

TRENCH ART

- the stories behind the talismans



Judy Waugh

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To those who left unintended epitaphs in times of trauma – carving their names and affirming their values on small and beautiful works of art

Foreword

by

Dr Brendan Nelson

Director

Australian War Memorial

Australian institutions such as the Australian War Memorial have a proud history in preserving Australia's heritage. However, individuals have a vital role in this, too. Many people, including families, groups, and private collectors, are keen to ensure the survival of the objects that reveal our past. No one deserves to be remembered more than those who served our nation in war and who, too often, gave their lives.

Judy Waugh is a dedicated collector of wartime trench art. Her interest is concentrated on those small personal items which she calls "talismans in times of trauma", made by soldiers from the limited available materials during wartime. The selection of objects she has assembled is remarkable, and all the more important because she has researched the details of the soldier involved; the so-called, "man behind the object". Many of the soldiers whose stories she reveals are Australians, but there are others, too. The power of the objects is in the story of the men and women behind them. It is this especially which makes the book so compelling.

Even though a century has passed since the First World War began, the stories of individual soldiers can still be brought to life by examining the existent records. So much of this information has become available online. I am proud that the Australian War Memorial has been in the forefront of making its records digitally available.

Sharing is an important part of preservation. Judy Waugh's book is fascinating for its fine photographs of small objects. The craftsmanship ranges widely (though many are fine works), but each object displays immense ingenuity and, through Judy Waugh's research, tells stories of service and sacrifice.

I am very happy to encourage this work and thank Judy for sharing her collection with us and the nation.

Table of Contents

FOREWORD by Dr Brendan Nelson, Director, Australian War Memorial

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PREFACE

CHAPTER 1 PERSONAL TRENCH ART

Talismans and touchstones

Art in the face of trauma

CHAPTER 2 THE COLLECTION

Sourcing the collection

‘Amazing’ items

Survival of the pieces

CHAPTER 3 THE PIECES

Identity and values

Symbolism and style

Theatres of war

CHAPTER 4 THE RESEARCH

Finding the story

Australia and New Zealand

Great Britain

The story in context

CHAPTER 5 STORY COINS

CHAPTER 6 A PERSONAL PIECE

CHAPTER 7 STORIES FROM FORGOTTEN PIECES

Music

Pearson’s banjo

Artists Regiment

Arnold’s mandolin

Royal West Kent

Lowrie’s bagpipes

Black Watch

Bell’s drum

Royal Field Artillery

Morgan’s grand piano

King’s Shropshire Light Infantry

Gregory’s ukelele

Manchester Regiment

Hogben's mandolin

Border Regiment

ANZAC

Scott's drum

New Zealand Rifles

Ginger's cello

Australian Imperial Force

Ladd's vesta case

Australian Field Artillery

Sinclair's matchbox case

Australian Imperial Force

Hillman's matchbox case

Australian Imperial Force

Wilkinson's map

Australian Light Horse

Adams' small knife

Imperial Camel Corps

Donald's letter opener and pencil

Australian Imperial Force

Denton's paper knife

Australian Light Horse

Kelly's Tunnelling Corps box

Australian Tunnelling Corps

Hammond's Boer War locket and WW1 fob

Bushmen's Corps and Australian Light Horse

Rootes' bone crucifix knife

Australian Imperial Force

Faith

Sawyer's crucifix

Hampshire Regiment

Gough's crusader case

Gordon Highlanders

Castle's candleholder and matchbox cover

Devonshire Regiment

Fisk's crucifix and horn

Royal Army Medical Corps

Smith's booklet and ring

Royal Horse Guards

Cortez' pyx and sacramental box

Wiltshire Regiment

Love

Adams' crucifix hearts

Royal Air Force

Hogg's matchbox cover

Royal Navy

Long's cameo and box

Sherwood Foresters

Garrett's photo frame

Sherwood Foresters

Platt's Boer War locket, horse brass and paper knife

Lancashire Fusiliers

Letters home

Beaver's inkwell

Royal Fusiliers

Cobb's candleholder

Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders

Grainger's candelholder

East Yorkshire Regiment

Pelham's inkwell

Royal Field Artillery

Brewer's scimitar and scabbard

The Buffs

'I was here'

Collings' HMS Contest cap

Royal Navy

Bass' lighter and matchbox case

Royal Engineers

Geddie's match holder

Highland Light Infantry

West's matchbox cover

Northumberland Fusiliers

Mickle's matchbox case

Machine Gun Corps

Williams' matchbox cover

Welsh Guard

King's matchbox cover

Devonshire Regiment

Chenery's tin matchbox cover

Lancers

Dicks' pocket knife holder

York and Lancaster Regiment

Armour's whistle and pipe tamper

King's Own Scottish Borderers

Carvings

Barnes' bone crucifix

Oxford Buffs

Bateman's dice box

Norfolk Regiment

Longman's bone shield

Queen's Westminster Rifles

Kidd's tobacco box

Black Watch

Hale's snuff mull Crimea

Crimean War

Coins

Hogg's fork and spoon

Highland Light Infantry

Brunt's dog tag

Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry

Booth's coin holder

Royal Flying Corps

Ford's tank

Machine Gun Corps

Pelham's rupee Mesopotamia

Royal Sussex

Johnson's identity bracelet

MTASC

McBlain's rupee dog tag

Royal Air Force

KAZEMIAN dinar

MTPC

EPILOGUE

RESEARCH NOTES

Henry Hammond

Edward Wildes Holyoak Ladd

RESEARCH CLUES

ABOUT THIS BOOK

REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY

INDEX

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe this collection to Steve, an old soldier I never met, who wishes to remain anonymous. Without his support this collection would not exist.

Steve understood the nature of the collection and acknowledged the passion behind my search for the stories. He dragged suitcases from the attic and sorted through his own collection, offering me unique pieces that had names and service numbers. He then scouted for more, searching through militaria fairs and auctions from deceased estates, bargaining on my behalf.

His support for the book was wonderful and unwavering, his enthusiasm carrying me through the darker moments of committing to print. To Steve I offer a heartfelt thankyou for a project that has intrigued me for the past few years.

I thank the archivists and family historians who answered my queries with interest and encouragement, and who gave me permission to publish their images and information.

In particular, I thank Anita Roe for allowing me to quote the diary of her great-uncle Frank le Brun for the days leading up to his landing at Gallipoli. And I thank Shane Lenfestey Langlois for permission to use his grandfather's account of the 1919 action in the Caucasus – similar to the official account but told from a personal perspective. I understand these are precious documents, and appreciate being allowed to quote from them.

I thank Christopher Dawkins from Felsted School, Alice Clanachan from the Art Gallery of South Australia, Jane Harding from Noosaville Library, and Helen Armitage from Conwy Town Council for time they spent on my behalf, and Sally Mullins, Geoff Allan, Joe Eastwood, Sally Randall, David Cornforth and Rob Belk from family history societies for friendly assistance with my research.

I thank the National Archives of Australia, the Australian War Memorial, and Archives New Zealand for their kind permission to publish, and as in the case of those mentioned above, for adding their personal encouragement and best wishes for the book.

I thank Tony Dwyer for photographing the collection in a way that allows others to see the unique beauty of the handcrafted pieces.

Finally, thanks to my family and friends, who not only encouraged and supported me, but edited with accuracy and gave me honest feedback, thereby saving me from infelicities and anachronisms.

PREFACE

I am a collector.

Over the past few years I've collected true stories from my own family history – rich with smugglers and convicts and the Poor Houses of Kent. There were bigamists and elopements, and scandalous 'living in sin'. Even the respectable side of the family had rumours of sheepstealing in the highlands of Scotland.

It was a fascinating trail – and I learnt a lot of social history. I was eager for more.

I started collecting coins. I collected tokens because they reflected issues of the times – but they were not personal. I liked engraved coins – '*Thankyou Nurse from Mr W.D.Ness*' on a silver shilling was interesting, but the story was at best hypothetical.

And then I found collector's gold – the 'leaden hearts' that convicts left for loved ones. These stories were rich in history and intensely personal.

I read *Convict Love Tokens* edited by Michele Field and Timothy Millett and bought a signed first edition of Sim Comfort's *Forget Me Not*.

I was hooked. I hunted with a passion, setting the alarm for the early hours of the morning to bid in the last seconds of eBay auctions. I won the ones I really wanted. And I found the stories behind the coins.

... ..

Intriguing pieces started to show up in my searches.

'Engraved coins' threw up items under a heading of 'trench art'. I'd stumbled upon a new lot of coins that told a story.

I bought *Trench Art* by Nicholas J. Saunders and *Trench Art – An Illustrated History* by Jane A. Kimball to understand what it was all about. These books describe trench art comprehensively and I make no attempt to cover the same ground.

My focus is on personal pieces where the owner has made or claimed it for his own use and marked it with his ID. My collection consists of personal pieces with rudimentary ID – my challenge was to find the personal story.

Chapter 1 PERSONAL TRENCH ART

Talismans and touchstones

The pieces in my collection are not souvenirs or gifts for loved ones at home. They are small personal items to be carried in a pocket or a kitbag.

They are containers for snuff, vesta cases and matchbox holders, inkwells and paper knives and candleholders. They are items to be handled and used, talismans to be touched, as close to hand as a cigarette.

They are not always functional. Some are simple crucifixes – touchstones in the face of trauma.

They all belonged to Non Commissioned Officers and Other Ranks. These were the ones who faced the long tense hours in the trenches before an attack, waiting for orders, all too aware of the trauma that lay ahead. There was often a need for silence, and even a small light could betray their position to the enemy. In the midst of an army, they were alone with their fears and thoughts.

The pieces are tactile, and they are personal. Each one is identified with name and serial number, often with regimental insignia – not necessarily of the person who made it, but the person who claimed it as his own and carved his name and number on it.

