, James, David, another John, Thomas, Adam and Joseph Stanners. Described as a fair-haired lad, he was educated at the old Burgh School in his native town. In 1904, Peter married Barbara Stanners (ms Jamieson) in Tillicoultry. The couple made their home at 28B Bankhead, Bo'ness, and they had one son, aged 11. Peter was well known in Bo'ness having been a postman in the town working for Bo'ness Post Office since 1898, having previously carried out the same duties in Linlithgow. He was called up in June 1916 and enlisted with the Royal Scots Fusiliers, 11th Garrison Bn, service no: 265580. After a period of training and home duty on the English coast he was sent to France in May 1917, eventually coming under orders of 59th (2nd North Midland) Division, 178th Brigade, and saw action at the Battle of Albert, escaping unharmed. His luck would soon run out. Peter Stanners was killed in action on 23rd September 1918 on the front line near Fauquissart just after the 59th Division's participation in the operations known as the Advance in Flanders. A few days later his wife Barbara received this letter from the regiment chaplain, Rev. G. T. Wright.

> I have just come in from performing the sad duty of burying your husband. You will have heard (by) now how he was killed early yesterday morning (Monday) morning, about a quarter past six by a shell falling upon the post of which he was in command. He lies now in a little cemetery well away behind the line in ground which he helped to reconquer from the enemy, far from all the dirt and hardships which he, good hearted man that he was - hated so much, and yet in which he bore his part so bravely and nobly. May I tell you how much we all - officers and men alike - thought of your husband. We can ill spare men of his type in these stern times. A gloom has fallen over the whole company at this going, and we shall miss him very much. Terrible as will be the suddenness of the shock to you, I am sure that for his sake you would much rather have it as it was - instantaneously and painlessly - rather than had he been condemned to spend days or even weeks in hopeless agony. He can have known nothing about it, and - brave and good man that he was - we need fear nothing for him. For myself, I believe that the only thing that mars his present peace and joy of heart is to see his friends mourning for him. Please accept the sincere sympathy of the Commanding Officer and in his that of us all.

The cemetery referred to by Rev. Wright was the Lestrem Communal Cemetery German Extension. As part of the grave concentration exercise in 1920, however, his body was identified from the cross and certified reports, was exhumed and reburied in its present location at Y Farm Military Cemetery, Bois Grenier, grave M. 6. Peter Stanners was 38 years old when he died. Although he is the fourth man with the same surname on the Memorial he is not directly related to the other three Stanners brothers.

**Colin Sidley**

Private Colin Sidley was born in Hanley, Staffordshire, in 1896, the son of Peter Sidley, a potter's sanitary presser, and Jane B. Sidley. He had three brothers Isaac, Fred and Arthur and three sisters Hannah, Jeanie and Elsie. Sadly his father died in 1910 and his widow and the family came to Bo'ness in 1912. There they had stayed at 15 Mayfield Terrace, Grangepans but later moved back down south to stay at 20 County Road, Stafford. Before enlisting Colin was employed as a potter with Messrs C.W. McNay and Sons, Bridgeness Pottery. He was a tall lad at 5'11", and weighed 135lbs.

He enlisted on the 8th December 1915, with the Royal Scots, 2nd Battalion, service no: 301842. Two of his brothers also enlisted. Before journeying to the Western Front he married Catherine P. B. Sidley (ms McGillivray) on 11th March 1916 at Bo'ness. They stayed at 6 Craigview Place, Grangepans and had one son, Colin Sidley. He arrived in France on 21st August and came under the orders of 3rd Division, 8th Brigade. He saw action at the Somme before contracting pneumonia and being sent home to recuperate, spending some time in Dublin and in Colchester Military Hospital in England.

He returned to France in August 1918 and participated in the Second Battle of the Somme, the 3rd Division being a part of VI Corps in the Third Army under General Byng. Much of this battle was fought on the same ground as the Battle of the Somme 1916.

Colin Sidley was killed in action at Demicourt on 25th September, just as 3rd Division were preparing to attack at the Battle of Canal du Nord, a phase of the Allied Hundred Days Offensive. He was buried at Morchies Australian Cemetery, grave D. 12. The village of Morchies was occupied by British troops on the 20th March 1917, lost on the 21st March 1918 and retaken again in September 1918. Colin's widow Catherine received official notification of his death from the Secretary of the Royal Scots Territorial Association in Edinburgh on 18th October. He was 22 years old.

**Thomas Orr**

Corporal Thomas Orr was born in Bo'ness on 8th November 1887, the eldest son of Thomas Orr and Agnes Orr (ms Donaldson). His parents had been married in Carriden in 1884. Along with his parents he had emigrated to Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada in 1908. Prior to this his father had been in business in Bo'ness as a general dealer.

In Canada, Thomas worked as a teamster (a driver of horses and cart). He was unmarried. Prior to enlistment he lived with his parents at 1852, 1st Avenue, West Vancouver. He was 5'7" in height, weighed 165lbs, had a ruddy complexion, brown eyes and brown hair.

He enlisted on 16th March 1916 in Vancouver, with the 231st Overseas Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force, service no: 1015127, and after finishing his training was sent to France in the spring of 1916. In May 1917 he was transferred to Canadian Infantry (British Columbia Regiment), 72nd Bn, (Seaforth Highlanders of Canada), coming under the orders of 4th Canadian Division, 12th Canadian Infantry Brigade. His Division fought at Passchendaele in 1917. In the summer of 1918 he made one last visit to Bo'ness on leave, finding the time to attend the funeral of his uncle, the late Stewart Currie. Returning to France he fought with the First Army under General Horne in the Second Battles of Arras. He was then promoted to the rank of Corporal in the field on 12th September.

Fifteen days later on 27th September Thomas Orr was killed in action near Bourlon Wood during the 4th Canadian Division's participation in the Battle of the Canal du Nord, part of a general Allied attack against German positions during the Hundred Days Offensive. The news was conveyed to Thomas' widowed auntie, Margaret Currie, by way of a letter dated 4th October from another nephew, Private William Donaldson, who was also serving with the Canadian Army. In the letter he said that Thomas had been killed in the last big push, and was shot through the breast. He only lived minutes and "died with a smile on his face".

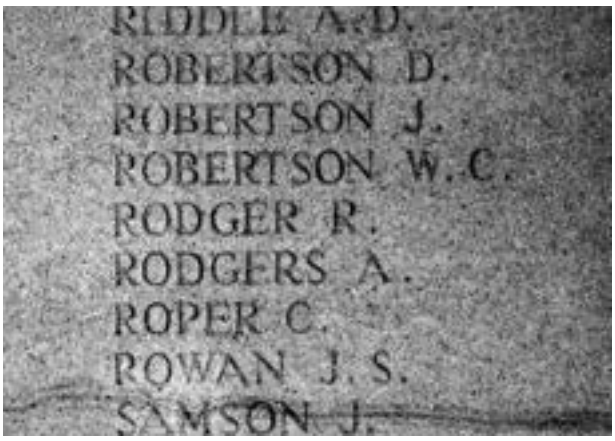
Corporal Thomas Orr is buried at Quarry Wood Cemetery, Sains-Les-Marquion, grave: III. C. 29. Sains-les-Marquion is a village approximately 12 kilometres north-west of Cambrai.

He was 30 years old when he died.

German dugout at Bourlow Wood after its capture by Canadian troops

**John Robertson**

Private John Robertson was born in Carriden in 1899. He was the youngest son of James Robertson, an insurance agent, and Janet Boyd Robertson (ms Williamson), who were married in Bo'ness in 1891. He had one sister, Robina, and one elder brother William Robertson and the family stayed at 13 Thirlestane Cottage, Grangepans. Sadly, his father had died in 1902, aged 38 years old. Before enlisting in 1917 John was employed by Messrs Kennedy & Company in their woodyard as a labourer. He was a slightly built young laddie, measuring 5'2" tall and weighing 99lbs. As soon as John reached the age of 18 years old he joined the colours on 25th October 1917, enlisting with the Highland Light Infantry, 53rd (Young Soldier) Battalion, service no: 45705. This was a basic recruit training unit based at Kirkcaldy, part of the Lowland Reserve Brigade. He was drafted to France on 12th May 1918, and a week later was transferred to the Royal Scots, 2nd Battalion, new service no: 59933, coming under the command of 3rd Division, 8th Brigade. He was slightly wounded during the Second Battle of Bapaume but returned to the front line in late August.




John Robertson was killed in action by artillery bombardment on 27th September during 3rd Division's participation in the Battle of Canal Du Nord, a phase of the Battles of the Hindenburg Line, part of the Allied Hundred Days Offensive. His body was not recovered and he is one of the many men commemorated on the Vis-En-Artois Memorial, panel 3. He had just turned 19 years old when he died.

Artillery going through a cutting in the Canal du Nord

**Alexander Williamson**

Private Alexander Williamson was born in Carriden in 1883, the son of George and Alison Williamson (ms Bell). His parents had been married on 26th September 1879 in Bo'ness. His father worked as a colliery wagon driver in town, but sadly he died in 1909, aged 56 years old, with Alexander registering his death.

Alexander came from a big Bo'ness family, with eight sisters, namely Henrietta, Alison, Mary, Catherine, Margaret, Helen, Davidina and Julia, and two brothers, Andrew and William Williamson. He also had an elder half-brother and half-sister named George and Agnes from his father's first marriage to Mary Haston, who also died at a young age. Previously Alexander was employed as a coal miner by Kinneil Coal Co., Ltd at Kinneil Colliery. He married Elizabeth M. Williamson (ms Walker) at Carriden in 1906. They had five children and prior to the war had moved to Fife, living at 135 Baldridgeburn, Dunfermline.

He enlisted in 1915 at Dunfermline, initially with the Army Ordnance Corps, service no: 04203 and was then transferred to the Hampshire Regiment, 2nd Battalion, service no: 39077, coming under the orders of 29th Division, 88th Brigade. Alexander was wounded in action during the 29th Division's participation in the Battle of Ypres 1918, a phase of the Final Advance in Flanders. He was removed to 36th Casualty Clearing Station but died of his wounds on 29th September. He is buried at Haringhe (Bandaghem) Military Cemetery, grave III. C.5. Bandaghem, like Dozinghem and Mendinghem, were the popular names given by the troops to groups of casualty clearing stations posted to this area during the First World War. The cemetery site was chosen in July 1917 for the 62nd and 63rd Casualty Clearing Stations and burials from these and other hospitals, including the 36th CCS, continued until October 1918. Alexander Williamson was 34 years old when he died.

**William Melville**

Private William Melville was born in Bo'ness in 1892, the elder son of Abraham Arthur Melville, a dock labourer originally from Dunkeld, Perthshire, and Agnes Melville (ms Currie), of Dark Close, 67 South Street, Bo'ness. His parents were married in Bo'ness in 1891. William had one younger brother James Melville. He married Margaret Scullion at Carriden on 18th October 1915, and they lived at 35 Foundry Square (the Dairy Close), Grangepans, and they had one son named William. Before enlisting, he was employed as a coal miner at the No. 6 Pit, belonging to Bridgeness Coal Company Ltd. He was a slightly built man, standing 5'0" tall and weighing 107lbs. He enlisted at Bo'ness on 15th March 1915 with the Royal Scots, 17th (Service) Battalion (Rosebery), service no: 21876. He arrived in France in January, 1916, coming under the orders of 35th Division, 106th Brigade.

He was wounded on the left side of his face on 17th May 1916 but was only out of action for four days, just in time to return for the Battle of the Somme. In early 1917 he had a three month spell with the 3rd Canadian Division and 176th Tunnelling

Companies. He rejoined the 17th Bn on 16th September and took part in the Passchendaele campaign. He suffered a shell wound in action and was gassed on the 6th June 1918, receiving hospital treatment, but once again returned to duty on 9th August. After a short period of leave he again returned to the action on 1st September.

On 30th September, he was fighting with Y Company, 12th Platoon in the 17th Bn when he was killed in action by machine-gun fire when they were attacking a village during 35th Division's participation in the Battle of Ypres. This was a phase of the Allied Final Advance in Flanders. He was originally buried near to where he fell on the battlefield. In October 1919, however, his body was exhumed and reburied at Zantvoorde British Cemetery as part of grave concentration. He is buried there at grave I. E. 12. He was 26 years old.

There is an eye-opener in William's records to the carnage of WW1. A letter to his widow Margaret informs her that there will be a delay in her receiving her husband's bronze Memorial Plaque as the Plaque Factory were issuing 15000 a week. With many thousands still to be issued, a delay was therefore unavoidable.

**John Buchanan**

Private John Buchanan was born in 1894 in Bo'ness, the son of John Buchanan, a pit bottomer, and Mary Buchanan (ms Roy). His parents were married in Bo'ness on 7th December 1894 and the family lived for many years at the Snab Toll in the west of Bo'ness. His grandparents John and Janet Buchanan also lived at the same address. John was a coal miner employed by the Kinneil Coal Company Ltd, and just before joining up he lived at 9 Foredale Terrace, Carriden.

He was called up in April 1918 and joined the Cameron Highlanders, 5th Battalion, service no: 32399. After three months training he was drafted to France in August. Before doing so, however, he found time to marry his partner Mary Wilson Stewart at Carriden Manse on 25th July 1918.

Arriving in France, his battalion came under the orders of 9th (Scottish) Division, 26th Brigade. John

Buchanan was wounded in the right thigh on 2nd October 1918 on the last day of the Battle of Ypres, during the 9th (Scottish) Division's participation in the Final Advance in Flanders, one of the last battles of WW1. He was transported to a stationary hospital at Wimereux but died of his wounds on 27th October. John Buchanan was 24 years old.

He is buried at nearby Terlincthun British Cemetery, Wimille, at grave VI. D. 9. The cemetery at Terlincthun was initiated in June 1918 when the space available for service burials in the civil cemeteries of Boulogne and Wimereux was exhausted. It was used chiefly for burials from the nearby base hospitals.

Having been married less than three months, his widow Mary received a compensation payment of £5 exactly from the Army for John dying in service, about £330 in today's money.

**Robert Baikie**

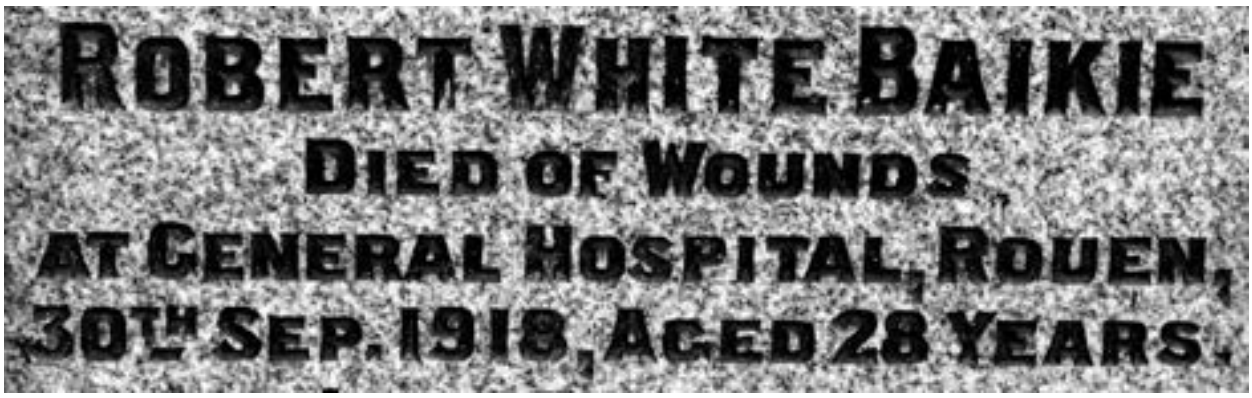
Guardsman Robert White Baikie was born in Bo'ness in 1890, the second son of John Baikie, a builder, and Janet Baikie (ms White) of Foremount Villa, Braehead, Bo'ness. Sadly his father had died in 1901, aged 47 years, leaving Janet to bring up the family of five. Robert had a brother John, and sisters Jane, Sarah and Jessie. He was a stonemason to trade and like his father was employed as a builder prior to joining up. He was a tall lad, standing 5'11" in height, and he weighed 155lbs.

He enlisted on 11th November 1915 at Glencorse, Midlothian, with the Scots Guards, 1st Battalion, service no:14982, and after a period of training at home was sent to France on 26th August 1916, coming under the orders of 1st Division, 2nd Guards Brigade. In February, 1917 he was hospitalised with pneumonia and was sent back to recover in the UK. Returning to the action, he fought at Passchendaele in late 1917, and at the Battles of the Lys and the Second Battles of Arras in 1918. In mid-September 1918, 1st Division were part of IX Corps in the Fourth Army under General Rawlinson.

Robert White Baikie suffered gunshot wounds in his right thigh and a fractured femur on 27th September 1918, just before the 1st Division took part in the pivotal Battle of St Quentin Canal, a phase of the Battles of the Hindenburg Line, part of the Allied Hundred Days Offensive. He was transferred to 3rd Field Ambulance and then No.8 General Hospital, to the south of Rouen, where he died of wounds on 30th September 1918. His mother had initially received a telegram informing her that her son had been wounded and admitted to hospital, but any hope was cruelly shattered in the evening of the same day, when a second telegram informed her that he had died of wounds. Later, in 1919, she would receive some of Robert's possessions from the Scots Guards Headquarters, and these included a German belt buckle and 23 German marks, small souvenirs of his many battles.

He is buried to the north east of Rouen at Bois-Guillaume Communal Cemetery Extension, grave E. 27A. The extension adjoins Bois-Guillaume Communal Cemetery. It was started in March 1917 and most of the burials came from No.8 General Hospital, which was quartered at Bois-Guillaume in a large country house and grounds. Robert Baikie was 28 years old when he died.

He is also commemorated on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery.



**Alexander Bernard**

Gunner Alexander Snedden Bernard and his twin sister Lizzie were born on December 15 1895, in Bo'ness. He was the son of Richard Bernard, a well-known Kinneil miner, and Isabella Stewart Bernard (ms Snedden), who had been married in Bo'ness in 1877 and lived at 24 Newtown, Bo'ness. Alexander came from a large family with eight brothers Hugh, Richard, Robert, John, Charles, James, William and his namesake Alexander (who had died in infancy) and four sisters, Margaret, Mary, Isabella and his twin Lizzie. His sister Isabella worked for many years in the Hippodrome cinema in Bo'ness town centre.

Alexander married Margaret (Maggie) Grant in Bo'ness on 27th October 1916, and the couple had two children, John Snedden and Richard. The family lived at 13 Ann Terrace, Bridgeness, and then 81 Castleloan. Alexander is pictured here with his family, John on his mother's lap and Richard balanced on the arm of the chair. Prior to enlisting, like his father and many of his brothers, he was employed as a coal miner with the Kinneil Coal Co., Ltd., Bo'ness. He was also well known in local football circles, being recognised as a player of some promise, and

was identified at different periods with Vale of Forth, Vale of Clyde and Bo'ness United. He played outside left for Vale of Forth in the 1915/16 season when they won the East of Scotland Juvenile Cup, beating Blackburn Rovers 2-0 in the final played at Volunteer Park, Armadale on 15th July 1916.

He enlisted at Bo'ness with the Royal Field Artillery, service no: 264693. Alexander is pictured wearing the uniform of the Royal Field Artillery. After completing his training he crossed to France in June and joined 466th Battery in 65th Army Brigade, serving with the Fourth Army under general Rawlinson. This Army Field Artillery Brigade, consisting of four Batteries, was equipped with 18 pounder guns. Alexander was wounded during the Battles of the Hindenburg, part of the Allied Hundred Days Offensive. He was removed to 20th Casualty Clearing Station, located at Doingt, a small village on the eastern outskirts of Peronne. Sadly Alexander died of his wounds on 29th September 1918. He is buried at nearby Doingt Communal Cemetery Extension, grave III.B.8. He was 22 years old when he died.

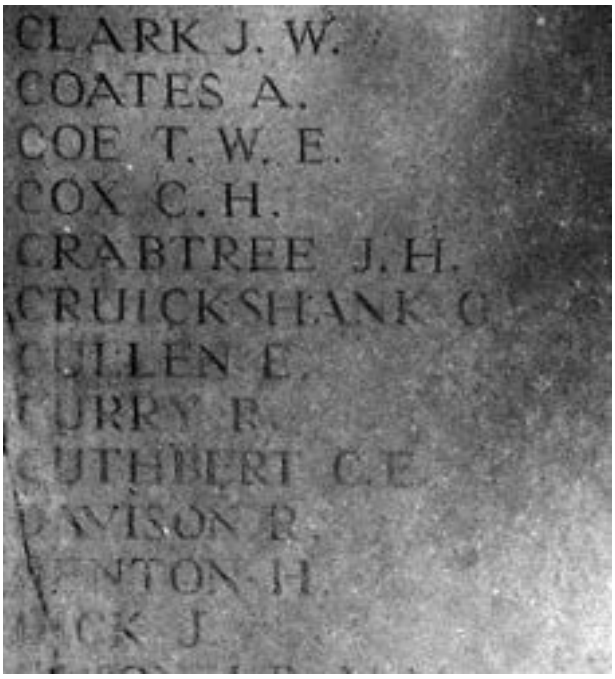
His son John was killed at El Alamein, Egypt in 1942 during WW2 and also appears on the Bo'ness War Memorial.

**George H. Cruickshank**

Private George Henderson Cruickshank was born in Carriden in 1887, the only son of George Cruickshank, an iron turner, and Elizabeth Cruickshank. He had three sisters Elizabeth, Helen, and Barbara. The family lived at Boyd's Buildings, Grangepans.

He was unmarried and had previously worked as a patternmaker with Messrs A. Ballantine and Sons, New Grange Foundry, Bo'ness, but had moved down to Newcastle-upon-Tyne in England. Prior to enlisting he was employed at Parson's Engineering Works in the city. He enlisted early in 1915 with the Northumberland Fusiliers, 21st (Service) Battalion (2nd Tyneside Scottish), service no: 21/1483. This battalion was raised in Newcastle mainly from men of Scottish descent from the North East. His initial training took place at Alnwick camp, in the grounds of Alnwick castle, then at Ripon coming under the orders of 34th Division, 102nd Brigade. George had fought at the Battle of the Somme in 1916, and the Arras Offensive and Passchendaele in 1917. In 1918 34th Division were in action in the Battle of St Quentin and then moved to Flanders seeing action in the Battle of Estaires, the Battle of Bailleul and the First Battle of Kemmel Ridge during the Battles of the Lys, suffering heavy losses in the process. The 34th Division was then withdrawn from fighting and 21st Bn were disbanded on 3rd February 1918. George Cruickshank then moved to 5th and finally the 12/13th Bn, coming under the orders of 21st Division, 62nd Brigade. On 8th October, the First and Third British Armies broke through the Hindenburg Line at the Second Battle of Cambrai. George Cruickshank was killed in action during this decisive action, part of the Hundred Days Offensive. He fell when the 12/13th Bn attacked the village of Walincourt, south of Cambrai.

His body was not recovered and he is listed on the Vis-En-Artois Memorial, panel 3. He was 31 years old.



**William Brown** (3 of 3)

Private William Stevenson Brown (the third man with the same name to appear on the Memorial) was born at Tenacres, a small farm steading near Grangemouth in 1895, the son of Henry Brown, a coal miner originally from Currie, Midlothian, and Elizabeth Brown (ms Stevenson). His parents were married on 10th December 1892 at Linlithgow. He came from another large family, with brothers Robert, John and Thomas, and sisters Margaret, Helen, Bella and Elizabeth. The family lived at 64 Castleloan, Bo'ness. Like his father William was employed as a coal miner with Kinneil Coal Company Ltd, Kinneil Colliery. He was unmarried.

He joined up in April 1917, enlisting with the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, 6th (Service) Battalion, service No: 32403. After a period of training he was sent to France and came under the command of 15th (Scottish) Division, 45th Brigade.

He had only been in France a few weeks, when he found himself in the thick of the action during the 15th (Scottish) Division's participation in the Final Advance in Artois. William was killed in action on 5th October in the front line west of the town of Vendin-Le-Viel. He was the only man killed that day in the 6th Camerons. He is buried at Philosophe British Cemetery, Mazingarbe, grave III. G. 3. He was 23 years old.

This was the final episode in a series of tragic events for his unfortunate father Henry Brown. Just before the war started his wife Elizabeth had been found dead in sad circumstances. Then, William's brother Robert Brown was drowned in action at sea. He was a stoker on board the HMS Hampshire when it struck a mine and sunk off Marwick Head, Orkney on 5th June 1916. Lord Kitchener was also killed in the same incident. Both Brown brothers appear on the Bo'ness War Memorial.

**Harry Robertson**

Private Henry (Harry) Robertson was born at Newtown, Bo'ness in 1898 the eldest son of Douglas Stewart Robertson, a Bo'ness miner, and Grace Robertson (ms McKenna). His parents were married in the town in 1897. His mother was the daughter of James McKenna, 122 Castleloan, Bo'ness, but sadly she died, aged 28, in 1905. After the death of his mother, his father moved down to South Moor, a village near Stanley, County Durham, England. His father remarried, to Phoebe, and lived at 8 Muriel Street, South Moor. They had four further children, George Morton, Henry, Elizabeth, Maggie and Agnes. At the time of enlistment, Harry worked as a coal miner for the South Moor Coal Company in the Hedley Pit. He was 5'7" tall and weighed 135lbs. He was described as a very steady, unassuming young man and well respected and loved by all who knew him.

He enlisted at Newcastle-upon-Tyne on 3rd May 1918 with the West Yorkshire Regiment, service no: 76171. He arrived in France on 1st September 1918, and was transferred to the Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment) 9th (Service) Battalion, service no: 35500, coming under the orders of 17th (Northern) Division, 52nd Brigade. He had only been in the action for seven weeks when he suffered a gunshot wound in the abdomen and left elbow on 12th October on the front line crossing the River Selle south east of the village of Neuvilly. This was during the action known as the Pursuit to the Selle, the final phase of the Battles of the Hindenburg Line.

A thanksgiving service for the deliverance of the town in Cambrai Cathedral on Sunday October 13th 1918

He was taken to 18th Casualty Clearing Station at Malassises but died of his wounds the following day. Writing to his bereaved father, Rev. J.G. Thornton, the regimental Chaplain said that Henry "… was admitted having been severely wounded in the abdomen…his wounds were too severe for him to survive. I buried his body in the military cemetery near here. There his grave is marked with a cross, and will be tended". He is buried in nearby Rocquigny-Equancourt Road British Cemetery, Manancourt, grave XIII.D.14. He was 20 years old.

**Robert Aitken**

Corporal Robert Aitken was born in Alloa in 1892, the son of Robert Aitken, and Mary Reid Lee Aitken (ms Staig). His father, a native of Airdrie, was a cashier in the goods department of the North British Railway Company in Bo'ness until, in 1907, he was promoted to Collector of Dock and Harbour Dues. His parents were married in Leven, Fife on 31st December 1886. He had three brothers, David, Matthew, William, and two sisters, Margaret and Lizzie Aitken. The family lived at Woodford Terrace, Braehead, Bo'ness. In civil life, like his father and elder brother David, he worked for the N.B. Railway Co. as a clerk, first in the Goods Station, Bo'ness, and afterwards at Philpstoun, and other places. At the time of his enlistment in February 1915, he was employed in the Goods office, Lime Road, Falkirk. He initially joined the Army Service Corps, service no: S4/064608, and arrived in France on 16th April 1915. His good work was noted and he was promoted to the rank of Corporal. In the summer of 1917 he was transferred along with a number of ASC comrades to the King's Royal Rifle Corps, 21st (Service) Battalion (Yeoman Rifles), service no: A/203629, in which he retained his rank. In November 1917 the 21st Bn moved with the 41st Division, 124th Brigade to Italy but returned to France in early March 1918.

He was then transferred to 16th (Service) Battalion (Church Lads Brigade), and came under orders of 33rd Division, 100th Brigade. He spent one last period of leave back in Bo'ness in the summer of 1918 before returning to the action. The 33rd Division took part in the Battles of the Hindenburg Line, and Robert wrote in his final letter of his satisfaction at driving out the Huns from the French towns and releasing their imprisoned townsfolk. It was great, he said, to see how happy these people were to be free from the German yoke. On 13th October 1918 Robert was wounded East of Troisville when the 33rd Division participated in the action known as the Pursuit to the Selle, a phase of the Hundred Days Offensive. He was taken to No:3 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station but died of his wounds there at 1:55pm on 14th October 1918. Official confirmation was received by Robert's parents three days later, and then a letter from the CCS Chaplain was received giving more details. It read, "The cause of death was a wound to the left side, penetrating into the abdomen. Such wounds, I may add, are almost always fatal, and generally produce unconsciousness". He is buried at Rocquigny-Equancourt Road British Cemetery, Manancourt, grave XIII. D. 20, five graves along from Private Harry Robertson of Bo'ness. Robert Aitken was 26 years old.

Robert was the second of four sons who were on service. The other brothers all survived the war. He is also commemorated on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery.

**Thomas Lapsley**

Private Thomas Lapsley was born on the 8th July 1897 at Carriden, the son of Andrew Lapsley, formerly a potter, but latterly a miner's brusher in the pits, and Ellen Lapsley (ms Stanners), a pottery worker. His parents were married at Bridgeness on 26th March 1897. He had five brothers Walter, James, Andrew, Alexander and William, and two sisters Violet and Agnes (Hannah) Lapsley. He was unmarried and lived with the family at Foredale Terrace, Carriden. Prior to enlisting he was employed as a coal miner.

He was 5'7" in height and weighed 126lbs, had a fresh complexion, brown eyes and brown hair.

Thomas enlisted on 3rd December 1915 at Bo'ness with the Royal Scots, service no: 27737. He served with numerous Royal Scots battalions. Initially with the 14th, he was transferred to the 16th and arrived in France on 8th June 1916, coming under the orders of 34th Division, 101st Brigade. He suffered a gunshot wound to the abdomen whilst fighting at the Battle of the Somme on 9th July, but returned to his unit soon after. Thomas was plagued with illnesses and ailments including of all things an ingrown toenail, but he contracted trench foot in November 1916 and was sent home for treatment. He returned to France in May 1917, and joined the 16th, 13th, 4th before being transferred to the 11th Bn on 3rd April 1918. He then came under the command of 9th (Scottish) Division, 27th Brigade. Thomas was fighting in the Battle of Courtrai, a phase of the Final Advance in Flanders when the British Second Army and Belgian Army combined to finally break out of the Ypres salient. He was killed in action on 15th October, when the 11th Royal Scots were attacking the objective of Steenbeck Ridge.

He was buried in Winkel St. Eloi Churchyard, alongside three comrades from the 11th Bn, Corporal William Robertson, 350557, Lance Corporal Thomas Stobo, 273039, Corporal Herbert Jones, 18136. The four men's bodies were exhumed in September 1920 and reburied at Cement House Cemetery, located in Langemark, north of Ypres. Thomas is buried at grave XVII. D. 21. He was 22 years old.

Four of his uncles, Alex, Walter, Charlie and David Stanners were also on active service and survived the war.

**James Hogg**

Corporal James Alexander Hogg was born on the 26th November 1880, in Duddingston, Edinburgh. He was the son of George Hogg, a native of Selkirk in the Borders and a gardener by trade, and Agnes Hogg (ms Gordon), originally from Forfar. His parents were married in Newington in the south side of Edinburgh in 1874. James had four brothers, namely William, John, Gordon and Thomas, and three sisters, Grace, Elizabeth and Agnes Hogg. Prior to the war his family had lived at Muirhouses in Carriden (known locally as the Murries), but latterly his parents resided at 9 Blackford Road, Edinburgh. He had previously served in the Royal Navy for 12 years from 1898 to 1910. He was 5'1" in height, had light brown hair, blue eyes and a fair complexion.

He enlisted in Bo'ness at the outbreak of war and joined the Royal Scots, 1st Battalion, service no: 381647. After a period of training at home he arrived in France on 17th February 1915, under the command of 27th Division, 81st Brigade. Almost immediately he received treatment at No:3 Casualty Clearing Station in April 1915, with a gunshot wound to his left finger, and was transferred to hospital at St. Omer.

He then fought in the Salonika campaign, and came through unscathed until 1918 when he was sent back to France and transferred to the 171st Chinese Labour Corps, service no: 381647, retaining his rank as Corporal. Some 95,000 Chinese farm labourers left their remote villages to work for the Allies on the Western Front to carry out heavy exhausting manual work in dangerous locations. After the war they continued to participate in ordinance clearance and exhuming bodies for grave concentration. Their contribution has gone largely unrecognised until recently.

Only days before the end of the war, James became part of the pandemic influenza outbreak

and contracted the illness. He never recovered and died on 23rd October 1918 from influenza and pneumonia at 3rd Stationary Hospital, Rouen. He is buried at St. Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen, grave S. II. DD. 14. He was 36 years of age.

This was the second tragic death to affect the Hogg family in less than a year. A younger brother Gordon Hogg had also enlisted with the Royal Scots but was serving with the Highland Light Infantry, 10th/11th Bn during the Battles of the Lys when he was declared missing in action, later presumed dead, on 9th April. Both brothers are commemorated in France and are listed on the Bo'ness War Memorial.

**William Youngson**

Private William Youngson was born in Peterhead, Aberdeenshire, in 1885, the son of James Youngson and Jemima Ann Youngson (ms Ritchie) of Peterhead. His parents were married there in 1882, but sadly his mother died aged 29 years in 1890. He was married to Isabella Elder Gibson at Dunning, Perthshire in 1915. They had one daughter, Grace Marshall, and prior to enlistment the family stayed at Kelty Cottage on Kelty Avenue, Grahamsdyke Road, Bo'ness. After the war his widow Isabella and child moved back to Perthshire and stayed at 34 King Street, Crieff. William was employed as a gardener by Mr Thomas Stewart, Justice of the Peace, The Knowe, Erngath Road. Thomas Stewart was one of the partners of Messrs Love and Stewart Ltd, pit wood importers and coal exporters.

William enlisted at Bo'ness with the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles), 8th Battalion, service no: 291470, and was sent to France coming under the orders of 34th Division, 103rd Brigade. William Youngson was killed on the front line whilst the 103rd Brigade were liberating Anzegem, Belgium during the Final Advance in Flanders.

He was killed 10 days before the Armistice. He was buried near to where he fell on the battlefield but on 20th July, 1920, his body was exhumed, as part of grave concentration, and transferred to Harlebeke New British Cemetery, grave IV. C. 5. The village of Harlebeke, located 32km east of Ypres, was captured on the night of 19-20th October 1918 by the 9th (Scottish) Division. The cemetery was formed after the Armistice when graves were brought in from the surrounding battlefields of 1918.

An interesting coincidence that William Youngson was the last man from Bo'ness to be killed in action on the Western Front, and he is also the last name to appear on the Bo'ness War Memorial.

