

1917

The 5th Battalion of the Dorsetshire Regiment was formed in August 1914 as part of the First New Army - Kitchener's Army - and then moved to Grantham and was attached to the 11th Division. In July of 1915 it had embarked for Gallipoli from Liverpool and, in August 1915, it had landed at Suvla Bay and engaged in various actions against the Turkish Army. It encountered appalling conditions and many died, either in battle or in imprisonment. In February 1916, it was deployed to Alexandria and took over a section of the Suez Canal defences.

In July 1916, the 5th Battalion embarked for France from Alexandria, arriving at Marseilles and then moved northwards to the Arras Front, staying there to get accustomed to the Western Front, before moving to the Somme. On September 26th 1916, they took part in the attack around Thiepval. The 11th Division stayed in the trenches around the St-Pierre Divion area until early 1917.

The winter of 1916/1917 must have been extremely difficult for them, as it was for the rest of the armies. It was an extremely severe winter, the most severe for 36 or 37 years since 1880-1881, so when the French General Nivelle launched the Great Offensive along the normally sheltered valley of the Aisne, the French troops were forced to attack through blinding sleet and snow.

In the above conditions, on 11th January 1917, the British forces, including the 5th Dorsets, attacked and took a German Trench system on a front of ¾ mile North East of Beaumont Hamel. The 5th Dorsets lost 47 men in this attack, including **Private Wilfred Haines 221174 Coy., 5th Bn., Dorsetshire Regiment** who died on 11th January 1917, aged 28.

Wilfred's father, Robert Haines, an artist born in Walderton in 1863, was churchwarden at St Peter's Church, North Hayling. He is remembered as wearing a straw hat to church. The family lived at Church Cottage, North Hayling and were clearly a family 'of means'. Wilfred was born at Rowlands Castle and was living in Havant at the time of his enlistment in Portsmouth in January 1915, when he joined the Hampshire Regiment, later transferring to the 5th Dorsets. He was one of three sons, **Robert, Wilfred and Llewellyn**. There was also a sister, Violet.

Robert, aged 31, was conscripted into the army on 4th January 1917, as a private and was employed as a lorry driver. He was married, living at Sesladys House, Mengham, Hayling Island. By the end of the year he had been wounded and invalided back to England. He was assessed as 50% disabled and given a pension. One week after Robert had entered the army, Wilfred, already serving on the front line, was killed in action. Wilfred is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial.

Llewellyn Haines served as a private in the Wiltshire Regiment, fought in the Balkans and survived the war, probably returning to Church Cottage. Initially, he was a Reservist, his Trade in Calling was Husbandry and although he had not served in any branch of His Majesty's Forces, he was a proud member of the Hampshire Cycle Battalion. Llewellyn joined the services on 5th May 1916. He became a corporal No. 141762. He received 75% injuries to neck and chest and was permanently discharged on 1st December 1917.

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Frederick Thomas Mant grew up on Hayling. In 1901, aged 8, he was living, with his family - father Thomas, mother, Sophie Matilda, and siblings, Edith, Lilian, Arthur and Florence at 14, Palmerston Road, and must have been a playmate of Reginald Barrett (see 1914) who lived at number 4. Frederick emigrated to work on a Canadian wheat farm in Saskatchewan and 'joined up' in the Saskatchewan Company, was absorbed into the 54th Bn., Canadian Infantry and sailed for France, where he most probably trained at the Canadian training base at Etaples. The 54th Bn. participated in a raid on March 1st 1917, which turned out to

be a failure with many casualties, of which Frederick Mant was one. There is a 3-volume bound copy at the War Memorial of this company, which contains a photograph of Frederick. The dedication was in Ottawa Cathedral and the then Prince of Wales (subsequently Edward VIII) attended.

Corporal Fredrick Thomas Mant 443364 54th Bn., Canadian Infantry, was aged 24 when he died. He is remembered at the Cabaret-Rouge, British Cemetery, Souchez, France.

At the start of WWI, most army volunteers joined their local infantry regiments reserve battalion, but when conscription was first introduced on May 25th 1916, the existing regimental system could not cope with the large influx of recruits. To train the recruits from 1916 onwards, 26 reserve brigades were raised with an extra complement of 208,500 soldiers. This system lasted until May 1917, when the reserve battalions were once again affiliated to a particular regiment. (Kitchener's Army).

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Private Thomas Leonard Pearce TR8/2092 37th Training Reserve, 13th Bn., Royal Warwickshire Regiment, enlisted at Portsmouth. Thomas Leonard was another former pupil of Hayling Church of England School, working for Algernon Pyecroft at Mill Farm in Mill Lane, Hayling Island. His father, Thomas Pearce, was a member of St Mary's choir and was given a 'handsome present' on his marriage to his mother, Kate Palmer Crassweller, in 1891. Kate came from another old Hayling family. The Pearce family lived at 1, Elm Cottage, Church Road and it was at home where Thomas Leonard died on 11th March 1917, aged 18. His grave is in St Mary's Churchyard, alongside that of his parents, as well as being remembered in Stratford-Sub-Castle (St Lawrence) Churchyard, Wiltshire.

The U-Boat threat.

The British High Command had noticed, with some alarm, the success of the German U-boats in crippling British shipping in the opening months of the war. Initially, they had been inclined to dismiss U-boats as an irrelevance to British sea power, but the continued success of the former forced them to re-think.