Many pieces are unique. The music pieces in particular are highly original in their design. Perhaps they were a claim on individuality – nearly everything else was army issue. Everyone looked the same, dressed the same and carried the same kit – but some pockets held a small piece that was different, marked with name and number because it was important.

Art in the face of trauma

I was talking to my son-in-law at a family gathering recently. He's a professional working in the area of mental health. He listened as I described my passion for this project. 'You might like to look at the research that's being done on the role of art in trauma therapy. It's showing that creating something in the face of trauma can help a person – it gives a reason to face the next day. And it leaves something tangible to show that it happened.'

I knew about the handicrafts that were encouraged in convalescent wards during WWI. That's where occupational therapy started as a profession.

On the battlefield, perhaps it was an intuitive response to the horrors of war – a way to focus on a world outside the war.

I thought of the pieces in my collection. They're not about war. They are about music, and religion, and love – and letters home.

They are often worn as a fob – to be held and used, clung to metaphorically and physically. That is what moves me as I hold them now. They are tactile, smooth and worn, much handled – like worry beads or a rosary between the fingers.

As I hold these items, I think of the soldiers who held them. I need to tell their stories.

Sourcing the collection

My focus is on finding the story. These are personal pieces. The challenge is to find the personal story – to solve the puzzle, reconcile the anomalies, reject the false trails, and be confident that I've not only found the story, I've found the right story.

To do that I need more than a name. Even a name and regiment is often not enough.

I started to be more selective in my bids on eBay. I noticed that several 'must have' pieces – including the banjo – were from the same seller in the UK. I'll call him Steve to protect his identity; he had a suitcase of trench art stolen years ago and has been cautious since.

I emailed Steve when the banjo arrived. It was perfect – functional, beautiful, and personal, and I thanked him for it. I learnt that Steve was selling off part of his collection to fund a different type of militaria. We talked about Australia, and the weather, and our collections.

Thanks Judy, have a lovely day, I had a look at your location, it looks beautiful – how very fortunate, we are having terrible weather here ...

I explained my passion for this collection in my reply.

Subject: Re: Interesting collections

My sympathies on your weather, Steve. My Dad came out to Australia from Scotland alone when he was 19. He loved this part of the world. He used to say 'Well, Jude, I've seen a lot of the world – but I reckon this is about as good as it gets.....'

I married a man from Scotland and we travelled the world on slow boats and small cars with kids and tents – and I think my Dad was right.

One of the motivations for my trench art collection is to show my grandchildren how lucky we are to live in a beautiful peaceful country – and that life wasn't always sunshine and beaches.

I'm trying to tell it through stories of real people – not through the horrors of war but through the ways they marked their individual presence in the battlefields.

They were people with names and families and loved ones, not just battalions and regiments.....who lit cigarettes and talked to their mates and carved their names on pieces of metal...

Along the way I am learning so much myself.

Thankyou for helping me in my small act of discovery.

Cheers

Judy

Steve has been collecting militaria for many years. He'd always meant to do the research – but of course it was much harder years ago, before records were digitised and put online. Now he has moved on to a different focus in a different war.

In offering me the personalised trench art he could fund his new collection. He parted with

unique items knowing that I would do the research and respect the stories. I felt privileged to be trusted with such beautiful pieces. I am reminded of Timothy Millett's story of how he came by his collection of convict coins – Steve is my Mr Vorley.¹

'Amazing' items

When I first planned this book I wrote to the Australian War Memorial asking permission to reproduce their material. They added an encouraging note to their formal reply – *'Best wishes for your book, the trench art is really amazing'*.

The pieces are amazing – particularly those based on musical instruments. I wondered what had inspired them. I found items on eBay that may have been used in grand households before the war – like this chatelaine to hold matches.



The music pieces, much heavier and more roughly made than the chatelaine above, are similar in concept.

The snuff mull – strange to my eyes – was modelled on the snuff mulls of Scotland in the 1800s when snuff – finely ground tobacco – was widely used throughout society.

So who made these amazing pieces?

In general the pieces are too crudely made to have been bought in a village shop.

I think the musical pieces were made using the armourers' tools – either by the armourers themselves or by soldiers using their tools. Every regiment had armourers and there was routine contact with the troops – one diary mentions that the mess was in the armourers' quarters and that's where they ate their meals. The fobs often look more amateurish than the pieces they're attached to, suggesting the owners created their own fobs and personalized them with names and serial numbers.

Some pieces like Ralph Sawyer's crucifix were made by the owner. Some were bought. But all were modified – and the modifications seem to have been made by the owner, possibly using armourers' stamps.

Survival of the pieces

Nearly all the pieces in my collection belonged to men who were killed in action or died of their wounds shortly after the battle. Yet the pieces survived.

They were rescued because they were marked with their owner's unique ID. They were lifted from bodies in the battlefield or from belongings in casualty clearing stations because they carried name and serial number. They were sent to next of kin.

So how do they end up here in my hands, in Australia, one hundred years on?

As I researched the stories, I realized why they were forgotten pieces – why they had drifted onto the market for strangers to find. So many men died young and unmarried. Sometimes they were the only son, sometimes their brothers also died in battle. Sometimes sisters remained unmarried for a lifetime because so many young men died.

Who was left to know the stories? The parents are gone. One hundred years on, the personal stories are lost and pieces lie like junk metal in the bottom of boxes from deceased estates.

Over the years Steve and others have rescued the pieces – now it's my turn to rescue the stories.

Identity and values

The urge to leave a mark or carve one's name is part of human nature, an affirmation of life. It's shown in handprints in ancient caves and in hieroglyphics on old walls.

It's there in love hearts on trees and names carved on rocks. It's initials on old school desks.

The pieces in this collection all carry the owner's mark.

In some cases, that's all there is, a name and a place or date, affirming existence. Or a name, and a pictorial description of the place, almost like a postcard – 'Here I am in a place of minarets and palm trees'.

Other pieces are emotionally much more complex, symbolically attesting to the values the person clung to in times of danger and uncertainty.

Symbolism and style

In some cases the symbolism is realistic, as in the musical instruments. Or as in the candleholders, which could shine light on the letters from home. These pieces are beautiful works of art in their own right, as befits the values they represent.

Others carry traditional cultural symbols – the crucifix for religious faith, entwined hearts for love, the crown and regimental insignia for honour and duty.

And in this time of war, some chose to use the profile of the monarch, painstakingly cut from coins of the realm, as a symbol of their patriotism.

Theatres of war

Nearly all the pieces came from World War I. They came from different theatres of war: France and Flanders, Egypt and Palestine, Gallipoli, and Mesopotamia. There are marked differences between the pieces from different theatres of war.

The beautifully engraved coins from Mesopotamia have the look of picture postcards.

The uniquely designed and well-engineered music pieces came from the Somme.

Pieces from Egypt and Palestine tended to include bone – possibly from horses and camels that were casualties of the battlefield.

Some pieces belonged to men who died at Gallipoli, however it seems unlikely the pieces were made there.

One piece came from the Crimean War, with name and intricate regimental insignia carved on a small snuff mull.

... ..

Two pieces came from the Boer War. Both were lockets made from pennies, and were remarkably similar in style. One belonged to an Australian trooper, the other to a soldier from Lancashire.

The Australian piece spanned two wars, and carried symbols from both – a stippled

crucifix for faith, two initials for love, the regimental letters ALH for honour and duty, and a profile of Queen Victoria for patriotism. And the name of the man who left his mark.

Chapter 4 THE RESEARCH

Finding the story

One of my earliest parcels from Steve contained a free item along with the pieces I'd paid for – a tiny knife 'to help me open my Christmas cards'.

It really was tiny – about the length of my finger. Engraved on the handle were the clues J.ADAMS 571 ICC and on the back 1916. Or it could have been JCC.



The depth of the story I found from these tiny clues surprised and delighted me.

I found J.Adams 571 on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website. James Alexander Adams served with the Imperial Camel Corps. He died two days after Christmas 1917 and was buried in the Cairo War Memorial Cemetery. His next of kin was his mother who lived in Christchurch, NZ.

I tried 'NZ Archives' and found that like Australia they have complete service records online for free.

I found James Adams. He was nearly six foot tall with a slim build – a labourer whose last employer was a Mrs Buckland in the town of Akaroa. He was 23 when he enlisted in August 1914 and single. He was a Presbyterian.

The service records gave everything – embarkation, Egypt, Gallipoli, where and when he was wounded, hospitals, the Imperial Camel Corps and finally his death in Egypt on the boat that was to take him home.

The framework of dates and places told me what happened in this soldier's war. I knew he was wounded at Walkers Ridge; I searched through websites and found photos and accounts of what happened there the day he was wounded. I found photos and accounts of the hospital where he lay wounded.

I researched the Camel Corps and followed their action knowing he was with them at those times shown on his service record. I found the intersection of this soldier's story with the stuff of myth and legend – Lawrence of Arabia joined up with the Camel Corps in late 1918 a few months after the soldier died.

This explosion of stories all came from a simple inscription on the handle of a tiny knife:

... ..

Most pieces in my collection carry name and service number. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) has free online access to the burial records of Commonwealth servicemen and women killed in WWI. This was the start point for most of my searches.

From there, records differ according to the soldier's country.

Australia and New Zealand

The story above gives an idea of what is available online from New Zealand.

The Australian War Memorial gives free online access to nominal rolls, honours lists with citations, and embarkation lists, together with access to related records and photographs in WWI histories. It provides a link to service records in the National Archives of Australia.

The service records in the National Archives of Australia are excellent. The service files for WWI are online free – to be read, saved, or printed – sometimes up to 60 or 70 pages of documents and correspondence relating to the person. They cover all servicemen – not just those who died, starting with their enlistment.