CHAPTER 13

# *Prisoners of War*

During the Great War, eight million soldiers fighting on the front and two million civilians, mainly those living abroad in enemy countries or areas under enemy occupation, were taken prisoner of war and interned in camps for several years.

In August 1914, the International Committee of the Red Cross established the International Prisoners of War Agency in Geneva, to which the warring states submitted, more or less regularly, lists of prisoners. The Agency received 400000 pages of documents, including lists of prisoners' names and records of capture, of transfers between camps and of deaths in detention. The organisation also sent delegates on missions to inspect 524 POW and internment camps in Europe, the French colonies in North Africa, India and Japan. They interviewed prisoners and camp authorities, and inspected detention conditions in the camps, including hygiene, food, working conditions, and whether prisoners were able to write to their families.

Many Bo'ness men were interned in such camps and the majority were able to return home. The first returning prisoner was Private John B. Heath of the 1st Bn Royal Scots, and he gave a fascinating account of his capture and time spent in captivity to the local press in June 1916. Heath had been born in Bo'ness in 1881, and on leaving school had worked at the Chemical Works. He was hardly 17 years old when he joined the Army, and he was serving in India at the outbreak of war when he was sent to the Western Front. He trained as a bomb thrower and was attached to the King's Royal Rifles, 3rd Bn, fighting at St. Eloi on 1st March 1915, when his company were overwhelmed by a German counterattack. His left leg was shattered and twisted by a bomb blast and he lay helpless in the mud from midnight until 6:00am the next morning with a wounded comrade next to him. Drifting in and out of consciousness with the pain, they were both hoping that British ambulance men would pick them up, but unfortunately the Germans arrived first. Several soldiers were savagely beaten to death with the butt end of a rifle, but a portly soldier decided to use John as a seat, and this may have saved him. Soon after he was removed to a general hospital in a Belgian town where his limb was amputated leaving only two inches of thigh. He was then removed to another hospital in Lille, in the hands of French doctors, although still under German capture. Anticipating another attack at Lille the Germans moved John once again to another hospital where the British prisoners were locked in the top level of a six storey building, with a doctor only visiting once a day, and where food was scarce. He said, "All this time the wound to my leg was not healing as it should. I had had four operations already, and a fifth and a sixth were necessary to cut the bone, which was protruding".

At the end of May 1915 he was sent by train from Valenciennes to Wessel, a hellish journey with 100 patients crammed into cattle trucks and forced to lie on straw. There was no reason to complain about medical treatment at Wessel but the food was poor. He said, "We had black bread for breakfast, potato water and horse flesh for dinner, and "billposter" for tea. This was a concoction of flour

Limburg Prisoner of War camp

and water, which went by the name of soup (made in Germany). By way of a special treat, on the Sunday we had haricot beans and horseflesh for dinner, and occasionally we got macaroni, or rather snails as we preferred to call it. It was nauseous stuff". Parcels from home helped, and John was thankful for one parcel from the "Prisoners of War Fund" in Bo'ness containing articles of clothing, food and cigarettes.

The Dutch border was only 15 miles away and there was a strong temptation for those that were able to escape the camp and strike for freedom. All notions of escape for John, however, were removed by a serious deterioration in his health in September, when another operation was necessary to fix the bone protrusion. During this operation he suffered a burst blood vessel and nearly died. He gradually regained his strength and by the end of the year he was able to move around on crutches. The Germans then supplied him with an artificial wooden leg.

He was fortunate to be selected along with four other comrades for prisoner exchange, 27 others were not so lucky and had to remain at Wessel.

On Friday, 10th January 1919, the local Prisoners of War Committee had invited and entertained 50 returned prisoners to a substantial tea in the Masonic Temple. John Heath was in attendance. John and his comrades were rightly saluted for surviving the rigours of captivity.

John Heath and the other men who made it back were the lucky ones, the following eight men never returned to Bo'ness:

**Private Joseph Murphy**, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, was held in Göttingen Camp but died in Göttingen POW Hospital in May 1915.

**Private David Boslem**, Highland Light Infantry, was held in Limburg Camp but died in the Naval War Hospital, Bruges, in April 1918, which was under German occupation.

**Private Robert Alexander**, Royal Scots, died in Lagensalza Camp in May 1918.

**Private Robert Craft**, Highland Light Infantry, died in Wittenberg Camp in June 1918.

**Private Thomas Kennedy**, Royal Scots Fusiliers, was liberated from Limburg Camp but died in hospital in December 1918.

**Private Hugh Baxter**, Royal Scots Fusiliers, died in Sprottau Camp in December 1918.

**Private David W. Johnstone**, Royal Scots Fusiliers, and **Private James Bell**, Black Watch, were both held in Giessen Camp and both died in foreign hospitals before they could be repatriated.

**Joseph Murphy**

Private Joseph Murphy, service no. 1130, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders "B" Coy, 2nd Bn, was 23 years old when he died on 9th May 1915, in Göttingen POW Hospital.

Joseph was a prisoner in Göttingen POW Camp and in his records he is named James and not Joseph, however, the service number and regiment confirms that it is the same man. According to one record the cause of death was pneumonia. Another record states tuberculosis. James was buried, firstly, in Göttingen but now lies in Niederzwehren Cemetery, Grave VII.C.12, Kassel, Germany.

John Sharp, Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders, also a prisoner in Göttingen, sent a letter home saying that his comrade, Private Joseph Murphy, from Newtown, Bo'ness, had died in a German hospital. He also said that Joseph had been in hospital for about a fortnight suffering from pneumonia and in a burial service conducted by a Roman Catholic priest, he was buried in Göttingen Cemetery on 11th May.

Joseph, the foster son of James Murphy, 64 Furnace Row, Bo'ness, and unmarried, was a reservist and former miner who had worked for the Kinneil Coal Co.

**David Boslem**

Private David Marr Boslem, service no: 350729, Highland Light Infantry, 14th Bn (formerly 10th Royal Scots, 1022, 2/8th Royal Warwickshire Regiment, 304291, and 5/6th Royal Scots, 376745).

David was an apprentice blacksmith in Ballantine's New Grange Foundry prior to mobilisation on 4th August 1914, with the 10th Royal Scots Territorials.

Private Boslem was wounded and captured at the front near Laventie on 9th April 1918, during the 40th Division's participation in the Battle of Estaires, a phase of the Battles of the Lys. He was taken to Limburg POW Camp and then transferred to the German Naval Hospital in Bruges where he died on 21st April 1918, aged 22. Cause of death was a gunshot wound to the left lower arm, resulting in shattered bone and gas gangrene.

He is buried in Larch Wood (Railway Cutting) Cemetery, grave IV. F. 13., Ypres, Belgium. He is also commemorated on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery.

David was the son of Jeannie and Thomas Boslem, 11 Liston Terrace, Bridgeness and the brother of John Boslem (died 16th July 1917) who is also commemorated on the Bo'ness War Memorial.

Limburg POW Camp was in the small German town of Limburg, 50 miles north-west of Frankfurt. After 1916 conditions at the Limburg camp deteriorated although, in general, it was more relaxed than other camps and prisoners could leave to buy rations in the town.

**Robert Alexander**

Private Robert Alexander, service no: 39312, Royal Scots "A" Coy, 16th Bn (formerly 22229 5th Reserve Cavalry).

Robert was born on 31st December 1892 at Distillery Buildings, Bo'ness, and was the son of Thomas Alexander and Mary McGowan. He was the youngest son in the family and before enlisting, in Ayr, he worked for his father as a haulage contractor. Robert married Joan Cairns Adamson in Glasgow on 6th November 1917, when he was home on leave. Robert married Joan in secret and his family never knew of the marriage until after the war. Joan lived at 68 South Brae Drive, Jordanhill, Glasgow. He returned to his unit in France a few days later and never saw her again. He was a stretcher bearer in his unit.

He was taken prisoner on 12th April 1918 and wrote to his family in April/May 1918 to tell them that he was a POW but there was no mention that he had been wounded. It is unknown if the wounds he died of were sustained at the front or in the camp. There is some uncertainty about the actual POW camp that Robert Alexander was sent to. POW records suggest that he was transferred to Cassel (Kassel) POW Camp but these may be incomplete. We are holding to the idea that he was sent to Langensalza as this information was supplied by Robert's great nephew. All burials in this area were centralised in Niederzwehren Cemetery, Kassel.

This is an edited version about Langensalza, taken from the memoirs of a soldier taken prisoner in July 1916. By December 1916 he was transferred Langensalza, a place that he described as the most sinister camp in Germany. He said,

> Think of the conditions of 12000 men huddled together on a large sized ploughed field so situated that it caught all the water draining from the surrounding hills. Sanitary arrangements on a par with those of the native quarter in an Egyptian town. Food of the vilest and unhealthiest nature for human consumption. Long ramshackle dilapidated barracks to hold 7-800 men with no thought in their construction for comfort and accommodation.

He then described the guards at Langensalza as being the most brutal and ferocious that he ever saw.

Robert was 27 when he died of wounds at Langensalza POW Camp on 13th May 1918. He is buried at Niederzwehren Cemetery, at grave X.B.6., in Germany and is also remembered on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery. The inscription on the Bo'ness headstone reads: "his son Robert died 12th May 1917 aged 26 years"

This date is wrong. According to army and family records, Robert died on 13th May 1918.

Two dates, a year apart, but this is the same Robert Alexander. The parents' names on the headstone agree with the names in the article above which has been written using army and family records.

**Robert Craft**

Private Robert Craft, service no: 11967, Highland Light Infantry 1st Bn.

Robert, the son of Peter Craft and Euphemia Munro, was born in the Royal Bank Buildings, Bo'ness.

> Bo'ness Journal Friday 30th July 1915:
>
> A Prisoner in Germany: Private Robert Craft, 1st H.L.I. (Indian Expeditionary Force) who, having been reported missing since 1st January, is now posted as a prisoner of war in Germany. Private Craft who was born at the Royal Bank Buildings, Bo'ness, is the son of Mr. Peter Craft, Lower Granton Road, Leith, who has a second son in the Army, Private Peter Craft, 4th Royal Scots.

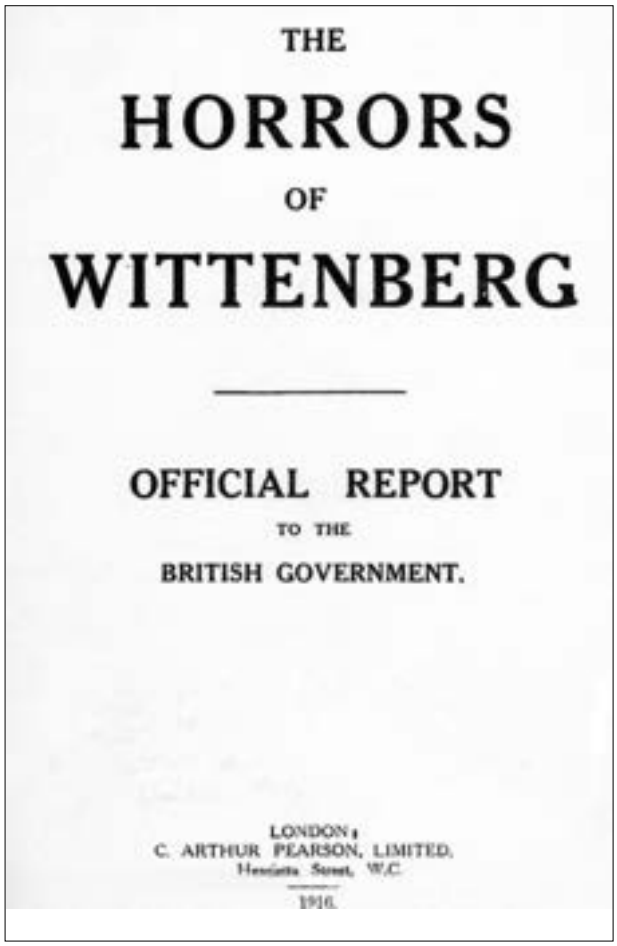
Pte. Robert Craft was captured at La Bassee and taken to Wittenberg POW Camp in Germany, one of the worst. Two taps were available for 17000 prisoners to wash and there was no soap.

When he arrived an outbreak of typhus was raging through the camp. This infectious disease is spread by lice and if untreated is often fatal. The Germans had responded by leaving the camp in the hands of the prisoners, mostly Russians, rather than catch the infection. This effectively sentenced 185 men to die of the disease.

The conditions were described in "The Horrors of Wittenberg" an official report (1916) submitted to the British Government regarding the devastating typhus epidemic at Wittenberg camp. The insanitary camp conditions were to improve very little over the duration of the War and Robert Craft himself succumbed to a different type of illness called typhoid fever on 9th June 1918, caused by unhygienic food handling and contaminated water. He was 25 years old.

He is buried in Berlin South-West Cemetery, grave XIV.D.7.

Wittenberg Camp


THE

HORRORS

OF

WITTENBERG

OFFICIAL REPORT

TO THE

BRITISH GOVERNMENT.

LONDON:
C. ARTHUR PEARSON, LIMITED.
Henrietta Street, W.C.

1916.

**Thomas Kennedy**

Private Thomas Sneddon Kennedy, service no: 43235, Royal Scots Fusiliers, 6th/7th Bn.

Thomas was born in Bo'ness on 31st July 1888. Prior to enlisting, in Bo'ness, he worked as a slater. Operation Michael was launched by the Germans on 21st March 1918. By the end of the day, British casualties numbered 38500, which included almost 21000 British soldiers taken prisoner. The date is regarded as the second worst day in British military history, surpassed only by the first day of the Battle of the Somme, 1st July 1916.

Thomas Kennedy was one of these prisoners, captured in the Somme area, and taken to the Dulmen POW Camp. By the end of May, he had been transferred to the camp at Limburg.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 26 April 1918:

Pte. Thomas Kennedy Missing: Mrs Kennedy, late Forthbank Terrace, Bo'ness, has received word from the War Office that her son, Thomas Kennedy, R.S., attached R.S.F., has been missing since the 21st March.

Edinburgh Evening News, 13th June 1918:

Pte. Thomas Kennedy, Bo'ness, formerly reported missing, is a prisoner in Germany.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 27th December 1918:

Death of a Released Prisoner of War: Mrs Thomas Kennedy, 5 Redheugh, Blackburn, has received official news of the death of her son, Private Thomas Kennedy, R.S.F. He was taken prisoner on 21st March, 1918, and released some time after the signing of the armistice. Prostrated with influenza, he was sent to hospital in Calais, where he died on December 14th from the effects of the malady. Deceased was a son of the late John Kennedy, ironmoulder, who, with his wife and family, lived at 13 Forthbank Terrace, Bo'ness.

On his liberation, Private Kennedy was nursed in the 30 General Hospital in Calais where he died from influenza on 14th December 1918. He is buried in Les Baraques Military Cemetery, grave VII.C.10, Sangatte, France.

**Hugh Baxter**

Private Hugh Baxter, Service No: 23099, Royal Scots Fusiliers, 2nd Bn.

Hugh, the son of Robert Baxter and Isabella Grant, was born on 11th November 1882 at Seaview Place, Bo'ness. His brother was Alexander Grant Baxter.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 1st September, 1916:

Prisoner of War: Pte. Hugh Baxter, Royal Scots Fusiliers, in a post card informs his brother, Mr Alex Baxter, hairdresser, South Street, that he is a prisoner of war in Dulmen, Westphalia, Germany. Pte. Baxter had been missing since the engagement on 30th July. He is the youngest son of the late ex-Bailie Baxter and served his apprenticeship as a pattern maker in Seaview Foundry, Bo'ness. He removed to Glasgow with his parents some years ago. Pte. Baxter enlisted under the Derby scheme on March 21st, 1916 and had only been two months in the trenches.

POW records show that he was taken prisoner around the 31st July 1916 near Guillemont during the Battle of the Somme 1916 and was taken to Dulmen POW Camp, near Munster, before being transferred Sprottau POW Camp, Silesia (in modern day Poland).

In January 1919, Alexander Baxter received word that Hugh had died at Sprottau POW Camp. The notification also said that Hugh Baxter "passed away at 2 o'clock in the afternoon as a result of Spanish Grippe" (influenza).

Pte. Hugh Baxter was 36 when he died on 21st December 1918. He is buried in Berlin South-Western Cemetery, grave VIII.D.4.

Sprottau POW Camp was not as severe as others. Many of the men worked in the local town and surrounding areas in activities that were not considered vital to the German war effort. In the photos below, the group of five men worked at the Glogan Sugar Factory and the larger group with the guard are on an outing to the cinema in Sprottau.

**David W. Johnstone**

David Walker Johnston served as Private William Allan, service no: 19050, Royal Scots Fusiliers, 1st Bn.

David, born on 15th February 1892, at 18 Norman Street, Glasgow, was the son of Charles Johnston and Elizabeth Walker. The family later lived at Victoria Terrace, East Bog, Bo'ness and also 40 Albert Buildings, Main Street, Bo'ness. Before enlisting, David played for Vale of Forth F.C.

Pte. Johnston/Allan was wounded and captured at the Battle of Loos on 24th September 1915. It was reported that he was taken to Sulto (Soltau) POW Camp but by 29th December 1915, German records had him listed as a prisoner in Giessen POW Camp.

At the beginning of January 1919, he was sent to Holland from where he wrote to say he expected to be home within three days.

Unfortunately, Pte. Johnston took ill with pneumonia and died at Enschede on 10th January 1919, age 26. He is buried in Enschede Eastern General Cemetery, grave N.GN.180, Netherlands.

He had three brothers in the Army and all three survived the hostilities.

Giessen Prisoner of War Camp

**James Bell**

Private James Bell, service no: 201967, Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), 1/6th Bn.

James was wounded and taken prisoner on 21st March 1918, at the Somme near Cambrai during the Battle of St Quentin, part of the German counter-offensive known as Operation Michael. He was taken to Limburg then Giessen POW Camp, near Frankfurt, Germany. The photo shows prisoners in Giessen Camp.

The following letter was sent to James Bell's parents from an Edinburgh-born member of the Royal Army Medical Corps saying that he had been one of a party appointed to search camps in the Frankfurt area:

> This lad was extremely thin and had lost all of his hair. He had a wound in his left knee, which was discharging owing to lack of proper attention. On the 21st January, two ounces of fluid were drawn from the patient's lung, which showed that an abscess had burst, and was interfering with his breathing, but his condition was such that there was no hope of an operation.

James' medical condition resulted in him being admitted to No.9 Central Hospital, Frankfurt, where he died from his wounds on 21st January 1919, age 22.

He was originally buried in Frankfurt/Main Cemetery but was later moved and reburied in Niederzwehren Cemetery, grave III.G.12, Kassel, Germany.

> Bo'ness Journal, Friday 14th Feb 1919:
>
> Died in Germany: Mr and Mrs William Bell, Hillside Cottage, West Bog, Bo'ness were informed last week that their son, Private James Bell, Black Watch, had died a month ago in Germany. Pte. Bell, who was 32 [actually 22] years of age, enlisted in the Black Watch in October 1916. He was wounded and taken prisoner on 21st March 1918 in the great German offensive. He was wounded in the knee, and the leg had been amputated. Pte. Bell was employed as a fitter in the New Grange Foundry.

CHAPTER 14

# *Home: 1914-1924*

The Bo'ness War Memorial bears the names of the countries and regions where our men fought and, for some, met their premature deaths.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| France | Belgium | Gallipoli | Salonika | Egypt |
| Russia | Italy | Palestine | Mesopotamia | Africa |

One area is missing - Great Britain.

From **Corporal Henry Victor Fradley**, October 1914, to **Sergeant W. Nicol Gray**, January 1924, this chapter covers the men that died "at home", some from wounds received in battle and others who survived the horrors of war only to succumb to illness and disease.

Bo'ness Cemetery looking north over the Forth

**Henry Victor Fradley**

Corporal Henry (Harry) Victor Fradley, service no: 10610, Royal Scots, 2nd Bn, died in England on 25th October 1914, of wounds sustained at the Front. He was 24 years old and is buried in Guildford (Stoke) Old Cemetery, grave G.390.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 30th October 1914:

Mortally Wounded in France: On Sunday morning last Sergt. Henry Victor Fradley of the Royal Scots died in Guildford Hospital, Surrey of wounds received at the front some ten days previously. From the time of his removal from France he had not regained consciousness. Deceased, aged 24, was married and leaves a wife and two young children, who live in Edinburgh.

The family belong to the Episcopal Church and the news of the Sergeant's death was conveyed to the parents, who reside at Ann Terrace, Bridgeness, by the wife of an Edinburgh Episcopal clergyman. It seems that the Rev. Mr McBean, acting for the Sergeant's wife, communicated with the hospital authorities in England. He learned that the officer was lying wounded in a hospital in the north of France, that subsequently the hospital was shelled by the Germans and that as a result the Sergeant was seriously wounded in the head. In an unconscious state he was conveyed to Guildford Hospital where he lingered for a few days and died.

Sergeant Fradley was a native of Staffordshire. Five years ago he enlisted at Linlithgow in the Royal Scots. An exemplary young man, he rose rapidly in the ranks, qualifying for the office of Sergeant on the outbreak of the war.

While stationed at Glencorse he married and soon after his departure for France a second child was born. Heartfelt regret and sympathy go out to the young wife on her loss of a brave husband. For the parents, too, the blow is a heavy one and they have the sympathy of the entire community. Their son is the first from Bo'ness to lay down his life for King and country.*

Mr Fradley is employed in the pottery of Messrs McNay, Bridgeness. A few days before the son's death the parents received from the Pas de Calais a postcard written by a Frenchman, who said:- "I have had the pleasure to see your son yesterday and may insure you that he is in very good health". Two days later came the news that the Sergeant had been seriously wounded and lay unconscious in hospital.

The Bo'ness Journal also stated (contrary to the first paragraph in the Gazette's report) Corporal Fradley, who was married and had two young children, lived with his wife at 11 Ann Terrace, Grangepans.

* This statement is incorrect. It also appeared in the Bo'ness Journal's report of Henry's death.

**Robert Potter**

Private Robert Potter, service no: 2893, Royal Scots, 5th Bn, was the husband of Barbara Sneddon Potter and the son of Alexander and Annie Potter, Stewart Avenue, Bo'ness. He enlisted during a recruitment campaign held in Bo'ness in the first week of December 1914. A recruitment office had been opened in Grangepans and more than 130 men enrolled during the campaign. The Linlithgowshire Gazette carried the following detailed report of his funeral.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 8th January 1915:

Funeral of a 5th Royal Scot at Bo'ness: An Impressive Scene: The funeral took place to Bo'ness Cemetery on Monday afternoon of Private Robert Potter, of the 5th Royal Scots (Queen's Edinburgh Rifles), who died under somewhat distressing circumstances. Potter, while serving with the reserve battalion in Edinburgh, contracted a chill, and immediately took to bed. Pneumonia set in, and he passed away on New Year's Night at the age of 26. Deceased leaves a widow and two young children, for whom the greatest sympathy is felt.

Deprived of the opportunity of striking a blow for his country, this young man, none the less, died for it, and his battalion accorded him all the honours of the heroic dead. Mr Archibald Grant, J.P., communicated with the commanding officer of the 5th Royal Scots, and suggested that the deceased ought to be buried with military honours. The suggestion was loyally acted upon. The regimental pipe band and three buglers were sent specially out from Edinburgh in the forenoon, and the 150 Bo'ness men belonging to the battalion, who were to have returned that morning to headquarters, were granted an extension of leave till the evening, so that they might attend the funeral. By the 11 o'clock train also there arrived Major Wilson, Colour-Sergeant Glasgow, and Sergeant Wiseman, of the 5th Royal Scots, who took the military arrangements in hand.

The funeral was at two o'clock, and for an hour before that there was considerable stir in the streets. All men in uniform resident in Bo'ness wanted to do honour to their dead comrade, and there was a muster of 200 at the Drill Hall. The 5th, the 7th, the 10th Battalions of Territorials, the 11th Service Battalion, the Artillery, the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce Battalion, the Lovat Scouts were represented there. A splendid body of men they looked, and one certainly that Bo'ness has every credit by. Led by the pipe band, they marched to the house of the deceased, and took up a position in Main Street.

A short service was conducted at the house by the Rev. R. Gardner, B.D., minister of the parish of Bo'ness, and at the hour appointed the coffin, covered with the Union Jack and beautiful wreaths, was carried to the hearse by six of the deceased's comrades, namely: Privates J. Kerr, W. Graham, J. Blair, D. Martin, W. Binnie, and D. Thornton.

The order of procession was: Pipe Band, Military, Hearse, Relatives and Mourners. The route was by way of Main Street, South Street, Church Wynd, and Dundas Street to Bo'ness Cemetery. Out swelled the pipes to the strains of "The Land o' the Leal" followed by "Lord Lovat's Lament", and the scene, as the cortege moved with slow and solemn tread between the long, deep lines of the townspeople, was most impressive. On approaching the cemetery gates the ranks were opened up, and the hearse and mourners passed up. At the entrance the coffin was taken from the hearse, and carried shoulder-high by the same bearers to the grave [B.274], where the young soldier was laid to rest. Grouped around his grave were his officers and comrades. His father and other near relatives were the pall-bearers, and they were visibly affected by the scene. Rev. Mr Gardner offered up prayer, Pipe-Major Wm. Sinclair advanced and played "Lochaber, No More", and the three buglers present sounded "The Last Post". Then the grave was filled in, and the mourners departed. On Friday 8th and Saturday 9th January 1915, the Coliseum in Bo'ness held a special screening of the film of Robert's military funeral.

**William C Grant**

William Clark Grant, a Private in the Scots Guards, service no: 12278, was 24 years old when he died on 22nd February 1915.

After enlisting in Lochgilphead, where he was employed as a painter, he went to Caterham to commence training in preparation for posting to the front. During this training period he contracted cerebral meningitis. This resulted in his premature death in Beddington Isolation Hospital, Surrey.

William was the son of David and Mary Grant, Wallacelea, Church Wynd, Bo'ness and is buried in Bo'ness Cemetery, grave F. 1831. William's brother, David, a pall bearer at William's funeral, also made the ultimate sacrifice and is featured elsewhere in this book.

Bo'ness Journal, 26th February 1915:

Private William Clark Grant, Scots Guards: The news of the death on Monday morning of Private William C. Grant, a Bo'ness soldier who enlisted in the Scots Guards at Lochgilphead in November last, has struck a sorrowful note in the community, the demise having taken place at the Isolation Hospital, Mitcham, as a result of an attack of cerebral meningitis. The deceased had been stationed at Caterham, Surrey. Private Grant, who was twenty-four years of age, and the sixth son of Mr David Grant, master painter, Church Wynd, served his apprenticeship with his father in Bo'ness, and for three years before his enlistment has been in the employment of Mr Neil Lambert, painter, Lochgilphead, Argyllshire. He was a young man of exemplary character, and was highly respected not only in Bo'ness, but in Lochgilphead where he has made a large circle of friends. He was a member of the U.F Church choir there and also took a keen interest in the musical life of town. Our sympathy goes out to his parents in their sad bereavement. The mortal remains of Private Grant reached Bo'ness on Thursday morning and were conveyed to the mortuary at the cemetery. The interment takes place tomorrow afternoon at 3.30.

Bo'ness Journal, 5th March 1915:

Funeral of Private Grant: On Saturday afternoon the mortal remains of the late Private William Grant, Scots Guards, who passed away at the Isolation Hospital, Beddington Corner, Mitcham, on the Monday previous, were interred in the new cemetery. The funeral, which was largely attended was of a public nature, and took place from the Cemetery House. An impressive service was conducted in the home of the deceased at Church Wynd, and the mourners proceeded to the cemetery gate where they joined the hearse. The Rev. G.S. Falconer conducted the burial ceremony. The pall bearers were: Mr David Grant, father; Messrs James, George, John, Lauchlan and Private David Grant (Gordons), brothers of the deceased. Amongst those present were the Rev. R. Gardner, parish minister, and a number of soldiers presently home on furlough. There were in all twenty-two wreaths laid upon the grave, notable those from the choir members of St Andrew's U.F. Church, Lochgilphead, with whom the deceased had been associated.

**John Kindred**

Private John Kindred, Seaforth Highlanders, 1st Bn, service no: 268, was 25 years old when he died of wounds on 14th April 1915. Born in Bo'ness, John was the son of James and Helen Stevenson of 20 Mayfield Terrace, Bridgeness. He had been employed at Messrs A. Ballantine and Sons, New Grange Foundry prior to enlisting.

The report of his wounding came from John himself.

> Linlithgowshire Gazette, 2nd April 1915:
>
> Bo'ness Seaforth Highlander Wounded at Neuve Chapelle: Official information was received at Bo'ness on Wednesday to the effect that Private John Kindred, of the 1st Batt. Seaforth Highlanders, had been wounded at Neuve Chapelle. In a postcard received on Thursday from the private himself, he stated that he was struck in the head by a piece of German shell.

Unfortunately, three weeks later the Gazette followed up with:

> Linlithgowshire Gazette, 23rd April 1915:
>
> Bo'ness Soldier's Death from Wounds: Official intimation has been received at Bo'ness of the death in hospital from wounds of Private John Kindred, 1st Battalion Seaforth Highlanders. He was severely wounded about the head at Neuve Chapelle and was removed to the Royal Victoria and West Hants Hospital (Boscombe Branch), Bournemouth, where he died. Private Kindred, who was a native of Bo'ness, was 26 years of age, and had been in the Army during the past six years, four of which he spent in India.

Private John Kindred is buried in Bournemouth East Cemetery, grave P. I. 152.

**Daniel McQuillan**

Private Daniel McQuillan, service no: 304, Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 2nd Bn, was 28 years old when he succumbed to wounds on 1st May 1915. The son of Daniel McQuillan and Elizabeth Spence, Daniel was born in Bo'ness in 1887.

The Scotsman, 5th March 1915:

A Bo'ness Soldier Wounded: Private Daniel McQuillan, 2nd Royal Scots, wounded in action, lies in a French hospital in a critical condition. This information was conveyed by telegram to his friends in Bo'ness yesterday. McQuillan enlisted at the age of 14 and he was in the Reserve. Sent with his regiment to the front in August, he had been through all the important engagements up to the time of his being wounded.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 5th March 1915:

Bo'ness Man Dangerously Wounded: Mrs Spence, Fraser's Close, has been notified by the War Office that Private Daniel McQuillan, 304, 2nd Royal Scots, was wounded in the head between 10th and 11th February and that he now lies in a French hospital in critical condition. McQuillan is a native of Bo'ness and resided with Mrs Spence, to whom he is related. Joining the Army at 14, he spent seven years with the colours. His time in the Reserve had nearly expired when the war broke out and he was immediately sent to the front. He is aged 28.

According to war diaries, on the 10th and 11th February, the Royal Scots 2nd Bn was in the trenches immediately east of Vierstraat and opposite Wyschaete. There were no casualties reported on the 10th but "Casualties one killed four wounded" was recorded on the 11th.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 7th May 1915:

Bo'ness Man Dies from Wounds: News reached Bo'ness last Saturday morning of the death of Private Daniel McQuillan, of the 2nd Royal Scots. He died in the First Northern General Hospital, Newcastle, from wounds received in action in the month of March.

Private Daniel McQuillan is buried in Newcastle-upon-Tyne (St. Andrew's and Jesmond) Cemetery (below) grave R. U. 322. The War Grave Commission wrongly inscribed Daniel's surname "McQuillian" on his headstone.

**The Quintinshill (Gretna) Train Crash**

**22nd May 1915**

TERRIBLE RAILWAY CATASTROPHE.

COLLISION OF MILITARY AND LOCAL TRAINS NEAR GRETNA.

LONDON EXPRESS CRASHES INTO WRECKAGE.

OUTBURSTS OF FIRE CAUSE AWFUL HAVOC.

On Saturday 22nd May 1915, a Liverpool-bound troop-train carrying half (498 all ranks) of the 7th (Leith) Battalion, the Royal Scots (7RS) collided head on with a local passenger train. The local train had been 'parked', facing north, on the south-bound main line at Quintinshill, just north of Gretna, to allow a following express to overtake it. The troop train overturned, mostly onto the neighbouring north-bound mainline track and, a minute later, the Glasgow-bound express ploughed into the wreckage causing it to burst into flame. The ferocity of the fire, and consequent difficulty of rescuing those trapped in the overturned and mangled carriages, was compounded by the fact that most of the carriages were very old, made of wood and lit by gas contained in a tank beneath them. As a result of the combined crash and inferno, a total of 216 soldiers of all ranks of 7RS and 12 others died, mostly from the express but including the driver and fireman on the troop-train. It was, and remains, Britain's worst railway disaster.

7RS, a Territorial battalion recruited mostly from Leith, had been mobilised at the start of the Great War and then employed on coastal defence duties on the Forth until April 1915 when they moved to Larbert to concentrate with 52nd Lowland Division before deploying to France. At the last moment orders were received changing the Division's deployment to Gallipoli. The Battalion was meant to leave Larbert on 21st May to board the troopship Aquitania in Liverpool but she ran aground in the Mersey and the move was delayed twenty-four hours. At 3.45am on Saturday 22nd May the first train left Larbert Station carrying Battalion Headquarters, A and D Companies. The accident happened at 6.49 a.m.

Of the half-battalion on the train only sixty-two survived unscathed. These survivors, including the Commanding Officer, continued to Liverpool where six officers embarked, and sailed on the Sunday on HMT Empress of Britain with the second half of the Battalion, while one officer and the 55 NCOs and soldier survivors were sent back to Edinburgh. It was a devastating blow to the Battalion and to the whole population of Leith, probably made worse by the fact that, out of the 216 who died in the disaster, or soon afterwards from their injuries, only 83 were ever identified. The remaining 133 bodies could not be identified or were, literally, cremated within the firestorm of the wreckage.

On Sunday 23rd May, 107 coffins were taken back to Edinburgh and were placed in the Battalion's Drill Hall in Dalmeny Street, off Leith Walk. On the afternoon of Monday 24th May, 101 of these were taken in procession for burial in a mass grave that had been dug in Rosebank Cemetery, Pilrig Street, about a mile from the Drill Hall. 'The route was lined by 3,150 soldiers, thousands of citizens stood shoulder to shoulder on the pavement; shops were closed, blinds drawn, and the traffic stopped'.

Very soon after the crash it was decided to raise a memorial, paid for by public subscription, alongside the communal grave in Rosebank Cemetery. The Memorial, unveiled by the Earl of Rosebery, Honorary Colonel of the Battalion, on 12 May 1916 takes the form of a Celtic cross. On either side to the rear, against the Cemetery wall, are tablets each with five bronze plaques. On these plaques are the names of 214 who died in, or immediately after the disaster, arranged by rank, and in alphabetical order.

Two Bo'ness men, Thomas Barnett and Andrew Williamson, were killed at Quintinshill.