'Mystery ships' proved to be an answer. The British High Command had noticed that the submarines preferred to attack unescorted, older and smaller vessels by using surface gunfire, thus saving their torpedoes for larger vessels or war ships and thus, by lightening the load, they were extending their time at sea for the same amount of fuel. The British High Command argued that if a vessel – such as a coaster – were provided with concealed armament, it could meet a surface submarine on roughly equal terms. The vessels chosen - code named 'Q' ships by the Admiralty – also known as Decoy Vessels and Special Service Ships - were comparatively small, were old and could be made to look poorly maintained. Outwardly, they appeared little different from ordinary merchant ships, their crews similarly attired in as casual dress as merchant sailors. When attacked, the Q-ship would allow the U-boat to come as close as possible before dropping the disguise, raising the White Ensign (a requirement of international law), and opening fire. This method sank about 30% of the U-boats destroyed by surface forces.

On March 12th 1917, the British Q-ship HMS *Privet* was posing as an unarmed merchant vessel, when she sustained heavy damage in an unprovoked attack from a submarine. The *Privet's* highly trained crew feigned abandoning ship, to lure the submarine closer, then uncovered the *Privet's* massive hidden machine guns and opened fire on the submarine at extremely close range, perforating the submarine, from bow to stern in an unrelenting hail of bullets. They sent U-85, Captain Petz and his crew of 37 men to the bottom of the English Channel. There were no survivors.

Among the British casualties on the *Privet* was **Stoker Petty Officer Alfred Charles Michael Horscroft 297412 HMS Q19, Royal Navy**, born Pevensey, Sussex, 8th August 1882. In 1911, he was living at 37, Balliol Road, Portsmouth with his wife, Bessie nee Perry and his three sons, George, Charles and Reginald. His memorial is in St Mary's Churchyard, Hayling Island, alongside the graves of his brother Arthur Frank, sister Beatrice Annie, wife of Walter Reuben Smith and Charles and Susan Horscroft, thought to be his grandparents.

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The **Battle of Arras** started on the 9th April – Easter Monday – 1917. The most famous action in this battle was the storming of the heights of Vimy Ridge by the Canadian Corps on the left of the British attack. Success elsewhere on the front was good, if not so spectacular. Historian, Cyril Falls, who wrote the Official History covering it, wrote that -

'Easter Monday was, from the British point of view, one of the great days of the war.

It was the most formidable ... and most successful British offensive hitherto launched'.

Less well known are the subsequent stages of the battle. The Battle of Arras, included the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Battles of the Scarpe, plus the 1st and 2nd Battles of Bullecourt and lasted from 9th April to 16th May. The play, *'War Horse'*, stimulated great interest in one of the relatively few cavalry actions of WWI, which took place during this battle.

South of Vimy Ridge, the village of Monchy-le-Preux stood on high ground, approximately 5 miles South East of Arras. Dominating the countryside, the village gave superb observation for artillery fire. Whoever held the village could control the battlefield. Most of the cavalry units were unable to exploit this situation, but one cavalry unit could. The Northamptonshire Yeomanry, a pre-war territorial unit, was on hand. After waiting west of Arras, they were ordered to advance.

'The shells were dropping fast and thick.... we came to some slit trenches and we just jumped – just like a hunt. I saw a lot of Scottish soldiers just lying there, machine gunned..... we came under shell fire and... Captain Jack Lowther, who had an enormous nose... had the end of it sliced off by .. shrapnel. We laughed... but he got off his horse picked up the end of his nose and wrapped it in his handkerchief!'

The Germans had recovered well from their reverses of the Easter Monday action and their artillery was still intact-

'but the British cavalry persisted and, during a lull in a snowstorm, an excited shout signalled the cavalry were coming up – line upon line of mounted men covering the whole extent of the hillside as far as could be seen! They were accompanied by machine gunners. The battle was fierce and the Northamptonshire Yeomanry, although without orders, joined in the charge on Monchy. There was much loss of life – in men and in horses - but the use of cavalry was exceptional for WWI.'

The Germans tried to recapture Monchy - its strategic position in an otherwise largely flat terrain, made the 'ownership' of its high ground of inestimable value, but, due to heroism by the Canadian troops of the Newfoundland Regiment, Monchy was held.

Nine officers and men of the Northamptonshire Yeomanry were killed in the above action. Among them was **Lieutenant James Ernest John Brudenell-Bruce**, aged 32, who died of wounds received in the action and was buried at Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun, France.

James Ernest John Brudenell-Bruce was born 27th February 1879 into a very distinguished family. He was a son of Commodore Lord Robert Thomas Brudenell-Bruce and Emma Charlotte Hanbury Leigh. Educated at

Harrow School and Trinity College Cambridge, he graduated from the latter in 1900 with a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Bachelor of Law degree LLB in 1900. He was admitted to the Inner Temple in London in 1901, entitled to practise as a Barrister at Law and then graduated from his former college in 1906 with a Master of Arts degree, before joining his family regiment, the Northamptonshire Yeomanry, where he gained the rank of Temporary Lieutenant. In the 1891 census, he was living, a child of 12, with his family of five in 'Stamford Lodge' in Stamford Avenue. He also lived at Deene Park, Northamptonshire.

His father, Commodore Lord Robert Thomas Brudenell-Bruce, Royal Navy, was a son of the 3rd Marquess of Aylesbury, a British courtier and politician, who served as Vice-Chamberlain of the Royal Household. He was an MP for 46 years.

As well as having a London address at 21, Eaton Square, Lord Robert lived on Hayling at Stamford Lodge, Stamford Road, once thought to be called 'Bruce's Lane'. Lord Robert was Lay Representative at the Priory Church of St Mary's and instrumental in the late 19th Century restoration of the church. The Brudenell-Bruce's were also very active in the life of the community and generous to its many causes, and the West Window of the Church, designed by George Brudenell-Bruce, was given in Lord Robert's memory by his children. The most western window on the south side of the church, '*The Light of the World*' is in memory of Lady Robert's mother. There is also a grave in St Mary's Churchyard of the infant daughter, Helen Margaret, of Lord and Lady Brudenell- Bruce, born 21st February 1887, died 2nd May 1888.