There are complete service records, including casualty forms, hospital records, medical histories and penalties for going AWOL or other misdemeanors.

There are inventories of items sent to next of kin and details of pensions paid to widows.

The files also include correspondence with next of kin and others – correspondence that gives insights into social history. For instance, there are letters informing families that their son is dangerously ill with influenza – but no mention of the venereal disease that's treated for months in a hospital in Egypt, although it's on the service record.

The files contain personal correspondence after the soldier dies. I found this correspondence particularly moving.

It's here that I found the poignant letters asking 'Where is my son's grave?' and the emotionally brutal response that it's a problem because he couldn't be identified.

It's where a mother named as next of kin in a soldier's Will is asked 'Is his father alive?' because there's a hierarchy for posthumous medals and they must go to fathers first, regardless of a Will.

It's where a soldier asks for the address of his mate's mother, because he was with him when he died.

And it's where a heartbroken mother writes a letter of hurt and helpless rage when she is sent what she believes are the wrong belongings after the death of her son – 'I think it is very hard after three years active service, to only get one old razor strop, all mouldy & stuck together with clay...'

... ..

The Australian WWI records provide a matrix of dates and places in a soldier's war that can be aligned with military histories and social history to find his place in the war.

It's much harder to find his story outside the period of the war. In most States of Australia, births deaths and marriages are indexes only, and original documents are expensive. And censuses – held regularly and analysed statistically – are anonymous.

Thus a soldier's life before the war is a bit of a mystery unless he came from England or Scotland.

Maybe it's a legacy of our convict history, this fierce protection of our identity.

Ironically the personal records of convicts are often detailed and comprehensive – even after they are pardoned.

Great Britain

Here the opposite applies – service records have either been destroyed by fire or are difficult to access, while ancestry sites have comprehensive records of life before the war.

Thus researching a soldier's life before the war is easy – but only if he died and only if his next of kin are named in the CWGC site. Next of kin names and addresses are the key to census records, which show families and ages and occupations and place of birth. These in turn open up previous census records back through the generations.

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Not all CWGC records show age and next of kin and not all have full names. This presents a challenge.

I have about 60 items in my collection with name and serial number. Within that extremely small set I have two ADAMSES, two HOGGs and two PELHAMs who seem unconnected in my research so far.

Without next of kin, families are almost impossible to identify in ancestry sites.

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The online medal cards in the National Archives can help but even here first names are sometimes just initials. And there are no addresses. There are medal honours but no citations for Military Medals.

And because the medal cards are hand-written, there are inevitable mistakes in transcription. In the records I searched, an 'O' for Owen became 'G' for Gwen, and a service number 1807 was understandably transcribed as 1867 where the original was creased. These are key search fields and a search based on them fails to find the record. I include this not as criticism – the National Archives encourages amendments – but as a warning to persist with the search using other criteria.

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While it's relatively easy to find details of a soldier's personal life, it's a challenge to find his war. There are few surviving online service records like those in Australia and New Zealand.

There are some obituaries in Du Ruvigny's Roll of Honour but I found only two that were relevant. The service records in ancestry sites are not necessarily the soldier's war; they are summaries of the battalion's action including before and after he joined them.

I found that the most useful war service information is not in the official archives. It's in the Rolls of Honour created by regiments and community groups – churches, schools, universities, villages – where archivists and historians and family history groups have put records online to honour their dead. It is here that personal war stories can be found; I found an excellent obituary in an online family history. It had also been submitted to the online BBC History Roll of Honour.

Obituaries tend to give significant dates in the soldier's war. By overlaying the dates on regimental histories I could get some idea of the soldier's war.

The story in context

In my head I have a model of the social history of England, Scotland and Australia.

It's a complex model built up from fact and fiction over a lifetime, heavily coloured with assumptions and personal opinion. It's a three-dimensional mindmap of time, place and action – the elements of a classic drama.

Within that drama, these soldiers have the tiniest of bit parts. I find who they are, when they died, and where they were – and I try to place them in an epic that has a cast of millions where I know few of the players and have only a shadowy idea of the action.

I look around the stage to see where their lives played out. As I do, I see figures in the background that I recognise – there's Florence Nightingale with her lamp visiting the hospital near Gunner Hale's grave at Karani. I understand more clearly why she held protest rallies in London – to provide nursing care to soldiers like Gunner Hale caught up in the Siege of Sebastopol.

I see the movie set from Hill 60 where a miner from a small town in Queensland served with the Tunnelling Corps and helped blow up the German trenches.

I can picture the isolation ward in the hospital in Cairo where an Aussie trooper is treated for venereal disease – it was described in both *The ANZACS* and Tom Keneally's fictional *Daughters of Mars*.

There is Lawrence of Arabia in Peter O'Toole's flowing robes leading the Camel Corps across the desert not long after the soldier I'm researching is killed.

And I recognise Simpson leading his donkey down the gullies of Gallipoli near where a stockman from a town near me is wounded.

Common to most pieces are what I've called the story coins – the coins that hold the key to the stories through the names engraved on them.

Most of the pieces have a coin as part of their design, either as an ID tag or as an integral part of the piece itself. The banjo, one of my favourite pieces, uses six pennies.

Pennies were plentiful. As Patsy Adam-Smith says in *The ANZACS*, 'Colonels of regiments were obliged to ensure that soldiers retain at least 1s 0d per day for their own use while abroad.'²

That's 12 pennies a day to gamble, trade for cigarettes, or make things with. They were easily smoothed for engraving. The marks were permanent, surviving the battlefield. They went well with the metal of spent artillery shells and bullets.

In some cases I think the pennies had extra significance. The king's head has been cut from the coin and soldered to the piece as a symbol of the call to arms – 'for King and Country'.

... ..

The coins weren't always pennies.

The snuff mull from the Crimean War has an 1854 French coin in the base. The meticulous engraving of a tank by Cpl G.H.Ford is on a 1916 French franc.

The pieces from Mesopotamia are mostly Indian rupees. The engraving on these coins is beautiful, perhaps reflecting the long periods of inactivity, albeit under harsh conditions, during and after the siege of Kut-al-Amara.

At the other end of the scale is this tiny George V threepence. On close inspection it reads 'H.Jones Sept 1917'. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists 264 men named H.Jones who died after September 1917. And he may not have died. I will never know who H.Jones was.



He is my unknown soldier. He tells the simplest of stories – 'I was here....'

Chapter 6 A PERSONAL PIECE

I was well into writing this book when I received an email from Steve. He'd been to Kent looking for pieces for our respective collections. He'd found four pieces for me and as usual he left the best till last.

4. *Wait for it....the best.* A mandolin, made from wood, with a pinned copper fret, beautifully made. It has a secret twist penny coin to base which revolves to reveal a space for personal items, whether it was used for a photo or other items, in this case *it has some cut matches inside. I think the fret board was used as the striker face. There is a coin attached with a fob watch winder and named to E. HOGBEN 22900, the seller was very excited about this item and would not budge in price – had a lot of offers.*



I stopped, scarcely daring to believe what I was reading. It was a goosebump moment.

I knew E.Hogben 22900. He was on my family tree, already there as Edward Hogben 22900 who was killed in action on 27 January 1917.

Not only was Edward Hogben on my family tree, he was on the branch of ‘smugglers, convicts and the Poor Houses of Kent’ that started it all.

It was researching these stories that gave me so much pleasure. The stories were about the Baileys and Hogbens of Bonnington Kent. After finding their stories, I wanted more names that I could research, more puzzles to solve.

So I started collecting engraved coins, which led to trench art which led to music pieces, which led to a mandolin and a soldier named Hogben and suddenly, miraculously, I was back where I started, in my own family history.

I hold Edward Hogben’s mandolin with a sense of wonder. I’d tried to conjure up stories; now I have conjured up a beautifully made mandolin with minute traces of my own DNA. It has materialised across a hundred years of time and half a world of distance through the hands of strangers.

The virtual trail has all been in my head and shared through the ether. Fifty years ago I was the first female programmer at the Treasury in Canberra; we wrote code to make computers do our calculations and keep track of records. Now they carry thoughts and ideas and wishes freely around the world to people we will never meet.

The patterns and links in my brain have made the mandolin materialise. No wonder I have goosebumps.

I have grouped the pieces under fairly arbitrary headings to cluster the stories in a readable way.

In some cases like the musical instruments I think the pieces belong together – they all belonged to soldiers who died on the Somme. In others like the Anzacs it is the ownership and thus the range of records that gives a more cohesive narrative thread.

There is significant overlap between categories, for example where the music pieces are owned by Anzacs.

I started with music.

I found this account of the emotional impact of music – even in the midst of mud and mayhem – in *Somme Mud* by E.P.F. Lynch, who describes the tension of waiting for a German attack at Dernancourt.³

Out of the fog looms the village church tower, now smashed by shellfire ... All is very quiet ... the village must even now house thousands of bayonets waiting to be launched at us. We look at the railway embankment just below and can see ... men lying very still and know that our boys are watching for the first sign of movement.

'Listen!' From afar we catch the sounds of band music, the faint, unmistakable, measured beat of marching music.

'Look!' And there, a mile or so beyond Dernancourt, we catch the flash of band instruments in the rays of the early sun.

'Get an eyeful of that!' And strung out behind that band we see a battalion ... officers on horses, company after company of marching men, a stream of horse-drawn transport, all slowly moving along under a little cloud of whitish dust...

And then our rifles and machine-guns are at them ... And our trench is crackling from end to end under the savage rattle of rifle and machine-gun fire ...

Under this barrage of fire, the German battalion scatters and retreats.

Something bright lies shining on the road – band instruments.

Over the next week, there is heavy fighting with many casualties on both sides. When they are finally relieved, Lynch continues his account.