**Thomas Barnett**

Private Thomas Barnett, service no: 2602, Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment) 7th Bn, enlisted at Blackness Castle. Thomas, the son of George and Ellen Barnett, 26 Gladstone Terrace, was born in Bo'ness. Before enlisting, Thomas was a coal miner. He married Matilda Kerr on 17th March 1915. Their son Thomas was born on 1st June 1915.

Thomas was 21 years old when he was killed on 22nd April 1915, in the Quintinshill Rail Disaster. According to the Bo'ness Journal, he had been instantaneously killed, and his body had been recovered from the wreckage. Thomas is said to have been so badly burned that he was only identified by means of his identification disc. His father is said to have ultimately been given possession of this. His home address is given as 62 Avon Place, and he is noted as being "the third son of Mr George Barnett".

Thomas is buried in Rosebank Cemetery, Edinburgh and commemorated on panel 3 of the Memorial.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 28th May 1915:

Thomas Barnett was the son of Mr George Barnett, boot repairer, South Street. The father, who belongs to Staffordshire, came to Bo'ness over 20 years ago, and all the members of the family claim Bo'ness as their birth place. The lad only enlisted in the Royal Field Artillery soon after the outbreak of war and was stationed at Sheffield. He met with injury and was discharged as unfit for artillery work. During the recruiting campaign for the 7th Royal Scots, he again presented himself at Blackness Castle, and was accepted. He trained with the regiment at Leith, and during the last month was encamped at Stenhousemuir. A sad circumstance is that only a few weeks ago he married, and his young widow resides in Corbiehall.

**Andrew Williamson**

Private Andrew Williamson, service no: 2450, Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment) 7th Bn, enlisted at Blackness Castle. Andrew, the son of George and Alison Williamson, Craigview, was born in Carriden. Before enlisting, Andrew was a miner with the Kinneil Coal Company.

Andrew was 19 years old when he was killed on 22nd April 1915, in the Quintinshill Rail Disaster.

According to the Bo'ness Journal, all initial enquiries failed to find any information on the fate of Andrew. His name did not appear in any of the lists of the killed or injured, although it was understood he travelled in the same compartment as Thomas Barnett.

Andrew is buried in Rosebank Cemetery, Edinburgh and commemorated on panel 10 of the Memorial.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 9th July 1915:

The Late Private Andrew Williamson: On Monday Mrs Williamson, Cowdenhill Road, received official notification of her son's death in the Gretna railway disaster. Private Andrew Williamson, it will be remembered, was in the same compartment of the troop train as Private Thomas Barnett, the other Bo'ness victim, but not until now have the Territorial authorities been in a position to send the bereaved mother official word of his death. The young man's effects were returned to his home last Saturday, and they include a new football belonging to his platoon.

**Samuel C McGregor**

Samuel Carolus McGregor was born in Dover, Kent, in 1880. He is recorded as Samuel Charles McGregor in his birth record and census. On some of his military papers "Charles" is scored through and corrected to "Carolus".

Samuel enlisted with the Royal Artillery in Malta on 15th October 1894, age 14.

He served twice in India and during his second spell he married Bo'ness born Agnes Kidd King in St Andrews Church in Bombay (Mumbai) on 23rd May 1908.

In January 1915, and living in Leith, their 3 month old daughter, Agnes King McGregor, died of broncho-pneumonia. Also in January 1915, Samuel took ill with tuberculosis of the lung and larynx.

He was awarded the Long Service medal in April 1915. After 20 years and 226 days service and "No longer physically fit for war service and unfit for duty or light duty at home (permanently)", Sergeant Samuel McGregor, service no: 6491, was discharged from the Royal Garrison Artillery, 21st Company, on 30th May 1915. On his discharge papers, Bo'ness was stated as his intended place of residence.

He died in the City Hospital, Edinburgh, from tuberculosis on 9th July 1915. Although his death certificate stated his usual residence as Leith Fort, his widow was already living at what was to have been their new home in Balkymore, South Philpingstone Lane, Bo'ness.

Sergeant Samuel Carolus McGregor was buried in Rosebank Cemetery, Grave QE42, Edinburgh on 13th July 1915. Today his grave is marked with a headstone but neither Samuel nor his daughter, Agnes, is mentioned on it.

**Alexander Crawford**

Private Alexander Crawford, service no: 3116, Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 1/5th Bn (Queen's Edinburgh Rifles), died of wounds on 7th October 1915, age 21. He was the son of Helen Crawford, 62 Newtown, Bo'ness, and the late William Crawford and his siblings were Lewis, Private William Crawford, Royal Field Artillery (survived), Jean and Lizzie. At the time of enlisting, in Edinburgh, he was a miner at Kinneil Collieries and lived at 129 Castleloan, Bo'ness.

Alexander was in action at the Dardanelles and on 29th June 1915, suffered wounds to the back and legs. He was transferred to the military hospital at Birkenhead where he had a bullet extracted from his bladder. He also contracted pneumonia, and although he recovered, he had lost most of his strength, which was to a large extent responsible for his death. His mother nursed him for the fortnight before his death. Private Alexander Crawford is buried in Bo'ness Cemetery, grave E. 2514.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 15th October 1915:

Funeral of a Dardanelles Hero: The funeral took place to Bo'ness Cemetery on Wednesday afternoon of Private Alex. Crawford, of the 5th Royal Scots, who was wounded in the back and legs at the Dardanelles on 28th June [29th in military records] and died on Thursday evening, 7th October, in a Birkenhead hospital. Crawford was a young, estimable lad of 21, and before enlisting in October last resided with his mother at Castleloan. His brother, Private Wm. Crawford, is serving with the Royal Field Artillery in France. The death of the young man was keenly felt, and there gathered around his obsequies a very large and representative attendance of mourners. Two sergeants from the headquarters of the 5th Royal Scots in Edinburgh were present, as also a detachment of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, at present stationed in the town. Two of these soldiers walked on either side of the hearse. Behind the chief mourners walked about a dozen soldiers on home leave. The Provost, Magistrates, and Town Council attended in their official capacity to pay a tribute of respect to the memory of the first soldier from the Dardanelles to be buried in Bo'ness. The workers at Kinneil Collieries were largely represented, and the route to the cemetery was lined with spectators, many of whom were deeply touched. An impressive service was conducted at the grave by the Rev. Mr Gardner, of the Bo'ness Parish Church. Many beautiful wreaths were received, including one from the Bo'ness members of the 5th Royal Scots.

**Henry Marr**

Henry (also called Harry) Marr, service no: 7069, was a Private in the King's Own Scottish Borderers, 3rd Bn. He was the son of Alexander Marr, a shoemaker, and Louisa Hancock. Henry worked as a coal miner and married Mary Ramage Kidd in 1914. They lived at 66 Furnace Row, Bo'ness.

On 23rd October 1915, Henry died in the 2nd General Military Hospital, Craigleith, Edinburgh. He suffered respiratory failure caused by sarcoma of the rib invading his left lung. He was 23 years old. Although contrary to the newspaper announcement below, this was the cause of death recorded on his death certificate.

> Linlithgowshire Gazette, 29th October 1915:
>
> Marr – At Craigleith Military Hospital, on 23rd October, of wounds received at Hill 60, Henry Marr, 3rd K.O.S.B., aged 23 years, beloved husband of Mary Kidd, Furnace Row, Bo'ness.

Hill 60 is an area of ground which remains relatively undisturbed since the end of the Great War. It is located around three miles south-east of Ypres. Because it was higher ground in an otherwise flat landscape, it had great strategic importance in the battles there. The hill is not natural, it was made from earth excavated during the construction of the nearby Ypres-Comines railway.

Private Henry Marr is buried in Comely Bank Cemetery, grave D25, Edinburgh.

**Thomas Morrison**

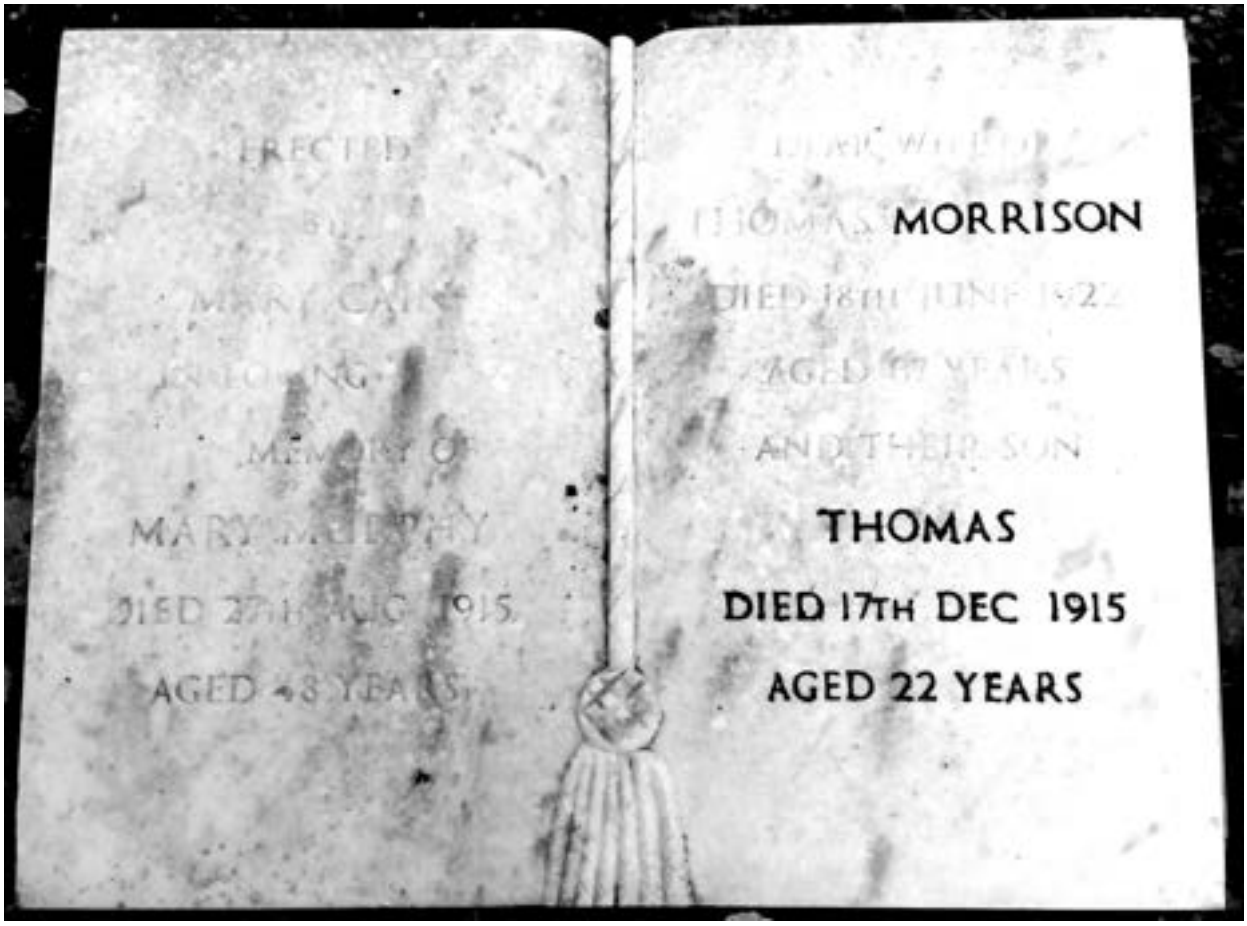
Thomas Morrison, service no: 2775, was a Private with the Royal Scots 5th Bn, when his illness, Phthisis (Tuberculosis), resulted in his discharge on 1st October 1915.

Thomas, born in Galgorm, Ireland was the son of Thomas and the late Mary Morrison (ms Murphy). He lived in the family home at 88 Castleloan, Bo'ness and worked as a miner.

> Bo'ness Journal, 24th December 1915
>
> In Loving Remembrance of Thos. Morrison who died at 88 Castleloan, Bo'ness on 17th Dec. 1915, aged 22 years...Inserted by his Father.

Although Thomas Morrison appears on the Bo'ness War Memorial, he was until very recently not commemorated by CWGC, even though he fitted their category 2 criteria for commemoration. This includes personnel who had been discharged from, or retired from, the military before their deaths during 4th August 1914, to 31st August 1921, and, importantly, of an injury or illness caused by or exacerbated by their service during the same qualifying period. These casualties are called "non-comms". Work by Mark Duffy of the Scottish Military Research Group, physically looking through the Registers of Soldiers' Effects, discovered information about Thomas and a case was submitted to CWGC. They accepted the case that, according to his medical discharge papers, his condition had been aggravated by his service, and he was added to CWGC records in September 2016. This change of status has resulted in the CWGC highlighting Thomas on the family headstone in Bo'ness Cemetery.

The number of these "non-comms" submitted and accepted for commemoration by CWGC already numbers over 5500 and more are being discovered in the records on a daily basis by Mark and others, such as the In from the Cold Project. The work of these individuals and organisations, many working on a voluntary basis, is helping to ensure that the sacrifice of British and Commonwealth servicemen is not forgotten.



**John Shaw**

Able Seaman John Shaw, service no: Clyde Z/6830, Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, Royal Naval Division, Misc. Bn., was born in Bo'ness on 18th May 1893. He was 5'8" in height, had a fresh complexion, dark brown hair and brown eyes.

He was the son of Canadian-born Agnes Shaw (ms McPherson) and John Shaw, an ironstone miner from Carnwath in Lanarkshire. The family lived for may years at Sheephousehill, Fauldhouse, West Lothian. John's sisters Agnes and Margaret were born there, along with brothers Thomas, William and James. The family moved to Bo'ness and John was born there on 18th May 1893. Sadly his father died four years later in 1897 aged only 39. At this time the family were living at 15 Snab Row, Bo'ness, but by 1901 had moved to live at 10 Richmond Terrace.

John was single and before the war had worked as a labourer. He had enlisted on 26th October 1915, and served at HMS Victory VI, a shore based training establishment at Crystal Palace in London. He did not see any armed conflict. Whilst home on shore leave in Bo'ness, he reported sick on 2nd February 1916, and died two days later from acute lobar pneumonia at the family home. He was 22 years old.

He is buried in Fauldhouse Cemetery, grave E. 241. He was well thought of and his pals W. Murphy and William Robb on active naval service took time to place "In Memoriam" notices in the local press.

**IN MEMORIAM.**

IN LOVING MEMORY of my dear chum, JOHN SHAW, of the R.N.D., who died at his home, 10 Richmond Terrace, Bo'ness (while on leave), on 4th Feby., 1916.

"He was a pal of the best."

I often think of the days gone by,
When we were pals together;
A shadow o'er my life is cast,
A true pal gone for ever.

Inserted by his chum, W. Murphy, H.M.S. "Temeraire," on Active Service.

IN LOVING MEMORY of my dear pal, JOHN SHAW, Royal Naval Division, who died at Richmond Terrace on Friday, 4th Feb., 1916

Dear John, thou art but one year gone,
Still to my memory dear;
And many a time I sit and weep
When there is no one near.
Gone and forgotten by some you may be,
But dear to my memory for ever you'll be.

Inserted by his pal, A.B. William Robb, H.M.S. "Grafton."

**Moses Rickard**

Moses Rickard, a Stoker, Petty Officer (Pensioner), Royal Navy service no: 122748, was born in Oreston, Plymstock, Devon on 11th March 1863.

He had joined the Navy on 27th February 1883, at the age of 19, and had served on many ships from several ports including South Queensferry, Inverkeithing, Leith, Glasgow and Lerwick. He was marked as of "Very Good character" on every ship he sailed on. He served in an engagement off the west coast of Africa, holding the Queen Victoria medal of 1890. In 1892 he left the Navy, and for the next 12 years acted as a coastguard at various stations on the east coast. He had married Elizabeth Gifford in Lerwick, Shetland on 23rd March 1893. They had nine children, Barbara Gifford, Susan, John Gifford, William, Sarah, Francis, Elizabeth, Mary and Alfred. The family had lived at 61 Forth Place, but then moved to Boundary Street, Grangepans. From 1904 he was employed at the Forth Shipbreaking Company, Bridgeness, and just prior to the outbreak of war had worked at the sawmills of Messrs Thomson and Balfour. He remained in the Naval Reserve and during the war was called up in early June, 1915, serving at the shore based establishment HMS President II in London. He was engaged there tutoring young mechanics in the Royal Naval Air Service.

Sadly he took seriously ill and developed a malignant disease of the right kidney and Moses died at the Royal Naval Hospital, Chatham on 26th May 1917. He is buried in Bo'ness Cemetery, grave E. 1546. at the age of 54 (not 52 as shown on the headstone).

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 1st June 1917:

Veteran Navyman's Death: The death occurred at the Royal Naval Hospital, Chatham, on Saturday last of Moses Rickard, stoker, petty officer, Royal Naval Air Service, at the age of 54. A naval reservist, with a long and honourable record, he was called up about two years ago, since when he has been engaged tutoring boys qualifying as mechanics for the air service. Recently he took seriously ill, and died in hospital, as already stated. He leaves a widow and family of nine, who live at Boundary Street, Grangepans. One of the daughters, Miss Barbara Rickard, was the first lady to "run the post" in these parts. She is still in the service of the post office.

**Robert Masson**

Robert Masson was a Private with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 15th Bn, enlisting in Bo'ness on 2nd December 1915. According to CWGC records his service no. was S/15444 but SNWM records state S/15344.

Robert was born in Fetteresso, Kincardineshire. He lived with his wife, Mary G. Robertson, and family in Invercowie Cottage, Braehead, Bo'ness. His occupation was Spirit Dealer.

According to military records, which differ from the article below, Robert was discharged from his battalion suffering from asthma on 20th December 1915. He was admitted to No.2 Scottish General Hospital, Craigleith, Edinburgh by his GP (Dr Cross, Linlithgow) and he died there on 9th March 1916. He is buried in Bo'ness Cemetery, grave B. 90.

Although discharged from the army he had never received his discharge papers and as a result the army regarded him as still being a soldier and so paid the funeral expenses.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 17th March 1916:

Masonic Funeral: Bro. Robert Masson, who died in the service of his country, was accorded a Masonic funeral last Saturday afternoon. He was a native of Aberdeenshire, and some twenty years ago joined the West Lothian Constabulary. On leaving the force, he took over the management of what is now known as the Crown Inn, Grangepans [building with flagpole in the photo below].

Mr Masson's chief hobby was yachting, and his spare hours were spent in the summer beating up and down the waters of the Forth, preferably in a lugsail. During the Forth Week he was in his element, and in the races he generally succeeded in being well up in the prize list. He was also a leading competitor at the regattas on the north side of the Forth. In other forms of sport, in quoiting and football, he manifested a lively interest.

Than Mr Masson there were few more enthusiastic Freemasons, and he held some of the higher degrees of the Order. Fired with patriotic zeal, he several months ago enlisted in the transport section of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. While stationed at Gailes he took seriously ill, and was removed to Craigleith Hospital, where he died on the 9th inst. at the comparatively early age of 44. Deceased leaves a widow and young family, for whom much sympathy is felt.

**David Victor Foot**

Second Lieutenant David Victor Foot, 18th (Reserve) Squadron, Royal Flying Corps, was killed in a flying accident at Montrose on 4th May 1917. He was 19 years old. The son of Mr. and Mrs. James Frederick Foot, of "Graemesdyke", Bo'ness, he was born in Bo'ness on 8th May 1897.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 11th May 1917:

Bo'ness Airman's Tragic Death: It was with feelings of deep regret that the people of Bo'ness heard last Friday of the tragic death at Montrose of Second Lieut. David Victor Foot, Royal Flying Corps, youngest son of Mr J.F. Foot, surveyor of Customs and Excise, Graemesdyke, Bo'ness. The sad news conveyed by telegram, was broken to the parents by the Rev D.G. Young of Craigmailen U.F. Church with which the family is connected. The distressing affair occurred about 8.30 last Friday morning. The weather was warm and clear, and for the purpose of taking photographs, which is part of the airman's training, Lieut. Foot, unaccompanied, made an ascent. What happened is largely conjecture, but on reaching 150 feet he was seen to be making a turning movement. It may be that something had gone wrong with the engine. Whatever the cause, to the consternation of the onlookers the aeroplane dived to the earth, landing with terrific force.

Members of the Royal Army Medical Corps who were on the spot at once made a valiant attempt, and almost succeeded in unstrapping the unfortunate occupant of the car, when the aeroplane burst into flames, nullifying all their efforts at rescue. However, it is comforting to think that death preceded the fire, for it is believed that in the fall the aviator's neck was fractured. Among the officers and men at the aerodrome the calamity caused a painful sensation, all classes feeling very keenly the loss of the popular young airman.

Lieut. Foot was born at Bo'ness 19 years ago. He was educated at Linlithgow Academy and Edinburgh Academy, to whose Officers' Training Corps he was attached for two years. A further period of probation was spent with the Artists' Rifle Corps in London and the Cadet unit at Oxford all qualifying him for a commission which he ultimately received in the Royal Flying Corps.

A good all-round sportsman, full of life and energy, and absolutely without fear, he would certainly have made a name for himself in the British air service. From Turnhouse where he began his flying career, he made a trip the other day to his native place in a biplane, and the skill

AVIATOR BURNED TO DEATH AT MONTROSE.

Lieutenant Foote (24), Royal Flying Corps, while flying at Montrose yesterday, was burned to death.

His machine dived to earth from a height of 50 feet and burst into flames. So fierce was the fire that no assistance could be rendered the unfortunate aviator, whose body was terribly burned, while the aeroplane was completely consumed.

Lieutenant Foote, who belonged to Bo'ness, made his first flight alone the previous day.

with which he handled his machine on that occasion commanded much admiration.

Bo'ness was proud of its first airman and the townspeople were following with keen interest his movements in our wonderful air service.

On the day before the fatal flight. Lieut. Foot had been eminently successful in a trial spin having been up for an hour, and the experience gained inspired confidence and caution, and makes the accident of last Friday all the more difficult to explain.

On receipt of the sad news, Mr Foot, accompanied by his brother-in-law, Mr Archibald Ballantine, Erngath. proceeded to Montrose and arranged for the internment taking place at Bo'ness. The body, enclosed in an oak coffin, was taken by rail to Edinburgh on the Saturday. A motor conveyance from Turnhouse was in waiting at the station, and the remains were taken to Graemesdyke.

The Funeral

The funeral took place to Bo'ness Cemetery on Monday afternoon, and, as showing the esteem and respect in which the young officer was held, the obsequies were taken part in by numerous officers and non-commissioned officers of the Flying Corps, soldiers from Carriden Hospital, wounded in the recent hard fighting in France; representatives of the various public bodies in the town; and numerous workers at New Grange Foundry and other public works.

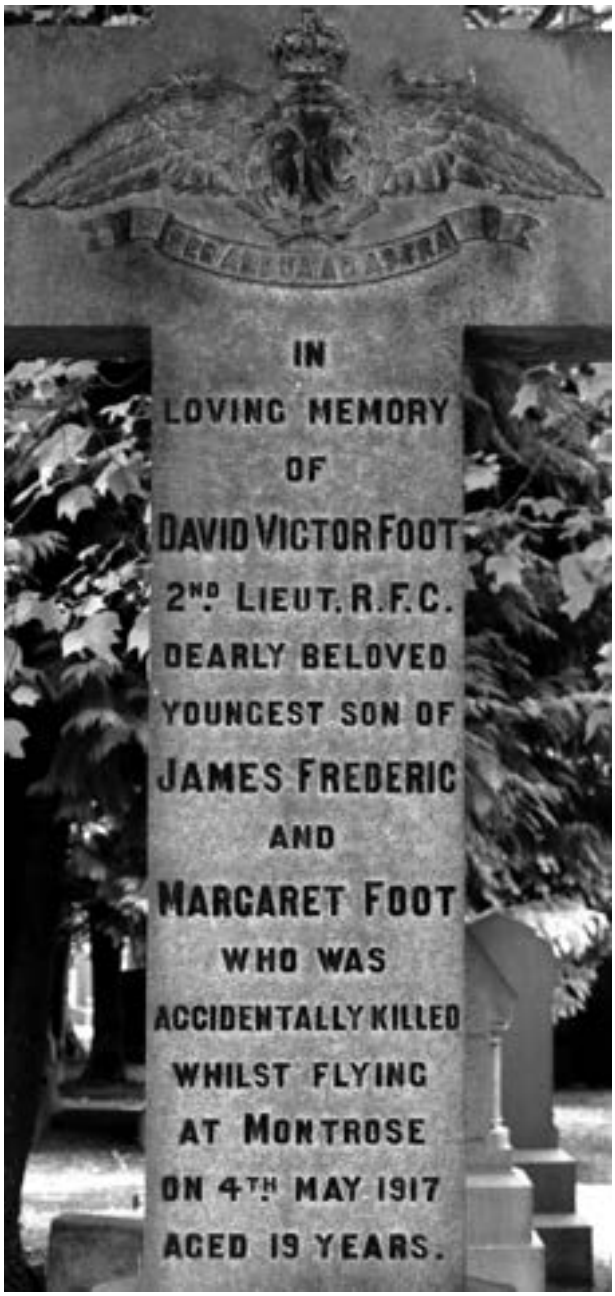
The coffin, covered with the Union Jack and bearing one or two of the many beautiful wreaths sent by friends, was borne to the hearse by six sergeants. These strapping young men then took up their positions - three on each side of the hearse, where they were joined later by a similar number of officers. The solemn procession moved off, cabs with the wounded soldiers taking up the rear. The route was via Graemesdyke Road, Erngath Road, Bankhead, and Dundas Street, and at many parts large numbers of spectators were assembled. As a mark of respect blinds were drawn in the houses.

Officers and men - including the wounded from Carriden - gathered round the grave [D. 1232], and the coffin was lowered. After prayer by the Rev. Mr Young, the deceased's brother, officers and non-commissioned officers advanced in turn, saluted, and retired, their example being followed by the convalescent soldiers. This was a very touching part of an impressive ceremony.

The pall-bearers were Mr J.F. Foot and his son James, Lieuts. Patrick, Arkle, Toy, Hyslop, Ogden, and Thompson, of the Royal Flying Corps.

Wreaths were sent by the officers of the Royal Flying Corps, air mechanics, R.F.C., and non-commissioned officers, R.F.C.; Lieut. Smith, R.F.C., Montrose; and from the soldiers at Carriden Convalescent Hospital.

In 2017, work by historian Patrick Anderson ensured David Victor Foot was added to the Scottish National War Memorial, after previously being omitted.



**William Falconer**

Private William Falconer, service no: 2989, Royal Scots 15th (Service) Battalion (1st Edinburgh), was 28 years old when he died of wounds. William was wounded in action on 9th April 1917, when 34th Division, 101st Brigade, participated in the First Battle of the Scarpe, part of the Arras Offensive. He was transferred home to Keighley War Hospital where he died of wounds on 9th June 1917.

Bo'ness Journal, 15th June 1917:

Died of Wounds: Pte. William Falconer, Royal Scots, who was wounded on 9th April, died in Keighley War Hospital [below], Yorkshire on Saturday, 9th June. Pte. Falconer is the son of Mr John Falconer, dock labourer, and was himself employed at the dock. He was a reservist, and joined up at the beginning of the war, and has been two years and eight months in France. He has been wounded twice and had trench feet. On one of his visits home invalided, six months ago he married the young widow of a comrade, Daniel Sinclair, and she was able to visit him in hospital before his death. He was buried in Bo'ness Cemetery [Grave E. 1696] on Wednesday.

William was born in Bo'ness and was the husband of Robina Paterson Falconer, of 15 Main Street, Bo'ness.

He was the co-author of the poem "The Bo'ness Lads in Flanders" that appears elsewhere in this book.

Keighley War Hospital

**John Peebles**

When he was called up after the outbreak of war, John Peebles, already in his fifties, was made a Private in the Royal Marine Labour Company, Service No: Deal/9569(S).

John and his twin sister, Catherine, the children of John Peebles and Catherine Snadden, were born on 1st November 1866. When he married Katie Morrison on 11th August 1893, he was a labourer at Bo'ness docks. Kate was a pottery worker. At the time of his death the family home was at 42 South Street, Grieves Close, Bo'ness.

He died on 20th July 1917 from disease at the age of 51 and is buried in Brookwood Cemetery, grave XII D1B, Brookwood, Woking, Surrey.

According to family sources, John was buried in Surrey because his wife could not afford to bring him home to be buried in Bo'ness Cemetery. This was a common occurrence during WW1.

Brookwood Cemetery, Woking, Surrey

**Matthew Paul**

Corporal Matthew Wilson Paul was born on 23rd December 1888 in Breich near West Calder, the second youngest son of Andrew Paul, a coal miner, and Annie Paul (ms Tait). His parents had been married in Dirleton parish, East Lothian, in 1878. He had two sisters, Jessie and Agnes, and three brothers Andrew, David and James. Another brother, John, had died in infancy. The family moved to Bo'ness when Matthew was a child and lived at 23 Corbiehall then Rock Cottage, Deanfield Road. Matthew was educated at Bo'ness Academy. He studied moral philosophy and political economy at Glasgow University, graduating as MA in 1910, and then entered the teaching profession. Prior to enlisting he was an assistant teacher at Kelty Public School in Fife where he had been teaching since 1912. Matthew Paul was described as a bright, promising lad, and a keen debater, his favourite themes being land and social reform. He was 5' 5" in height and weighed 144lbs.

He enlisted in Edinburgh on 30th June 1915 with the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders (2/2nd Lovat Scouts), service no: 5811. This second line territorial force was part of the 1st Yeoman Cyclist Regiment, for home service, based on the coast at Gorleston-on-Sea, Norfolk. After training at home for 18 months he was sent to France on 12th December 1916, joining the 7th Battalion Camerons, service no: S/27100, on 18th December. He was then transferred on 23rd March 1917 to the Gordon Highlanders, 4th Battalion, service no: S/40784.

Matthew was fighting with 154th Brigade in 51st (Highland) Division when he suffered a gunshot wound to the head on 9th April, the opening day of the First Battle of the Scarpe, during the Battle of Arras, and was evacuated from the battlefield. He was sent home to Britain where he spent the next 6 months at the Duchess of Connaught Canadian Red Cross Hospital, Taplow, Buckinghamshire. Sadly he died there of an abscess on the brain as a result of his head wounds at 4:00pm on 9th November 1917.

The first intimation that his mother received that her son was dangerously ill was contained in a telegram which reached her on 11th November, and the same evening a message arrived that the young man had passed away. His family and friends in the town were under the belief that Matthew was regaining strength, so much so, it was said, that he expected to be able to travel north soon. The news of his death, therefore, was quite unexpected and caused deep regret.

His remains were brought to Bo'ness on the following Tuesday, and Matthew's funeral took place at Bo'ness Cemetery the following day. He is buried at grave: B. 985, and commemorated on the large family headstone. Mathew Paul was 29 years old when he died. He is also commemorated on the Kelty War Memorial.

**Angus D. Sheal**

Private Angus Dick Sheal was born in Levenshulme, Lancashire in 1883. He was the youngest son of William and Annabella Sheal (ms McCall), latterly of Park Road, Broxburn. His parents had been married in Blythswood parish, Glasgow, in 1875. He had two brothers, William and Thomas. His father William Sheal was at one time in business in Bo'ness as an aerated water manufacturer. In 1900, he was the defendant in a court case known locally as "The Lemonade Bottle Question" raised by Robert Barr, another aerated water manufacturer from Falkirk. Barr successfully sought an interdict to stop William Sheal using bottles marked with his name and trademark. Sheal's appeal was dismissed and he had to pay costs of over £60. His business did not survive but Barr's continued and became the forerunner of the famous soft drinks manufacturer still thriving to this day. Before the war Angus was a wine and spirit merchant at the Wellington Bar, 11 East Register Street, Edinburgh, and the Crown Tavern, Broxburn, a popular hostelry in that town. He was a well-known man, taking an interest in football and other sports.

In March 1917 he initially appealed to the local Military Tribunal to defer his call-up on the grounds of serious hardship, but this was dismissed and he enlisted soon after at Broxburn with the King's Own Scottish Borderers 2nd Battalion, service no: 202658, who were part of 5th Division, 13th Brigade.

Angus Sheal was wounded in the left leg and thigh during the first day of the 5th Division's participation in the Second Battle of Passchendaele on 26th October 1917. The 13th Brigade were part of a diversionary attack through the Scherriabeek valley, that met stiff resistance from German machine gunners located in Gheluvelt. He was treated at 14th Field Ambulance before being evacuated from the battlefield back to Britain, but he died of his wounds on 11th November 1917 at Leaf Square Military Hospital, Pendleton, Manchester.

His body was returned to Scotland and Angus was buried in Uphall Cemetery on the afternoon of Thursday 15th November 1917 at grave: L.32. He is commemorated there on the large family headstone erected by his mother, as well as the Broxburn and Uphall War Memorial unveiled in 2010. Angus Sheal was 34 years old when he passed away. After the war his mother Annabella Sheal took over the running of the Crown Tavern for a number of years.

**John Cotton**

Private John Cotton was born in Glasgow in 1878. He was the second son of John Cotton Senior and Sarah Cotton (ms Reid) who had been married in Milton parish, Glasgow in 1872. Sadly his mother died in Dennistoun in 1892, aged only 38, but his father remarried, to Jane or Jeannie McCann or Boyle, in Bo'ness in 1893. John had three sisters, Sarah, Mary and Elizabeth and two brothers, Stephen and Alexander. The family latterly resided at Grieve's Close, 42 South Street, Bo'ness. At the turn of the century, both John and his father had worked as labourers in the local potteries, but prior to joining up he worked as a dock labourer at Bo'ness docks. He was 5'3" in height, weighed 145lbs and had his initials "JC" tattooed on both forearms.

John enlisted at Leith, Edinburgh on 28th May 1915, service no: 22953, and joined the Royal Scots 14th and then 13th Battalions. Later that year he was posted to France to join the BEF on 2nd October, his Battalion attached to 15th (Scottish) Division, 45th Brigade.

John Cotton was wounded on 23rd April 1917, during the opening day of the Second Battle of the Scarpe, a phase of the Battle of Arras. He suffered a gunshot wound to his back, and was transferred to No: 6 Canadian General Hospital, Rouen. He was then evacuated home to Britain on 15th May, and spent time at Woolwich Hospital, London and Bromley Hospital, Kent. He was eventually transferred to 2nd Scottish General Hospital, Craigleith, Edinburgh. During this time he was assigned to the Royal Scots, 3rd Battalion, a training reserve unit based in Edinburgh. Following a further operation on his back, complications set in and John became weaker. He died of furunculosis (or cellulitis of the thigh) and pyaemia on 7th August 1917, aged 39 years.

John Cotton is buried at Comely Bank Cemetery, Edinburgh, at grave: D. 18.

His brother Alexander Cotton was killed during the Gallipoli campaign and is also commemorated on the Bo'ness War Memorial.