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The **Battle of Arras** continued. The British plan was to attack on a front of 9 miles, extending from Croiselles to the right of Gavrelle, which was itself just to the right of the Hindenburg/Siegfried line. On the 28th April 1917, they attacked the German line that ran from the northern part of Gavrelle, due north to Oppy Wood. The purpose of the inclusion of the 1st Royal Marine Battalion of the Royal Naval Division (R.N.D.) was to support the Canadian forces. But at Oppy Wood, positions were far from ideal as they were on a forward slope which looked down on to the Gavrelle Plain and they were in full view of the enemy. To add to their problems, the bitterly cold weather of the earlier part of the year had returned and was in full force and they experienced alternating sleet and snow. During the day, the Naval Division hung on grimly and fought off at least 7 attempts to shift them. In so doing, they lost hardly a yard of captured ground. The two sides were so close to each other that any artillery fire would have caused casualties to *both* sides simultaneously.

The first objective of the RND had been to support the Canadians: the second to capture the ruined village windmill and the high ground beyond it to the north-east. This area was probably more important than Gavrelle itself.

On 28th April 1917 the 1st Bn Royal Marines Light Infantry RND lost 169 killed and 29 taken as prisoners of war. Their capture and holding of the windmill was a huge gain – and this was one of the main objectives. But their loss was great, not only of men just in for the 'duration' but also experienced soldiers who had fought at Gallipoli and the Ancre.

Private Horace Robert Brown PO/1429 (S) Royal Marine Light Infantry, Royal Naval Division aged 25 was 'killed or died as a result of enemy action' on 28th April 1917. His grave and body were lost in the days after the battle. His name is on the Arras Memorial.

Horace Robert Brown was the fourth son of Alfred Brown and his wife, Caroline. There was also a younger sister and brother. Alfred had been born in Lewisham, Kent and Caroline in Westbourne, Sussex. Three of their children, including Horace, were born on Hayling Island where Alfred was the manager of Royal Hotel Tap. None of their children are on the Hayling Church of England School register. By 1901, they had

moved to Portsmouth where they lived at 21, Jessie Road. Alfred gives his profession as Head Stableman/Groom at a Brewery. Percy, aged 13, the eldest son, works as an apprentice in a Spirit Store. Horace , aged 9, was still at school. There is no trace of the family in the 1911 census.

Private Casaubon Thorold Angell 53185 66th Coy., Machine Gun Corps (Inf) did not commence his service life in the Machine Gun Corps (MGC) no. 53185. Men changed regiments when another regiment was decimated, or the needs of the war changed.

The MGC saw action in all the main theatres of the war, including Mesopotamia. It gained an impressive record for heroism – frequently serving well in advance of the front line – but this, unsurprisingly, incurred a ghastly casualty rate. Some 170,500 officers and men served in the MGC, with 62,049 becoming casualties.

Casaubon, born 1887 in South Kensington, was the son of Arthur Torrington Angell born 1849 in Silver Grove, Manchester, Jamaica and Sophia Rose (nee Dunning) Angell born in Portsea. Casaubon’s father was an architect, his maternal grandfather, Charles Dunning, was a builder employing 63 men and 11 boys. Casaubon’s paternal grandfather, Edward Angell, was a solicitor in London, but born in Adana Valley, Manchester, Jamaica.

In 1891, Casaubon and all his family were living at ‘The Rookery’, South Hayling. In August 1907, Arthur Torrington Angell, with his family, but without Casaubon, moved to New York and finally settled in Wheaton, Illinois about 1908.

Parish Magazines show that Casaubon had joined the Hayling Choir by 1910 and eventually became conductor-trainer of the Hayling Choral Society which gave concerts in the Victoria Hall on the Island in 1910 and 1913. These concerts were very well received, although part of the 1913 one was criticised for being insufficiently ‘*dolorous*’ in places.

Casaubon was killed on the 25th April 1917. His grave was lost and he is now remembered on the Basra Memorial, Iraq.

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Private Albert Tonks 22775 15th Bn., Royal Warwickshire Regiment age 18 had enlisted in Warwick in the 15th Bn., which was a service battalion (the 2nd Birmingham). Formed in Birmingham in September 1914 by the Lord Mayor and a local committee on the 20th June, they came under the command of the 95th Brigade in the 32nd division. They were transferred to the 13th Brigade of the same division and landed at Boulogne on the 21st November 1915. They, too, experienced the harshest winter - 1916-1917 - in northern France that could be remembered.

In 1917, the 5th Division took part in the Battle of Arras. On 3rd and 4th May, they captured Fresnoy near the Scarpe River. On the 8th May, the Germans attacked in great strength and Fresnoy was recaptured. Private Albert Tonks was killed in action on that day, 8th May 1917. His grave was lost in the battle: his name is recorded on the Arras Memorial.

The Tonks’ family was from Yardley, Birmingham. The parents were Alfred and Eliza Tonks. In 1911 census, his father was a farmer and Albert worked on the farm, Pool Farm Lea Hall, Yardley, as did his eldest brother, Alfred Charles. His younger brother, Braden, at 9, was probably thought too young. He had three sisters, Jane, Mable (*sic*) and Maggie, who were then all single.

Albert’s father died in 1915. At the time of Albert’s death, two years later, the family were living at Gorseland, Station Road, Hayling Island.