Now we're on the road, marching off again. Tired and weary, we trudge along, hour after hour, mile after mile. Not a man but would like to fall out, but not a man does. We're grimly sticking to it. Seeing the job through.

Still on, heads down, shoulders dropping from weariness and the weight of rifle and equipment. Suddenly a band strikes up ahead and 'Colonel Bogey', our battalion march, rings out. The battalion's band has met us and is playing us into Bussy-les-Daours.

Heads go up. Shoulders are squared. We're all in step and march into the village as if Dernancourt and the past fortnight were a year and not a day behind us.

Music evoked memories that could overcome – even for a short time – the horrors of the battlefield.

Perhaps these small talismans, so tactile in the dark, evoked memories of loved ones and the world outside the war, to help face the fears of the awful unknown.

Footnotes

- 1 Millett: 6
- 2 Adam-Smith: 43
- 3 Lynch: 267-277

Music

Pearson's banjo



The banjo has a compartment for snuff made from five stacked pennies. It is 7.8cm in length and 3cm across the body.



The banjo is attached by a chain to a container for matches made from copper and brass and measuring 5.2cm by 2.3cm by 1.5cm. The frets of the banjo serve as the strike for matches.

A smoothed and shaped 1916 penny on the front of the match container is inscribed ARTISTS REGIMENT 1ST 28TH K H P.

The back of the fretboard is stamped with the number 766615.

Construction

The round body of the banjo is made from 5 stacked pennies. The three middle pennies have a hole cut from the centre; the top penny swivels as a lid.



The pennies are held together by five visible rivets, with only one going through to the top penny allowing it to swivel.

The body is further strengthened by a brass flange soldered and riveted in place. The flange is curved to sit clear of the body; it has four holes for imaginary strings. The brass bridge has four corresponding slots for the strings and is riveted in place.

The fretboard is a single strip of brass tapered in width at the front from 5mm to 4mm and tapered in thickness from 2mm to 1mm from the body to the tip.

Four brass tuning pegs are soldered to the peghead.

Etched lines mark the frets and punch marks represent inlaid position markers.



The neck sits level with the body. It pierces the second penny and is visible from the inside of the container; it does not pierce to top penny. It is soldered in place.

A brass tag is riveted to the fretboard for the chain.

... ..

The match container is an oval cylinder made from a piece of copper joined at the front under the penny by a seam of solder; it has a curved piece of copper for the base.

The penny is cut to an oval and smoothed; the 6 of the date 1916 is partly lost.

The letters of the inscription appear to be done by hand rather than stamped. There are punchmarks at the corners and the letters are of varying heights. The inscription appears to have been done before the penny was curved and soldered to the container; the top of the R of ARTISTS has been lost.

The penny hides the front seam, as does the brass band above it. The brass band is soldered in place with a side seam.

The lid is copper with a soldered side seam. The top of the lid is brass with an overhanging tag for the chain. The lid fits easily in one orientation only, with its side seam in line with the seam of the brass band.

Comment

This is the piece that stirred my emotions when I first held it. It is smooth and heavy, much handled and worn. It is a beautiful piece – functional, original, handmade, and personal. I am moved by knowing that its owner once held it as I do now.

I was intrigued by the Artists Regiment.

I found their website and learnt that the regiment was formed by artists in the mid 1800s to face a perceived threat from France. It consisted of ‘painters, sculptors, engravers, musicians, architects and actors’.¹

By the 20th century, according to Wikipedia ‘The Artists Rifles was a popular unit for volunteers ... and recruitment was eventually restricted ... It particularly attracted recruits from public schools and universities ...’²

I’d studied the war poets at university in the 1960s. I went looking for the ones I knew, and there was the most famous one of all – Wilfred Owen. He was in the Artists Rifles. He was killed in action a week before the end of the war.

With his poetry as emotional context, I went looking for KHP who held this banjo so many years ago.

ARTISTS REGIMENT

1st

28th

KHP 766615

The Research

PEARSON, KENNETH HERBERT

Rank: Private

Service No: 766615

Date of Death: 30/08/1918

Age: 19

Regiment/Service: London Regiment (Artists' Rifles) 1st/28th Bn.

Grave Reference: VI. B. 34.

Cemetery: Bagneux British Cemetery, Gezaincourt

Additional Information: Only son of Herbert Andrew and Kate Elizabeth Pearson, of Redditch, Worcs. ³

There were initials only on the banjo so I used his serial number to find his name in the CWGC. This gave his name and next of kin which led to his records in ancestry sites before the war.

I also found two obituaries, one in Du Ruvigny's Roll of Honour⁴ and one in The Artists Rifles Roll of Honour.⁵

From one of these I learnt he had gone to Felsted School in Essex. I emailed the school explaining that I was researching Kenneth Pearson.

A few days later the archivist replied with details of Kenneth's time at the school including his areas of study and his exam results.

Using information from all these sources, I eventually found his story – of a gentle lad with a hearing impairment who studied the classics and died on the battlefields of Flanders.

Kenneth Herbert PEARSON 1899 – 1918

Kenneth Herbert Pearson was born in Redditch, Worcestershire on 11 May 1899,⁶ the only son of a bank manager and his wife. He had two older sisters.

He grew up in what we would call today a middle class family. His father was a bank manager in the Midlands of England. The family lived in the bank building in a respectable area of Newbury with a live-in 'lady help' to assist with the housework.⁷

Education was important to the family. In 1911 twelve-year-old Kenneth was at school. And more unusually so were his sisters, eighteen-year-old Kathleen and fifteen-year-old Dorothy.⁸

Kenneth was educated at Newbury Grammar School and Felsted School in Essex.

Kenneth had a scholarship to study at Felsted. In his first exams in 1915 he came top in Scripture and fourth in Maths. He also studied English, French, Latin, History and Geography – a classical education. He was not particularly interested in sport but was actively involved in a range of other school activities. As the war progressed his exam results began to slide dramatically and in 1917 he left Felsted to join the Artists Rifles.



... ..

Felsted School describes him in its Roll of Honour:

Kenneth Pearson was in house d from January 1915 (age 15) to July 1917 (age 18).

Date of birth 11 May 1899.

CV: Artists' Rifles. Died of wounds received in France, Aug 30 1918.

WW1: Died.

A quiet boy, handicapped in many ways by slight but permanent deafness, but entering with zest into all the details of our routine and enjoying them with infinite good temper, K H Pearson spent his two and a half years here from January 1915 to July 1917.

Then military service claimed him and he joined the Artists.

He had been in France 11 weeks with them when the Brigade played its part in the great advance. Four times in five days he 'went over the top' with them, and on August 29th was badly wounded in the head; unconscious, he was carried into the CCS, and there died next day.

He was the only son of H A Pearson Esq. of Redditch.⁹

... ..

After training in England, Kenneth Pearson went to France with the Artists in June 1918.

By August the Artists were part of the offensive that would eventually end the war – the 'great advance' mentioned in his school obituary. As part of that great advance, the Artists joined the attack on Thillooy near Bapaume to recapture it from the Germans.

I found three accounts of the attack on Thillooy from 21 to 30 August 1918 when Kenneth Pearson died: an obituary of a soldier in the Artists who was wounded on the same day;¹⁰ pages from the war diary of the Bedfords who fought alongside the Artists;¹¹ and an extract from the New Zealand Medical Service describing the attack at Thillooy and its aftermath.¹²

This is my understanding of what happened that week, based on those accounts.

... ..

Early in the week there were heavy morning fogs. The Artists along with other regiments launched a frontal assault on the trenches around Thillooy, finding their way blind down a ravine and up a ridge on the other side. As the fog lifted, advance troops found themselves in open space – easy targets for the entrenched enemy. They were driven back by heavy machine gun fire and snipers firing from behind the ridge.

They were surprised by the level of resistance. Some German troops were taken prisoner with little resistance but others were fiercely defending their positions to allow their fellow soldiers to retreat.

Over the next few days the story was repeated. Assaults were launched only to falter under sustained resistance from machine gun fire and expert snipers, always with heavy casualties.

Kenneth Pearson 'went over the top four times in five days' as attacks were repulsed by machine gun fire. Many were killed and injured.

Kenneth Pearson was wounded on 27 August, the day the battle to reclaim Thillooy came to a climax. He suffered a gunshot wound to the head and was evacuated to the Casualty Clearing Station at Doullens.

He died there three days later on 30 August 1918.

... ..

The New Zealand Medical Service adds a sad postscript to his story.

As the shelling subsided on the night of the 28th, a strange silence fell upon Bapaume – away to the eastward was seen the glare of burning dumps, and just before dawn our patrols penetrated the town to find it abandoned.

The German troops withdrew the day after Kenneth Pearson was mortally wounded.

In his book *The Hawke Battalion*, Douglas Jerrold writes of that week near Thillooy:

*... it is justifiable to suggest that the idea of ... isolated frontal attacks was itself an unwise one ... two days later, the advanced posts, for which so much had been vainly sacrificed, fell without a shot being fired.*¹³

... ..

Wilfred Owen – deeply affected by seeing his comrades killed in battle – wrote this poem in 1918.

Futility

*Move him into the sun -
Gently its touch awoke him once,
At home, whispering of fields unsown.
Always it woke him, even in France,
Until this morning and this snow.
If anything might rouse him now
The kind old sun will know ...*

When he writes so poignantly 'Move him into the sun ...' I think of Kenneth Pearson, the quiet boy 'of infinite good temper' who fought for his country and died of his wounds at 19.

Arnold's mandolin



The mandolin is a hollow container. It is well crafted, consistent with being made behind the lines. The design is ingenious but the solder is rough.

With a stopper of cork or leather it could be used to hold snuff.



Unflattened rivets make the pegs for imaginary strings.