**Michael Muldoon**

Private Michael Muldoon, service no: TR/2/13417, Royal Scots Fusiliers, 9th Bn, converted into 55th Training Reserve Bn, was stationed at Kinghorn, Fife when he died at Whinnyhill Shooting Range, Burntisland, on 14th November 1917, after being accidentally shot during shooting practice. He was 18 years old and the son of Patrick Muldoon, 75 Newtown, Bo'ness.

Bo'ness Journal, 23rd November 1917;

Fatal Accident to a Bo'ness Private: On Thursday last Patrick Muldoon, 75 Newtown, received a telegram from a commanding officer on the East Coast of Scotland to the following effect:

"Regret to inform you that your son, Pte. M. Muldoon, met with a serious accident today, which has proved fatal. Please advise me what funeral arrangements you wish made". Mr Muldoon the same day proceeded to the East Coast and the body was brought home and interred with military honours in Bo'ness Cemetery on Saturday afternoon. Deceased was in his 19th year. Enlisting in the Royal Scots Fusiliers in June last, he was sent to the Fife coast to complete his training and he was going through his firing course when the unfortunate accident occurred. An elder brother, John, lost his right hand in France, and is now employed on light work at Kinneil Collieries. From the Lieut-Colonel in command, Mr Muldoon on Tuesday morning received the following letter: "Following my telegram dated the 14th inst. regarding the death of your son Michael, this soldier, who unfortunately was only under my command for about five months, showed keenness in his work, and gave his company no trouble. Pte. Muldoon was on the 14th inst. firing his musketry course when he met his death. He was standing ready to take his place at the firing point, when a comrade, contrary to all orders, loaded his rifle and accidentally drew the trigger. The officer in charge of the party states that your son died immediately, and on examination made by the medical officer, he states that your son was rendered instantly unconscious and that death was instantaneous. I deeply regret this most unfortunate accident and wish to convey to yourself and his friends my sincerest condolence in their sad bereavement".

This unfortunate accident would never have happened if the outcome of following appeal had been more favourable to Michael.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 9th March 1917:

*A Youthful Support:*

Perhaps the most interesting case was that of a mere boy, Michael Muldoon (18), employed in the mines at Kinneil. He appeared in person, along with his father, who did all the pleading for him. The lad had been passed in Class A. It was stated in the form that the youth was the sole support of the household, as his father was only able to work occasionally. A brother had been discharged from the Army, having lost a hand. The claim was refused.

Private Michael Muldoon is buried in Bo'ness Cemetery, in the unmarked grave B. 197. Investigations are ongoing to determine if Michael Muldoon is a "non-comm" (see entry for Thomas Morrison) and at some point in future his grave may be marked with a CWGC headstone.

Michael Muldoon's unmarked grave.

**William Cant**

Private William Cant, service no: 40891, Highland Light Infantry, 14th (Service) Bn, (formerly Royal Scots) was 35 years old when he died 20th December 1917.

The Quarterly Record of the Craigmailen Free Church (No.38, Jan 1918) tells us the strain of trench-life had shattered the health of this fine young man and caused his early death.

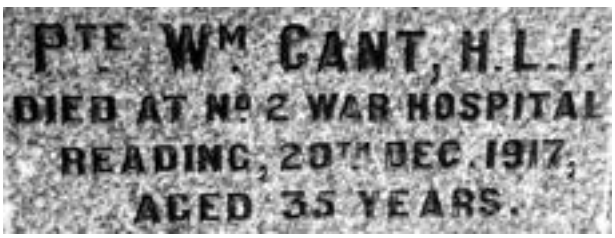
William was the son of George and Christina Cant, West Bog, Bo'ness. He was married to Margaret Wardlaw and they had a son.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 28th December 1917:

Died on Service: Private Wm. Cant, H.L.I., whose death occurred at No. 2 Reading Hospital on the 20th December, was the third son of the late George Cant, a prominent citizen in his day. The young man enlisted two years ago. He served for a time in France and some weeks ago was invalided home. His death was quite unexpected. Private Cant was a mason to trade and prior to enlistment was in the employment of Bo'ness Town Council. Deceased, who was aged 36, leaves a widow and child who live at the Liberal Institute. The funeral took place privately to Bo'ness Cemetery on Wednesday afternoon.

William Cant was transferred to Military Hospital in Reading at an unknown date, but it is likely that he participated in most, if not all, of the 40th Division activities in 1917, including: the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line (March), the capture of Fifteen Ravine, Villers Plouich, Beaucamp and La Vacquerie (April and early May) and the Cambrai Operations in which the Division participated in the capture of Bourlon Wood (November).

Private William Cant is buried in Bo'ness Cemetery, grave E. 1574. His headstone and the family headstone sit side by side.



**Thomas Brown**

Thomas Brown had been discharged from the Army when he died suddenly on 21st March 1918.

Bo'ness Journal, 22nd March 1918:

Sudden Death: Yesterday afternoon a man named Thomas Brown (40), employed by the North British Railway Company's contractor as a lorryman, was delivering goods at Newtown Store [as pictured], and carrying a sack into the store he was seized with sudden illness. The employees in the store did what they could for him, but he died in a very short time. The unfortunate man whose home was at Corbiehall, only started work with the contractor yesterday morning.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 29th March 1918:

Sudden Death of a Lorryman: Last Thursday afternoon Thomas Brown, lorryman, dropped dead while in the act of carrying a bag of meal into the Newtown branch of the Bo'ness Co-operative Society. He collapsed on the door-step, death being due to heart failure. Brown, himself a discharged soldier, relieved a younger man for the Army, and he had just entered upon his new occupation as a railway lorryman when the tragic event occurred. Deceased was aged 40 and leaves a widow and three children who reside at [61] Corbiehall.

Thomas is buried in common ground, grave G.141 (indicated with white marker), in Bo'ness Cemetery.

Bo'ness Cooperative Society

**Peter McNiven**

Private Peter McNiven, service no: 21648, Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment), 3rd Bn, was 39 years old when he died in the 1st Northern General Hospital, Newcastle-upon-Tyne on 17th April 1918.

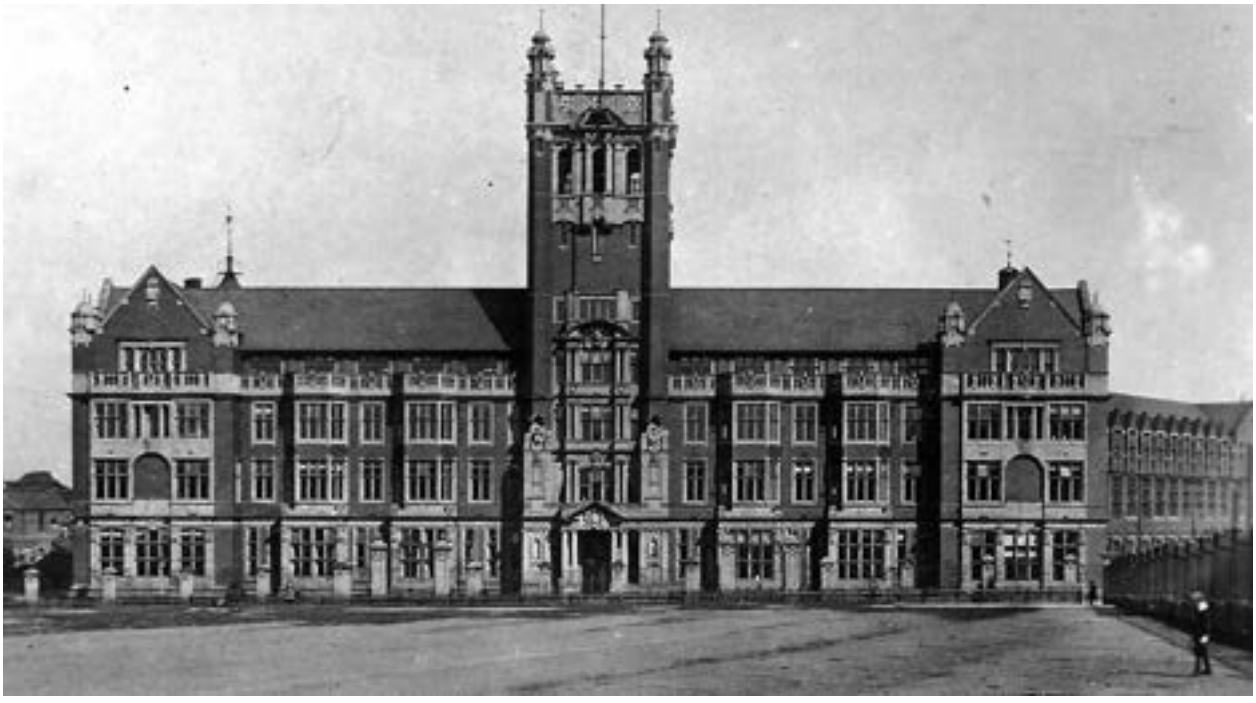
Born in Tillicoultry in 1879, he was the son of George Balmain McNiven and Margaret Dawson McNiven, of 39 Main Street, Grangepans, Bo'ness, and the husband of the late Julia Snedden Hamilton McNiven. He had two children, George and Janet.

> Linlithgowshire Gazette, 26th April 1918:
>
> Died on Service: Private Peter McNiven, of the West Riding Regiment, died in hospital in Newcastle-on-Tyne on Wednesday of last week. Private McNiven enlisted soon after the outbreak of war in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and served for some time in France where he was wounded. His injuries necessitated an operation in England and after recovery he was kept on home service. For many years Private McNiven worked as a plumber at Bo'ness. He was aged 38.

He was due to be discharged on 1st May 1918, as he was considered to be no longer physically fit for war service. His discharge papers had already been written and in them he was described as "honest, sober and hard-working".

His service records show the cause of death was pulmonary tuberculosis aggravated by military service. According to medical records, he had been hospitalised twice previously with gunshot wounds which included injury in the right jaw in the Somme battle.

Private Peter McNiven is buried in Bo'ness Cemetery, grave F. 2026.



Northern General Hospital, Newcastle

**Thomas McLaren**

Private Thomas McLaren, service no: 31099, Cameronians (Scottish Rifles), 16th Bn, was 38 years old when he died from tuberculosis on 23rd April 1918.

He married Bethia Dickson in 1905 and they were living in Grange Institute when Thomas enlisted in December 1915. They had five children, Bethia, Peter, Matthew, Thomas and Mary. According to his military records, Thomas had worked as an iron moulder (foundry unknown). However, on his death certificate his occupation was Saw Mill Worker.

Pension records show he was discharged on 11th April 1918 as he was physically unfit after contracting tuberculosis due to ordinary military service during the war with Germany.

Thomas died in Tippethill Hospital, to the south of Armadale, and is buried in Bo'ness Cemetery, grave E. 1520. His CWGC headstone is partially obscured by the family headstone.

Tippethill Hospital

**Thomas Hogarth Bernard**

Thomas Hogarth Bernard, service no: 56158, was a Private with the Highland Light Infantry, 3rd (Reserve) Battalion. He was the son of Hugh Bernard and Barbara Hogarth of Gorebridge and the husband of Jessie Crawford Pringle Bernard of Catcune Farm, Gorebridge, Midlothian.

Thomas Hogarth Bernard was related to Alexander Sneddon Bernard also commemorated on Bo'ness War Memorial. Thomas H. Bernard's father Hugh Bernard is the son of Andrew Bernard, who in turn was the brother of Hugh Bernard, father of Richard Bernard, father of Alexander Sneddon Bernard on the war memorial. They were second cousins and there are strong family links to Bo'ness and coalmining. Although we could find no firm connection in the records, there is enough circumstantial evidence to suggest that this is the correct man.

Thomas was 27 years old when he died from capillary bronchitis and pneumonia in 2nd General Military Hospital, Craigleith, Edinburgh on 17th July 1918. He is buried in Newbattle Old Cemetery, Midlothian, at grave 19.34.

An interesting fact that seems to confirm this is that the first male with the surname Bernard born after Thomas Bernard's death in July 1918 was also named Thomas Bernard (born on 11th November 1918). This name doesn't appear often in the Bo'ness branch of the Bernard family tree. He may have been named after Thomas Hogarth Bernard.

**Albert Hanley**

As explained in the "Alive, In Error and Unknown" section, Albert Hanley was in fact Albert Fradley. Albert's brothers, Victor and Herbert, who were killed during the War, both appear twice on the war memorial, as Fradleys and Hanleys. Albert appears only once on the memorial, under the incorrect surname, Hanley.

Albert Edward Fradley was a woodyard worker and lived with his parents, Herbert and Helen, in Ann Terrace, Bridgeness. Albert died from septic broncho pneumonia and appendicitis in the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, on 14th September 1918. He was 16 years old. The notification of his death in the Bo'ness Journal, 27th September 1918, confirmed a military connection. Albert was a member of the 6th Volunteer Battalion, Royal Scots.

There are no military records available for Albert but at the age of 16, he would not (or should not) have been involved in any fighting as official government policy was that you had to be 18 to sign up and 19 to fight overseas. However, despite this ruling 250000 underage soldiers fought in the war.

Albert is buried with his parents in Bo'ness Cemetery.

**James Drysdale**

The Spanish Influenza pandemic lasted from approximately July 1918 to April 1919 with a major peak in the UK between September 1918 and January 1919. It claimed more lives than the Great War. James Drysdale is thought to be one of its victims. He was the son of William Drysdale and Marion Drysdale, Melville Place, Grangepans, Bo'ness. He had several brothers and sisters, namely Annie, Bruce, Maggie, Thomas, Alexander, Robert and John.

James was an Able Seaman with Mercantile Marine Reserve on board the Mercantile Fleet Auxiliary ship SS Saltmarshe. The ship was launched on 9th May 1907, by Wm Pickersgill & Co, Southwick, Sunderland as Yard No: 159 and named Saltmarshe for Wetherall Steamship Co Ltd, Goole. She was completed as a collier by the following month. The Admiralty requisitioned the ship on 7th March 1915, for service as an ammunition carrier. She was returned to her owners on 21st November 1918. On 12th December 1931, she arrived at Bo'ness for dismantling by P & W MacLellan Ltd., shipbreakers.

Able Seaman James Drysdale was 19 when he died on 21st July 1918, and is buried in Bo'ness Cemetery, grave E. 2524.

A small In Memoriam for James Drysdale in the Bo'ness Journal stated that he died at Shrewsbury Hospital, and that his sister and brother-in-law were Mr and Mrs James Thomson, 11 Bowling Green Street, Leith.

S S Saltmarshe

**William Bishop**

Private William Bishop, service no: 59119, Royal Scots 17th Bn, (formerly 2/7815 Highland Light Infantry) died of wounds on 15th October 1918. He was 19 years old. These wounds were probably sustained in the heavy fighting at Zanvoorde or Wervicq in late September/early October 1918 prior to the Battle of Courtrai.

William was the son of Robert and Jemima Bishop, of 10 Kinneil Lane, Bo'ness and brother of John Bishop, who was killed in action in October 1917 and who is also remembered on Bo'ness War Memorial. William Bishop is buried in Bo'ness Cemetery, grave A. 484.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 18th October 1918:

Second Son Falls: Pte. William Bishop, Royal Scots, died of wounds at Northumberland War Hospital, on 15th October, was the youngest son of Mr and Mrs Robert Bishop, Kinneil, and is the second son to fall in the war. He was in his 19th year.

Recently an item relating to William was discussed in the local press.

Bo'ness Journal 1st January 2010:

A Peep at the Past: Help is needed this week to identify the family of a soldier who died of wounds in Northumberland War Hospital on October 15, 1918. Private William Bishop, son of Mrs Robert Bishop, served with the 17th Royal Scots and was aged 19. A Bo'ness lady, who wishes to stay anonymous, believes he could have had local links and would be happy to pass on a small memorial card she has found during a house clear out. It has a decorative front, complete with ribbon, that says "For King and Country" with a crown and flag emblem. Inside is a picture of the late soldier and the tribute "He heard the call of duty and obeyed".

Two weeks later the Journal reported that the card had been passed to William's nephew Andrew McNeill (89) from Chester-le-Street. Co. Durham, who had been in touch. Andrew had lived in Kinneil Lane, two doors from William and his parents. His mother Jessie was William's sister.

IN LOVING MEMORY

OF

**Pte. WILLIAM BISHOP,**

(17th ROYAL SCOTS),

(Beloved Son of Mr and Mrs Robert Bishop),

WHO

Died of Wounds in Northumberland War Hospital,

15th October, 1918,

AGED 19 YEARS.

"He heard the call of duty and obeyed."

**Thomas Baillie**

Corporal Thomas Baillie, service no: 125055, Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment) No. 4 Anti-Aircraft Coy, 44th Garrison Bn, was 26 years old when he died at his home in Gilburn Place, Bo'ness. Thomas had been ill with influenza and he died on 1st March 1919. He is buried in Bo'ness Cemetery, grave F. 1930. He was the son of James and Margaret Baillie, of 16 Gilburn Place, Bo'ness. Before the war he was a woodyard worker.

The Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment), 43rd and 44th (Garrison) Battalions were formed in France in May and September 1918 from Garrison Guard Companies, for duty at the five Army HQs. They were manned by troops who had been rated as medically unfit for front line duty.

Bo'ness Journal, 7th March 1919:

Soldier's Death: On Saturday at Gilburn Place, there passed away Corpl. T. Baillie, of the M.G.C., who had been demobilised just a fortnight ago. The deceased contracted influenza shortly after his arrival home, which developed into pneumonia with the result that he died as above stated. The deceased joined the Royal Scots just after the outbreak of the war and held the rank of L-Corporal. He was well liked in the Battalion, and proved a capable N.C.O. In 1916 he was drafted to the R.S.F. in France, being badly wounded in the Somme Battle. After hospital treatment he served at home for some time and was drafted overseas to the Machine Gun Corps, in which corps he made considerable progress. The deceased was 26 years of age and the elder son of a widow. Before the war he was employed with Messrs Harrower & Welsh, at Kinneil.

Dundee Evening Telegraph, 5th March 1919:

Bo'ness Soldier's Tragic Death: The death has occurred under sad circumstances of Corporal Thomas Baillie, Royal Scots. He had been stationed in France and was granted furlough while suffering from an attack of influenza.

Alighting at Linlithgow Station he set out on foot for his home at Bo'ness and collapsed by the wayside. A driver of a passing conveyance picked the poor Tommy up and took him to his home at Gilburn Place, where he died. Deceased, who was 26 years of age, was the son of a widow.

Gilburn Place, Old Snab Foundry

**James McIntosh DCM**

Private James McIntosh DCM was the eldest son of Alexander McIntosh, Carter to the Bridgeness Coal Company Ltd. James was born and bred in Grangepans. The family lived at Cowdenhill Road, Grangepans but they latterly moved to 6 Miller Pit.

James was a member of the Black Watch, 2nd Bn, service no: 1789, and began serving with them in 1909. He was in India when WW1 broke out and he was despatched to France in October 1914. Out of the original draft of 1000 men, only 100 were to survive the initial fighting.

It was in the trenches where he became one of the first soldiers in Scotland to be awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM). An account of how this was achieved appeared in the LG 28/03/19 as follows:

> Pte. McIntosh, in the course of an interview, told how he won the decoration. He had, he said, been only a month in the trenches, and the snow was still on the ground when the Germans made a vigorous attack on the Indian native troops. Overwhelmed, the latter yielded ground and a counter-attack ensued. In this attack they were led by a party of five 2nd Black Watch, namely - Major Houston, Corporal (now Sergeant) Venters, Dunfermline; Pte. Watters, Kelty: Pte. Stewart, Dundee; and Pte. Mcintosh himself. Stewart, as a result of a bomb explosion, had the misfortune to lose his eyesight, but the other four went on to the end and after a Herculean effort recaptured the trench. For this meritorious work, four were awarded the DCM, while Major Houston was given a special honour.

The DCM citation further states that James was awarded the medal, "For conspicuous gallantry and dash on November 23 and 24, 1914. In voluntarily assisting in the leading of parties of the 58th Vaughan's rifles, which resulted in the recapture of the enemy trenches"

James McIntosh would later be gassed in France in October 1915. After serving for eighteen months in France, he was drafted to Mesopotamia (modern Iraq), where he was wounded in the face and hand, then to Egypt and finally back to France.

In February 1919, he returned home from France for a few week's sick leave only to contract influenza. This led to pneumonia, from which James McIntosh died in the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh on Monday 24th March 1919, aged 27. He had survived some of the fiercest battles of WW1. Only illness could beat him. He was given a military funeral at Bo'ness Cemetery attended by a contingent of fifty or more soldiers from the Black Watch. He is buried at grave B. 662.

An interesting article appeared in the Linlithgowshire Gazette of 16th April 1915, regarding James McIntosh. It read,

**CONGRATULATION TO PRIVATE MCINTOSH D.C.M.**

A leading Bo'ness gentleman wrote to Private McIntosh, 2nd Black Watch, congratulating him upon having so worthily earned the Distinguished Conduct Medal, and the gallant Carriden man sends the following model reply from the trenches:

"Dear Sir,

I am very pleased to receive your letter, and I wish to thank you for your good wishes towards me. I am also naturally pleased to know that the people at home think so well and Kindly of me. I personally was very surprised when this decoration was awarded to me. However, I trust I may always be fit to do my duty and spared to return safe. Thanking you once more.

I remain, respectfully yours,
No. 1789 Pte. James McIntosh,

2nd Battalion Black Watch".

James McIntosh was a humble man, but hard as nails.

James McIntosh's DCM

**Richard Pow**

Richard Grant Pow, service no: 264743, served as a Gunner with the 35th Company, Royal Field Artillery. He was the son of William Pow and Julia Grant.

When Richard married Hume Malarky King on 25th June 1918, in Bo'ness Manse, Hume lived at Foredale Terrace, Carriden and he was stationed at Redford Barracks, Edinburgh.

After the war Richard worked as a Coal Miner. He died on 2nd October 1919, from acute lymphatic leukaemia, at 29 Newtown, Bo'ness leaving his wife and one child. He is buried in Bo'ness Cemetery, grave B. 723.

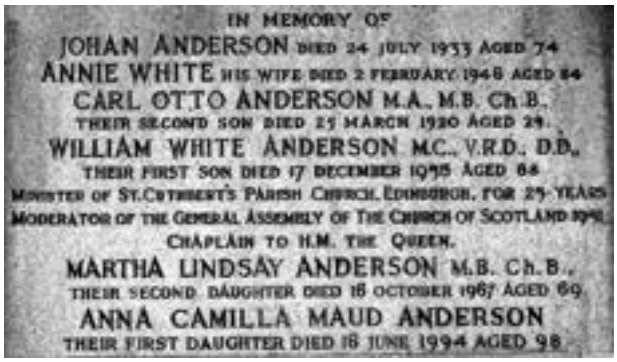
**Carl Otto Anderson**

Carl Otto Anderson MA, MB ChB, was a Lieutenant in the Royal Army Medical Corps. He was born in 1891 in Bo'ness, Linlithgowshire, the second son of Annie Anderson a housekeeper and Johan Anderson a shipping clerk or cargo superintendent originally from Sweden. Carl had three other siblings: William, Anna and Martha, and the family lived at Jane Terrace, Bo'ness. He studied at the University of Glasgow from 1910 until 1918. On the 20th June 1913, he graduated with an Arts degree, (MA), and later, in 1918, he graduated with a degree in medicine (MB ChB). He was a good student winning a number of prizes including one for first place in his class in Clinical Surgery (1916-1917). Whilst at the University he was also a member of the Officers Training Corps. On the 29 October 1918, Carl became a Lieutenant in the Royal Army Medical Corps. On demobilisation he acted for a time as a locum, and just three months prior to his death he received an appointment as a resident doctor at Bellahouston Hospital.

He died on the 25th March 1920, at Bellahouston Hospital, Glasgow from a carbuncle in the neck and pyaemia.

Carl died after leaving the RAMC and some time after the Armistice. He does not appear on CWGC or any of the usual websites, even though he saw active service and is within the date range for inclusion (before 31st August 1921). This is because it must be proven to the authorities' satisfaction that death was service attributable. Carl Otto Anderson is buried in Bo'ness Cemetery, where he is commemorated on the large family headstone. He also appears on the University of Glasgow WW1 Roll of Honour.

Carl's brother was Rev. William White Anderson, M.C. He won his Military Cross in 1917 and also served in WW2. In 1951, Rev. Anderson was appointed Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and in 1952 became Chaplain to the Queen in Scotland. Earlier he had been Chaplain to King George VI in Scotland, 1949-1952. The Very Rev. William White Anderson died 17 December 1956.



**Alexander Laing Burnett**

Sergeant Alexander Laing Burnett, service no: 307240, served with the Royal Garrison Artillery, 1st/1st Lowland (City of Edinburgh) Heavy Battery, latterly C. Coy, 234 Siege Battery, RGA. He was the son of Thomas Burnett and Annie Lothian Laing, Gladstone Terrace, Bo'ness and the husband of Helen Lawrie, Beaton's Cottages, Kingennie, near Dundee.

The Lowland (City of Edinburgh) Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery (Territorial Force) was formed with its ammunition column from part of the 1st Edinburgh (City) Royal Garrison Artillery (Volunteers) in 1908. The unit headquarters was in Edinburgh. Upon mobilisation in August 1914, to cope with the numbers of volunteers and in common with other territorial units, the unit was duplicated, forming the 1st/1st and 2nd/1st Lowland Heavy Batteries.

Alexander enlisted on 25th January 1915, and was discharged on 20th September 1919.

He died in the Royal Infirmary, Dundee on 17th June 1920, from spinal meningitis. He was 27 years old.

Bo'ness Journal 25th June 1920:

In Memoriam: Burnett - At Dundee Royal Infirmary, on the 17th inst., in his 27th year, Alexander Laing Burnett, late Sergt. of C. Coy, 234 Siege Battery, R.G.A., dearly beloved son of Mr and Mrs Thomas Burnett, Gladstone Terrace, Bo'ness, and beloved husband of Helen Lawrie, Kingennie.

Alexander is buried in Barnhill Cemetery, grave M. 169, Broughty Ferry, Dundee, in the marked area on the photograph. At present, there is no headstone.

**William Drysdale**

William Black Drysdale was 59 years old when he died as the result of an accident at Bo'ness Docks.

On the 16th July 1920, he was run over by a goods train at the Pier Siding. He was taken to Edinburgh Royal Infirmary where he died from his injuries that evening. The cause of death was recorded as "Compound Fracture of Left Humerus, Haemorrhage and Shock".

Born in Polmont, William was the son of David Drysdale and Ann Paterson, and the husband of Marion (Minnie) Marshall, he was the father of James Drysdale who also appears on the Bo'ness War Memorial. William and Minnie lived at Market Square, Bo'ness. He was a Marine Engineman and a former Stoker on a Steamship.

We can find no service records, but given his family seafaring background, it is likely that he saw some marine service during WW1 and, therefore, he is the likeliest candidate for the name on the War Memorial.

William Black Drysdale is buried in Bo'ness Cemetery, grave B. 766. His resting place is marked with a simple headstone with the inscription "In Loving Memory".

**James Cairns Grant**

In November 1912 in Bo'ness, and at the age of 18 years and 1 month, James Cairns Grant signed up as a Private, service no: 838, in the Royal Scots, 10th Cyclist Bn. He had been a miner with the Bridgeness Coal Company before the War. He was 5'5" in height and weighed 145lbs.

In July 1915 he was transferred to the 3/1st Lowland Divisional Cyclist Company, Army Cyclist Corps, service no: 19831. One month later he was promoted to Sergeant.

He was discharged on 6th January 1919, suffering from rheumatism, the cause of which was attributed to his military service. One document in his records is marked "Discharged 6.1.19. Surplus to military requirements. Having suffered impairment since entry into the service".

James died in Bangour Military Hospital on 28th October 1920 at the age of 26. He was suffering from Acute Rheumatism and Lymphatic Leukaemia. He was the son of William Grant and Grace Forrester, 35a Bankhead, Bo'ness.

James is buried with his parents in an unmarked grave in Bo'ness Cemetery, grave B932.

> Bo'ness Journal 2nd October 1914: Bo'ness Families Loyalty: It is interesting to note that at least two families in Bo'ness have made an exceptionally good response to the country's "call to arms" as they have given respectively four and three members to service with the colours. Mr Wm. Grant, Bankhead, has four sons in the local "B" Coy, Royal Scots (Cyclists) and are amongst those who have volunteered for foreign service. Their names are: Sergt. Andrew F. Grant, George Terrace; Corporal Wm. Grant, Thirlestane; Pte. John Grant, Bankhead; and Pte. James C. Grant, Bankhead.

Bangour Military Hospital

**William King**

William King was a Lance Corporal in the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), 2nd Bn. The son of John King and Julia Nimmo Duncan, he was born in Kilmacolm, Renfrewshire, on 3rd January 1886. By the 1891 census, the family were in Bo'ness. John was the manager at the gas works and they lived in the gas works house in Links Road. In the 1901 census, 15 years old William was a bank clerk. After his father John's death in 1907 the family moved to Panacre Place (behind bandstand in bottom photo), Bo'ness.

During the Great War, William served with the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), 2nd Battalion and saw action in Mesopotamia, Egypt and Palestine. After the war William returned to working as a bank teller, with the Union Bank, and on 25th December 1919, he married Anne Paris, daughter of James Paris, Master Baker, and Elizabeth Morrison, at her home, Deanforth, Bo'ness.

Less than two years later, due to an abdominal tumour and intestinal obstruction, William died in Glasgow Royal Infirmary on 27th March 1921. He was 35 years old.

> Linlithgowshire Gazette, 1st April 1921:
>
> The Late Mr Wm. King: The death occurred in the Royal Infirmary, Glasgow, last Sunday afternoon of Mr Wm. King, a promising young Bo'ness man. The eldest son of the late Mr John King, gas manager, and of Mrs King, Panacre Place, he was born in Bo'ness [sic], 35 years ago. Soon after completing his apprenticeship in the Bo'ness branch of the Union Bank, he was promoted to an important branch in Edinburgh. In 1915 he joined the Black Watch and served for three years in Mesopotamia. On his return to civil life Mr King was appointed teller in the head office of the Union Bank in Glasgow, in which city after his marriage he took up residence. Six months ago, Mr King had a serious breakdown in health and his untimely death has caused widespread regret. Of a singularly lovable disposition, the deceased was held in high esteem and respect. He leaves a widow and child, for whom much sympathy has been expressed.

William's funeral was from Deanforth and he was buried in Bo'ness Cemetery on Wednesday 30th March 1921.

Panacre Place in the background

**W. Nicol Gray**

William Nicol Louden Gray was a Sergeant in the Gordon Highlanders, 1st Bn.

William was born on 1st October 1882, at 3 Mount Pleasant, Bo'ness. His father was James Tweedle Gray, a grocer, and his mother was Barbara Dudgeon Millar. The family were living in Bo'ness at the 1881, 1891 & 1901 censuses. In the 1911 census, William was unmarried and a Lance Corporal in the Gordon Highlanders, stationed in Goojerat Barracks in Colchester.

The Bo'ness Journal of 16th October 1914, reported that his father James had been notified of William's promotion from Corporal to Sergeant. The Linlithgowshire Gazette published a letter from Sergeant Gray, dated 22nd October 1914, that he wrote from the Military Hospital, Princes Street, Manchester to his uncle Mr Thomas Galloway, Bo'mains. It read,

> Thanks very much for large parcel of cigarettes, which, I learn, you sent to me at the front. I never received them. We were kept so busy with the Germans – for three days and nights – that we had no time to issue the mails. My comrades in the firing line will get the packet all right. Poor souls! they feel the want of a smoke more than the want of food and it is not the first man I have noticed giving his last biscuit for a cigarette or a fill of tobacco. I have seen our troops heavily shelled but still they puffed away at a "fag" end.
>
> We suffered a lot on the left wing from wet weather. We were never out of canals and wet ditches. One day, I think on 13th inst., I lay with my section up to the waist in water from 9 a.m. till 3 p.m. patiently waiting for dusk to fall, thinking we might then get a chance to dry our clothes. The Germans generally cease operations at dusk, but alas! on these occasions along the firing line came the same old call, "Dig yourselves in, men". No sooner had we completed our cover for the night than the order was given to advance. This sort of thing went on till I left the line and I daresay it is going on still. It was quite evident we had the Germans on the "hop" and we didn't intend to let them settle down again. Had the German troops the pluck of our men, I daresay they would wipe both France and us out. Our county regiment, the Royal Scots, alongside of us did some splendid work, but, like us, suffered heavily. The Germans have bowled over nearly all our officers. Probably the walking stick and macintosh sported by our officers give them away.
>
> Our men pay little attention to the German rifle fire. It is the shrapnel and machine guns that do the damage. We opened a terrific fire on them on the night of 15th inst. – one probably unexampled in history. Bullets poured into the German lines like rain for at least one hour. No big guns replied, so we had an ideal opportunity of showing the Germans how to use a rifle. One Frenchman I noticed just stood and looked on amazed. I am keeping a great deal better and expect to be back to the front soon again".

William married Margaret Forrest in Middlesbrough in 1916. He died on 6th January 1924, suffering from carcinoma ventriculi (stomach cancer). His funeral was four days later at Trinity Cemetery, Aberdeen, where he is interred at grave C. 7.

His was the final death to be commemorated on the Bo'ness War Memorial.

CHAPTER 15

# *Home: The Coming of Peace*

**Never Again**

No more wars should be declared
Nothing like 100 years ago!

Never Again letters of conscription
Never Again dying of starvation

Never Again children lying about their age
Never Again reading a devastating page

Never Again should there be any violence
Never Again should there be a minute of silence

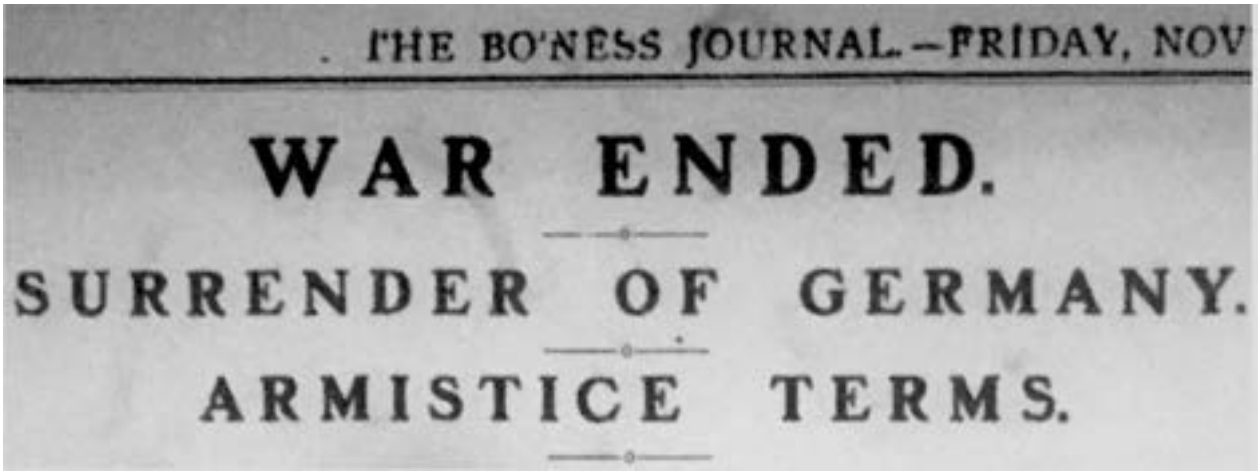
Never Again should innocent animals be used to fight
Never Again should pigeons have dangerous flight

Open your heart and be grateful
Never Again!