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Serjeant Major Andrew Herbert Timothy Crawley M2/051800 Army Service Corps, was born in 1866 in Bermondsey, London and was the son of John and Mary Crawley. His father was a wharf labourer. He had two brothers, Joseph and Thomas and two sisters, Catherine and Florence. At the time of his enlistment he was a cashier.

At the time of his death, he was **Company Sergeant Major Andrew Herbert Timothy Crawley No. M2/051800**, 5th Motor AMB Convoy A.S.C. Army records show that he served 30 years 151 days in the Middlesex Regiment. He was then in the Special Reserve. He was attested on the 10th August 1914 into the 5th Motor AMB Convoy A.S.C. He was promoted to Company Sergeant Major on 29th September 1914. He went to France. He served until the 29th March 1917 and was discharged. He was awarded the Cross of the Order of St George 3rd Class (Russian) – London Gazette, 25th August 1915. On his M.I.C., he is Timothy Crawley.

He was also awarded the UK Silver War Badge no 156624 at the time of his discharge.

In 1914, he was living with his wife, Agnes (nee Goodwin) Crawley at 43, Littleton Street, Earlsfield, Surrey. He died, of sickness incurred in France, on 25th May 1917 at ‘Boston’, Church Road, Hayling Island and his grave is in the churchyard of the Priory Church of St Mary, Hayling Island.

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The 8th **HMS Vanguard**, of the British Royal Navy was a St Vincent-class battleship – an enhancement of the ‘dreadnought’ design. Designed and built during the Anglo-German naval race, she spent her life in the British Home Fleet.

At the outbreak of WWI, *Vanguard*, joined the First Battle of Jutland, as part of the Fourth Battle Squadron. As one of 24 dreadnoughts in Lord Jellicoe’s Battle Fleet, she did not suffer any damage or casualties. Tragically, just before midnight on 9th July 1917 at Scapa Flow, *Vanguard* suffered an explosion, probably caused by an unnoticed stokehold fire heating cordite stored against an adjacent bulkhead in one of two magazines which served the amidships gun turrets ‘P’ and ‘Q’. ‘*Vanguard*’ sank almost immediately, killing an estimated 804 men. This event was one of the most tragic accidents in the history of the Royal Navy.

One of the casualties from the disaster was Captain Kyosuke Eto, a military observer from the Imperial Japanese Navy, which was allied, at that time, with the Royal Navy.

Boy Telegraphist James Ernest Curtis J/52993 HMS Vanguard, Royal Navy, age 17, son of Mrs D.V. Whitehead (formerly Curtis) of ‘Lhassa’ Hayling Island and formerly of Beckenham Kent was a tragic casualty of this event..

James, a pupil at the Hayling Church of England School, had won a scholarship and one can imagine the jubilation there had been at the School in 1913, when their pupil, James, was awarded one of only two Naval Scholarships by the County Council - £25 per year for each of 2 years!!

This jubilation was not just confined to the School, it was felt across Hayling Island. His success was shared by the congregation of the Priory Church of St Mary’s – the vicar, the Rev. C. H. Clarke, B.A. writing of James’ achievement in the November edition of the Hayling Island Parish Magazine. Mr Clarke also reminded the congregation, that Lilian Lucy Glue (*sister of Acting Bombardier Albert George Glue who was to lose his life on the Somme in 1916*) had won the scholarship the previous year and had attended Portsmouth Secondary School for the past twelve months and had had her scholarship renewed for another year by the County Council. (*Lilian Lucy was to complete her education and become qualified to teach. She then returned to the Hayling Church of England School as a qualified teacher*).

James joined the training ship 'Mercury' and was then drafted into the Royal Navy. He is remembered on Portsmouth Naval Memorial, Southsea Common.

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Private William Maylum Sawyer 72995 143rd Coy., Machine Gun Corps (Inf) was the son of Alfred Maylum and Kate Sawyer, of 2, Saltern Cottages, formerly near the Coastguard Station and of Elm Grove. Father, Alfred, came from Pembrokeshire, West Wales and William Maylum was born in Pembroke Docks. The 143rd Machine Gun Company was formed on 8th January 1916 in France. It was in action in the Battle of the Somme, suffering heavy casualties on the very first day, the 1st July 1916, in assaulting the Quadrilateral. It was also in action at the Battles of Bazentin Ridge, Pozieres Ridge, Ancre Heights and Ancre.

In 1917, the Division occupied Peronne during the German Retreat to the Hindenburg Line and were in action at the Third Battle of Ypres, known as Passchendale, which took place on the Western Front between June and November 1917 for control of the ridges south and east of the Belgian city of Ypres. Again, any height of land which gave view over the adjacent terrain, was fiercely fought over.

Passchendale lay on the last ridge east of Ypres and was 5 miles from a railway junction which was a vital part of a supply system of the German 4th Army. Control of this, would be a huge asset to the allies. Passchendale was arguably the most horrendous battle in an appalling war.

Unfortunately, although the Battle of Messines, with the British (including Australian) tunnelling under German tunnels and the consequent huge blowing up of the German lines, had gained the British advantage, the damage to the ground, compounded by the very wet winter and spring, made the ground over which Passchendale was fought rapidly became a quagmire.

Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister described Passchendale as

'...one of the most gigantic, tenacious, grim, futile and bloody fights ever waged in the history of war'.

He indicted *'the vanity, stubborn egotism... wrought by (the) human complacency'*

of Sir Douglas Haig, Commander in Chief and the C.I.G.S, Sir William Robertson, who directed the battle. Haig was bitterly criticised by many, including Sir Winston Churchill and Siegfried Sassoon, the war poet, who memorably wrote –

'I died in Hell –

(They called it Passchendale).....'