Attached by a piece of leather is a fob made from a 1914 penny with R.Arnold 2362 stippled roughly on the smoothed reverse. The metal letters R.W.KENT are soldered to the bottom edge of the penny under the name and service number.

Construction

The bowl of the mandolin is brass. It is topped with a flat brass piece that extends to the tip of the fretboard. A second brass piece is soldered to the back of the fretboard for strength, and a piece of bone is riveted to the front.

A blunt V-shaped piece is riveted to the top of the bowl for the other end of the strings; the tip of this brass piece is just visible through the middle of the metal tassel. The tiny circle of metal holding the tassel together is soldered to the body with the brass spike giving rigidity.



The whole piece feels strong and rigid.

Comment

There are markedly different levels of workmanship between the mandolin and the fob.

The fob is much rougher and inscribed by hand. Most fobs in the collection use armourers' stamps for inscriptions; here the inscription is stippled. The brass ring through the hole in the fob is handmade.

Richard Arnold may have bartered for the mandolin but it seems likely that he inscribed the fob himself.

R.ARNOLD
2362
RWKENT

The Research

ARNOLD, RICHARD

Rank: Private

Service No: 2362

Date of Death: 01/07/1916

Age: 21

Regiment/Service: Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment) 7th Bn.

Panel Reference: Addenda Panel

Memorial: Thiepval Memorial

Additional Information:¹⁴

It was the day he died – the first day of the Battle of the Somme – that told the story of Private Richard Arnold. He was one of so many.

Richard Thomas ARNOLD 1896 – 1916

Richard Thomas Arnold was born in Camberwell in 1896. His mother was from Ayr in Scotland; his father, a photographer's assistant, was from Camberwell.¹⁵

When Richard was young the family lived in Clacton on Sea. In 1901 it was a full house; his little sister Helen was a baby and his grandmother was staying with them. They had three boarders, a widower and two single males, suggesting that his mother ran a small boarding house.

They didn't stay in Clacton. The next baby, another girl, was born in Yorkshire in 1905. By 1911 the family had moved to Barnet in Middlesex where the father worked as a photographer in collotype printing. Richard and his older brother, young teenagers by now, had jobs as clerks.¹⁶

Richard Arnold enlisted with the Royal West Kent Regiment and entered the war in France on 27 July 1915.¹⁷ He died almost a year later on 1 July 1916, the first day of the Battle of the Somme.

The statistics from that day are devastating, described as

one of the bloodiest military operations ever recorded. The opening day of the battle saw the British Army suffer the worst day in its history, sustaining nearly 60,000

casualties.’¹⁸

Richard Arnold was one of those men.

His body was never identified. He has no personal grave.

Comment

The logistics of accounting for nearly 20,000 deaths in one day and informing next of kin must have been overwhelming. Richard Arnold was missing presumed dead but it appears that the authorities found no record of his next of kin to inform them.

On the next three anniversaries of his death, notices appeared in Army Lists and the London Gazette asking next of kin to come forward and claim the money owing to him.

London Gazette 29th June 1917 ... there is available for distribution amongst the next of kin ... Arnold R., Royal West Kent Regt ... £7 9s 10d.

London Gazette 28th June 1918. 1st Republication ... Arnold R, Pte. Royal West Kent Regiment ... £7 9s 10d

*London Gazette 27th June 1919. 2nd Republication ... Arnold R., Royal West Kent Regt ... £7 9s 10d.*¹⁹

It appears that no one came forward to claim the money owed to Richard Arnold.

Comment

There is no next of kin in Richard Arnold’s CWGC record.

He left home in 1915 to go to war. His family may have received letters but the letters would contain no details of where he was or the action he was involved in.

And then even the letters stopped.

There was nothing – no word, official or otherwise. How did his family handle the not knowing? Did they live in fear of the telegram that never came? Did they see him in his soldier’s uniform in the years that followed? Did they hope against hope that one day there would be a knock at the door and he would be standing there?

The not knowing would be the hardest thing of all.

... ..

The authorities appear to have had no way of contacting Richard Arnold’s family.

They updated his medal card to show he was killed in action on 1 July 1916 and that he was entitled to three medals. In small hand-written notes alongside the medals on his medal card are ‘retd 20.2.23’ and ‘BW. VM Retd 7.5.23’ with what look like file numbers, suggesting that his medals – including the British War Medal and the Victory Medal – were sent out in 1923 but were returned as undeliverable.

His family saw him go off to war as a 20 year old. They never saw him again. He simply disappeared.

... ..

There seems to be a missing link in Richard Arnold’s official records. In 2008 someone

queried the Commonwealth War Graves Commission about why he wasn't listed. The CWGC replied with details of 21 war dead named R. Arnold but none that matched his regiment or service number.

In May 2008 he was finally added to the CWGC site.²⁰

Posted 23 May 2008 – 04:53 PM

CWGC added the following 'new' WW1 casualties to its Debt of Honour database today – Friday 23rd May.

Pte Richard ARNOLD

2362 7 Bn, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment)

Died 01.07.16 Age 21 – Killed in action

Commemorated: Thiepval Memorial, France

The Thiepval Memorial, unveiled in 1928, is for those who were never identified.

Lowrie's bagpipes



This is a small brass container in the shape of bagpipes. The body is 7.3cm by 3cm by 1.5cm.

It has an inscribed copper fob attached by a chain. Both the bagpipes and the fob are decorated with a badge or button of the Royal Highlanders Black Watch.

The flattened copper fob is 3.5cm in diameter. G.LOWRIE 9890 is stamped on the fob around the Black Watch button.



The lid with the chanter is removable. The bag of the bagpipes is hollow and may have been used to hold snuff.

Construction

The bag is made of brass with a continuous side strip joining the front and back pieces. The mouth is cylindrical as is the removable lid; there are no visible side joins on either cylinder.

The drones are separate lengths of thin tubing, possibly nails or rivets, carefully soldered together and firmly soldered to the side. The mouthpiece is tapered at the end. The chanter is soldered at an angle to the top of the lid. The finish is crude but the detail is exquisite.



Attached to the base by a chain is the fob, a copper disc almost the size of a penny with a button for the Royal Highlanders Black Watch soldered to the centre, similar to the button on the bag.

The digits of the service number 9890 appear to be stamped using armourers' stamps. The letters G LOWRIE are etched.

Comment

Steve told me he had bagpipes as a snuff container but I had trouble believing him.

These bagpipes really are amazing. All the music pieces in the collection came from the Somme suggesting soldiers saw what others had made. Did someone issue a challenge – 'but could you make bagpipes?'

Only a piper would get the design and the proportions so close to the real thing.

G.LOWRIE

9890

Royal Highlanders – Black Watch

The Research

LOWRIE, G

Rank: Private

Service No: S/9890

Date of Death: 24/03/1918

Age: 22

Regiment/Service: Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) 4th/5th Bn.

Grave Reference: III. G. 5.

Cemetery: Peronne Communal Cemetery Extension

Additional Information: Son of John Lowrie, of 44, Balcarres St., Edinburgh. Born at Galashiels.²¹

I found George Lowrie on the Edinburgh University Roll of Honour with a photo of him as a young man.²²

I went looking for a life of privilege. The story I found was very different. It was a story of factory workers doing their best for their child – only to see him lost in the battlefields of France.

George LOWRIE 1895 – 1918

The pointers to George Lowrie's background came from the 1911 census in Scotland. This showed that his parents had three children, one of whom had died.²³ The death certificate of that child gave full details of parentage and occupations going back generations.²⁴ The story below is based on information in those two documents.



George Lowrie

George Lowrie was born in Galashiels in 1895. His parents were factory workers, descended from factory workers. His father was a 'wool factory worker' – and so was his grandfather. His mother was a sewer and loom weaver, the daughter of a wool spinner.²⁵

His parents married in Galashiels in 1893 and a year later their first child was born – a girl named after her grandmother. The baby contracted whooping cough when she was just three weeks old. A month later, somewhere between 3am and 5am, she died.

George was born the following year 1895 in Galashiels. His only brother Thomas was

born four years later.

As the boys grew older, the family moved to Edinburgh. Their father found work as a despatch man for a bakery and they moved to a tenement in Merchiston.

When George was 12 he went to Boroughmuir school, one of Scotland's first non-fee-paying secondaries.²⁶

He stayed there until he was 18. He then went to Edinburgh University.

It was 1913. He wanted to be a teacher, and studied Arts for the next two years.²⁷

... ..

Halfway through 1915 he abandoned his studies at Edinburgh University and joined the Black Watch as a Private.

By December 1915 he was in France.

He fought in France until the first Battle of the Somme when along with so many others he was seriously wounded and evacuated back to the UK.

It was six months before he was well enough to rejoin his regiment. He returned to France in December 1916 and served in the trenches until he contracted dysentery and was once again invalided home.

This time it was a year before he had recovered sufficiently to rejoin his regiment, in December 1917.

Three months later he was killed in action at Peronne near Bapaume on the Somme. German troops captured Peronne after fierce fighting on 23 March 1918. The following day George Lowrie was reported missing and later confirmed dead – killed in action.

He was buried at Peronne. He was 22.

... ..

Six months later on 30 August 1918 the German troops surrendered Peronne along with Thillooy and Baupaume in the face of 'the great advance'.

Bell's drum



The drum is made from brass and copper pennies. The height and the diameter are the same – 3.3cm. The lid screws off to reveal a watertight container for snuff – or matches, with the braid as strike.



The fob is a 1914 penny counterstamped RFA 125333 on the obverse and R W BELL on the reverse.

Construction

The drum is surprisingly complex in its structure.

A strip of brass is joined once at the side to make a cylinder around two pennies: a 1914 penny is the recessed base; a 1915 penny is the top with the centre removed for the threaded cylinder that holds the cap in place.