*Ava Lugget (aged 10) and Carice Baillie (aged 9)*
*Primary 7/6, Kinneil Primary School, Bo'ness.*

*November, 2018.*

# *Home: The Coming of Peace*



THE BO'NESS JOURNAL.—FRIDAY, NOV

WAR ENDED.

SURRENDER OF GERMANY.

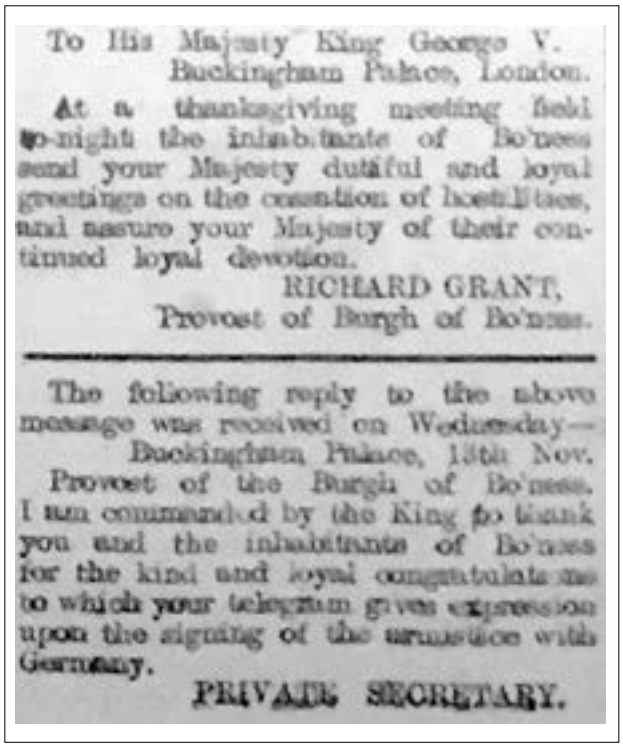
ARMISTICE TERMS.

News travels fast in Bo'ness, and it became known at about 10:00am on Monday, 11th November 1918, that the Armistice had been signed and that hostilities would cease at 11:00am that morning. The joyful news was first made known to the public by the ringing of the town bell at eleven, and immediately a crowd began to assemble in the vicinity of Market Square in the town centre. Grange miners were off work that day due to a dispute with their employers and quickly formed the nucleus of a crowd. They were soon joined by other workers who had downed tools and joined the celebrations. Female woodyard workers in their working garb marched into the town in processional order, and children were released from school to swell the exuberant throng and add to the chorus of jubilation. Flags appeared everywhere as if by magic, everyone seemed to have acquired one, or at least something brightly coloured to wave. Colours were hung out of windows and on shop fronts, and soon the town acquired a Fair Day appearance. Steam horns and whistles added their voice, and this was followed by strains of triumphant music from the Carriden Band.

As church bells joined in, flags were put up on the flagpole at the Public Park and the whole community were stirred by a spirit of thankfulness. Many of the crowd looked expectantly to the Forth, where the warships and steamers of the Auxiliary Fleet were lying off shore, but the Admiralty were in no mood to rejoice until a peace treaty had been signed and the German High Seas Fleet had surrendered. In the early afternoon however, a large aeroplane passed overhead to great cheers, reminding the crowd that the war was now over, and peace declared, they hoped, forever.

The Bo'ness Journal reported, "All afternoon the town was pervaded by an air of festive gaiety. The countenances of the older inhabitants shone with a quiet thankfulness, while the more youthful sang their loudest, cheered and waved their flags with hearty abandon". In the evening, the steamers in the Forth finally added their note to the general rejoicing and for some hours afterwards their bellowing sirens sounded throughout the town.

A public thanksgiving service was quickly scheduled for the Town Hall at 8:00pm the following day, with flags arranged by Captain Grant of the SS Shelagh, and flowers provided by Mr. W. Denholm, Tidings Hill. The event was chaired by Provost Richard Grant with many local dignitaries in attendance. After the impressive service, it was resolved to send a telegram to the King, and a response was received from Buckingham Palace the very next day.



To His Majesty King George V.
Buckingham Palace, London.

At a thanksgiving meeting held to-night the inhabitants of Bo'ness send your Majesty dutiful and loyal greetings on the cessation of hostilities, and assure your Majesty of their continued loyal devotion.

RICHARD GRANT,
Provost of Burgh of Bo'ness.

The following reply to the above message was received on Wednesday—
Buckingham Palace, 13th Nov.
Provost of the Burgh of Bo'ness.
I am commanded by the King to thank you and the inhabitants of Bo'ness for the kind and loyal congratulations to which your telegram gives expression upon the signing of the armistice with Germany.

PRIVATE SECRETARY.

Politics came to the fore with a general election called immediately after the Armistice. The local candidates standing as Member of Parliament of Linlithgowshire were James Kidd, from Muiredge, Carriden, standing as a Coalition Unionist (a supporter of David Lloyd George's Coalition Government) and Emanuel (Manny) Shinwell of Labour. The hustings were fiercely played out and one of Kidd's canvassers had to make a public apology in the Bo'ness Journal after falsely accusing Shinwell of being a murderer.

The election was held on Saturday, 14th December, although the vote count was delayed until 28th December so that the ballots cast by soldiers serving overseas could be included. It was also the first general election to be held after enactment of the Representation of the People Act 1918, in which women over the age of 30, and all men over the age of 21, could vote. Previously, all women and many poor men had been excluded from voting. Kidd won by 4175 votes and took his seat, which the two would battle over for the next decade until Kidd's death in 1928. Shinwell had a chequered career in politics and died in 1986.

On a clear and frosty Hogmanay, a New Year of peace was ushered in by the ringing of bells and the sound of ship's horns from the Forth. New Year's Day, 1919, was dull, foggy and drizzling, but this didn't stop the Carriden band traversing the town playing "A Guid New Year" and other suitable music.

In early 1919, the Admiralty allowed the re-opening of Grangemouth Docks to commercial vessels but Bo'ness Docks remained closed. There was frustration in Bo'ness at this decision, although Bo'ness was re-opened soon after. In truth, Bo'ness had been left behind by its neighbouring port during the war years. Just prior to the war, the port authorities at Grangemouth had finished building a large and accommodating dock with improved facilities. The Admiralty took full advantage of this during the war, resulting in the port being maintained in good order, ready for immediate use. Bo'ness docks on the other hand were built over 30 years previous and were already outdated even before the war. Vessels of the size that could be accommodated at Bo'ness had been made obsolete by four years of submarine and mine warfare. Replacement ships were rapidly being built but were too big to be berthed at Bo'ness. Traders had also grown used to the measures they had to adopt on the closure of the docks at the start of the war so the appetite for increased shipping trade was limited. It was a combination of factors that would

ultimately seal the future of the once thriving port. Although the coal industry boom would lead to a brief revival of fortunes, trade declined and Bo'ness docks would close to commercial trade on 30th June 1959.

Normality gradually returned to Bo'ness. With war restrictions being lifted business started to pick up. The Charlie Chaplin film "A Dog's Life" was the first show of the year at the Hippodrome Cinema and played to full houses. In February, a new picture house, the Pavilion, opened in Grangepans, on the site of Adie's Bakery, and seated 600 people.

A new Motor Bus service was introduced between Bo'ness and Falkirk, by way of Grangemouth, by the Falkirk and District Tramways Company, opening up new travel possibilities for the town's inhabitants.

In April, Bo'ness Football Club was reformed in readiness for the 1919-1920 season. Office bearers appointed were: James Cochrane (President), J. Holmes (Treasurer) and G. Gibb (Secretary). The Committee were Messrs R. Sneddon, R. Wylie, A. Simpson, J. Watt, A. MacFarlane, D. Cunningham, A. Thomson, W. Broome, W. White, A. Forrester, J. Kirkwood, H. Bernard and J. Grant.

On 28th June 1919, the Treaty of Versailles was signed between Germany and the Allied Powers officially bringing World War One to an end. Perhaps the most important event to take place to confirm locally to Bo'nessians that peace had endured, and that things were returning to pre-war normality, was the recommencement of the Bo'ness

Children's Fair Festival. On Friday, 18th July 1919, the children from the various schools attended the crowning ceremony of Queen Joan from Borrowstoun Public School in the Ladywell Park, Kinneil. The summer sun was gleaming as the assembled crowd of at least 3000 people sang two verses of the Fair song "Our Festal Day" played by Kinneil Band. The Queen's Champion delivered his challenge, which was untaken. The Sceptre Bearer then gave the sceptre to the ex-Queen of 1914, Miss Helen Grant, who delivered it to the Queen-Elect. The Crown Bearer presented the crown to Miss Murray, who after a few words placed the crown on the head of Queen Joan. Kinneil Band struck up the tune of "Hail to the Queen" and following the reading of the Royal Proclamation by a Herald, the presentation of characters then took place. Each school had one representative of an Allied nation, dressed in national colours. They were: France - Maggie Neish, Kinneil School; America - Rosamond McNaught, St. Mary's; Japan - May Harkins, Infant School; Serbia - Bella Sneddon, Grange; Italy - Nelly Robertson, Public; Romania - Violet Lapsley, Carriden; Belgium - Mary Reach, Blackness; and Britain - Jean Law, Bo'ness Academy. Maggie Neish's brother Alexander was a Stoker killed on board HMS Black Prince at the Battle of Jutland, 1916 and is commemorated on the War Memorial. Afterwards the children were supplied with necessary refreshments by the Co-operative Society and participated in games and sports until 4:00pm that afternoon when they marched in procession back to their schools by way of Castleloan and Panbrae Road. The Bo'ness Fair Day remains the focal point for the local community to this day, and much of the day's proceedings will be very familiar to modern residents of Bo'ness.

The post-war years were also a time for reflection and reconciliation. One such incident captures this

sentiment in its entirety. We have already read the story of Private Henry McEwan, Connaught Rangers, 6th Battalion, who was killed on 21st March 1918, during the Battle of St Quentin. During an earlier offensive, the Battle of Cambrai, after hand-to-hand fighting with the Germans, a dying Prussian officer handed him his Iron Cross, parchment certificate and leather pouch. The officer was subsequently identified as Captain Hugo Vogelman of the 11th Company of the Royal Prussian Infantry. Henry sent the medal back home to his sister Mary who lived in Torphicen, with a note saying that the German, described as "a gallant young chap", died in his arms and that he buried him in an unmarked grave.

For 17 years they remained in the possession of Mrs McEwan. She was always haunted with the tragedy of the young officer, and in 1932 had such a vivid dream of the anxiety of the officer's parents that she resolved to trace them, and hand over the belongings which she felt they would treasure above everything. She told her nephew, John Anderson, a constable with Falkirk Police, who agreed to help her find the officer's parents. He deciphered the name on the parchment as "H. Vogelman", and he endeavoured without success to discover the relatives through the German authorities. John then hit upon the idea of speaking to the captains of the many German boats which put into the port of Grangemouth. He met a Captain Specht of the SS Diana who took possession of the items, promising he would continue the quest to find the rightful owners.

John Anderson then received a letter in November 1934 from Dr. Paul Schonheit, a barrister from Rudolstadt, Thurinigia, who it happened was a fellow officer of Captain Vogelman. He said that the items had been handed over to the gallant officer's elderly mother, Frau Vogelman of Hershchdorf, together with the account of how he died. Dr. Schonheit, after expressing the relatives' thanks, said, "The aged mother and sister of my friend have now found a certain element of peace in the fact that the torturing uncertainty which of necessity was combined with the dread[ed] word "missing" has vanished. For the family the articles you have sent us - the Iron Cross, supreme token of German gallantry - will remain of inestimable value and ever be sacred souvenirs". He went on to say that, coincidentally, the items had been handed over on the 17th anniversary of Captain Vogelman's death. It was a remarkable end to a touching story of two women whose men fought as enemies, and who both gave their lives for their countries.

For many of the residents of Bo'ness the effects of the Great War would take many years to come to terms with. For those that had lost their fathers, brothers, husbands, boyfriends and sons, the wounds would take longer to heal. Many families had been devastated. Spare a thought for Mrs Christina Stanners. She had lost three sons in the conflict, Gilbert, Neil and Thomas. She then lost her husband Thomas Stanners Senior, who died on the 29th September, 1918, two weeks after hearing the news that his third son had been killed. We cannot imagine her grief and suffering, or her stoic resilience in protecting and bringing up her remaining family. The same values were necessarily shown by many other women throughout Bo'ness. Families, friends and neighbours would rally round. The collateral experiences of the Great War helped to strengthen the community spirit still seen in Bo'ness to this day.

Romance of Officer's Iron Cross

WEEK-END WIRELESS

TO-DAY.

Returned to Mother 17 Years After His Death

Scotswoman's Long Quest Ended

The Stanners family portrait: WW1 casualties included Gilbert (back row, third from left), Neil (back row, middle) and Thomas (back row, extreme right). Father Thomas Senior also died in 1918.

Although this book is primarily about the fallen, we must also remember those who survived the Great War. For those returning soldiers, some had obvious physical injuries, but mental aspects of the horrors of what they witnessed also had to be dealt with, usually kept at the back of their minds, something only now after a century we are beginning to understand. A typical story of a returning soldier is that of George McQuet, as told by Peter Aitken in his book "Wha's Like Us - Bo'ness the People". Prior to the outbreak of the Great War George worked at Bo'ness Docks, but at 19 years old he enlisted with the Inniskilling Fusiliers, service no: 1/42091. He later joined the Army Service Corps, service no: SS/3496. He fought in a number of campaigns including the Battle of the Somme where he was wounded but returned to the Front after only two weeks recovery. After the War he returned to Bo'ness and worked in Kinneil Colliery until his retirement in the mid-1960s. Like many Great War veterans he rarely talked about his wartime experiences, but remained proud of what was achieved. In 1999 he was awarded the Legion d'Honneur by the French government in recognition of his role in the liberation of France. Rather than travelling to London he insisted on a quiet presentation ceremony in his home town.

George McQuet passed away on 6th August 2000. He was aged 105 years old, at the time the oldest resident in Bo'ness. He was the last remaining Bo'ness veteran of the Great War, our last local link to the so-called War to end all Wars.

CHAPTER 16

# *About the Bo'ness War Memorial*

The proposal to erect a memorial to those who made the ultimate sacrifice in the Great War was first suggested in 1919. A committee was formed but there were many difficulties to overcome and progress was slow. A slump in trade two years after the Armistice brought it to a halt as money was scarce due to the post-war economic conditions not just in Bo'ness but throughout the country.

However, the general feeling in the town was that Bo'ness should pay tribute to its war dead with the erection of a war memorial and even more so as memorials had sprung up in numerous burghs and hamlets in Scotland. Another committee was formed and a new appeal was launched in October 1922 when it was hoped that the townsfolk would support the fundraising events that were proposed. A subscription list was opened and a winter programme of concerts was put together. There was also a street collection planned for Remembrance Day. Various events were held the following year including fundraising dances, shows, and a flag day.

By September 1923, the War Memorial Committee had visited several towns in the west of Scotland to view their war memorials. They then had to decide between a memorial with a figure and a cenotaph. The Committee decided on the latter form as the cost of a memorial with a first class figure may have proven too costly and they did not want to settle for something inferior solely to meet their budget. They agreed unanimously that the memorial in Blantyre "embodied their aims" and this is what they wanted for Bo'ness. This cenotaph had been designed by Messrs Galt & Barr, Bath Street, Glasgow. Mr Barr had visited Bo'ness and had inspected the two proposed sites, the area overlooking Church Wynd and a site at the Victoria Park. Mr Barr was asked to submit sketches and a price for construction in freestone and, alternatively, granite.

The committee had also compiled a list of names, many taken from church memorials and others submitted by the public. This list was made available for inspection at several premises in the town in preparation for the final list being sent to the architects. All additions, omissions or errors had to

**BO'NESS WAR MEMORIAL FUND.**

**FIRST LIST OF SUBSCRIPTIONS.**

| | £ | s | d |
|---|---|---|---|
| Employees of James Calder and Co., Ltd. | 30 | 0 | 0 |
| A. Troup, Erngath Cottage | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Mr and Mrs W. C. Thomson, Craigneuk | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| Ex-Provost Grant | 0 | 10 | 0 |
| Employees of Bo'ness Iron Co., Ltd. | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| Mr John White | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Railway workers | 5 | 15 | 2 |
| Provost Hogg, Ellangowan | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Mrs Hogg, Ellangowan | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Miss Alison Hogg, Ellangowan | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Misses Anderson, Redlands | 0 | 15 | 0 |
| Inspector Clydesdale | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| C. W. M'Nay, Redlands | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| Share of proceeds of Bo'ness Fancy Dress Ball | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| Mrs Baikie, Bridgeness | 0 | 10 | 0 |
| Proceeds of West Lothian Golf Club Competition | 3 | 15 | 0 |
| Councillor Barrowman | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Anonymous donor, per Mrs Jeffrey | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| W. D. Sleath, Riverview Terrace | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Employees of A. Ballantine and Sons, Ltd. (first subscription) | 4 | 10 | 0 |
| J. C. M'Nay, Carndene | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| Bailie Livingstone | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Cochrane Brothers, Ltd. | 5 | 5 | 0 |
| Mrs John Denholm, Eastmount | 10 | 10 | 0 |
| John S. Dymock, Birmingham | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| John Hope, Glasgow | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Ex-Treasurer Stevenson, Edinburgh | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Harrower, Welsh and Co. | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| Andrew Vannan, Glasgow | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| A Friend, per Bailie Livingstone | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Thomas Stewart, The Knowe | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| Mrs Liddle, Benvue | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| J. C. Liddle, Benvue | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Balance from War Honours Fund, per ex-Provost Hogg | 88 | 14 | 0 |
| Dr Sinclair | 7 | 7 | 0 |
| Wm. Adams, Ayr | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | £273 | 6 | 2 |

be rectified and finalised by 29th February 1924. After that date no corrections could be made.

The memorial is constructed of Aberdeen silver grey granite, and consists of a pedestal and shaft 27 feet high. The contractors for the granite work were Messrs Scott & Rae, Glasgow, the bronze work was undertaken by Messrs Holmes & Jackson, Glasgow, and the builders were well known local builders Messrs Hardie & Sons, Bo'ness.

A bronze panel consisting of 398 names is on the north facing side, surmounted by a bronze wreath and sword in relief. At the top of the bronze panel the following words are engraved: "Salute the memory of these thy sons, who fought and laid down their lives in the Great War". Underneath the names of the fallen is inscribed the now famous quote from Lawrence Binyon, "At the going down of the sun and in the morning we will remember them".

The opposite elevation faces Stewart Avenue and bears the inscription "To our Glorious Dead 1914-1918", with a bronze wreath and the Burgh coat of arms. The side panels contain the names of the various theatres of war that the Bo'ness men fought in.

The memorial was unveiled in fine weather before a large gathering of Bo'nessians and visitors on 12th July 1924. The King's Own Scottish Borderers, 1st Battalion, supplied the guard of honour, as Lieutenant-General Sir Walter Braithwaite, K.C.B., General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Scottish Command, performed the unveiling ceremony with Provost Livingstone presiding. From 3.00 p.m. until 5.00 p.m. the shops in the town were closed and Stewart Avenue and Church Wynd were closed to all vehicles. People began gathering from 2.00 p.m. and soon after 3.00 p.m. relatives of the fallen began to fill the seats in the enclosure, lined by Bo'ness and Carriden Boy Scouts and Bo'ness Girl Guides. Kinneil Band and Bo'ness and Carriden Band were stationed opposite the Memorial in the Manse Park, under the conductorship of Councillor Bell, together with a combined choir under Mr. John Arthur.

Lieutenant-General Braithwaite arrived from Edinburgh at 3.30 p.m. and after the formal introductions at the Municipal Chambers the party headed to Stewart Avenue. Following Provost Livingstone's address to the gathering and at the appointed time of 4.00 p.m., the Lieutenant-General advanced and said: "To the glory of God and to the memory of the men of Bo'ness and Carriden, I unveil this monument". He then drew aside the Union flag to uncover the memorial which he later described as "a simple, dignified memorial, situated on a magnificent site". The ceremony continued with speeches, prayers and a minute's silence. The hymn "For all the Saints" was sung by the choir accompanied by the Band and immediately afterwards the buglers sounded the "Last Post" which was followed by the pipers playing "The Flowers of the Forest". Later the buglers played the "Reveille".

Wreaths were then placed by Mrs Livingstone, wife of the Provost, on behalf of the inhabitants of the town; Mrs McKenzie, wife of the president of the British Legion, Bo'ness Branch, on behalf of ex-Service men; and Major Anderson, on behalf of "B" Company, 10th (Cyclists) Battalion, Royal Scots (disbanded after the war). Amongst other wreaths were those from Bo'ness Town Council, Bo'ness Academy and Grange School Girl Guide Companies; the Boy Scouts; the Masonic Orders in Bo'ness, St. Mary's Catholic Social Club, Bo'ness Police, Bo'ness Parish Church Sunday Scholars, Mr and Mrs Leishman, who lost two sons in the war; Employees of P&W MacLellan, Ltd., Forth Shipbreaking Yard; Messrs Harrower, Welsh and Company, shipbrokers; and from the showmen at Corbiehall.

After the ceremony, over 200 ex-servicemen wearing their decorations paraded for inspection by Lieutenant-General Braithwaite headed by the combined British Legion and Bo'ness Burgh Pipe bands.

The overall cost of the memorial was £1300 (this sum in 1924 is equivalent to £55000 in 2018). By the time the memorial was unveiled £1000 had been raised and further fund raising events continued up until 1926 to help contribute towards the outstanding £300.

Girl Guide laying a wreath at the Memorial

BO'NESS AND CARRIDEN WAR MEMORIAL.

**UNVEILING CEREMONY**

BY

Lieut.-General Sir WALTER BRAITHWAITE, K.C.B., G.O.C., Scottish Command,

ON

SATURDAY, 12th JULY, at 4 p.m.

Relatives will be accommodated within Reserved Enclosures surrounding the War Memorial, and in Manse Park opposite. They are respectfully requested to be on the ground not later than 3.20. Admission by Ticket only. Entrance by Wynd Steps and Stewart Avenue, and, for the Manse Park, by the Main Gate at Manse.

Relatives who have failed to receive tickets by post might kindly apply to the Secretary on or before the forenoon of the day of opening.

Stewart Avenue and surroundings will be available for the general public.

The Guard of Honour from the 1st Battalion King's Own Scottish Borderers, with Colours, will leave the Council Chambers at 3.25, and pass up Church Wynd, after which the thoroughfare will be thrown open to the public.

The steps leading from the Wynd to Stewart Avenue are reserved for Ticketholders.

Ex-Service Men will Parade at Glebe Park at 3 p.m., under Captain Milne. Decorations should be worn, and uniform, where possible.

OFFICIAL PROGRAMMES, 2d each.

J. WATT, Hon. Secy.

·SALUTE·THE·MEMORY·OF·
·THESE·THY·SONS·
WHO·FOUGHT·&·LAID·DOWN·THEIR·LIVES·
·IN·THE·GREAT·WAR·
WE·WILL·REMEMBER·THEM

CHAPTER 17

# *Alive, In Error, Unknown*

When the Bo'ness War Memorial was unveiled in a ceremony on 12th July 1924, the Linlithgowshire Gazette gave a detailed report of the occasion, which included the following:

> On a chastely designed bronze panel are the names of 400 men from Bo'ness and Carriden who made the great sacrifice in the war. Great care was exercised in the compilation of those names. Indeed, the committee found this to be the most exacting and responsible part of their duties. The records already compiled by churches for congregational memorials, however, formed a considerable and authenticated basis for the major task, and with wide publicity being given to the scheme, and the list thrown open to public inspection, an accurate total was, at last arrived at.

Unfortunately, the War Memorial Committee did not have at their fingertips the vast databases that are available today and despite their efforts and attention to detail mistakes were made. This section is not intended to belittle the efforts of the committee but solely to correct these unintentional errors.

As we have already read, the first error on the Memorial is the first man listed on the panel - "Walter Adams". He was actually named Walker Adams. However, spelling errors were always to be expected and, apart from hindering identification, were only a minor inconvenience.

This chapter explains why some of the men listed on the Memorial should not be listed on there at all and, through no fault of the War Memorial committee, why some of the men on the Memorial do not feature in this book.

The grave of Andrew Huldberg who died in 1943

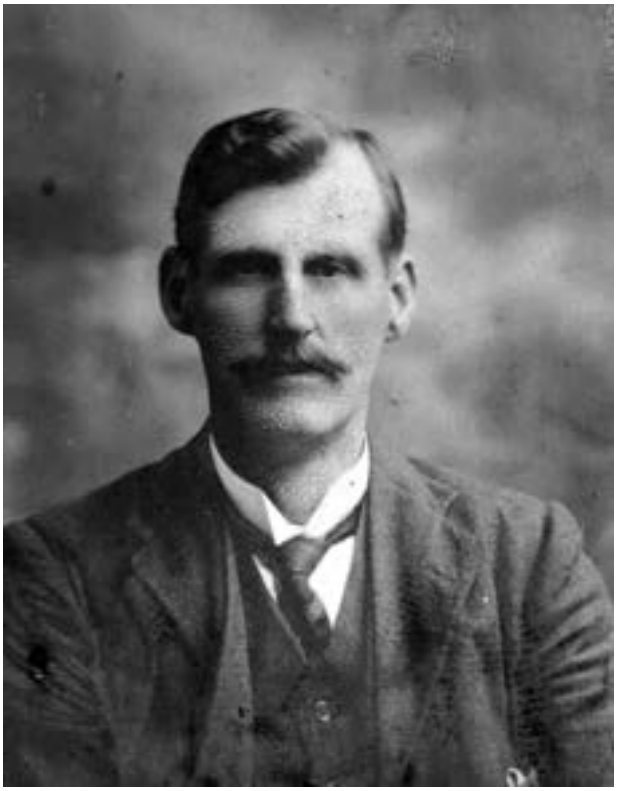
**Robert Drummond**

Robert Drummond was the brother of William, John and Frederick Peter who appear on the Bo'ness War Memorial. He was born on 6th July 1876, the eldest son of blacksmith and marine engineer Robert Drummond, originally from Kinbuck, Perthshire, and Annie Drummond (ms Bowie). His father was a larger than life character, measuring 6'4" in height. The family lived at Old Burnshot, between Carriden and Blackness. The two Roberts between them were said to have built the first bus to run between Bo'ness and Philpstoun. The story goes that they eventually sold out to the Bluebird Line, later Scottish Transport.

Robert married Thomasina Donald on 26th February 1908 in Grangemouth, and the couple had five children, Robert, Mary Maxwell Donald (Mamie), Annie, Thomasina (Ina) Donald and Thomas Drummond. They began their married life at 66 Forth Street, Grangemouth, before moving to "Roselea", 18 Talbot Street, where they stayed for the rest of their lives.

He also worked as a marine engineer and was sailing with his eldest son Robert, aged 5, on a voyage to and from a Northern Russian port when WW1 was declared. His wife Thomasina was beside herself with worry. They arrived home, sailing into Grangemouth, not having seen action and unaware that there was a war on. Later he was torpedoed twice during the war but survived.

After the war it was discovered that Robert's name was on a Bo'ness war memorial alongside his brothers as someone thought he had been lost at sea. However on discovering their mistake the



Memorial Committee were said to have asked the family permission to leave it, on account of the expense of removing it. Robert was at home for 3 years afterwards, suffering from his nerves, before eventually going back to sea.

He died at Falkirk Royal Infirmary on 23rd June 1948.

Much of this information was obtained from family history information, posted on the Ancestry website by relatives, that we acknowledge with thanks.

**Alexander Gray**

The Bo'ness Journal of 25th May 1917, reported that Alexander Gray, the younger son of the late David Gray, Kirk's Close, Bo'ness had died of wounds. However, there are no British military records of his death and burial. Alexander Mather Gray was born 13th November 1866, and the 1871 and 1881 censuses show David, wife Janet (Mather) and children James, Catherine, Alexander and Margaret living in Kirk's Close, Bo'ness.

The Falkirk Herald 31st August 1889, announced the marriage of Alexander (a Contractor) and Flora MacDonald Dickson in Linlithgow Bridge on 23rd August 1889. In the 1891 census Alexander (a Carting Contractor) and Flora were living in Main Street, Bo'ness with their daughter Janet. In 1901 Alexander (a Horse Keeper), Flora and Janet were living in Blantyre. Alexander then disappeared from UK records and there is no record of his death in Scotland.

On 24th June 1912, however, Janet Mather Gray, a nurse from Scotland, married James G. Bailey in Montesano, Chehalis County, Washington, USA. The marriage register recorded her parents as Alexander Gray and Flower [sic] McDonald Dickson. There was still no record of Alexander's death prior to the unveiling of the war memorial, however, finally, the breakthrough was made when a news article from 1935 was found.

> The Sheffield Daily Independent,
>
> Saturday 15 June 1935:
>
> Believed Killed but he was Living in Canada: The announcement of the death of a Bo'ness ex-soldier has revealed that his name has been for years inscribed on the Bo'ness war memorial, while the man was still living in Canada. He was Alexander Mather Gray, an ostler, who after emigrating to Canada a few years before the Great War, served in the third Canadian divisional ammunition column in Flanders. He disappeared near the end of the War, after receiving it is presumed "fatal injuries" at the front.

> When the Bo'ness war memorial was erected in 1924 Gray's name was included in the list of the fallen. The discovery of the state of affairs was brought to light by his daughter, Mrs. A.S. Bain, of Hackensack, New Jersey, who visited Bo'ness last year and read the name of her father Alexander Gray inscribed on the bronze tablet of the cenotaph.
>
> Mrs. Bain had a premonition that there was some mistake and that her father might still be alive somewhere in Canada. On her return to the U.S. Mrs Bain continued her inquiry through official sources.
>
> A few weeks ago she received word from the Canadian Government that her father had died in hospital at Toronto last September from pneumonia following an operation.
>
> A member of the now dissolved war memorial committee said yesterday "before any action can be taken regarding the removal of a name on the memorial definite proof must be brought forward".

Alexander, whose occupation was stableman, died from broncho pneumonia in Christie Street Hospital, Toronto on 21 September 1934, and was buried three days later in the Veteran section of Prospect Cemetery, Toronto.

Various documents show that Alexander had remarried and lost eight years off his age!

**The Hanleys: Albert, Herbert and Victor**

Despite extensive research we have been unable to find any of these men. We think that the inclusion of these names is another error and offer the following theory.

The Fradley family lived in Ann Terrace, Bo'ness. Herbert Fradley was a potter and had brought his family to Bo'ness via Alloa from Staffordshire. Herbert had three sons – Albert, Herbert and Victor.

**Victor Hanley**

Henry Victor Fradley died of wounds in October 1914. In the 1901 census he is recorded as Victor H Fradley.

**Herbert Hanley**

Herbert Fradley was killed in action in June 1915.

**Albert Hanley**

Albert Fradley died September 1918. He was 16 and died from pneumonia in Edinburgh Royal Infirmary.

We can only assume that the person who supplied these names, had got the surname wrong and probably didn't know the family all that well. Then again, perhaps the brothers were submitted as Fradley but the handwriting was illegible.

Finally, when Henry/Victor was born the family were living in the Staffordshire town of Hanley. This would seem to be more than coincidence.

As previously stated, the names put forward for inclusion on the memorial came from various sources. We do not know who supplied the Hanley names and probably never will.

Henry Victor Fradley and Herbert Fradley are featured elsewhere in this book. The name Albert Fradley does not appear on the war memorial but Albert is featured in this book under the listed name of Albert Hanley.

**John Hannah**

We are not sure who this man was despite The Scotsman, 2nd August 1915, carrying this short report:

> John D. Hannah, wounded at the Dardanelles on 28th June, was formerly employed with the North British Railway Company at Bo'ness. He belongs to Leith.

John is not listed on the North British Railway Company memorial in Edinburgh's Waverley Station.

In the 1901 and 1911 censuses there was a John D. Hannah living in Leith whose occupation was listed as an assistant grocer and warehouseman for a wine merchant respectively. Hardly the background of a railway worker.

Taking the date as the starting point, Private John Hannah, Service No: 3157, Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 5th Bn., was killed in action on 28th June 1915 at Gallipoli.

There is much confusion in John's service record regarding his fate:

> Wounded in Action 28/6/15 Gallipoli
> Wounded and Missing 28/6/15 Gallipoli
> Not now Missing 11/10/15 (marked error)
> Invalided Home 4/8/15 Alexandria (marked error)
> Killed in Action 28/6/15 Gallipoli

This looks as if this is the man that The Scotsman reported as wounded. However, this John Hannah was a miner who was born in Ayrshire and lived in Fife and there are no mentions of Bo'ness or Leith in any of his records, military and civilian.

This may, or may not, be our man. Regardless, he is worthy of remembrance in these pages and he is commemorated on the Helles Memorial, panel 26 to 31, Turkey.

**Andrew Huldberg**

Andrew Huldberg may not have died during WW1 but his story is a fascinating one.

Andrew Albert Huldberg was born in 1889, the second oldest child of Copenhagen born Andreas Albreth (Andrew Albert) Huldberg and his wife Agnes, ms Wallace. The couple had been married in Bo'ness in 1887. His father Andreas was a Danish seafarer, who became a naturalised British citizen in 1909. Andrew, who was known by the family as "Sonny", had four brothers, Edmund James, Edwin (both of whom died in infancy), Alexander Wallace and James Wallace, and five sisters, namely Agnes Wallace, Eleanora (after her Danish grandmother), Mary Buchanan, Margaret Lillian and Caroline Wallace Huldberg. The family had lived at Richmond Terrace, Bo'ness, but had lived in Leith, Edinburgh, for some time prior to the outbreak of war. Andrew was 5'1" in height, had blue eyes, dark brown hair and a fair complexion. He was unmarried. Andrew followed in his father's footsteps and before enlisting was a ship's cook and mess steward. His brothers Alexander and James also went to sea. On 19th January 1913, James Huldberg was on board the steamer SS Hawkwood, well-known in the port of Bo'ness, on a journey from Burntisland to London with a cargo of coal when the ship foundered off Flamborough Head. Along with all of the crew, James was officially announced as lost at sea but miraculously he survived and returned to Bo'ness soon after. His brother Andrew would soon have a similar story to tell.