William Maylum Sawyer died on 9th August 1917, aged 19. He is remembered in Track 'X' Cemetery, St Jean-Les-Ypres, West Vlaanderen, Belgium.

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Major Bertram Seymour Raymond joined the 97th Deccan Infantry and got his first command on 19th June 1907. He became a Lieutenant, 19th May 1909.

The **97th Deccan Infantry**, was an infantry regiment of the British Indian Army. It could trace its origin to 1794, when it was in a battalion of the Hyderabad State army. After the reforms brought about by General Kitchener, all the Princely state forces were incorporated into the Indian Army in 1903 and, during WWI, the regiment served in the 15th Indian Division during the Mesopotamia Campaign.

Bertram Seymour Raymond was born on 11th January 1888, in Albemarle County, Virginia, U.S.A. He was the son of Walter and Mary Margaret (nee Mitford) Raymond. His siblings were Hugh Evelyn and Margaret Francis. His father was born in Shaftsbury, Dorset in 1861 and, according to the census, was 'living on his own means'. His mother, also born in 1861, was born in Ceylon – now Sri Lanka.

In 1911, the family were living at 'The Vicarage', Vicarage Road, Hayling Island. Hugh Evelyn Raymond, Bertram's brother, became a Commander R.N. in WWI and was gazetted and awarded a D.S.C for sinking an enemy submarine on the night of the 2nd May 1917 – he was in command of HMS P12 a naval patrol boat.

Major Bertram Seymout Raymond died on the 12th August 1917, in Persia, now Iran. His body was exhumed and reburied in Tehran War Cemetery, which had been built in 1862.

Private William Frederick Feese 632461 20th Bn., London Regiment, was the son of George and Johanna Feese of 'The Firs', Hayling Island. He was born in 1876 and baptised at St George's, Hanover Square, London. His father, born 1843, was a Coachman – Domestic Servant. His mother, nee Quinland, was born 1848. William Frederick had four brothers, George, Henry, Francis and Edward and two sisters, Elizabeth and Louise.

In 1914, William Frederick was living in 172 Ebury Street, Westminster (rent 10/- per week). He was a Solicitor's Clerk. He enlisted in the army at St Paul's Churchyard, London E.C. In August 1914 he formed up at the Duke of York's Headquarters, Chelsea as part of the 5th London Brigade in the 2nd London Division. They landed at Le Havre on 10th March 1915 and, two months later, they became the 141st Brigade in the 47th 2nd London Division.

In August 1917, they were fighting in the 3rd Battle of Ypres – Passchendale.. From the 18th August to the 2nd of September they were near Poelcapelle, North East of Langemarck.

On 22nd August, they were in very heavy fighting astride the St Julian-Poecapella Road, but the British Line advanced only 500 yards on a one mile front.

William died of wounds on 22nd August 1917, another tragedy of Passchendale. His burial place is Lijssenthoek, Poperinge, Ypres Salient. His name, and also that of his brother, George, is also on his parents' grave in the Churchyard of the Priory Church of St Mary, Hayling Island, an island which, he no doubt loved for its serenity. He was aged 41.

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Private Richard Smart 260244 6th Bn., Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry was, with the rest of his unit involved in fighting on the Menin Road during the Battle of Ypres, when he was killed on 23rd August 1917. He was aged 37. He is remembered on the Tyne Cot Memorial, Zonnebeke, West Vlaanderen, Belgium.

Richard Smart, like many of the Smart family, was born and bred on Hayling Island and the Hayling Church of England School register shows their attendance. Richard was son of George and Charlotte Smart of Hayling Island; husband of Florence Christine Smart of 53, Manners Rd., Southsea; brother of Harry, George and Charles and cousin of Ernest Joseph Smart who lost his life on the *Good Hope* in November 1914. Richard was another of the soldiers who changed regiments and numbers during the war, formerly as no. 243123 Hampshire Regiment and, in the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry at the time of his death.

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Private Henry George Hayter G/16130 12th Bn., Royal Sussex Regiment aged 32 died near Langearch and the Menin Road Bridge in Belgium. There are two dates given as the date for Henry's death. Army

records show the date to be 12th September 1917. C.W.G.C. show the date to be 2nd September 1917. They both agree on the place of death.

He was born in 1885 in Gosport. He was the son of Henry George and Annie (nee Cawte) who was the daughter of William and Annie Cawte from Fareham. In the 1911 census, Henry's parents and brother, James Arthur, aged 8, were living at 2, Manor Cottages, South Hayling. James was a pupil at Hayling Church of England School, but there is no entry for Henry. Henry enlisted at Horsham into the 12th Battalion (2nd South Down) Royal Sussex Regiment No G/16130. The 12th Bn., was formed at Bexhill on the 3rd November 1914 by Lieutenant-Colonel Lowther M.P. and committee. They were adopted by the War Office in July 1915. They came under the command of the 116th Brigade in the 39th Division. They landed at Le Havre in March 1916.

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Gunner John Crockford 94307 Royal Horse Artillery, Royal Field Artillery was killed on 29th September 1917 aged 26. He was the son of John and Emma Crockford of Havant and husband of Eliza Amelia Crockford of Battins Cottage, Stoke, North Hayling. He was in 'C' Battery in the 58th Brigade in the 11th Division.

The 11th Division took part in the Battle of Polygon Wood from the 26th September to the 3rd of October 1917. At 5.50am on the 26th September, the five layers of the barrage fired by the British Artillery began. Dust and smoke added to the morning mist, so the infantry advanced using compass bearings. The Germans counter-attacked later on 26th September with an Eingrief division, a special type of German army formation established in 1917, which was responsible for engaging in immediate counter attacks and much feared by the British, but, on this occasion, no ground captured by the British was lost and the German counter attack managed only to reach ground to which survivors of the front line divisions had retired. (*11th Division History*).