The brass braid is irregular in parts suggesting it has been made from two lengths of brass twisted together.

At the point of each V there are signs the metal has pierced the side, appearing as spike marks into the penny at the base and as rivet heads on the inside rim. The braid is soldered to the drum at the point of each V.

A braid loop is soldered to the cap to hold the chain for the inscribed fob.

Comment

The drum is particularly well made. It's possible that Richard Bell made it himself. He was a shoeing smith or farrier, one of the few people with the skills and the tools to make such an item on the battlefield.



R W BELL
125333
RFA

The Research

BELL, R W

Rank: Shoeing Smith

Service No: 125333

Date of Death: 09/12/1918

Regiment/Service: Royal Field Artillery 18th Div. Ammunition Col.

Grave Reference: VIII. A. 71.

Cemetery: Busigny Communal Cemetery Extension

Additional Information:²⁸

With no next of kin and no age of death, R W Bell remained a mystery in my earliest drafts. And then I found his Will, newly released online through a UK Government website, and his family history opened up. He left half his effects to his sister and gave her name and address. If I could find him with his sister in a census I could find his age and when and where he was born. And the Will gave a name to his elusive middle initial – Whitling.

With the finding of the Will, Richard Bell was tracked to Crathorne. There he went from virtual anonymity to a brush with one of the most famous families in England – that of Sir

Isaac Lowthian Bell and his granddaughter Gertrude Bell.

Richard Whitling BELL 1884 – 1918

There are five names on the Crathorne Village War Memorial.²⁹

Sister Alice Welford, – Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service

Gunner John Welford, – Royal Garrison Artillery

Private Arthur Kendrew, – 7th Leicesters

Shoeing Smith Richard Whitling Bell, – Royal Field Artillery

Private John George Dobson

It was the comment alongside the image of the memorial that pointed to a possible connection between shoeing smith Richard Bell and his famous namesakes.

The Crathorne War memorial contains the name of one woman, – Sister Alice Welford. Sister Alice died in Basra, Iraq, and one wonders whether there was any connection between her and Gertrude Bell.

The Bell family came from fairly nearby in East Rounton, and Gertrude Bell, of course, was well-known for her activities in Iraq at about that time.



Rounton Grange at East Rounton

So the ancestral home of Sir Isaac Lowthian Bell 1st Baronet, was close to where Richard Bell lived with the sister named in his Will.

While there may have been a connection between the Bell families, the social distinction between them was immense. The blandness of census terminology cannot disguise the social chasm between a major industrialist and parliamentarian and the local blacksmith and his son.

Sir Isaac Lowthian Bell's occupation was 'iron master' while Richard and his father were blacksmiths – the same industry but at extreme opposite ends of the spectrum.

The 1891 census shows Gertrude Bell, 22, living with her family at Red Barns, built for her father Thomas Hugh Bell by her grandfather Lowthian Bell. The household of two parents and four children had a cook, parlour maid, two housemaids, nurse, lady's maid and a nursery maid.³⁰

Nearby in a cottage close to the Rectory lived Richard Whitting Bell, 6, with his mother and father and four sisters. He and his sisters were at school. Their father was a blacksmith.³¹

... ..

By 1911, Gertrude Bell had left home and was building a reputation as one of the most influential women of her age. She travelled extensively in the Middle East, and like T.E. Lawrence whom she met, developed an understanding of the culture and established strong ties with people of influence. She spent most of the war in the Middle East and is generally accredited with helping define the boundaries of Iraq after the war.

Her father, now 2nd Baronet after Sir Isaac's death in 1904, lived at Rounton Grange at East Rounton in 1911. On census night he and his son and two child relatives lived with 16 servants: two footmen, a housekeeper, two kitchenmaids, a scullery maid, head housemaid and four domestic housemaids, three laundrymaids, a children's nurse and a children's nursemaid.³²

Living nearby was Richard Bell 26, working as a blacksmith alongside his father. His youngest sister Edith Elizabeth, to whom he left half his effects in his wartime Will, was living at home with them.³³

(One-everything) Form of Will (making everything to one person)

In the event of my death I give to

(a) Edith Elizabeth Bell Sister

Brathorne, Yorks R.D. Yorkshire

(b) one half of the whole of my effects

And I give to (a) Christiana Waller friend

Appleton Works, Northallerton, Yorkshire

(b) one half of the whole of my effects

And all the rest of my estate and effects, and everything that I can give or dispose of, I give and bequeath absolutely to (a) _____

Signature of Soldier (full name) Richard Whitting Bell

Rank and Regimental Number Shoeing Smith 125333

Regiment Royal Field Artillery

Date 17th August 1916

Signed and acknowledged by the said (a) R. W. Bell

as and for his last Will, in the presence of one or more persons at that same time, who, in his presence, at his request, and in the presence of each other, have subscribed our Names as Witnesses.

Also living nearby was a young woman Christiana Waller, age 23. Christiana lived at West Rounton with her grandfather, a retired farmer, and her father, a farm labourer.³⁴ Richard Bell left the second half of his effects to Christiana, describing her in his wartime Will as 'friend'.

Richard Bell made his Will on 17 August 1916 as shoeing smith 125333 with the Royal Field Artillery. He was 31. His friend Christiana was 28.

... ..

Richard Bell served with the 18th Division Ammunition Column of the Royal Field Artillery.

His role was vitally important. Horses carried sacks of ammunition through to the forward lines. The shoeing smith was responsible for keeping the horses' feet healthy, and for looking after the general welfare of the horses.

The 18th Division Ammunition Column saw action on the Somme between 17 August

1916 when Richard made his Will and the end of the war in 1918. The names of their battles still resonate – the battles of Albert, Delville Wood, Thiepville, Ancre, Passchendaele, Villers-Bretoneux, Amiens, Bapaume and St Quentin Canal.

Richard Bell survived these battles, only to die of wounds or illness the day before demobilisation of the Ammunition Column began.

Morgan's grand piano



This is a truly beautiful piece.

It is a brass grand piano keepsake with an inscribed penny fob attached by a permanently closed chain.

The keyboard is bone with lines etched to mark the keys. The piano has the insignia of the King's Shropshire Light Infantry (KSLI) on the lid.

The lid is hinged and stays open in any position up to the vertical. The inside is lined with fine black padded leather.



Construction

The baseplate is a single piece. The curved sides are soldered to the top of the base. The hinge, cut away to allow for the keyboard, gives rigidity to the piece; it is riveted to the side covering the original join.

The front is a single piece shaped for the keyboard; it is soldered to the sides and base. The bone keyboard is riveted to this in three places.



The KSLI insignia is soldered to the lid. Three brass legs are soldered to the base.

The fob is a 1903 Edward VII halfpenny stamped A A MORGAN 21382 on the reverse.

Comment

The grand piano is such a convincing miniature that I think it must have been copied, at least from memory, from a manufactured trinket box. In her book *Trench Art*, Jane A. Kimball suggests some pieces were made by workers in the Chinese Labour Corps in the supply lines behind the trenches, customised for soldiers with buttons and insignia at their request. That may be the case here. It is beautifully made but with enough irregularities to confirm it is handmade.



Below is a grand piano trinket box from a much later period. It was made in occupied Japan presumably for the English market. Earlier versions may have been around in Victorian England.

The careful padding of the black leather lining is very similar to the lightly padded red velvet in the commercially manufactured piece. This suggests it was meant for keepsakes rather than snuff or even matches – although the bone keyboard could serve as a strike for matches.



It seems that the catch and the chain with the halfpenny fob have been added by a less expert hand. The inscription on the fob is roughly stamped. The end loops of the chain have been soldered permanently closed suggesting the keepsake has been claimed by A.A. Morgan as his own.

... ..

The piano came with a small collection of items: a postcard of A.A.MORGAN with his swagger stick and his KSLI cap; his swagger stick with the KSLI insignia; and a sterling silver cigarette case hallmarked to a Chester silversmith described by the seller as *full silver hallmarks on item, Chester Assay Office, letter date M for 1912, silversmiths initials S.I.Ld for Stokes and Ireland registered 1890, for outstanding quality and highly regarded and now extremely rare to find nowadays.*



The monogram A.A.M is inscribed on the front in flowing script.

A.A. MORGAN
21382

The Research

MORGAN, A A

Rank: Private

Service No: 21382

Date of Death: 30/03/1918

Age: 23

Regiment/Service: King's Shropshire Light Infantry 6th Bn.

Grave Reference: I. B. 16.

Cemetery: Namps-au-Val British Cemetery

Additional Information: Son of Edward Morgan, of "Wheeler's Rest," Pedlars Arms, Craven Arms, Salop.³⁵

I checked the King's Shropshire Light Infantry and noticed the songs of the regiment. The KSLI marches were Farmers Boy, Old Towler and Daughter of the Regiment.

How appropriate that the march should be the Farmers Boy. Albert Morgan was the farmer's boy – the Shropshire lad who went to war.

Albert Arthur MORGAN 1893 – 1918

Albert Morgan came from a long line of farm labourers.

His grandparents were agricultural labourers whose daughters became domestic servants and whose sons, like Albert's father, became farm workers.³⁶

Albert's parents married in their early twenties³⁷ and Albert was born a year later in 1893.³⁸ Albert's mother died before Albert was 8 years old. Albert and his father moved to Corfton to live with the grandmother, herself a widow by then in her seventies.³⁹



5 Corfton, Craven Arms, Shropshire

They lived together in Shropshire for at least ten years. The 1911 census shows the grandmother 82, father 44 and Albert 18 – a farm labourer – living at 5 Corfton, Craven Arms⁴⁰ which still stands today with Wordsworth's daffodils fluttering in the garden.