Andrew enlisted as a Private in the Royal Scots Fusiliers, 1st Bn, service no: 6533. He was sent to the Western Front and arrived in France on 15th September 1914, coming under the orders of 3rd Division, 9th Brigade. On 14th November 1914, and suffering from head wounds, he was taken prisoner during the First Battle of Ypres. He was sent to the infamous Wittenberg POW camp, arriving on 16th December. This was just at the moment a horrific outbreak of Typhus, spread by body lice, had taken hold. Andrew was lucky to survive. He was there for nearly six months before being transferred to Alten-Grabow POW camp and by September 1917 had been transferred to Zerbst POW camp. He remained there until he was repatriated after the end of the war. During this time records show his next of kin as his mother Mrs Huldberg, 253 Leith Walk, Edinburgh.

Why Andrew was listed as a fatality remains a mystery as there was no doubt about his survival. The Linlithgowshire Gazette tells us that on Friday, 10th January 1919, the local Prisoners of War Committee had invited and entertained 50 returned prisoners to a substantial tea in the Masonic Temple. Not only did Andrew Huldberg attend, in the uniform of the Royal Scots Fusiliers and sporting the Mons ribbon, but, following a great ovation as he mounted the dais, he also gave a short address to the gathering. After the war Andrew returned to sea working as a ship's steward again in the Merchant Navy. The photo is from his seaman's records. The suggestion is that somehow information was obtained in Bo'ness, before the War Memorial cut-off date of 1924, to the effect that Andrew was now deceased. With no relatives in the town to correct the assertion this may have been plausible. Much of the information on Andrew was obtained by his great niece Diane Smith. She told us, "Andrew lived until he was 54 years old. He died in Edinburgh in 1943. My grandmother Mary (Andrew's older sister) and my mum told me that Andrew had been very upset to discover that his name was included with the names of the fallen. Clearly it was an error. I don't know if he tried to re-dress the situation but as you know his name remains to this day".

Andrew was laid to rest beside his parents at Seafield Cemetery, Leith.

**A. Hutton**

Another survivor who emigrated was Albert Watson Hutton who was born in Stirling on 4th May 1890. In 1891 his family lived at 30 Upper Bridge Street, Stirling, but ten years later the family lived in Dean Terrace, Panbrae Road, Bo'ness.

Sailing on the SS California, Albert emigrated to the United States on 27th March 1909. In the U.S. Census of 1910 Albert was living in the Manhattan borough of New York and working as a draughtsman.

At the time of the Scotland Census in April 1911 Albert was visiting his parents who lived at The Elms, Panbrae Road, Bo'ness. He returned to the U.S. in August that same year, sailing from Southampton on 9th August 1911, on board the SS Olympic, the elder sister ship of the Titanic.

In 1917 Albert was living in Nelson, Pickens County, Georgia. The city of Nelson was famed for marble mining due to substantial deposits in the area, and Albert worked as Estimator and Head Draughtsman for the Georgia Marble Company.

On 5th June 1917, he signed up for the first National Draft. He was one of almost 1500 men from Pickens County that had signed up by the end of the third National Draft in September 1918. He was inducted at Jasper, Georgia, on 15th October

1918 and assigned service no: 4,744,346. He did not travel overseas, did not see any action during WW1, and was discharged on 29th November 1918. By 1920, Albert was married to Mary and the couple had a son, also called Albert. Ten years later, 1930, he took the Oath of Allegiance thus becoming a U.S. citizen.

At some point before 1924 word had got back to Bo'ness that he had perished but Albert was very much alive, and died on 3rd September 1957, aged 67 years old. He is buried in Knollwood Cemetery, Mayfield Heights, Cuyahoga County, Ohio.

SS Olympic (left) next to the Titanic

**Thomas Kerr**

There are a number of Kerrs that were killed during the Great War with connections to Bo'ness but none by the name of Thomas Kerr. The likeliest candidate is Private George Torrance Kerr who was born in Bo'ness in 1879.

He was the son of Thomas Kerr, a stone quarryman originally from Clackmannan and Jane or Jeanie Kerr (ms Torrance) from Bo'ness. His parents had been married in the town in 1878. He married Mary Bodman in Polmont on 21st April 1909, and thereafter the couple had five children, Helen, Agnes, Jeanie, Thomas and Henry. The family lived at 21 Glen Village, Falkirk. Prior to the war he was employed as a coal miner. George was 5'4" in height and weighed 128lbs.

He enlisted on 15th May 1917 at Stirling Castle with the Royal Scots, 2nd Bn, service no: 46354. He was posted to France in September, 1917, when he joined 15th Royal Scots in the field and served with 34th Division, 101st Brigade at Passchendaele. On the 24th May he rejoined 2nd battalion as part of 8th Brigade in 3rd Division.

George was killed in action at the Second Battle of Bapaume on 23rd August 1918, when 3rd Division captured Gomiecourt village 6km north west of Bapaume. He is buried at Gomiecourt South Cemetery, at grave II. A. 7. He was 39 years old.

During and after the war his brothers William and Francis, and sister Bella all resided in Bo'ness (another sister Janet lived in Bathgate) and it is likely that they would have asked for their brother's name to have been inscribed on the Bo'ness War Memorial since he was a native of the town. We can only assume that a transcription error led to the name George Torrance being recorded as Thomas, or perhaps there was confusion with his father's name.

**T. Lightfoot**

Thomas Little Lightfoot, service no: 159406, was a Gunner with the Royal Horse Artillery and Royal Field Artillery, "C" Battery, 155th Brigade. He was born in 1894, the son of John Lightfoot, a farmer from Aikton, Cumberland, and Hannah Lightfoot (ms Little). He had one brother Robert and three sisters Sarah, Hannah and Martha Lightfoot who all worked on their father's farm - called Bowness Farm - at Bowness-on-Solway in Cumberland.

Thomas, age 23, was killed in action on 5th July 1917, and is buried at White House Cemetery, St. Jean-les-Ypres, Belgium at grave 111. A. 9.

His death was reported in the Scotsman newspaper of 13th August 1917, and gave his home town as Bo'ness. It is unclear who made the mistake, but this was a misprint, and unfortunately it was subsequently copied by the Bo'ness Journal of 17th August. In turn this was picked up by the War Memorial Committee, who must have been using the press notifications during the war years to compile their own list of the fallen for inclusion on the Memorial. With no relations in the town to correct the error, Thomas Lightfoot's name was inscribed on the bronze panel.

Thomas Lightfoot is also commemorated on the Bowness-on-Solway war memorial.

## RANK AND FILE.

### SCOTTISH LOSSES.

#### FIRST LIST.

All are privates except where otherwise shown. The town shown against each soldier's name is the home of his next-of-kin, except when followed by the abbreviation "Enlt.," when it is his place of enlistment.

KILLED.

R.F.A.—Lightfoot, 159406, Gnr. T. (Bo'ness.)
ROYAL ENGRS.—Ross, 158296, L.-Cpl G. (Mossend.)
ROYAL SCOTS.—Williamson, 335627, W. T. (West Bromwich.)
H.L.I.—Eddie, 30264, L.-Cpl. J. (Aberdeen); Pringle, 28038, G. (Dundee.)
SEAFORTH HRS.—Alexander, 240733, G. K. (North Walten.)
GORDON HRS.—Donn, 13716, D. (Cullen); Henderson, 40251, J. (Peterhead); Kelman, 201709, W. (Elon); Reid, 241462, W. (Udney); Riddoch, 529, J. (Grange); Sim, 240595, J. (Udney.)
MACHINE G.C.—Black, 21611, R. M. (Glasgow); Gallagher, 42565, C. (Dumfries.)
LABOUR CORPS.—Griffin, 5551, A. E. J. (Methil.)

**John Morison**

This is probably the man listed on the memorial as he is the only John Morison that can be connected to Bo'ness.

John survived the war and was living in London in 1920. Perhaps neighbours put his name forward for inclusion due to him not returning home immediately after the war and was therefore presumed dead.

Private (later Acting Corporal) John Morison, Service No: 230537, Royal Army Service Corps (Motor Transport) was 23 years and 5 months old when he enlisted at Glencorse on 4th October 1916. The elder son of George Morison and Margaret Ashford Beattie, John was born on 22nd March 1893, at 276 High Street, Linlithgow. The family were still in Linlithgow in 1901 but in the 1911 census they were living at 9 Rattray Street, Grangepans. When John enlisted in 1916, the family were living at 21a Rattray Street. John and George were bakers and worked in the Co-operative Bakery which was also in Rattray Street.

His military service began with general duties until October 1917 when he was then moved to the Tractor Depot where he was a Caterpillar Driver. John developed organic disease of the heart (ODH) and was admitted to Queen Mary's Military Hospital, Whalley, in August 1918. Another document stated he was suffering from DAH (disorderly action of the heart). He suffered quick irregular heart beats which increased on exertion. His records show that this disability was caused by his field service and in May 1919, his medical report recommended that he was discharged as permanently unfit.

However, his service records also show that in August 1920 he was still in the R.A.S.C. and at Woolwich Dockyard. His home address was given as "31 Rattray Street, Grange, Bo'ness. N.B".

Not only did John survive the war but he was still alive when the war memorial was unveiled as it was he who registered his father's death in May 1925. The reasons for his inclusion are unknown.

A grainy picture of the Co-operative Bakery in Grangepans where John worked.

Queen Mary's Military Hospital, Whalley external and internal views

**Daniel Robertson**

Despite extensive research we have been unable to find a Daniel Robertson that can be linked to Bo'ness. There is, however, a link between a Daniel Robertson and Daniel McQuillan, who is on the memorial, and this may have led to confusion when collating the names for inclusion.

Daniel McQuillan's mother, Eliza, died in 1896. Daniel's father, also Daniel, remarried and in the 1901 census his wife was Margaret. Also in the house, in Waggon Road, Bo'ness, were 14 year old Daniel McQuillan, his sister Elizabeth (Margaret's daughter) and five others with the surname Robertson who were the step children of Daniel, and so presumably Margaret's children from a previous marriage.

This meant there were two boys named Daniel in the house, Daniel McQuillan – Margaret's step son, and Daniel Robertson – Margaret's son.

Our theory is that when names were being gathered, the McQuillans put forward Daniel McQuillan's name but someone else put forward, in error, Daniel Robertson's name because they knew that Margaret McQuillan's son, Daniel, had been killed.

**H. Brown**

This name appeared in the Bo'ness Journal in June, 1916. It was a transcription error for R. Brown, or Robert Brown, who was killed on board HMS Hampshire when it was mined and sunk that month. Similar to Thomas Lightfoot, the name had been picked up from the local press and included in the list of names for the Memorial.

**Hugh Orr**

We think Hugh Orr and Walter Orr could be the same man. David Clark's hand painted WW1 Roll of Honour, that is on display in St Andrews Church, lists "W. Orr, HLI" as killed in action. The names on the roll of honour were later used to craft the beautiful stained glass window in the Church that acts as the WW1 Memorial. This window contains the name Hugh Orr instead. We know conclusively that there was a Walter Orr from Bo'ness who served in the HLI, 16th Bn, and died on 1st July 1916, on the first day of the Battle of the Somme. It therefore seems likely that an error was made, but the latter name of Hugh was also included in the list for the War Memorial.

**Unknown Men**

Despite extensive research the following men cannot be identified for now. There are several possibilities in the military records for each man but there is nothing in the information that can connect any of them to our town. It is interesting that six of the men appear on church memorials and it is known that the Bo'ness War Memorial Committee used these as the basis for their list. Extensive searching of the respective church records has failed to provide any evidence for each of the names. Other names are too common to pinpoint the exact man with accuracy so we have left these for future research. The names are:

James Brown

John Douglas, listed on Old Kirk memorial.

George McCredie

Donald McGregor, listed on Old Kirk memorial.

John McIntosh

James Naismith, listed on Carriden Church memorial.

William Paterson

James Riley, also listed on Carriden Church memorial. This name may be a duplicate of Private James Reilly, Black Watch, 2nd Bn, from Grangepans, who died in 1914.

Daniel Snedden

John Telfer, listed on Old Kirk memorial.

Henry Thomson, also listed on Old Kirk memorial. There is a 14 year old Henry Thomson living at Kinneil in the 1911 census, however, he cannot be connected to any military records.

**Not listed on the Memorial**

In addition to the names discussed in this chapter we have identified 110 men who are not listed on the Bo'ness War Memorial but have a connection to Bo'ness and Carriden parishes, through being born there, living there, working there, enlisting at Bo'ness and/or with a family connection. This follows a similar pattern for war memorials throughout Scotland. Limited space allows us to provide only their names, regiment and date of death for posterity.

| Name | Regiment | Died |
|---|---|---|
| Aitchison, James | Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 7th Bn | 28/06/1915 |
| Aitken, William Anderson | Highland Light Infantry, 8th Bn. | 29/10/1915 |
| Anderson, John | Highland Light Infantry, 12th Bn. | 28/12/1916 |
| Beagley, James | 157 Depot American Expeditionary Force | 28/09/1918 |
| Best, Robert Linkstone | Royal Scots "A" Coy., 13th Bn | 26/12/1917 |
| Blackie, Walter | Gordon Highlanders, 8th Bn. | 23/08/1915 |
| Boslem, Daniel | Cameronians (Scottish Rifles), 6th Bn | 08/08/1916 |
| Boslem, John | Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 16th Bn. | 08/05/1918 |
| Boslem, Robert | East Yorkshire Regiment, 1st Bn. | 16/09/1916 |
| Boyle, Jack | Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 2nd Bn. | 03/05/1917 |
| Brown, Donald | Seaforth Highlanders, 1st Bn. | 20/07/1915 |
| Brown, John | Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 9th Bn. | 09/04/1917 |
| Brunton, Samuel | Canadian Forestry Corps, 7th Bn. | 25/11/1918 |
| Buchanan, Thomas | Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 11th Bn. | 27/09/1915 |
| Buchanan, William | Royal Scots Fusiliers "A" Coy., 1st Bn. | 08/07/1915 |
| Burke, Samuel | Royal Munster Fusiliers, 1st Bn. | 22/03/1918 |
| Cameron, John | Royal Air Force | 08/06/1921 |
| Campbell, James | Royal Army Service Corps, 688th Coy | 16/12/1916 |
| Campbell, James | Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 2nd Bn. | 26/09/1917 |
| Campbell, Robert | Seaforth Highlanders, 1st/6th Bn. formerly Cameron Highlanders | 31/07/1917 |
| Cawkwell, Thomas | Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 2nd Bn. | 23/10/1918 |
| Clusker, Duncan | Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 2nd Bn. | 09/06/1917 |
| Collins, Thomas | Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 11th Bn. | 07/05/1916 |
| Cooper, Charles | Gloucestershire Regiment, 13th Bn. | 01/03/1917 |
| Corbett, Lewis | Royal Garrison Artillery, 251st Siege Bty. | 25/04/1917 |
| Davidson, Robert | 2nd Dragoons (Royal Scots Greys) | 20/06/1917 |
| Donnelly, John | Royal Scots Fusiliers "A" Coy., 2nd Bn. | 17/05/1915 |
| Fawcett, Thomas | Cameron Highlanders, 2nd Bn. | 30/09/1916 |
| Ferrier, Joseph | Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, Nelson Bn. | 17/11/1915 |
| Ferrier, William | Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 1/7th Bn. | 15/02/1917 |
| Frew, John | Northumberland Fusiliers, 8th Bn. transf. to 198th Coy. Labour Corps | 19/02/1919 |
| Gallacher, Bernard | Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 10th Bn. | 25/09/1915 |
| Garrett, Hugh | Machine Gun Corps (Infantry), 51st Bn. formerly Seaforth Highlanders | 21/03/1918 |
| Gilbert, Edward | Gordon Highlanders, 1st Bn. | 07/03/1915 |
| Gilchrist, James | Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 11th Bn. | 29/05/1916 |
| Glancey, James | Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 12th Bn. | 09/04/1917 |
| Grant, John | Royal Dublin Fusiliers 1st Bn. | 07/08/1915 |
| Greenall, Thomas | Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 11th Bn. | 27/09/1915 |
| Greer, Thomas, MM | Machine Gun Corps, formerly Highland Light Infantry | 19/12/1917 |
| Hamilton, William | Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 2nd Bn. | 15/10/1914 |
| Hastings, William | Scottish Horse 1st | 28/10/1915 |
| Hayworth, Frederick | Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 7th Bn. attd 1st/14th Bn. London Regiment (London Scottish) | 12/05/1917 |
| Holburn, Charles | Gordon Highlanders, 8th Bn. | 03/06/1915 |
| Hunter, Andrew | Cameronians (Scottish Rifles), 2nd Bn. | 24/03/1918 |
| Jack, Alexander | North Staffordshire Regiment, 8th Bn. | 20/09/1917 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Jamieson, Henry | Seaforth Highlanders, 1st Bn. | 07/01/1916 |
| Jamison, Robert | Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 1st Bn. | 27/01/1917 |
| Kennedy, Peter | Gordon Highlanders, 2nd Bn. | 29/10/1914 |
| Kerr, Henry | King's Own Scottish Borderers | 1914/1915 |
| Kerr, Robert | Royal Engineers, 66th Signal Coy. | 10/08/1917 |
| Learmonth, John Meikle | Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), 1st/7th Bn | 25/04/1917 |
| Liddle, Andrew | Canadian Army Medical Corps | 09/03/1920 |
| Macauley, Thomas | Mercantile Marine, SS Constantia (London) | 08/05/1918 |
| MacDonald, John | Royal Engineers, 2nd Reserve Bn. | 12/03/1918 |
| Marshall, Thomas | Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 5th/6th Bn. | 11/08/1918 |
| Marshall, William | Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 17th Bn. | 25/07/1920 |
| Martin, Robert | 10th Royal Scots (drafted to Clyde Corps in France) | 1914/1915 |
| McChrystal, John | Gordon Highlanders, 1st Bn. | 18/06/1915 |
| McDonald, Murdoch | Seaforth Highlanders, 1st Bn. | 04/11/1914 |
| McGregor, Alexander | Black Watch | 12/08/1915 |
| McGregor, Duncan | King's Own Scottish Borderers 1st Bn. | 06/06/1915 |
| McGregor, Thomas B. | Black Watch | 09/07/1917 |
| McGurk, Peter | Canadian Infantry, 2nd Bn. (Eastern Ontario Reg.) | 26/04/1915 |
| McIntosh, George | Gordon Highlanders, 8th/10th Bn. | 01/08/1917 |
| McIntosh, Hugh | Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders 4th Bn. transf. to 81st Labour Coy Labour Corps | 01/01/1919 |
| McLay, James | Seaforth Highlanders 1st Bn. | 13/04/1915 |
| McMahon, James | Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 12th Bn. | 22/10/1917 |
| McNeill, Walter | Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 15th Bn. | 03/06/1918 |
| McOustra, John | Gordon Highlanders, 8th/10th Bn. | 31/07/1917 |
| McTee, Robert | Royal Garrison Artillery | 04/03/1918 |
| McWilliam, Alexander | Gordon Highlanders, 1st Bn. | 02/08/1915 |
| Milligan, Robert | Royal Scots Fusiliers, 2nd Bn. | 12/03/1915 |
| Muir, Alexander | King's Own Scottish Borderers, 2nd Bn. | 18/11/1914 |
| Murray, John | Royal Army Service Corps transf. to Labour Corps | 06/12/1920 |
| Park, William | Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 11th Bn. | 09/05/1917 |
| Paterson, Joseph | Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), 1st/7th Bn. | 21/03/1918 |
| Paton, John | Royal Flying Corps (formerly Gordon Highlanders) | 20/05/1917 |
| Platt, William | Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 11th Bn. | 12/10/1915 |
| Polson, John Johnston | Honourable Artillery Company | 15/11/1917 |
| Porteous, Frederick | Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 2nd Bn. | 24/08/1918 |
| Raines, Robert | Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, Hawke Bn. | 29/06/1915 |
| Ramsay, Robert | King's Own Scottish Borderers, 6th Bn. | 15/08/1918 |
| Ravey, Hugh | Cameron Highlanders, 6th Bn. | 11/04/1917 |
| Reid, William | Canadian Infantry | 15/09/1916 |
| Reilly, Francis | Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) 4th/5th Bn. | 28/07/1918 |
| Reilly, Richard | Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 1st/7th Bn. | 11/05/1917 |
| Richardson, James | Machine Gun Corps, K.O.S.B. | 29/11/1917 |
| Robertson, Robert, MM | Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), 8th Bn. | 03/05/1917 |
| Ross, Robert | Seaforth Highlanders, 2nd Bn. | 27/10/1914 |
| Russell, John | Gordon Highlanders, 1st Bn. | 27/09/1918 |
| Scott, William C. | Gordon Highlanders, 3rd Bn. | 30/09/1918 |
| Smith, James | Royal Garrison Artillery, 31st Siege Bty. | 21/05/1917 |
| Smith, Peter | Highland Light Infantry, 6th Bn. | 19/09/1918 |
| Sneddon, James | Highland Light Infantry, 10th/11th Bn. | 04/09/1916 |
| Stevenson, John | 14th (King's) Hussars | 30/10/1914 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Stirling, John Ballantine | Gordon Highlanders 8/10th Bn. | 13/08/1917 |
| Stuart, George | Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), 1st Bn. | 17/11/1917 |
| Sutherland, James A. | Royal Naval Reserve, HMS Bayano | 11/03/1915 |
| Thomson, Robert Nyreland | Otago Mounted Rifles, NZEF | 06/09/1915 |
| Thorburn, Reginald Gregorson | Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders 12th Bn. | 09/05/1917 |
| Thornton, Sidney Percy | Leicestershire Regiment "A" Coy., 11th Bn. | 05/12/1916 |
| Tocher, Henry | Royal Naval Reserve, HMPMS Queen of the North | 20/07/1917 |
| Towers, James | Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 11th Bn. formerly S/7491 Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders | 21/03/1917 |
| Turner, Henry Hollands | Royal Scots Fusiliers "A" Coy., 8th Bn. | 09/10/1918 |
| Walker, William | Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 2nd/10th Bn. | 04/09/1916 |
| Wallace, William | Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), 13th Bn. | 26/06/1916 |
| White, Alexander | Royal Marine Light Infantry | 04/05/1917 |
| Wright, Alexander | Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment) "C" Coy., 7th Bn. | 28/06/1915 |
| Young, Alexander DCM, MM | Royal Engineers 25th Div. Sig. Coy. | 28/10/1918 |
| Young, Hugh | Gordon Highlanders, 2nd Bn. | 12/07/1918 |

# CHAPTER 18

# *Other Bo'ness Memorials*

The War Memorial in Stewart Avenue is not the town's only memorial commemorating the fallen of the Great War. This chapter looks at the other memorials in the town that were already in place prior to the unveiling of the town's main memorial in 1924.

When the main memorial was being constructed, the War Memorial Committee appealed to the townsfolk to submit names for inclusion on the bronze plaque. In addition to these submitted names, the Committee had also compiled a list of names of their own of which many were taken from the following memorials.

**Bo'ness Parish Church (Old Kirk),** unveiled in December 1919

**Craigmailen Church** – January 1920

**St Andrews Church** – October 1920

**Bo'ness Academy** – December 1920

**Carriden Parish Church** – August 1922

**Blackness War Memorial** – December 1922

Some memorials and rolls of honour have inevitably been lost in the past one hundred years. Where memorials cannot be located other information has revealed that there was no less sacrifice. For example, in October 1917, the Linlithgowshire Gazette reported that from the St. Mary's R.C. Church Roll of Honour there were, up to that point in time,

> . . . 253 enlistments all told. Of these two had won the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM), four had won the Military Medal and 18 had nobly given their lives for the great cause. This out of a congregation of slightly over a thousand is an excellent record.

During the Great War, death and sorrow affected all churches, societies, workplaces, schools and other establishments in Bo'ness.

**Bo'ness Parish Church (Old Kirk)**

On Sunday 21st December 1919, the dedication of the two memorial stained glass windows to fallen soldiers connected with Bo'ness Parish Church took place. The dedication service was taken by the Rev. Professor Duncan of St Mary's College, St Andrews, who had been chaplain to Sir Douglas Haig and staff during the war.

On the left window, a knight (St George) in plate armour with chainmail detailing holds an upright lance in his right hand and an elongated triangular shield bearing the cross of St George in his left. He has a blue cloak and yellow locks of hair protrude from under his helm. The lance rests on brown earth studded with plants. A purple-winged angel looks down from above with a ribbon bearing the words, "Put on the whole armour of God". The scroll at the foot reads, "To the glory of God and in memory of those connected with this church who have fallen in the war 1914-1919"

Incorporated into the right window, a knight is seen getting up off his back with his left hand pushing against the earth and his right raised for assistance. He is bathed in a bright light that has given a pale blue hue to the armour and greyed his

hair. This light emanates from a pink- winged angel, who stand above him with a laurel wreath in its left hand and its right hand stretched towards that of the knight. Above the angel is a ribbon saying, "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life". Below the knight his sword lies on the earth and a scroll reads, "These windows are placed here by the congregation and friends".

The Roll of Honour, made of hand-painted vellum and framed in oak, is flanked by the two windows, forming the church's war memorial. 125 parishioners are commemorated.

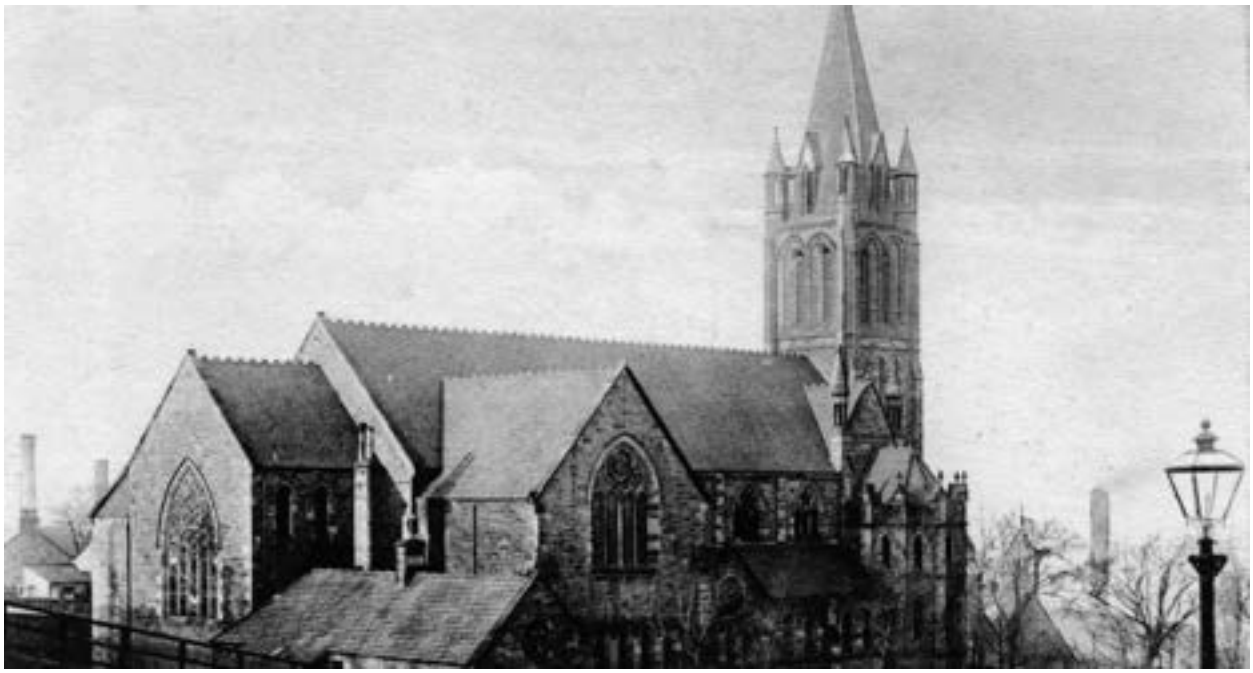
The commemorative Roll reads:

*Roll of Honour of those belonging to Bo'ness Parish Church who died for their King and Country during the war 1914-1919*

Walker Adams
Alexander D. Anderson
Robert Baikie
Walter Baikie
J. Boyd Ballantine
Thomas Ballantyne
Aaron Barnett
Thomas Barnett
David Bell
John Bell
Alexander Bernard
Thomas H. Bernard
John Bishop
William Bishop
David M. Boslem
John Boslem
Joseph P. Boyd
George Brodie
Herbert Broome
Robert Brown
William Brown
J. Burnett
James Edward Culbert
Hugh Campbell
William Campbell
John Carlaw
John H. Cook
John Cotton
Alexander Cotton
Richard Cowan
Alexander Crawford
John Currie
Archibald Dearie
Charles Downie
Victor Downie
John Douglas
James Drysdale
John Edgar
William Falconer
David Ferguson
George Ford
W. S. Finlay *
John Friars
George Gardner
John Gardner
Thomas Gibb
James Gibson
John Grant
Charles Hamilton
John Hamilton
Richard Hamilton
Hugh Hannah
John M. Hardie
John Wilson Harper
William Henderson
Thomas Howie
Eric L. Jamieson
Michael John Johnston
George Kyles
Charles Mair
Robert Maines
Richard Malarkie
James Mann
Henry Marr
James Marshall
William Marshall
James Mason
Thomas B. B. Meikle
David G. Millar
George Miller
George Miller
John Middleton
Thomas Morrison
William Morrison
John McCredie
Peter McGillivray
Donald McGregor
John McGurk
Hugh McIntosh
David McKay
Robert McNaught
Peter McNiven
Adam Neill
Alex. Neish
John Peebles
Robert Potter
Peter D. Potter
William Pow
John Queenan
Robert Riddell
Moses Rickard
James Robertson
William Robertson
Thomas Robb
Daniel Rogers
Thomas Rooney
David Rutherford
John Shaw
Joseph Sherratt
John Simpson
Alexander Sneddon
Forbes Sneddon
Richard Sneddon
Peter Stanners
Gilbert Stanners
Neil Stanners
Thomas Stanners
David Tait
John Telfer
Alex. Thomson
Henry Thomson
Andrew Waldie
Alexander Walker
John Wardrope
George Watt
Andrew S. Watters
Laurence White
Hendry White
Thomas White
Robert Wilson
James Williamson
William Yates
William Youngson
Andrew Watson

*W. S. Finlay is the only man from the 125 not to be named on the Bo'ness War Memorial.

Bo'ness Parish Church, now known as Bo'ness Old Kirk is located at Panbrae Rd, Bo'ness. The Foundation Stone of the church was laid on 6th November 1886 by James A Jamieson Esq., a commissioner to the Duke of Hamilton. Construction was completed in 1888 under the tenure of Rev. H Robertson Fullarton. It was designed by Shiels and Thomson of Edinburgh, with a significant contribution from the Duke of Hamilton. On 2nd July 1896, the Rev. Robert Gardner, B.D., was ordained as Minister, in succession to Rev Fullarton who died that year. He served as Minister of the Church during WW1.



**Craigmailen Church**

The Great War memorial is in the vestibule of the church facing everyone who enters. It was unveiled by Mrs Ballantine, wife of the congregation's presiding officer, on Sunday, 24th January 1920. The ceremony also included the unveiling of a white marble tablet, by Mrs Young, in memory of the Rev. Samuel Sleath who had been the church's minister for 39 years when he died in September 1913.

Following on from the two memorials, the Roll of Honour was unveiled, by Miss Sarah Lindsay, which was "beautifully written by Miss Brown and framed in dark oak". The Roll contained the names and units of 159 members of the church, but is now sadly lost.

The Great War Memorial commemorates 22 men and all 22 are listed on the Bo'ness War Memorial. The oak panel is headed "Their Name Liveth For Evermore", with the church emblem of a burning bush and the latin phase "Nec Tamen Consumebatur", and the words, "Sacred to the memory of the members and adherents of the church who made the supreme sacrifice in the Great War 1914-1919".

The names listed are:

2nd Lieut. Robert Sharpe, M.C. 2nd Lincolns
2nd Lieut. David V. Foot, Royal Flying Corps
Corp. Robert Aitken, King's Royal Rifles
Corp. Terris H. Mair, Arg. & Suth'd. Highrs.
Pte. James D. Broom, 2nd Royal Scots
Pte. Alex S. Morrison, 2nd Royal Scots
Pte. Robert McNaught, 2nd Royal Scots
Pte. John Gray Couper, 5th Royal Scots
Pte. Peter Bell, 5th Royal Scots
Pte. William Binnie, 5th Royal Scots
Pte. Andrew Porteous, 2/10th Royal Scots
Pte George Smith, 3/10th Royal Scots
Sig. John Kidd, 12th Royal Scots
Pte Geo. H. Cruickshanks, North'd. Fus.
Pte. Thos. S. Stevenson, K. O. Sco. Bord.
Pte. William T. Ford, 2nd Black Watch
Pte. Harry P. Hogg, 9th High. L. I.
Pte. Neil McCallum, 9th H. L. I. & M. G. Corps
Pte. William Cant, 14th High. L. I.
Pte. John Seaton, 5th Gord. Highrs.
Pte. Joshua Reid, 6th Gord. Highrs.
Pte. David Golder, 1st Arg. & Suth'd. Highrs.

**St Andrew's Church**

The war memorial is a stained glass window in the north gallery of the church. It was erected by Messrs Oscar Paterson and Co., glass stainers, 216 Bath Street, Glasgow at a cost of £290 and a brass plate was to be provided bearing the names of those who had made the supreme sacrifice.

When the window was unveiled by Mr Thomas Young, Senior Member of Session, at a ceremony on 16th October 1920, the names of 28 men had been incorporated into the design of the window, preceded by the wording, "Greater love hath no man than this", the names and then followed by, "In memory of members and adherents of this congregation who gave their lives in the great war".

The names listed are:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Robert N Brown | James M Rhynas | John E K Mackay | David Grant |
| Robert W Dott | Alexander Valentine | Thomas McLaren | Richard W Hamilton |
| Alexander Grant | Andrew Wright | Malcolm Paul | Thomas Leishman |
| John Hastings | John Buchanan | Thomas Simpson | James A McKay |
| Robert Leishman | Alexander Grant | William Wallace | Hugh Orr |
| Samuel C McGregor | William C Grant | Josiah B West | John Robertson |
| Matthew Paul | Alexander M B Harley | James Clark | John Stanley |

St Andrew's Church honours its war dead with great pride. Great War casualties are also honoured on a plaque, at the front of the church, that also includes those who lost their lives in WW2. Also on display are hand painted Rolls of Honour that list all members and adherents that served in both wars. The Great War memorial is on the west wall and 1939-1945 is on the east wall.

Both Rolls of Honour were painted by David Clark, a session clerk in the church and a gilder and decorator in C.W. McNay's Bridgeness Pottery. David's son, James, died of wounds in November 1916 and is buried in France.