Gunner John Crockford was killed in action – probably by German Artillery - on the 29th September. He has no grave. He was buried where he fell, but his grave was destroyed by German shell fire. He is remembered at the New Irish Farm Cemetery which is located to the North-East of Ypres.

New Irish Farm Cemetery was first used from August to November 1917 - during which period John Crockford was killed - and was named after a near-by farm, known to the troops as 'Irish Farm'. It was used again in April and May 1918. At the Armistice, it contained 73 burials, the three irregular rows of Plot 1. It was then greatly enlarged when 4,500 graves were brought in from battlefields north-east of Ypres (Ieper) and from other smaller cemeteries. Originally, there was an Irish Farm Cemetery immediately south of the Farm. New Irish Farm Cemetery is about 300 metres north of the Farm and at a crossing known as 'Hammer's Corner'.

Yet another Hayling victim of the 3rd Battle of Ypres – Passchendale – was **Private Cyril Henry Ellison M2/265467 717th Mechanical Transport. Coy. Attd IX Corps Army Service Corps, aged 20**. He is remembered at Locre Hospice Cemetery, Heuveland, West-Vlaanderen.

Cyril was the son of Henry and Annie Kate Ellison of the Royal Hotel, Shades, Hayling Island. In the 1911 census, the family are living at the Hotel and Henry describes himself as a Public House Manager, born in Hampshire. Annie Kate was from Wiltshire where the two eldest children, Maggie Kate, 15, and Cyril Henry, 13, were born. Rose Marie, 10, was born in Cosham, and the two youngest children, Gracie Annie, 5, and Victor David, 1, were born on Hayling Island. Though a hotel manager on Hayling, Henry had been a Coachman (Domestic) ten years earlier, at Fareham.

There are three Ellison children listed in the Hayling Church of England. School register – Maggie born 1895, Jackie, born 1897, children of Henry Ellison of the Royal Hotel and Rose Marie, born 1901, daughter of Henry Ellison of the Grand Hotel. The misnaming of the child Jackie, the Ellison's had not lost a child up to that date, so the 'Jackie' must have been Cyril Henry – as he is the correct age – registered under a nickname – or mishearing by the teacher!

The 717th Mechanical Transport Company must have suffered badly on the 30th September 1917, as Private A. W. Evans M2/280558, also of the 717th, died on the same day aged 32 and is remembered with honour at the same cemetery.

The Hospice Cemetery at Locre was begun in June 1917, by field ambulances and fighting units. It was in Allied hands during the greater part of the war and field ambulances were stationed at the Convent Antoine. The village changed hands several times towards the end of the war in 1918, but was eventually recaptured by the French. The cemetery now contains 244 Commonwealth burials and commemorations of WWI, fourteen WWII memorials and some German graves.

O.....O

Private George Spittles 12684 14th Bn., Hampshire Regiment was the son of Francis and Elizabeth Bessie Spittles, of Tournerbury Lane. Francis had moved to Hayling from Kent, working as a shepherd at Tickner Farm, Eastoke. There were 13 children. Four sons, Bill, Jack, Phil and Ernest followed their father into farming. Charlie became a gamekeeper, Walter, a carpenter and Frank, a baker. George and his brother Thomas Robert (see below) were both killed. Daughter, Gladys married Frederick Sawyer, brother to William Maylum Sawyer, (see above). Francis and Elizabeth's last home was at Milford Cottages, near Bound Lane..

George was killed in action on the 1st October 1917 aged 23. Initially, he was a private in the 10th Bn., Hampshire Regiment (New Army). They were in the 116th Brigade in the 39th Division. They landed in France on 6th March 1916. The 39th Division was in the 3rd Battle of Ypres.

On the 26th September, the British advanced on a 6 mile front, east of Ypres, Polygon Wood, was cleared, Zonnebeke was stormed, and they advanced towards Passchendale. Four hostile counter attacks failed after fierce fighting.

On the 27th September, *seven* German counter attacks east of Ypres were repulsed.

On the 28th September, all was quiet.

On the 29th September, all was quiet.

On the 30th September, there were *three* German flamethrower attacks between Tower Hamlets and Polygon Wood – which were repulsed.

On October 1st *five* powerful German attacks were repulsed between the Ypres-Menin Road and Polygon Wood and at Zonnebeke.

Private George Spittles was killed in action in, or near, Polygon Wood on 1st October 1917. He is remembered at Westoutre British Cemetery, Heuvelland, West Vlaanderen, Belgium.

The 14th Bn., Hampshire Regiment lost 12 men on the 1st October 1917.

O.....O

Serjeant John Wilson 3748 1st Bn., Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment) died on 13th October 1917 aged 41. He was the son of John and Ann Wilson and was born in Halifax, Yorkshire. He had a younger sister, Annie, born in Ireland. His father, John, was a Colour Serjeant, born in Scotland and his mother, Ann, was born in Portsmouth. It would appear that the family 'followed the drum'.

John 'Junior' enlisted at 16 and joined the Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment). He married Katherine Norah Ellen Wilson and they made their home on Hayling. He died at home, 2 Lilac Villas, Church Road, Hayling Island.

He is remembered in a special grave in Halifax (Stoney Royd) Cemetery and also on his grave in the Priory Church of St Mary's Hayling Island, as is also his daughter Alice Mary Wilson, who died 25th August 1933 aged 18.