Albert Morgan didn't marry. By the time he enlisted his father had moved into the Wheelers Rest in Craven Arms.

Albert Morgan's medal card has few details other than that he was due the Victory and British medals.⁴¹ He died on 30 March 1918 and was buried in the British Cemetery at Namps-au-Val near Amiens.

The Shropshire lad – the farmer's boy who grew up with fields of golden daffodils – died among the red poppies of the Somme.

Comment

The personal items that came with the grand piano tell their own story.

He was an only son who grew up as a labourer on a farm in Shropshire. The grand piano he chose or made, the fine sterling silver monogrammed case, and the studio portrait with his regimental swagger stick suggest that Albert was held in high regard and was honoured before he went off to war.

He would be sadly missed.



Gregory's ukelele



The ukelele is carved from a single piece of wood faced front and back with copper and brass. It is 12cm long and 3cm across the body, and bears an inscription for J Gregory 2745.

A piece of brass covers the upper part of the back of the body and a George V penny covers the lower part.

The lower penny swivels to reveal a secret compartment carved into the wood containing the photo of a young woman. The photo is protected by a circle of glass that fits the carved recess perfectly.



Construction

The neck is strengthened by a strip of brass riveted to the back in 5 places. The fretboard is a strip of ridged brass riveted to the front in 3 places.

The top of the neck is covered by copper from a George V halfpenny held in place by 2 rivets. This top section has 4 small holes drilled through the layers of copper, wood and brass to represent the tuning pegs. One larger central hole allows for a fob chain.



The front of the body has the obverse of a George V penny with a sound hole riveted to the upper part, and the reverse of a 1917 penny below. An arc has been cut from the lower penny to allow it to be soldered to the top penny.

J.GREGORY is carved on one side of the ukelele.



2745 is carved on the other side



Comment

The workmanship in this piece is amazing. The finished piece fits the palm of the hand and is smooth to the touch. There is no outward sign that the locket exists and the swivelling coin needs a firm hand to open it. It opens in one direction only. The casual observer would not know it was there even on handling the piece and examining it.

Close inspection of the photo suggests the young woman is a nurse wearing a cape and collar. She is wearing an earring that looks like the symbol for the Red Cross.

... ..

The ukelele comes with a second piece that is very different. It is a wood page turner 27.5cm long and 3cm wide.



It is handcarved from a single piece of light wood.

The blade is 0.4 cm thick along the centreline tapering to a knife-edge along the sides and rounded point. The haft of the knife is 0.5cm thick. It is decoratively carved with flowers and symbols including the letters J and G in flowing script on either side.

J GREGORY
2745

The Research

GREGORY, JAMES

Rank: Private

Service No: 2745

Date of Death: 06/10/1917

Age: 27

Regiment/Service: Manchester Regiment 2nd/6th Bn.

Grave Reference: I. K. 14.

Cemetery: Brandhoek New Military Cemetery No.3

Additional Information: Son of Moses and Margaret Gregory, of 23 Yorkshire St, Salford, Manchester.⁴²

James GREGORY c1890 – 1917

There were signs of overcrowding and hardship in James Gregory's childhood.

He was the youngest son of Moses and Margaret Gregory.

Moses was a labourer in an iron works when he and Margaret married and set up house in Salford.⁴³ Over the next 15 years Moses and Margaret had five children, Hugh, Elizabeth, Mary, Margaret and James. Moses worked as a blacksmith's striker and the older children went to school.⁴⁴

The oldest child, Hugh, at 15 was working as a 'boy in land factory'. By 25 he was married with two young children and working as a night soil man. He and his young wife and two young children lived with Moses and the family at 23 Yorkshire Street, Salford in 1901.⁴⁵

Elizabeth, educated till she was at least 12, married a fellow factory worker Thomas Duggan and had a baby by the time she was 22. Elizabeth and her husband and their baby also lived with Moses and the family at 23 Yorkshire Street in 1901.

That year, 23 Yorkshire Street was home to twelve members of the extended family: Moses and Margaret, Hugh and his wife Clara and two children, Elizabeth and her husband Thomas Duggan and baby, with Mary, Margaret and James. James was 11 by now but not at school.

Moses died in the winter of 1909 leaving Margaret a widow at 58.⁴⁶ Without Moses as breadwinner the family appears to struggle in the months after his death.

Hugh's wife Clara had a married sister Mary who was also struggling. Mary had three children including a baby to support but her husband was in His Majesty's Prison in Cheetham.⁴⁷ Hugh and Clara and their three children moved in with Mary and her three children and Hugh took over as head of the house. Clara fell pregnant with her fourth child so by 1911 Hugh was the breadwinner for his wife and four children and Mary and her three children. Hugh was a labourer in a cleaning department and one of Mary's sons had a job as an errand boy but they were the only ones in work. None of the children went to school.⁴⁸

Thomas Duggan took over as head of the household at 23 Yorkshire Street. He and Elizabeth now had five children under the age of 10 plus the widow Margaret to support. James was living with them on the night of the census and had a job as a general labourer.⁴⁹

... ..

James Gregory joined the 11th Battalion of the Manchester Regiment. The Long Long Trail summarises its history.

11th (Service) Battalion

30 June 1915 : sailed from Liverpool, going via Mudros to Suvla Bay, disembarking on 6 August 1915.

*December 1915 : evacuated from Gallipoli and moved to Egypt via Imbros. July 1916 : moved to France.*⁵⁰

James Gregory was not with them at the August landing at Suvla Bay on the Gallipoli Peninsula. His medal card shows he first entered the theatre of war in the Balkans on 21 November 1915.⁵¹ It seems he joined his regiment at Gallipoli in time for the December evacuation firstly to Imbros and then to Egypt where he served till July 1916.

From Egypt he went to the battlefields of France and Flanders. As a service battalion the 11th Manchester Regiment was a second line unit. In 1917 they were at Brandhoek in Belgium.

According to James Gregory's CWGC record, Brandhoek was within the area comparatively safe from shell fire. Field ambulances were posted there continuously.

With a new Allied offensive planned for July 1917, several Casualty Clearing Stations were moved to Brandhoek and the New Military Cemetery was opened.

James Gregory died of wounds on 6 October 1917 and was buried in this New Military Cemetery.

The ukelele is similar to other music pieces from the Somme suggesting it was made there. The wooden knife is more consistent with items from Egypt and may well have come from his time there.

Hogben's mandolin



Hogben's mandolin is carved from wood and is 9.2cm long. The body is 3.7cm by 3.2cm and 1.7cm deep. The fretboard is copper, as is the pick guard. A secret locket on the underside is hidden by a sliding penny lid.



The well of the locket is lined in metal, with brass sides and a copper halfpenny base. The penny lid slides open in one direction only. It swivels on a brass stud, and is held closed by the brass tailpiece.



Attached by a graduated silver chain is a fob watch winder and a 1912 George V halfpenny fob. The fob is engraved E HOGBEN 22900.

Construction

The fretboard and the body of the mandolin appear to be carved from a single piece of wood, with a small shaped inset where the neck meets the body.

The seven rivets through the copper fretboard penetrate the wood and are visible on the underside, with the last of these serving as the pivot for the swivelling penny lid of the locket.

The well of the locket is lined with a circle of brass that appears to have no side seam, suggesting it was cylindrical before it was inserted. The base of the well is a George V halfpenny.

The brass tailpiece is recessed into the wood and riveted in place.

The penny lid is flattened and slightly elongated at the top to be riveted into the wood while covering the bowl without overlapping the edges.

Comment

On a personal level, this is the most significant piece in the collection coming as it does from someone on my family tree.

Above and beyond that, as a piece of trench art it is stunning. The mandolin is beautiful, and the secret compartment an emotional treasure.

E.HOGBEN
22900

The Research

HOGBEN, EDWARD

Rank: Corporal

Service No: 22900

Date of Death: 27/01/1917

Age: 20

Regiment/Service: Border Regiment 1st Bn.

Panel Reference: Pier and Face 6 A and 7 C.

Memorial: Thiepval Memorial

Additional Information: Son of Mrs. Louisa F. Hogben, of Upper Park Cottage, Lympne, Hythe, Kent.⁵²

It seems fitting – and historically ironic – that Edward Hogben chose the 1st Border Regiment when he enlisted in early September 1914. The role of the Border Regiment was to protect the shores of England and Scotland from invasion. He'd spent all his life near those shores, as had his forebears who were not always on the right side of border protection.

Edward George HOGBEN 1896 – 1917

Edward Hogben grew up in Bonnington in southern Kent, close to the English Channel. And close to the Baileys of Bonnington and Bilsington. For generations the Hogbens had lived and worked on the lands around Romney Marsh, their lives interwoven with the Baileys through marriage and other relationships.

The colourful history of Romney Marsh abounds in the literature of smuggling. It is told in the fictional adventures of Dr Syn, with films based on the books and comics based on the films.

It is also told in the sombre reality of trial notes from the Maidstone Assizes.

The Hogbens and the Baileys were real-life characters in the true tales of smuggling, identified and named in Lord Teignmouth's *The Smugglers: Picturesque Chapters in the History of Contraband Vol II*. Their names were recorded and sentences passed in what was later described as 'the most sensational trial of the century, so far as Kent was concerned'.⁵³

The smuggling story of the Baileys and Hogbens is told anecdotally below from my own family history, as background to the story of Edward Hogben. Relevant references for the Hogbens are given from the time of Eliza Hogben, my great grandmother and Edward Hogben's great aunt.

... ..

The smuggling was real in the 1820s.

Life was harsh for agricultural labourers in Kent. Men returned from the Napoleonic Wars to find work was scarce. Farms were neglected. The Industrial Revolution had drawn able-bodied men to the cities leaving the farms run down and unproductive.