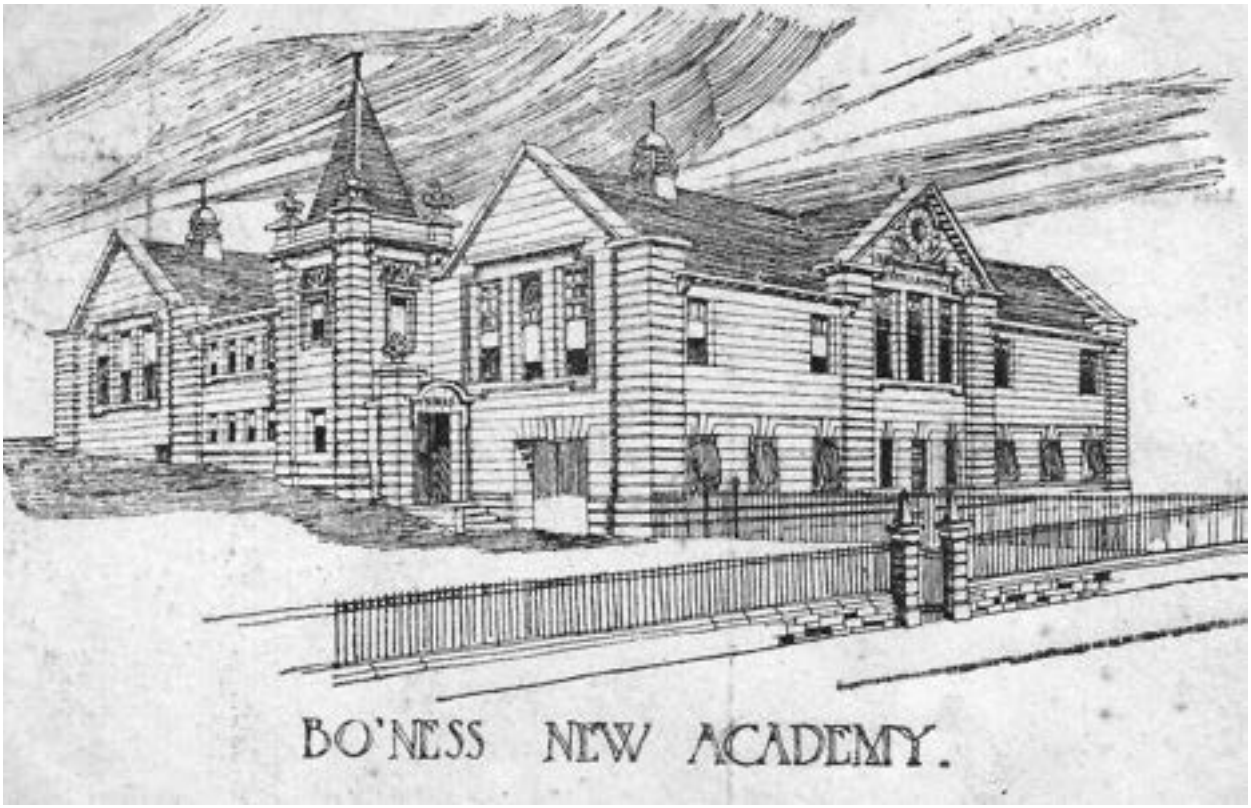
**Bo'ness Academy Memorial**

This bronze memorial tablet was created by William Gladstone (right), rector of Bo'ness Academy, whilst the War was still in progress. Unfortunately, he died in 1917 and, therefore, never saw the memorial completed but he did oversee the draft project. His intention was to have the memorial erected on the outside wall of the school but was strongly advised by others to have it placed inside.

The tablet was unveiled in the school hall of Bo'ness Academy on the afternoon of Friday, 3rd December 1920, in memory of 58 pupils who died in the War. Mrs Gladstone performed the unveiling ceremony.

One of the officiating clergymen was Major the Rev. William Anderson, M.C. from Bellahouston Parish Church. Major Anderson was born in Bo'ness and was educated at Bo'ness Academy. His brother, Carl Otto Anderson, had died nine months previously and is one of the men on the Bo'ness War Memorial. In 1920, Bo'ness Academy (opened in 1903) was what is now the Bo'ness Public Primary School.

To date, we have been unable to establish if this memorial still exists.



The names listed are:

## BO'NESS ACADEMY

Deo Patriae Tibi

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Adie, Andrew | Dunlop, James | Leishman, Thomas | Rowland, Samuel |
| Aitken, Robert | Eriksen, William | Mackay, John Keir | Seaton, John |
| Baikie, Robert | Ford, William | Mann, James | Sharpe, Robert |
| Ballantine, John B. | Gardner, James | Miller, David | Smith, George |
| Baxter, Hugh | Grant, David | Mulrine, Thomas | Stanners, Gilbert |
| Bishop, John | Grant, William | McCallum, Neil | Sheal, Angus |
| Boyd, Joseph P. | Hamilton, Richard | McKerracher, David | Tait, David |
| Broome, Herbert | Harley, Marquis | McCurrach, William | Watt, George |
| Brown, Robert | Hastings, John | McVeigh, Joseph | Watt, Jack |
| Carlaw, John | Hogg, Harry | Paul, Matthew | Welsh, William |
| Clark, James | Jones, James | Potter, Peter | Williamson, James |
| Cook, John | Jamieson, Eric | Porteous, Andrew | Watters, Andrew |
| Day, Richard | King, Richard | Reid, Robert | Walker, Alex |
| Dott, Robert | Leishman, Robert | Robertson, Herbert | Walker, James |
| Dunlop, Archie | | | Wilson, Robert |

ERECTED BY
WILLIAM GLADSTONE
RECTOR
TO THE MEMORY OF THE PUPILS WHO GAVE
THEIR LIVES IN THE GREAT WAR

1914 1919

All 58 men are commemorated on the Bo'ness War Memorial.

**Carriden Parish Church**

The Carriden Church War Memorial was unveiled in a dedication service held on 20th August 1922. 118 parishioners were originally commemorated on the marble tablet but there was a later addition. One of the officiating clergymen was the Rev. William Dundas, B.D., who was minister of the parish, and amongst the congregation were ex-service men, who occupied the front pews, and a large number of relatives of those whose names are on the roll of honour. Music was supplied by Bo'ness and Carriden Band, under the conductorship of Alexander Bell, more commonly known as "Band Sandy" (standing beside Mrs Bell in photo), who had been Bandmaster in the 5th Royal Scots during the war.

The unveiling ceremony was performed by Colonel W.B. Lesslie, V.C., D.S.O., R.E., commander of the East of Scotland Infantry Brigade. The church remained open during the following week to allow others to view the memorial.

Carriden Church is located at the foot of Carriden Brae in the east end of Bo'ness. The memorial reads:

To the Glory of God

In Memory of those who gave their lives in the Great War MCMXIV-MCMXVIII

Robert Alexander
Alexander D Anderson
William D Andrew
Aaron Barnett
Thomas Barnett
Alexander Bell
Andrew Bell
John Bell
Peter Bell
Alexander Bernard
Thomas Black
James C Blackley
David Boslem
John Boslem
Robert N Brown
William Brown
John Buchanan
John Carlaw
James Clark
Robert Clark
John Corbett
John G Couper
George H Cruickshanks
James Cuthell
Robert Dalrymple
Andrew Dickson
P Fred Drummond
John Drummond
William Drummond
Alexander Duncan
John Erskine
Robert Fairclough
William Finlay
William John Finlay
David V Foot
Alexander Forbes
William Forrest
Henry V Fradley
Herbert Fradley
David Glen
James R Goodall
William Goodall
Alexander Grant
James S Hamilton
Richard Hamilton
William Hamilton
Adam Hastie
Gordon Hogg
James Hogg
Fred Houston
James Hunter
John Jackson
John Kidd
John Kindred
William Kindred
James S King
Thomas Lapsley
Daniel Lourie
Alexander Lumsden
James McP McBlain
John McCallum
Neil McCallum
Andrew McCleary
Henry McEwan
Peter McGillivray
Michael McGowan
James McIntosh
Hugh W McIntosh
James A McKay
John McKinnon
John McPhee
Robert McPhee
John M McVeigh
Joseph McVeigh
Richard Malarky
James Mann
John Manson
James Martin
William James Martin
Thomas Meldrum
Alexander Mitchell
Hugh Muir
James Naismith
Adam Neill
Walter Neill
Hamilton Ogg
Walter Orr
Malcolm N Paul
Arthur Porter
Alexander Potter
Robert Ramsay
Moses Rickard
James Riley
Alexander Robertson
George Robertson
Herbert Robertson
John Robertson
John Seaton
Colin Sidley
Thomas B Simpson
Alexander Snedden
Edward A Snedden
James W Snedden
William Snedden
John Stanley
Edward B Stewart
William F Stevenson
James A Sutherland
Frederick Tait
John Taylor
Andrew Waldie
Peter Wardlaw
John Wardrope
Anthony Weir
Peter Weir
John White
William White
Andrew Williamson
Alexander Grant

They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old
Age shall not weary them nor the years condemn
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We Will Remember Them

**Blackness War Memorial**

Although Blackness is a village three miles east of Bo'ness it was in the original Carriden Parish and is in the present day Parish of Bo'ness and Carriden. The war memorial was designed by William Roberts and Son, Falkirk and it stands at the side of the only road into the village in the shadow of Blackness Mission Church.

It was unveiled at a ceremony on Saturday 23rd December 1922 by Colonel Henry Moubray Cadell, Deputy Lieutenant for Linlithgowshire.

The memorial reads:

1914-1919
To the Glory of God
and in memory of
the men of Blackness district
who fell in the Great War

Pte. J.C. Blackley, N.F. *
Pte. R Dalrymple, G.H. *
Pte. J.L. Manson, R.S. *
Pte. W.P. Naysmith, S.H.
Pte. G. Paterson, K.O.S.B.
Pte. J. Paterson, R.S.
J.A. Sutherland, H.M.S. "Bayano" **
Pte. J. White, R.S. *

Greater love hath no man than this, than a man lay down his life for his friends.

* These four men are also commemorated on the Bo'ness War Memorial and on the memorial in Carriden Church. Their stories are told elsewhere in this book.

The memorial is 10½ feet high and made from Rubislaw granite. It was originally designed as a clock tower but the clock has since been removed and replaced by a panel.

** James Alexander Sutherland does not appear on the Bo'ness War Memorial but is commemorated on the memorial in Carriden Church.

Following the unveiling, Col. Cadell read the following verses:

Think on Haig an a' his heroes
Wha the savage Huns repelled,
Think on the West Lothian warriors
Wha the British Flag upheld.

Think o' lads frae toun an' hamlet
Answering the trumpet's ca'.
Ran to help when Britain needed;
Scotia's sons ran first o' a'.

Far awa' frae hame an' kindred
Never never to return
Shed their bluid on fields o' battle
Bigger far nor Bannockburn.

Think on them that fought for freedom
Laid the proud usurper low
Fought as weel as Bruce an' Wallace,
Past six hundred years ago.

Gin bairns forget the war for freedom
This bit stane will keep in min'
The Blackness boys that helped to win it
Far awa' in auld langsyne.

We now provide the biographies of the four men who are mentioned on the Blackness War Memorial who do not appear on the Bo'ness War Memorial.

**James A Sutherland**

James Alexander Sutherland, service no: 1541EA (Po), was an Engine Room Artificer and served with the Royal Naval Reserve on HMS Bayano. James, the eldest child of John Sutherland and Christina Matheson, was born in Fort George on 28th October 1884.

His father was a Private in the Seaforth Highlanders. In 1891, he was a labourer in the ordnance stores of Fort George barracks. In 1901, John was still a labourer in the ordnance stores but now the family were living in Blackness Castle.

James, 16, was an apprentice blacksmith, but he later found his vocation as a marine engineer, and carried out his practical training in the engineering works of Messrs Marshall & Duguid, Dock Street, Bo'ness, although for some time previous he had been employed by the Forth Shipbreaking Company. Prior to the war he had served on various local steamers operating out of Bo'ness including the SS Carriden and SS Lovart, owned by Messrs Love and Stewart.

Linlithgowshire Gazette, 19th March 1915
Local Man on the "Bayano":

With deep regret we have to announce that among the victims on the ill-fated "Bayano" was Mr James Sutherland, second engineer, who joined the ship for a voyage that was destined to be of remarkably short duration. It was known that he had joined the "Bayano" and when the news of this ship's destruction was published there was the keenest anxiety felt by his relatives in Blackness and his many friends in Linlithgow and Bo'ness. As his name did not appear among those who had been saved, it was feared that the worst had happened, but faint hopes were entertained that he might possibly have been saved and that he might be heard of. These expectations, however, faded away as day after day passed and on Wednesday Mrs Sutherland at Blackness received official intimation from the Admiralty that her son had given his life in the country's service. On the same day a message of sympathy was received by her from the King and Queen. Mr Sutherland, whose father was in the Army service, was born at Fort George and later the family came to Blackness, serving his apprenticeship to the sea, Mr Sutherland recently gained his second engineer's certificate. At the outbreak of the war, he was on one of the Bo'ness owned boats and was held up in Finland. With difficulty the crew made their way home via Sweden and Norway, arriving at Newcastle. Mr Sutherland then obtained an appointment in the Royal Naval Reserve and in this service he has given his life. Sincere sympathy is felt for the bereaved relatives.

HMS Bayano, built in 1913, was originally a banana boat for the Elders & Fyffes line. At the outbreak of the war it was drafted into the Royal Navy on 21st November 1914, as an armed merchant auxiliary cruiser. On 11th March 1915, whilst on her way from Glasgow to Liverpool, she was intercepted ten miles off Corsewall Point, Galloway, by German submarine U-27. The attack began at 5.15 a.m. and the Bayano sank within five minutes. 26 men survived the attack and 195 lives were lost. James Alexander Sutherland is commemorated on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial, and also on the family headstone in Abercorn Churchyard.

**W. P. Naysmith**

Private William Purslow Naysmith, service no: 565, Seaforth Highlanders, 2nd Bn, was killed in action on 4th January 1915. Some military records state his middle name as Purcel but his middle name Purslow is written on his birth certificate.

William was born in Shottstown, Penicuik, on 1st August 1889. His father was Andrew Naysmith, an ironstone miner, and his mother was Isabella Gibb. In 1911, William was already a Private in the Seaforths and was stationed at Fort George. Two years later, on 7th June 1913, he married Agnes Hutchison Murray, a domestic servant, who lived in Blackness.

From the 1st to 4th January 1915, William's battalion was in the Douve Trenches in Belgium. They suffered shelling from heavy, medium and light guns and were battered by small field guns causing a great deal of damage to the trenches and parapets. Surprisingly, only three men were killed during this four day bombardment. Unfortunately, William was one of these three.

Private William Naysmith is buried in Berks Cemetery Extension, grave III.C.22, in Belgium.

**G. Paterson**

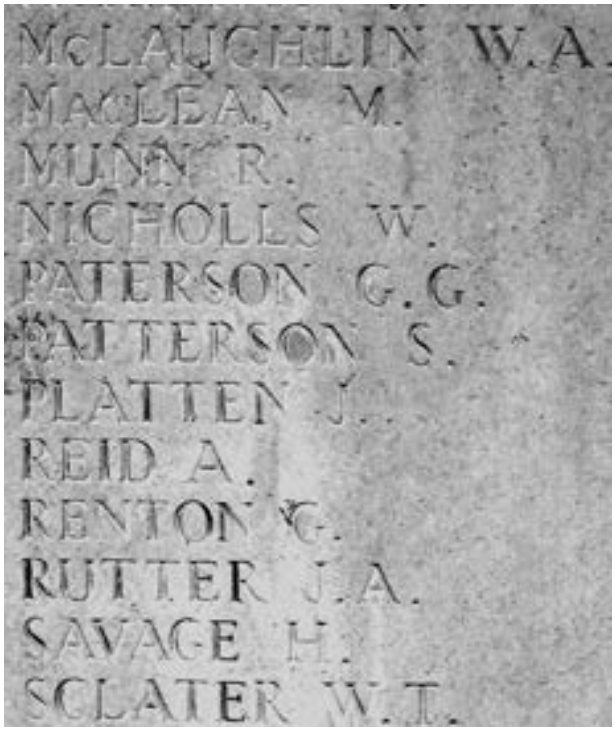
George Gray Paterson, the fourth son of James Paterson and Marion Binnie, was born in Ecclesmachan in 1897. He enlisted at Linlithgow.

Private George Paterson, service no: 24924, King's Own Scottish Borderers, 1st Bn, was killed in action on 21st November 1917.

On 21st November, George's battalion was at Marcoing in northern France. Assisted by 9 tanks, it advanced on enemy lines but great resistance from the Germans resulted in a day long confrontation that eventually ended with the orders for the battalion to resume its original position and consolidate it. Around 50 prisoners were taken in this offensive but at the expense of losing 2 men with a further 57 wounded.

Private George Paterson is commemorated on the Cambrai Memorial, panel 5, France.

The family had lived at various places in the Ecclesmachan area but at the end of the war, George's father, James, lived at Old Philpstoun.




**J. Paterson**

George's brother, Lance Corporal **John Paterson**, service no: 14901, was also killed in the war. He had also enlisted at Linlithgow. Serving with the Royal Scots, 2nd Bn., John was killed in action on 24th October 1916.

On 24th October, John's battalion was at Vauchelles and in the trenches at Serre. The day ended with 5 men killed and four wounded.

Lance Corporal John Paterson is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, pier and face 6D and 7D, France.

The J. Paterson listed on the memorial has the rank of Private. If that is a mistake then this is probably John Paterson. If Private is correct then the man on the memorial is Joseph Paterson.

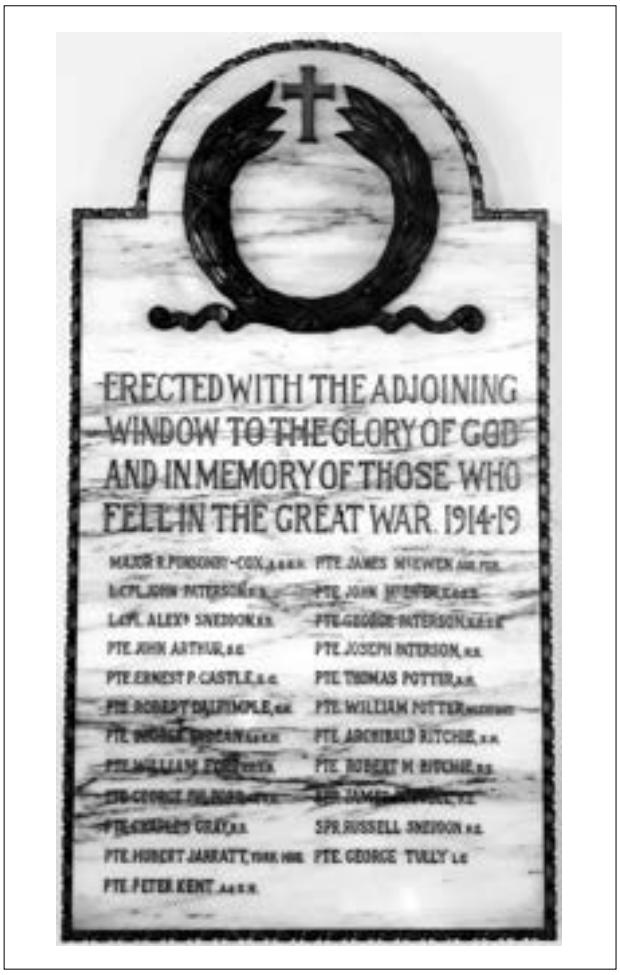
**J. Paterson**

Private Joseph Fuller Paterson, service no: 14903, Royal Scots, 11th Bn, died of wounds on 24th October 1917.

Joseph, the son of James Paterson and Jane Gray, was born at Philpstoun Mill on 18th September 1883. He worked as a forester before he enlisted at Linlithgow.

Private Joseph Paterson is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial, panel 11 to 14 and 162, Belgium.

George, John and Joseph Paterson are also commemorated on the War Memorial in Abercorn Parish Church. The dedication service was led by Rev. J. A. McClymont on 13th February 1921 and the Marquess of Linlithgow unveiled the memorial. A stained glass window was also installed within the church, made by Dr. Douglas Strachan, in remembrance of those who died.



CHAPTER 19

# *More Bo'ness Bravery*

Many of those who fell during the Great War were rewarded with medals for their gallantry on the field, and we have already read of the exploits of medal winners Private James McIntosh DCM, Sergeant William James Martin DCM, Corporal Peter Wardlaw DCM, Captain Archie Dunlop MC and Second Lieutenant Robert Sharpe MC, as well as Military Medal winners Private James Grant, Sergeant John Hamilton, Lance Corporal Alexander Potter and Private William Rose. All of these men made the ultimate sacrifice. Many other gallantry medal winners survived the war and we wanted to ensure that they were also recognised in these pages. This chapter is about those medal-winning individuals whose names do not appear on the Bo'ness War Memorial. Most survived the Great War and its aftermath, others were not listed. Their deeds of bravery to help ensure an Allied victory are also remembered.

In the Falkirk Archives there is a historical document issued by Bo'ness Town Council entitled "Honours List", dated 12th March 1918. This lists the Name, Address (where available), Decoration and Date of Minute the award was discussed. It is typed up until the 12th February 1918, and then various handwritten additions are made. In the following pages we will provide information on each name listed, with the exception of those already mentioned previously in this book, that is, those that had fallen in action.

(Note: LG: Linlithgowshire Gazette, BJ: Bo'ness Journal)

**Medals of the Great War**

A British soldier who served on the Western Front between 4th August and 22nd 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 during the war, including the Merchant Navy, received 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.

**Gallantry Medals**

The Victoria Cross (VC) is the highest award of the of the British honours system, awarded for gallantry "in the presence of the enemy". It was introduced in 1856 by Queen Victoria to honour acts of valour during the Crimean War. The ribbon is crimson red.

The Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM) instituted in 1854 was awarded for acts of gallantry by other ranks. It was the oldest British award for gallantry and was a second level military decoration, ranking below the Victoria Cross. The ribbon is dark crimson, with a navy blue band in the middle.

The Military Cross (MC) 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."

From March 1916 the Military Medal (MM) was awarded to other ranks for "acts of gallantry and devotion to duty under fire". The ribbon is dark blue, with five equal stripes of white and red. Over 115000 awards of the MM were made for actions during WW1.

**Harcus Strachan, VC, MC**

This is not an attempt to add to the thousands of words already written about this man but a simple tribute to a son of Bo'ness.

But first, what was his name and where and when was he born? When his birth was registered with John Paul, the Registrar for Bo'ness, his name was registered as Harcus Strachan. Various other sources say his name was Henry Mareus/Marcus Strachan but it is strange that this was not the name registered when he was born. However, on his Attestation Papers for the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF), he is named as Henry, alias Harcus. This same document has the, incorrect, date of birth as 7th November 1887. According to the statutory birth register, he was born on 7th November 1884, at Grange Terrace, Bo'ness. The Valuation Roll for 1885-86 shows that the Strachan family were tenants in a house in Grange Terrace. In the Valuation Roll for 1895-96, the Strachans owned and lived in Hollywood, Grahamsdyke Road, Bo'ness, the address where some sources, incorrectly, say Harcus was born. Harcus was the son of William Strachan and Isabella Thomson Veitch. His siblings were William, Hannah, Alexander, Grace, Norman and May. He was educated at Bo'ness Academy, the Royal High School, Edinburgh and the University of Edinburgh before emigrating to Canada, with his brother Alexander, in 1905.

He joined the CEF in July 1915 and arrived at the Western Front as part of the Canadian Cavalry Brigade. In 1916, he was promoted to Lieutenant in the Fort Garry Horse, part of the Cavalry Brigade. In May 1917 he was awarded the Military Cross after a raid near St. Quentin. His deeds were recorded in the Bo'ness Journal as follows:

> Lieut. Strachan commanded the party of two officers and thirty eight men who attacked the enemy's outpost in the rear on the night of May 26-27th. His bold conception, swift movement and courageous leading resulted in the capture of eight prisoners, the killing of a much larger number and the destruction of the enemy's defensive organisation in the sector, without losing a single man of the party.

Six months later, he earned the Victoria Cross.

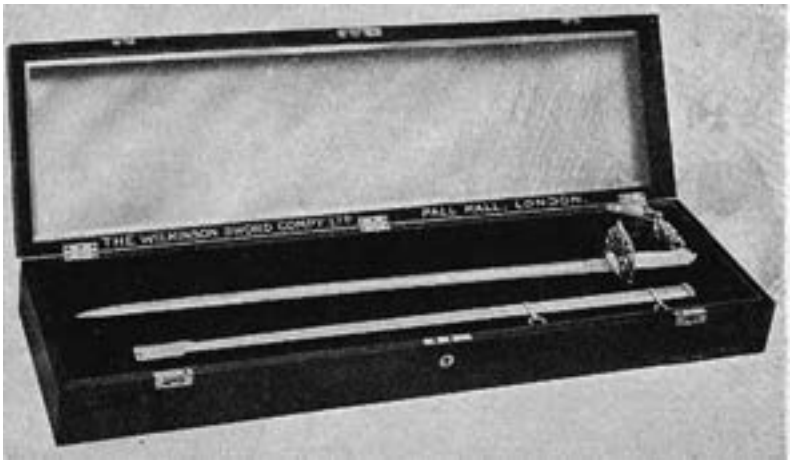
His actions were described in the following citation that appeared in the London Gazette, no.30433, 18th December 1917:

> *For the award of the Victoria Cross, Masnieres, France, 20th November 1917, Lieutenant Harcus Strachan, Fort Garry Horse, CEF.*
>
> For most conspicuous bravery and leadership during operations. He took command of the squadron of his regiment when the squadron leader, approaching the enemy front line at a gallop, was killed. Lt. Strachan led the squadron through the enemy line of machine-gun posts, and then, with the surviving men, led the charge on the enemy battery, killing seven of the gunners with his sword. All the gunners having been killed and the battery silenced, he rallied his men and fought his way back at night through the enemy's line, bringing all unwounded men safely in, together with 15 prisoners.
>
> The operation – which resulted in the silencing of an enemy battery, the killing of the whole battery personnel and many infantry, and the cutting of three main lines of telephone communication two miles in rear of the enemy's front line – was only rendered possible by the outstanding gallantry and fearless leading of this officer.

Harcus received his VC from King George V on 6th January 1918. Fifteen days later, Harcus attended a reception in his home town, where he was presented with a sword of honour. He also attended ceremonies at Bo'ness Academy and Douglas Lodge No. 409.

After the war, he returned to his farm in Alberta but a few years later he had a change of career and went into banking. In 1928 he married Betsy Stirling and they had a daughter, Jean. He later commanded the Edmonton Fusiliers, 1st Bn, during the Second World War and he eventually attained the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. After the war he retired and moved to Vancouver. In 1967 he voiced his disdain for the U.S. supporters of the U.S.-Vietnam War.

Harcus Strachan died on 1st May 1982, at the age of 97 years and 175 days. He is the longest lived of all 1355 recipients of the Victoria Cross. His ashes were scattered near the Rose Garden Columbarium at Boal Chapel Memorial Gardens in North Vancouver, British Columbia, on 5th May 1982. There is also a recently erected memorial in the Veterans' Garden at Boal Chapel. In 1918, a mountain on the border of Alberta and British Columbia in Canada was renamed to Mount Strachan, and in September 2013 a lake in Manitoba was named "Harcus Strachan Lake", both to commemorate his award of the Victoria Cross.




The V C Sword of Honour

The Memorial Slab in Bo'ness

The Memorial at Boal Chapel

The Rose Garden Columbarium

On 20th November 2017, a memorial slab was unveiled in Bo'ness commemorating his award. This was part of a nationwide campaign where these slabs were laid in the home town of every UK soldier awarded the Victoria Cross during the Great War.

As this is a book about Bo'ness, we cannot finish Harcus's story without mentioning his sister, Grace. On 16th July 1897, 16 year old Grace, a pupil at the Anderson Academy was crowned Queen at the first Bo'ness Children's Fair Festival. Fondly known as "The Best Day of the Year", only World Wars 1915-1918 and 1940-1945, and the General Strikes of 1921 and 1926 have interrupted this annual event.

1897 A unique picture of the first School Queen - Grace Strachan - and her Court

**Corporal James Jenkins, MM**

LG 06/10/1916:

Gallant Kinneil Soldier Goes "Duck Shooting"

Military Medal for Big "Bag" of Huns

Corporal James Jenkins, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, who has been awarded the Military Medal, is a regular soldier, having joined the Army six years ago. Captain-Adjutant W.S. Stevenson writes to the corporal as under:

> The Military Medal has been awarded to you under the following circumstances:- During the attack on Longueval, on the 14th [July, 1916], one of the hostile machine guns held up our advance from the last German trench. This n.c.o. led a party of bombers, and succeeded in capturing the gun and killing the team. Although wounded, he remained at duty until again wounded two days later. I am to congratulate you, in the name of the regiment, and I hope you will soon be fit to rejoin us, and continue your good work with this battalion. You are now entitled to wear the ribbon of the Military Medal.

Corporal Jenkins is the son of Mr and Mrs John Jenkins, 56 Furnace Rows, Bo'ness. He was born at Camelon 27 years ago, and removed with his parents to Bo'ness in 1904. Provost Grant wrote to Corporal Jenkins congratulating him on winning the medal, and the gallant man in his reply writes from the Red Cross Hospital, Bellahouston Glasgow, as under:-

> Many thanks for your good wishes. I feel quite proud that you think me worthy of your congratulations. After all, it was a bit of pure luck that I was able to drop on the Germans unexpectedly. Any of the 'boys' would have given a lot to have got the chance of killing some of them. It's like duck shooting, you have to wait your chance. However, I am glad I was able to take advantage of the opportunity when I got it. It's a nice feeling of satisfaction to know I hadn't been there long for nothing. My total for the last 14 months was eight killed and one prisoner, the latter dying from natural causes on the road back. The wounded I can't swear to, but some must have got a lot of bomb shrapnel picked out of them in Germany lately. I am keeping fine and able to go about a bit, and getting quite strong now. I hope it won't be too long before I see Kinneil Store again.

Further information reveals that Corporal Jenkins had killed 6 German soldiers in this attack, and his right leg had been shattered by shrapnel in the same engagement during the Battle of the Somme. He had also been hit by a splinter in the right hand and his shoulder had been grazed. Whilst in hospital recovering, towards the end of July, septic poisoning set in and his leg was amputated above the knee. He had spent six years in the Army, the first two spent in India. He was part of the first Indian Contingent sent to France.

**Pipe Major McCombe, MM**

LG 15/12/1916:

Military Medallist

The report is now confirmed that Sergeant-Pipe-Major McComb, H.L.I., has been awarded the Military Medal. Mrs McComb lives at 29 Mayfield Terrace, and in a letter which she has just received from her husband he states that he was mentioned in despatches in June, and in more recent heavy fighting he had been awarded the medal for conspicuous gallantry. The pipe-major is a native of Bo'ness, and prior to the war he was employed in the pits at Bridgeness. He enlisted two months after the outbreak of war, and crossed over to France in November last year. He had charge of the pipe band in Linlithgow, where he was about as well known as in his native place.

**Bombardier J. McKay, MM**

BJ 12/01/1917:

Military Medal for Bombardier McKay, R.F.A.

Bombardier John McKay, R.F.A., has been presented with the Military Medal for gallantry, and devotion to duty, while on service with the troops operating from Salonica. In the presence of the Company the Commander pinned on the ribbon and shook hands with Bombardier McKay, at the same time reading out the details of the case as follows:

> Bombardier John McKay, R.F.A. During operations on the Struma his battery was in an action and one gun received a direct hit from the enemy's battery, killing the four men at the gun, and also setting fire to a pile of ammunition at the gun amongst which there were a number of high explosive rounds. Bombardier McKay at once ran up and succeeded in putting out the fire. His battery was being heavily shelled at the time.
>
> Bombardier McKay is the fifth son of the late Inspector McKay, and has served his full term in the Army, most of his time in India, and rejoined after furlough.

*His elder brother John Edward Keir McKay or Mackay was killed in action and appears on the War Memorial.*

**Lieutenant Henry Moubray Cadell, Croix de Guerre**

LG 06/04/1917:

French Honour for Lieut. Cadell

Lieut. Henry Moubray Cadell, younger, of Grange and Banton, has been awarded the Croix de Guerre (Military Cross) of the French Legion of Honour by the French President, in recognition of distinguished service in the Salonica Campaign, in which he has been engaged for more than a year as signalling officer of Royal Engineers.

Lieut. Cadell was born at the Grange, Bo'ness, on 27th January 1892, and he is the son of Mr and Mrs Cadell of Grange, Linlithgow. He was educated at Merchiston Castle School, Edinburgh; made a brilliant pass into the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich; and in due course qualified for the Royal Engineers. Soon after the outbreak of war he went to France, and in the signalling department rendered such distinguished services in the early stages of the war that he was mentioned in General French's despatches. Towards the end of the year he contracted enteric fever, and was in hospital for some time. He returned to the Western Front in the spring, and after completing several months of valuable work he had the misfortune to take ill again, necessitating an operation in London for appendicitis. In the autumn of 1915, having completely recovered, he went out to Salonica, where he has been since. Although he has taken part in much stiff fighting on both fronts, he has so far been very fortunate in not being wounded, and we hope the same good luck will attend him to the end.

*The Croix de Guerre is a French military award, commonly bestowed on foreign military forces allied to France. The medal is awarded to those who have been "mentioned in dispatches", meaning a heroic deed or deeds were performed meriting a citation from an individual's headquarters unit. The WW1 ribbon is green and red stripes.*

**Private Bernard McColl, MM**

LG 13/04/1917:

At the monthly meeting of Bo'ness Town Council on Monday, Provost Grant passed around for inspection the Military Medal won by Pte. Bernard McColl, whose mother resides at 26 Furnace Row. Pte. McColl belongs to the Canadians, which he joined in September, 1914. The Provost said the lad had passed through some stiff fighting on the Somme, and his officer having fallen, he performed brave deeds in the field. It was agreed to record appreciation of the distinction won by Pte McColl, who is a native of Linlithgow.

### Captain William Drummond, MC

Captain William Drummond, Gordon Highlanders, was awarded the Military Cross on 4th June 1917. He had twice been mentioned in despatches previously. He was a native of Aberfoyle, joining the Gordons in 1900, and for a time he was stationed at Blackness Castle. He was married to Alice Duncan and the couple lived with their two boys at Muirhouses, Carriden. He was well-known in Bo'ness.

He served in the Boer War, during which he rose to the rank of sergeant. In August 1914 at the outbreak of war he was stationed in Aberdeen as a sergeant-major, later rising to the rank of captain after gaining a commission. In May 1915 he arrived in France where he fought at the Battle of Loos.

On 12th April 1918, he was taken prisoner by the Germans and held at Karlsruhe, returning to Bo'ness unscathed after the war.