O.....O

Rifleman Harry Thompson 573891 17th Bn., London Regt., Posted to 2nd Bn., London Regt., (Post Office Rifles) Aged 33 died 30th October 1917. Harry was born in 1887 in Hammersmith, London, the son of George William and Elizabeth Thompson of 4 Palmerston Road, Hayling Island. His father was a carman. In 1891, they were living at 42, Wharf Road, Hammersmith, In 1901, they were living at 41, Southern Street, Kensington.

The family then no longer appear on CWGC records. Records state that Harry's father was dead – his mother must have been living with someone on Hayling Island, but there is no evidence that she remarried. They are not on the 1911 census. His M.I.C. can be found on Ancestry, but no army record. He is also on 'Soldiers Died'.

Harry Edward Thompson joined the 17th London Regiment, the Poplar and Stepney Rifles in August 1914, enlisting in Hammersmith. They were in the 141st Brigade in the 47th Division. They landed at Le Havre on 10th March 1915. Sometime before 1917, Harry was posted to the 2nd/8th London Regiment, the Post Office Rifles, who were in the 58th Brigade in the 2nd/1st London Division.

At the Battle of Wurst Farm on the 15th September, the 2nd /8th lost over half its fighting strength, died or wounded, but its men were awarded a total of 40 gallantry medals. These included a V.C. won by Sergeant A.J. Knight

On the 30th October the British attacked in very bad weather at Ypres, from Poelcapelle to Passchendale. They entered the village, but were driven back to the outskirts. They then repulsed 5 German counter attacks.

The Post Office Rifles lost 119 men on the 30th October 1917. Harry was one of them.

Those that survived were commended for the battalion's achievements.

'I thought', said the Divisional General, on parade after the aforementioned attack, 'you were a lot of bloody stamp lickens, but the way you fought, you went over like a lot of bloody savages'. The Post Office Rifles saved the line.

They were known as the Trench Terriers.

Harry is remembered on the Tyne Cot Memorial, Zonnebeke, West Vlandereen, Belgium.

O.....O

Lieutenant Colonel Henry Charles Rochfort-Boyd DSO 16th Bde., Royal Horse Artillery was born in Middleton Park , County Westmeath, Ireland on 13th October 1877. His father, born in Dublin, was Colonel Charles Augustus Rochfort-Boyd, C.M.G (1850-1940) and his mother, Adeline Maude Felicia Longfield. His wife was Dorothy Nicholson. An Irish family through several generations, his grandfather, George Augustus Boyd, was a Dublin barrister. The family name was changed to Rochfort-Boyd by Royal Licence.

‘Harry’ was educated at Charterhouse for two years, then on to the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich where he passed out 1st and won the Artillery Prize and Tombs Memorial Scholarship. He joined the R.A. in 1897 and served in the South African War, 1899-1900. He was commissioned into the Royal Horse Artillery and served with the 16th Bde. In WWI, he was four times mentioned in despatches and was awarded the D.S.O.

Three times wounded, ‘Harry’ finally died of wounds received near Cambrai, probably during the Battle of Cambrai, on 1st December , eventually dying on 4th December 1917. He is remembered at St Sever Cemetery, Rouen, Seine Maritime, France, and in the Memorial Chapel at Charterhouse.

He and Dorothy had two sons, Charles and John – the latter born after his father’s death and dying in infancy. Charles died in 1979.

O.....O

Private Albert William Hewes 28023 4th Coy., 3rd Bn., Grenadier Guards was the son of Alfred W. Hewes from Colchester, Essex and his wife Esther, from London, Bethnal Green He was born in 1883 in Forest Hill, Lewisham, Kent. In the 1891 census, the family was still living in Lewisham, Kent, where Alfred was a Master Baker. They had seven children - four sons, followed by three daughters. Albert, born 1881, was the youngest son. Father, Alfred, must have run a successful business, since he employed a ‘servant’, who worked for him as a ‘Baker Journeyman’.

Ten years later, Albert describes himself as a butcher, his eldest brother, Alfred, is an etcher copper sculpture and the second brother, Walter, a baker and breadmaker.

In 1911, Albert was living in Bournemouth, at a boarding house run by Emily Needham at 25, St Swithuns Road. His trade was still that of a butcher. In 1913, he married Mable Spraggs, 13 years his junior, in Portsmouth, who was the daughter of George, a licensed victualler, and Martha Spraggs, who originally ran the Norfolk Inn, Sinah Ferry Road, before moving to the Ferry Boat Inn. Around 1900, Martha’s father was also a golf professional and, for 40 years, he was also a club steward at Hayling Golf Club.

It may be that from 1913 until his death in 1917, Albert and Mable continued to live in Bournemouth and that, after Albert’s death , Mable moved back with her parents in the Ferry Boat Inn.

Albert William Hewes was enlisted in Bournemouth in 1915 into the 3rd Battalion Grenadier Guards. They landed at Le Havre on the 19th August 1915. They came under the command of the 2nd Guard Brigade in the Guards Division. In 1917, they were in the Battle of Arras and the Battle of Cambrai. Pte Albert William Hewes died of wounds on 31st December 1917 at No 3 General Hospital at Bois Guillaume, which is a suburb of Rouen, near the French coast. He is buried at Boisguillaume Communal Cemetery Extension Seine-Maritime, France.

There is no way of knowing when those wounds were incurred, nor what they were. Given the date of Albert’s death, it is highly probable, that they were received during the Battle of Cambrai – in which many were gassed – for, throughout November 30th 1917, a procession of gassed and wounded men were treated at the regimental aid-posts. Their clothes were full of gas. The medical personnel could not treat them without removing their own respirators, and also became gassed. It is arguable, that, being so near to Rouen and the

coast and so distant from the front, that Albert was being taken back to England for nursing at home, when he died.

O.....O

Private Ernest King 29541 1st Bn., Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry aged 33.

Ernest King was the third son of a Hayling Island thatcher, Edward King and his wife, Ellen. The King family were firmly established on Hayling Island, there being at least three 'King' families residing there and Edward, himself was born on Hayling Island. In the 1901 census the family are living in Springfield Lane and a few doors away are the family of William King, including his daughter, Daisy, who declares, in the 1901 census, that she is a school teacher. Indeed, a lodger in the Edward King's household is Albert E. Logan, who also declares himself as a school teacher, born in Finchley Middlesex, and who in 1905 was one of the signatories of the letter responding to demands for a defence corps in the Parish Magazine.

Ernest originally joined the 5th Hampshire Regiment at Portsmouth, but was moved later to the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. Ernest was killed in action on 5th November 1917. He is remembered on the Tyn Cot Memorial (*To the Missing*).

The Battle of Cambrai in which Harry Rochfort-Boyd almost certainly took part and Albert Hewes possibly took part, lasted from the 20th November – 7th December 1917 and was a British Campaign of the First World War.

'The Battle of Cambrai (can be viewed) as one of the most thrilling episodes of the whole war. Tanks at last came into their kingdom. The notion that the Hindenburg Line was impregnable was exploded.' So writes Captain Stair Gillon in *'The Story of the 29th Division: a record of gallant deeds.'*

Like many other sweeping statements, this one has to be modified. This was not the first use of tanks in a combined arms operation, the French had deployed large numbers of tanks in April, in May and in October 1917 and the British even more, in Flanders in June and July. Moreover, though there were initial successes of the Mark IV tanks, both the German artillery and infantry defences exposed the weaknesses of the armour, and the vehicles were almost useless after the first day. (British Official History.)

However, The Battle of Cambrai – the last battle on the Western Front in 1917 - **was** completely different and, arguably, marked the end of conventional trench warfare, the British basing their attack on tanks, while the Germans expanded the same tactics they had been developing since 1915, 'merely' increasing the numbers of storm troopers. Their Hindenburg Programme had focussed on sticking to more of the same, rather than innovation. But both sides focussed more on surprise attacks, which, big advances in technology, such as calibration, on the British side, allowed their artillery to do. The British could, for example, predict the fall of shot very much better than previously and their fire was now accurate and telling and thus needed less ammunition. Nevertheless, the British still maintained tried and trusted methods in other techniques of warfare, which had proved successful from earlier in the conflict.

The result – according to some historians – a small British victory - a slim stretch of ground gained.

1918

The New Year of 1918 saw the initiative lie with Germany. Romania, which had relied on the Russian forces for support, had collapsed, because Russia, which had turned inwards, obsessed with its revolution, had collapsed - enabling German and Austrian soldiers on the Eastern Front to turn their attentions towards the Western Front.

Fortunately, America had come into the war. American troops were now available and were being deployed to Europe.

In addition, the make-up of the British Army had changed. When the war started, recruitment relied on volunteers. The well-known posters, showing Kitchener, his arm pointing outwards directly at the observer and the slogan 'Your Country Needs You', are an instantly recognizable reminder of the Great War. Perhaps less well known are the posters for the New Army into which the recruits were deployed

The New Army, often referred to as Kitchener's Army, or disparagingly as Kitchener's Mob, was formed in the United Kingdom when WWI started and was the brain-child of Horatio Kitchener, then Secretary of State for War.

Kitchener, unlike many of his government colleagues and certainly unlike the bulk of the population, did not believe that this war – like the skirmishes of the previous century - would be 'all over by Christmas'. Indeed, he predicted a long and brutal war. His theory was that it would need an overwhelming force of new, well-trained and well-led divisions to deliver a decisive blow against the Central Powers.

Kitchener had to fight off both opposition to his theory and all the plans to water down its potential – including piecemeal dispersal of the New Army battalions into existing regular or Territorial Divisions. Moreover, Kitchener declined to use the existing Territorial Forces already set up, as many of its members had volunteered for Home Service only. Hence, those recruited to the New Army formed complete battalions under existing British Army Regiments. They were first used at the Battle of Loos in 1915 and were under intense pressure at the Battle of the Somme in 1916. The original British Expeditionary Force (B.E.F.) – a single army of 5 regular divisions in August 1914, had grown to 5 armies of 60 divisions by the summer of 1916 – approximately 2 million men of whom about half were infantry and the rest were gun crews and logistics men etc.

All 5 of the full army groups were made up of volunteer recruits – including the famous Pals Battalions - the placement of all the local volunteers into one local Battalion. The 14th and 15th Battalions of the Hampshire Regiment were known as the 'Pompey Pals'. The queues which had formed to enlist, country wide, could be about a mile long and there were, initially, problems in equipping and providing shelter for them all.

By the beginning of 1916, the queues were not so long – the true horror of the war had reached Britain's man-in-the-street and the enthusiasm for volunteering had plunged. On May 25th 1916, Britain finally followed the rest of the other powers in resorting to conscription, the first conscripts arriving in France in late 1916 to fill the gaps in the volunteer units, greatly diminished by the Battle of the Somme.

Hayling Island had suffered the loss of many of its men in that battle - from **Bertram Rogers** who was killed on the 1st day of the **Battle of the Somme**, July 1st 1916 – to **William Sutch** and **Geoffrey Breslaw**, who were killed on the same day, 7th October 1916, near its close just over 5 weeks later, on 14th November 1916.

In between those dates, and those casualties, came the loss, in the same battle, of **George Mitchell, Louis Boncey, William Palmer, George Russell, George Small, Albert Glue, Percy Carter, George Luff, Rowland Brown, John Crook Rumsey and James Small.**