### Captain Archibald Livingstone, MC

LG 15/06/1917:

In the Birthday List of Honours recently published appeared the name of Acting Captain Archibald Macdonald Livingstone, son of Mr. A. Livingstone, Mount Pleasant, formerly manager to Kinneil Cannel and Coking Coal Co., Ltd. The young officer has been awarded the Military Cross for gallantry in the field.

The parents and friends of the hero first learned of the conferment in scanning the official list of names in the Press and confirmation is forthcoming from the acting captain himself, who is still serving in France, that he is the holder of the much-coveted Cross.

Educated at Bo'ness Academy, he decided upon agriculture as a career. For a time he served in the Kinneil Estate Office, under Mr Macaulay, and later he got a splendid insight into practical farming with Mr Crawford, farmer Bo'mains. This combined with a natural aptitude, enabled him to make a first class pass for the degree of BSc of Agriculture at Edinburgh University. Soon after qualifying he received an important appointment as organiser of the small holdings in Scotland. A member of the University Officers' Training Corps, he returned from the north, where he had been attending to his duties, to find that he had been gazetted as a lieutenant in the Royal Field Artillery. About two years ago he was sent to France, where, as we have already said, he is still serving and doing splendid work. He was last home on leave at the New Year.

**Lance-Corporal James Hammond, MM**

LG 15/06/1917:

Corporal James Hammond, A. and S. Highlanders, has been recommended for the Military Medal for gallantry in the field on 9th April. The corporal is a regular soldier, having enlisted seven years ago with Pte. Jenkins who was also recently awarded the Military Medal. Early in the war Corpl. Hammond was drafted from India to France, and since then he has been in every big push that has taken place. He has been twice recommended by his officers for the D.C.M. for bringing in the wounded lying in the zone of fire, and for having led successfully bombing parties against advanced German positions. Corpl. Hammond was first wounded in February, 1915, and latterly on 3rd May of this year. He is at present recuperating at his home at Furnace Row, Kinneil, from the effects of wounds. His two brothers, John and Hugh, are in the firing line. Hugh has been twice wounded. John has been in the thick of the fight since the spring of 1915, and has not had a single scratch.

**Private Thomas Fraser, MM**

LG 14/09/1917:

Private Thomas Fraser, Machine Gun Corps, awarded the Military Medal for his good work on the 7th June [1917], is a son of Mr James Fraser, formerly of Grangepans. The family now reside at Craignestoch Place, Glasgow. Pte. Fraser is a native of Bo'ness. He enlisted under the Derby group system, and passed through several very heavy engagements in France. He was wounded on the occasion on which he displayed so much gallantry, and he is still in hospital in England. Prior to enlisting the brave lad was a miner at Bridgeness.

**Sergeant William Gibb, MM**

LG 26/10/1917:

Bo'ness Non-Com. Awarded Military Medal

Sergt Wm. Gibb, awarded the Military Medal, is a son of John Gibb, railway hoistman, Stewart Avenue, and the gallant deed for which he won the distinction was performed last month, when he courageously led his platoon into action. The lad was born at Bo'ness, educated at Kinneil School, and served with the North British Railway Company up to the outbreak of war, when he enlisted. For three years he has been in France. He is 21 years of age.

**Sergeant James Rutherford, MM**

LG 16/11/1917:

Military Medal for Bo'ness Sergeant

The latest recipient of the Military Medal from among the army of brave men hailing from the Kinneil district is Sergt. Jas. Rutherford, Royal Scots…The sergeant going on to refer to the Military Medal said he had little to tell about the circumstances. "Many a poor lad out here has won a V.C. twice over, and never a word said. I may say I was not expecting any reward for my work. The officer having gone down, I was left in sole charge in a very grave position, with only two men, and so well did we do, under great difficulties, that I got highly recommended. After all, I only did my duty and I often wonder how I got through"…this evoked a remark from a Councillor that "there would soon be a Military Medal at every door in Furnace Row, where the sergeant's home is situated".

**Gunner David Ballantine, MM**

LG 31/08/1917:

Gunner David Ballantine, Machine Gun Corps, Royal Scots, wounded on 16th August [1917], is the oldest son of Mr and Mrs David Ballantine, Lawrie Place. He enlisted in February this year, and went to France on 24th May. Formerly he was employed as a Cooper with Messrs James Calder and Co. Ltd. In a letter from a chaplain at a hospital in France, the writer says Gunner Ballantine is suffering from a wound in the shoulder, and that he is making good progress.

*He received the Military Medal later in the year.*

**Sapper Richard Snedden, MM**

LG 14/12/1917:

Bo'ness Sapper Awarded Military Medal

Sapper Richard Sneddon, Royal Engineers, has been awarded the Military Medal for conspicuous bravery on 20th November. In a letter to his wife Sapper Sneddon said he succeeded in capturing three Germans whose portraits he has sent home. The three appear to be mere boys, showing the straits to which Germany is reduced in man-power. Sapper Sneddon and family live at 96 North Street.

### Private Alexander Doughty, MM

BJ 28/12/1917

Pte. Alex. Doughty, Lancashire Fusiliers has written to his wife who resides at Alexander Terrace, Carriden, that he has received the Military Medal for good work in the field. Pte. Doughty is the youngest son of Mr David Doughty, Inspector N. B. Railway, and was employed as an engineer by Messrs Cochrane Bros., before joining up in October last year. He joined the Royal Field Artillery, and was later attached to the Lancashire Fusiliers. He has been ten months in France, and is now in hospital at Northampton, England, suffering from shell shock.

### Captain James Swan, MC

BJ 25/01/1918

Captain James Swan, R.A.M.C., has been awarded the Military Cross. Captain Swan is the younger son of the late Mr William Swan, agent, Clydesdale Bank, Bo'ness. He offered his services as a Doctor early in the war, and has been on duty all through the campaign. [Incorrectly recorded on BTC list as Military Medal recipient.]

### Lance-Corporal T. McMahon, MM

Reported in the Bo'ness Journal of 1st February, 1918, "Military Medal: L.-Cpl, T. McMahon, Bo'ness, [The Black Watch] Royal Highlanders".

### Sergeant Major George Black, DCM

Company Sergeant Major George Henry Black, Royal Scots Fusiliers, 1st Bn, service no: 5547. Citation of 6th December, 1918, reads:

> For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty in rushing forward and dropping a bomb through one of the loopholes of a "pill-box" that was holding up an attack. The garrison 15 in number, at once surrendered. His gallantry enabled the company to take the position. He was himself severely wounded.

### Private Archibald Hamilton, MM

From BJ 07/06/1918

Private Archibald Hamilton was the eldest son of Mrs Hamilton, Philpingstone Terrace, Bridgeness. He enlisted in the Australian forces in January, 1915, and was drafted to France in the same year, continuing there for two years. He was awarded the Military Medal in October, 1917, during the Battle of Cambrai for bringing in wounded under heavy shell and machine gun fire, proceeding again and again to the danger zone and bringing in the men who were newly submerged in water and mud. He went to Australia in 1913 and previously was employed in Cadell's pit at Grangepans.

**Corporal Peter Craft, MM**

BJ 22/02/1918

Corpl. Peter Craft (pictured right), Royal Scots, has been awarded the Military Medal for gallant service with the Army in Palestine. Private [sic] Craft is the son of Peter Craft now of Grange Road, Trinity, Edinburgh and was born at Bona Vista, Bo'ness [23] years ago. He is a grandson of the late Henry Craft, fisherman, and is a nephew of Mrs Shaw, Dean Loan, Kinneil.

**Sergeant Robert Johnston, MM**

LG 25/01/1918:

Sergt. Robert Johnston, Canadian Field Artillery, awarded the Military Medal, is the son of the late Mr Johnston, of the firm Walker and Johnston, drapers, Bo'ness. His wife is a daughter of Mr Wm Ellis, Bankhead.

**Captain Rev. William White Anderson, MC**

William White Anderson was born on 17th March 1888. He was the brother of Carl Otto Anderson who appears on the Bo'ness War Memorial. He was educated at Bo'ness Academy, and then he studied at Glasgow University. Anderson became a missioner in New Brunswick, Canada, in 1912, and during the 1914-1918 War he was a Chaplain to the Forces. He was Senior Chaplain (9th Division), served with the army of occupation in Germany, and was Senior Chaplain in the Lowland Division. He received the Military Cross in 1917. He was Minister of Bellahouston Parish Church, 1919-1926, Minister of New Kilpatrick Parish, Bearsden, 1926-1931, and then from 1931 was the Junior then Senior Minister of St. Cuthbert's Parish Church, Edinburgh. He was Chaplain too in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, 1926. During the 1939-1945 War he served with the Royal Navy and he was awarded the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve Officers' Decoration. In 1951, Anderson was appointed Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and in 1952 became Chaplain to the Queen in Scotland. Earlier he had been Chaplain to King George VI in Scotland, 1949-1952. The Very Rev. William White Anderson died 17th December 1956.

**Lance-Corporal Thomas Spence, MM**

BJ 20/09/1918

L-Cpl. Thomas Spence, Royal Scots, was awarded the Military Medal for gallantry on 21st February, this year. L-Cpl. Spence joined up over three years ago. Before doing so he was employed in Links Sawmill, and the firm and employees have during his leave presented the gallant Corpl. with a substantial sum of money.

**Private Thomas Middleton, Australians, MM**

LG 12/04/1918

Son of the late James Middleton

**Corporal Alexander Anderson, Belgian Croix de Guerre**

LG 15/03/1918:

Belgian Honour for Bo'ness Man

Corpl. Alex. Anderson, Canadian Royal Field Artillery, awarded the Belgian Croix de Guerre for bravery while repairing guns under heavy shell fire, is the oldest son of Mrs Anderson, Dunedin, Bo'ness. The corporal was formerly a partner of the firm Charles Anderson and Sons, Plumbers, Bo'ness and Linlithgow.

*The WW1 Belgian Croix de Guerre was a military decoration of the Kingdom of Belgium established by royal decree in 1915. It was primarily awarded for bravery or other military valour on the battlefield.*

**Private William Young, DCM**

LG 19/04/1918

250784 Pte. W. Young, Royal Scots (Bo'ness) awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for gallantry in the Palestine Campaign. Private Young is a son of the late Mr David Young, engineer, Snab, and a nephew of Councillor McKenzie. Joining up soon after the outbreak of war, he was sent to Palestine, where he got his baptism of fire.

The DCM citation of 1st May, 1918, reads:

> For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. He displayed the utmost gallantry in action when, single-handed, he rushed a hostile machine gun, bayonetted one of the team, routed the remainder, and then put the gun out of action, there being a danger of an immediate counter-attack by the enemy. His courage, dash and initiative cannot be too highly praised.

**Private James Galloway, MM**

LG 10/05/1918:

Bo'ness Lad Wins the Military Medal

Mr James Galloway, Royal Horse Artillery, has been awarded the Military Medal for devotion to duty in the field. He is the second son of Thomas Galloway, milkman, Bo'mains. The lad was born at the farm there 22 years ago, and joined the Artillery soon after the outbreak of war. For three years he has been in France. Mr Galloway has other two sons serving, and a daughter in the W.A.A.C.'s.

**Private David Park, MM**

LG 17/05/1918:

Mr Wm Park, shoemaker, North Street, has received word that his second son, Pte. David Park, Black Watch, has been awarded the Military Medal for gallantry on the field. Pte. Park is 38 years of age, and his wife and family reside at Blackness.

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## Other names not listed on the Bo'ness Town Council list

These three men are known to have died and appear in the chapter "Alive, in Error and Unknown" as not listed on the Bo'ness War Memorial:

**Alexander King Young, DCM & MM**

Company Quarter Master Sergeant, Royal Engineers, 25th Divisional Signalling Company, service no: 47243. He was awarded the DCM on 26th January 1918. The citation reads:

> For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty when in charge of a forward signalling post. At a critical moment, when completely cut off from communication by very heavy shell fire, he showed the greatest initiative by selecting and personally relaying his lines by the only possible route, thus re-establishing communication. It was entirely due to his gallant example and energy throughout a very trying period of seven days that communications were maintained in spite of the exhaustion of the men who were at work upon the line.

Died on 28th October 1918. Buried at St. Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen, grave S.II.G.1. Born in Bo'ness.

**Thomas Greer, MM**

LG 01/02/1918

Former Bo'ness Footballer Killed

Mrs Greer, Old Orbiston, Bellshill, the other day received official intimation that her husband, Corpl. Thomas Greer, Machine Gun Corps, had been killed in action on 19th December [1917]. Corpl. Greer some four or five years ago resided at Castleloan. He was then in the employment of Kinneil Coal Company. Along with Jamie Kelly, now also in the Army, Greer played inside left. Some time before his death he was awarded the Military Medal, and it is understood that he was subsequently recommended for a further decoration.

*Buried at Villers-Plouich Communal Cemetery, grave A. 29.*

**Robert Robertson, MM**

Private, Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), 8th Bn, service no: S/9315. Died on 3rd May 1917 at the Battle of Arras. Born in Bo'ness. Commemorated on the Arras Memorial, bay 6.

## Other medallists and award winners who survived the war:

### Private William Paterson, MM

Pte. Wm. Paterson, Royal Scots, whose home was at Gilburn Place, Bo'ness, joined up in August, 1914, prior to which he was employed in Kinneil Coal Company's pits. He had been mentioned twice in despatches. For over 18 months he had been in France, and was previously wounded.

### Corporal David Reith, MM

LG 28/07/1916

Corporal David Reith, attached to a special corps of the Royal Engineers, has won the Military Medal for conspicuous gallantry. He is the son of Mr James Reith, N.B.R. passenger guard, who was for some time resident in Bo'ness, but several years ago removed to Edinburgh. Corporal Reith, who is still in his teens, was, before enlisting, a chemist by profession.

### Lieutenant D. Bruce Allan, MC

BJ 16/06/1916

Lieut. D. Bruce Allan, 7th Royal Scots, awarded the Military Cross for gallantry at Gallipoli. Son of the late James Allan, Craigallan, Bo'ness, and partner in the firm of J. & J. Allan, corn merchants, Bo'ness and Leith.

*He was the elder brother of James Stanley Allan who appears on the Bo'ness War Memorial.*

**Miss Daisy M. Murray, Commandant, Carriden Hospital**

**Miss Helen M. Murray, Quartermaster, Carriden Hospital**

LG 08/02/1918:

Valuable Hospital Services
Bo'ness Ladies Mentioned

The names of Misses Daisy and Helen Murray are included in the latest published list issued by the War Office of ladies mentioned for services in connection with the establishment, maintenance, and administration of hospitals. They are the daughters of Sir Robert and Lady Murray of Caer Edin and have been responsible for the management of Carriden House Auxiliary Military Hospital since it was opened on April 19th, 1915. The house, with its beautiful grounds, was lent by Mr Joseph Constant of Blackheath Park, London, but recently the estate of Carriden changed hands the purchasers being the adjacent colliery lessees, the Bridgeness Coal Company, Ltd. Throughout well-nigh three strenuous years Miss Daisy Murray has acted as resident Commandant, and Miss Helen as resident Quartermaster, and under their capable management the hospital has gained a high reputation.

**Private Charles McKenzie Young, MM**

BJ 02/08/1918

Pte. C. McKenzie Young, Royal Scots, who has been awarded the Military Medal, is the second son of the later Mr David Young, engineer and of Mrs Young, 13 Snab. He is only 19 years of age, and went to France in October 1917. He was wounded in March last, through the arm, and still lies in hospital in Manchester. Before enlisting he was employed in Kinneil Colliery. Mrs Young's elder son, William, won the D.C.M. in Palestine.

**Private Matthew King MM**

BJ 20/09/1918:

Pte. Matthew King, 1-4th Royal Scots, has been awarded the Military Medal for bravery in the field. Pte. King is married and his wife resides at Craigfoot Terrace, Grangepans. Before joining up he was employed with Bridgeness Coal Company.

**Corporal John Neill, Croix de Guerre and Palm**

BJ 23/08/1918:

Corpl. Neill, Gordon Highlanders, whose home is at Albert Buildings, Bo'ness, has been presented with the French first-class honour the Croix De Guerre and Palm.

*The French Croix de Guerre and Palm was the second highest level of award that could be given.*

**Lance Corporal C. Sneddon, DCM**

BJ 20/09/1918

DCM for Repatriated Prisoner of War

Private (Lance Corporal) C. Sneddon, Royal Scots, Bo'ness.

Observing that casualties were being caused from the fire of a nest of enemy snipers, he collected a small party of men and charged the snipers' post. He himself shot two and bayonetted a third, when the remainder took flight leaving a machine gun behind them.

*Lance-Corporal Sneddon lived at Boyd's Buildings, Grangepans. He enlisted in the autumn of 1914 with the Royal Scots, 5th Bn, and fought at Gallipoli. He was wounded on 18th June 1915 and after recovery in Egypt was drafted to France in March 1916. He was stationed in the Albert sector at the time of the German offensive Operation Michael in March 1918, and a few days after the above incident occurred he was wounded and taken prisoner on 25th April. He was interned in Saxony and had been shot in the right arm. No medical attention was given during his internment, with any treatment coming from fellow prisoners. After losing the power of both arm and hand he was repatriated with a number of other prisoners of war, arriving in London in early September 1918.*

**Sergeant Thomas Simpson MM**

BJ 07/06/1918

Sergt. Tom Simpson, Royal Scots, has been awarded the Military Medal for gallant conduct in action on 12th April [1918], for "Coolness, distinguished conduct, a good leader of men while in a critical position." Sergt. Simpson who is well-known in Bo'ness, enlisted in the 2-10th Royal Scots at the beginning of the war, and went to France eighteen months ago, being attached to another regiment of the Royal Scots. He was slightly wounded in the hand in the big German offensive in March. Sergt. Simpson who is 38 years of age was employed as a miner by the Bridgeness Coal Company previous to joining the colours.

**Private Alexander Muldoon, MM**

BJ 21/06/1918:

Pte. Alexander Muldoon, H.L.I., Newtown, has been awarded the Military Medal for bravery in the field on the morning of April 3. Pte. Muldoon was gassed on April 13, and is now in hospital in Manchester. Pte. Muldoon is one of the original 2-10th, and on his being drafted to France in July last was attached to another regiment of Royal Scots.

**Corporal Cuthell, MM**

BJ 21/06/1918

Cpl. Cuthell, Scots Guards, who joined up from Bo'ness, where he was stationed as police constable, has been awarded the Military Medal.

**Sergeant J.W. Johnston, Meritorious Service Medal**

BJ 21/06/1918

Sergt. J.W. Johnston, R.G.A., Grangepans, Bo'ness, has been awarded the Meritorious Service Medal in recognition of valuable services rendered with the Forces in France during the present war.

*The Meritorious Service Medal was awarded for distinguished service, or for gallantry, by non-commissioned officers, extended in WW1 for gallantry in the field.*

**Rifleman James Webster, MM**

LG 19/07/1918:

Rifleman James John Webster, Scottish Rifles, has been awarded the Military Medal for bravery and devotion to duty whilst under heavy shell-fire on 8th May, 1918… Rifleman Webster's father was for some eight or ten years engaged in business as a grocer in Bo'ness.

Rifleman Webster

Private King

**Private David King, MM**

Private David King, Royal Scots Fusiliers, 2nd Bn, service no: 43205. Received Military Medal, Gazette date 24th January 1919.

**Lance-Corporal C. Ramage, DCM, MM**

BJ 01/11/1918

Lance-Corporal C. Ramage, Scottish Rifles, has received the Distinguished Conduct Medal in addition to the Military Medal. Lance-Corpl. Ramage, who is only 18 years of age, is a native of Bo'ness and is the son of Mr George Ramage, who was employed as coal trimmer at Bo'ness dock, and was for a time Secretary of the local branch of the Dock Labourers Union. He is now resident in Glasgow.

**Sergeant Edward McGregor, MM**

BJ 08/11/1918

Sergt. Edward McGregor, H.L.I., third son of Mr. Alex McGregor, Livingstone Terrace, Grangepans, has been recommended by his Commanding Officer for the Military Medal in recognition of his services..

**Private Alexander Sneddon, MM**

LG 15/11/1918

Pte. Alex. Sneddon, Royal Scots, in a letter to his mother, of date 28th October, states that he has been awarded the Military Medal. Pte. Sneddon crossed to France in the spring of 1917 and was gassed in April of this year. He is one of three sons of Mrs Sneddon, Co-operative Buildings, South Street, on active service, one being in Mesopotamia, and the other two in France. Before enlisting, Sneddon was a railway porter. He is about 21 years of age.

**Lance-Corporal Neil Whitelaw, MM**

Neil Whitelaw, King's Own Scottish Borderers, was the son of Cornelius Whitelaw, who was wounded at Gallipoli, but died on board a hospital ship and was buried at sea. His mother Mary (or Jessie) Anderson belonged to Kinneil. The family resided at 3 Crown Place, Leith. His brother James was killed in the First Battle of Bapaume in March 1918. Neil's father and brother both appear on the Bo'ness War Memorial.

**Company Quarter-master Sergeant F.H. Taylor, DCM**

BJ 30/05/1919

AWARD OF DCM

In the latest list of awards of the Distinguished Conduct Medal appears the name of C.Q.M.S. F.H. Taylor, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. Mr Taylor saw a lot of service with the 51st Division during the war and was wounded three times, he is now a Customs Officer at Bo'ness Distillery. His citation in the London Gazette of 11/03/1920 reads:

> Since July, 1917, until the cessation of hostilities, he has on no occasion failed to see his rations safely delivered to the men of his company, on many occasions under great difficulties and at grave personal risk.

**Corporal James Buchanan, MM** (Gordon Highlanders)

**Private J. Wylie, MM** (Royal Scots)

**Private J. Johnston, MM** (Royal Scots Service no: 250750)

**Private David McColl, MM** (Scots Guards)

**Driver J. Thompson, MM** (Royal Field Artillery)

# CHAPTER 20

# *Reflections on the Research*

The process of finding the World War One stories behind the names on the Bo'ness War Memorial was an interesting and enjoyable one, but not without its challenges. We were to soon find out that the research wasn't going to be plain sailing. The very first name that appears on the Memorial is that of Walter Adams. We discovered that his forename is incorrectly inscribed and that it should read Walker Adams. This didn't bode well for the future but as we have seen earlier, thankfully mistakes were kept to a minimum. Above all, the lesson we learned in relation to searching for historical information on the internet and in the historical archives is to always cross-check with other sources of information. There are a lot of family trees on the web for example that are based on very little in the way of facts, and must be treated with caution.

The starting point for researching each name was usually the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) archives website. The Commission was set up to provide perpetual commemoration to those who had died while serving in the Commonwealth forces during the war. The aim of the CWGC archive is to collect, manage and preserve materials that document the history of the organisation, the individuals commemorated, the cemeteries and memorials they maintain, and to make such records accessible to the public. Here, if we were lucky, a Bo'ness connection would be highlighted.

If not we would then try the Scottish National War Memorial website. The National War Memorial for Scotland was established by Royal Charter to commemorate the sacrifice of Scots in the Great War, Second World War and subsequent conflicts. The Memorial sits within Edinburgh Castle and houses and displays the Rolls of Honour of Scots servicemen and women from all the Armed Services, the Dominions, Merchant Navy, Women's Services, Nursing Services and civilian casualties of all wars from 1914 to present date.

To add to the information found on the casualty's military services we looked at the Scotlandspeople website. This is the official Scottish Government site for searching government records and archives. It is used by hundreds of thousands of people each year to apply for copies of official certificates and to research family history, biography, local history and social history. There are fees to download information, but most of the site is free to search. Here we found various military information such as soldiers' wills, death in service information, local military tribunal decisions. This site was invaluable in helping to flesh out the bones of each person's story, providing family history information on births, marriages and deaths, as well as census and valuation roll information, allowing us to pinpoint addresses. Further similar information from further afield is available free from the Familysearch website.

As part of the project we also subscribed to commercial genealogical sites such as Ancestry UK, Findmypast and Forces War Records. If we were lucky we could obtain the person's service records at one or more of these sites which provided all sorts of additional information, including personal appearance, next of kin details, service history, correspondence and so on. Unfortunately only about 40% of service records remain, as many were lost during the Blitz in WW2. Much of this information is also available from the National Archives at Kew in London. Some information is not yet online and like many other researchers, a visit to these premises was a necessary requirement. The National Archives of Australia, Archives New Zealand and the Library and Archives Canada were also visited, albeit virtually, and much of their service records are available free.

Keeping tabs on individual Battalions, Regiments and Divisions through the WW1 is a very tricky task and thankfully there is a site that has done all the hard work for researchers in this regard. It is called the Long, Long Trail and is the personal work of one man, Chris Baker. It comes highly recommended by our Project. Also the Forces War Records website has an excellent section on WW1 Troop Movements and Orders of Battle (ORBATS), allowing us to determine exactly where units were on a given date and the battle, action or event they took part in. For maritime research, a whole host of separate websites and databases were utilised but we found very useful information on Wrecksite, the world's largest online maritime wreck database, and on the website Uboat.net where we found invaluable information on all the German U-boats of WW1, their commanding officers and operations including all Allied ships attacked, casualty lists, as well as technological information and more. We also found the Scottish Built Ships website, operated by the Scottish Maritime Research Trust, invaluable.

For more difficult queries researchers can make use of a number of discussion boards online.

Foremost is the Scottish Military Research Group - Commemorations Project, created by the Scottish Military Research Group, a registered charity with the purpose of educating and informing the public about how to research their Scottish military ancestors. The Great War Forum was established in 2002 and is owned and operated by The Great War Forum Limited, a not-for-profit company. The site is for discussion and research on all aspects of the Great War. The information provided is staggering, and help is available for any queries from forum members.

If we had an unlimited budget we would loved to have visited all of the graves or commemorations of the Bo'ness fallen in the many distant foreign fields. Hopefully the information provided in this book will encourage others to do so directly, or in the passing. Instead we obtained many of the photos of grave headstones and memorials from The War Graves Photographic Project. TWGPP is made possible through the efforts of a dedicated group of volunteers, from all walks of life, who felt the need to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice and who realised the importance for families to see where their loved ones are laid to rest or commemorated. This emulates the CWGC ethos to 'Remember in Perpetuity'.

The very first photo we ordered from TWGPP was for Private Peter Bell who fell at Gallipoli. We had to carefully explain that his headstone is inscribed wrongly as "C. Bell". Other headstone information is available from websites such as Findagrave and Billiongraves.

The final part of the jigsaw was finding out information from historical newspapers. We were fortunate in so far as the British Newspaper Archive decided to add the Linlithgowshire Gazette 1910-1918 to their archive just before we started our research, and this proved invaluable. We are also very lucky that we have two excellent facilities, Bo'ness Library and West Lothian Family History Library in Linlithgow, on our doorstep to utilise. Both have historical issues of Bo'ness Journals and Linlithgowshire Gazettes from the Great War period available on microfiche. We spent many hours poring over newspaper articles and this provided essential additional information for our project, perhaps best illustrated in our attempts to discover more about one name, Jack Watt.

## Case Study: Finding Jack Watt

Discovering Jack Watt's details proved to be quite a challenge and perhaps best illustrates the difficulties we faced. All we had initially was an article from the Bo'ness Journal 17th May 1918, that read:

> *BO'NESS CANADIAN DIES*
>
> *Information has been received by his friends in Bo'ness that Private Jack Watt, of the Canadian force, died of wounds on 24th April. Jack Watt was the son of Sergt. Watt of the local police force, who left Bo'ness to go to Canada a number of years ago. Jack was a student at Bo'ness Academy, and some time ago visited old friends in Bo'ness while on leave from the Canadian Army in France.*

This gave us quite a bit to go on and we could cross-check its accuracy with another reference, the Bo'ness Academy War Memorial Tablet, and that did indeed include a Jack Watt. Unfortunately, however, CWGC had no Jack or John Watt killed on the date mentioned in the article, and over 170

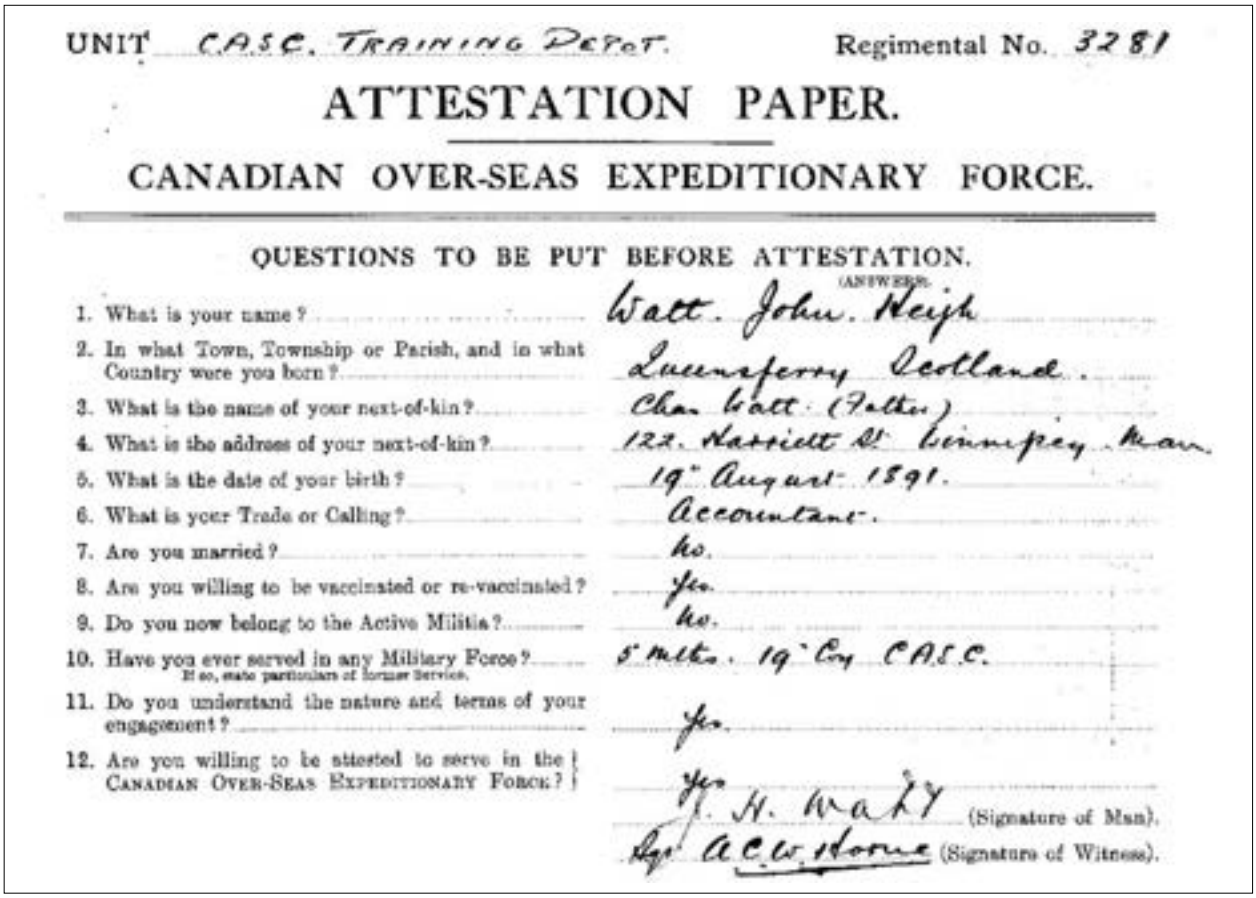
records for John, Jack, or simply J. Watt. Scotlandspeople had no Watts in Bo'ness in terms of Birth, Marriage or Death data, Census information or Valuation Rolls. No records on Findmypast or in the British Newspaper Archive connected a Jack Watt to Bo'ness. Nothing obvious matched, was this another error? It was all very frustrating, but we were determined to find him.

The breakthrough came when we checked a seldom used database entitled Canada Passenger Lists, 1881-1922 at the Familysearch website and found a Jack Watt (aged 14) travelling in 1906 on the ship SS Numidian from Glasgow to Quebec with his mother Agnes Watt, and siblings Charles, Margaret and Alex. The family were going to meet their father. They all came from Linlithgowshire. Looking for this family unit on Scotlandspeople, Ancestry and Findmypast and we found that the father's name was Charles Watt, occupation Police Constable.

Searching for Charles Watt on Findmypast revealed an article from the Linlithgowshire Gazette of 13th August 1909, in a column entitled "Armadale Odds and Ends", that revealed Charles Watt was stationed at Bo'ness and Whitburn before going to Canada, with Winnipeg mentioned.

In the 1901 Scotland Census, available on Scotlandspeople, Jack Watt is referred to as John Hugh Watt. We searched on the Canadian Government's Library Archives Canada website and looked for WW1 records for John Hugh Watt with no luck. However, there was a John Heigh Watt, and the results matched. His services records were downloadable free from this site. Jack Watt had been found at last.

The outcomes of this particular investigation hold true for our research in general and for anyone else attempting such military research. Firstly it is important to identify, explore and use all sources of data available, not just the main databases or genealogical websites that may need to be cross-referenced. Next, in any database, and especially in historical newspapers, names can be changed, inaccurate or wrongly transcribed and must be treated with caution until verified by other sources. For example, Jack Watt died on 12th April 1918, not the 29th as reported in the Gazette. Finally, historical newspapers are an extremely valuable tool and the tiniest scraps of information in newspapers can be crucial to research, and as we have shown, sometimes the key to unlocking closed doors. If these matters are recognised, the research process can be extremely rewarding and we would highly recommend and encourage others to have a go at researching their own local military and family history.



UNIT C.A.S.C. TRAINING DEPOT. Regimental No. 3281

# ATTESTATION PAPER.

## CANADIAN OVER-SEAS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE.

### QUESTIONS TO BE PUT BEFORE ATTESTATION.

| | (ANSWERS) |
|---|---|
| 1. What is your name? | Watt. John. Heigh |
| 2. In what Town, Township or Parish, and in what Country were you born? | Queensferry Scotland. |
| 3. What is the name of your next-of-kin? | Chas Watt (Father) |
| 4. What is the address of your next-of-kin? | 122. Harriett St Winnipeg Man. |
| 5. What is the date of your birth? | 19th August 1891. |
| 6. What is your Trade or Calling? | Accountant. |
| 7. Are you married? | No. |
| 8. Are you willing to be vaccinated or re-vaccinated? | Yes. |
| 9. Do you now belong to the Active Militia? | No. |
| 10. Have you ever served in any Military Force? If so, state particulars of former Service. | 5th Mtn. 19th Coy C.A.S.C. |
| 11. Do you understand the nature and terms of your engagement? | Yes. |
| 12. Are you willing to be attested to serve in the CANADIAN OVER-SEAS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE? | Yes |

J. H. Watt (Signature of Man).

Sgt A.C.W. Horne (Signature of Witness).

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