Times were hard. Under the Poor Laws people were moved back to the parish of their birth, as parishes struggled to meet the needs of the poor.

Work was hard to find. On the other hand, young men knew that across the Channel lay the lucrative sources of silk and laces and tea and spirits – and they had the boats and the skills to bring them in under cover of darkness.

One group became particularly well-organised and successful – the Aldington Gang under the leadership of George Ransley. The Hogbens and Baileys of Bonnington were key members of this Gang.

Along with many others, the Baileys had struggled with poverty. Way back, old Samuel Bailey (1728 – 1816) owned a farm. He had five children, including his firstborn son Samuel (b1760) who would normally have inherited the farm. But when old Samuel's first wife died, he married a much younger woman and had a second set of children.

By the time old Samuel died his first son Samuel (b1760) was 57, married with adult children of his own.

In his Will of 1813, old Samuel left the farm and his estate to the children of his second wife, with 10 pounds each to the children of his first marriage.

... ..

From then on the children of the first wife were destined to be agricultural labourers,

including Samuel (b1760). This Samuel's children – including Samuel (b1786), Robert, Rhoda and Elizabeth – felt the burden of poverty when they grew up and married.

Samuel Bailey (b1786) was subject to Removal Orders under the Poor Laws, together with his wife and children; Robert Bailey and his wife were subject to Removal Orders in 1822; Rhoda Bailey had a child subject to Bastard Orders for maintenance under the Poor Laws.

Faced with such poverty, the siblings became members of the Aldington Gang.

Elizabeth Bailey married the leader of the Gang, George Ransley. Samuel Bailey – tall and strong – became second in charge.

Robert Bailey was an active member, as was their uncle John Bailey.

Rhoda's Bastard Orders were against Higgins, another member of the Gang.

And James Hogben was also a member.

... ..

The Aldington Gang flourished. They had tacit support from the clergy, who turned a blind eye to the spirits stored in the Priory.

They had support from the gentry who wanted low-cost luxuries.

They had support from the local doctor who allowed himself to be led blindfolded through the marshes to treat wounded smugglers.

Most of all they were supported by the villagers who helped bring goods ashore and were paid handsomely for their efforts. Elizabeth's son kept the books and ran the payroll – seven shillings and sixpence a night each for the hundred or so men carrying the tubs, and a guinea each for those guarding the runners.⁵⁴



The Frontispiece of The Smugglers – Picturesque Chapters in the History of Contraband Voll II

Elizabeth and her husband ran the Walnut Inn, where they sold the spirits from the Priory. From a window high in the Inn signals could be sent to boats on dark nights, giving the

all-clear for landings.

Business was flourishing and loyalty was high. Convictions were hard to get and even harder to execute, with breakouts well organised and supported.

All that changed one night in 1826.

... ..

Two men from the Kent Coast Blockade ran down and challenged smugglers on a darkened beach. One of them fired a warning shot. More shots rang out and one of the Coastguards fell dead.

Murder was different. A 500 pound reward was offered. It took several months but eventually two witnesses stepped forward with information.

The twelve ringleaders of the Aldington Gang were arrested and sent to trial at the Maidstone Assizes – including George Ransley, Samuel Bailey, Robert Bailey, John Bailey and James Hogben.

It was a sensational trial, attended by large crowds. Coaches to Maidstone were overbooked as onlookers came in from surrounding farms and villages.

The difficulty for the Prosecution was proving who had fired the fatal shot. It was a dark moonless night with many darkened figures of smugglers and supporters.

The Defence suggested a compromise that reads like a modern plea bargain. The men were also charged with smuggling, which carried the same death sentence as murder. If the men pleaded Guilty to the smuggling charges, would the Crown drop the murder charge?

This was agreed and sentence was passed – death, with a recommendation for mercy. On the morning of the execution the sentence was commuted to transportation for life. George Ransley, Samuel Bailey, John Bailey and James Hogben were transported to the convict colony of Van Diemen's Land, where they served their sentences as welcome farm labourers, then took up land holdings, bought pubs and became respected members of the community.

Robert Bailey was acquitted.

He and one other were up on the murder charge but not the smuggling charge. When the murder charge was dropped, he walked free. It was 1827.

Robert Bailey and his family moved into the Poor Houses of Mersham, where he stayed until his death in 1860. The family lived in a cottage within the grounds and it appears Robert may have had a role in managing the books. His eleven children grew up in the Poor Houses of Mersham.

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One of Robert's sons, John Bailey, married Eliza Hogben in 1855.⁵⁵

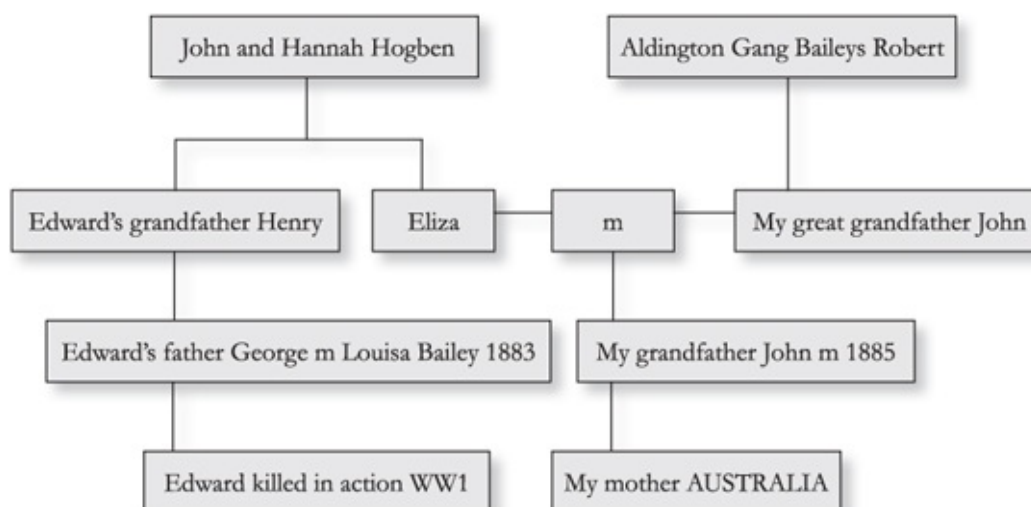
Eliza's children grew up around Bonnington.

In 1885 one of Eliza's sons, also John Bailey, married.⁵⁶

Time and scandal blurs the picture, but it appears that John's wife fell pregnant to a

boarder at the same time as John's mistress fell pregnant to John. Divorce was discussed but not agreed upon.

John Bailey left England with his pregnant mistress and started a new life and a new family in Australia.



Eliza Bailey nee Hogben had a brother Henry Hogben.

Henry's children also grew up around Bonnington.

In 1883 one of Henry's sons, George, married Louisa Bailey⁵⁷ and stayed on in Bonnington, raising his children there.

He and Louisa had four daughters and two sons. In 1901 they were living in Lawson Cottage in Bonnington; Edward was 4, and his younger brother was just a baby.⁵⁸

The daughters married or went into service. The sons went off to war.

One served as a stoker in the Royal Navy and survived.

The other, Edward George Hogben, fought at Gallipoli before being killed in action on the Somme at the age of 20.

• • • • •

Edward George Hogben was born two days before Christmas 1896.⁵⁹

He grew up in a family of farm labourers, living in the Lawson Cottages in Bonnington from the time he was born until he joined the army.

Like his sisters, he went to school from age 4 to 13, but by 14 his occupation on the 1911 census was 'farm work lad employed about house etc'.⁶⁰

Despite their schooling the boys were destined to be agricultural labourers and the girls domestic servants.

Edith, the youngest of the sisters, was in service by the the time she was 16. She was one of seven domestic servants for a household of four – a man, his wife, his sister and his daughter. The servants included a cook, two lady's maids, a parlour maid, a kitchen maid and two housemaids – one of whom was Edith.⁶¹

By 1911 only Edward (14) and his brother were still at home with their parents.

Edward enlisted on 1 September 1914 at Shorncliffe and became Private Edward Hogben 26767 with the Hussars of the Line.⁶² His father was a waggoner and it seems reasonable to assume that Edward was a good horseman. He'd grown up on the farm, and was tall and fit – just under 6 feet tall on his enlistment papers.

His description on enlistment shows his height and chest measurements, and his religion as Church of England. It also shows his age as 19 years 8 months instead of 17 years 8 months. It seems he lied about his age rather than this being an error in transcription; his age is consistently shown as 19 instead of 17 on signed handwritten forms from 1914.

He answered the typed questions on his enlistment form, but gave a provisional answer to the agreed period of service which was 3 years with the following handwritten proviso:

3 or during period of war.

If employed with hospital depots or mounted units as clerks etc you may be retained after the termination of hostilities until your services can be spared but such retention shall in no case exceed 6 months. If however the war is over in less than 3 years you will be discharged with all convenient speed.

This was signed by Edward Hogben.

Three years later Edward Hogben was killed in action on the Somme.

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It is not clear from the faded service records when Edward Hogben 26767 of the Hussars of the Line became Edward Hogben 22900 with the 1st Battalion of the Border Regiment. What is clear from his service records is that he spent the first 14 months on home defence.

The 1st Battalion of the Border Regiment sailed to Alexandria in late March 1915, then on to Mudros, and landed at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915.

Edward Hogben was not with them at that first landing according to his service records and his medal card.⁶³ It was seven months before he joined them at Gallipoli.

On 24 November 1915 he embarked at Devonport for the Dardenelles as part of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force.

This was a critical time on the Peninsula.

*The British Government finally sanctioned an evacuation on 7 December. Unfortunately by this stage a heavy blizzard had set in making such an operation hazardous ... The evacuation of Helles was conducted – comprising 35,000 men – from late December until 9 January 1916.*⁶⁴

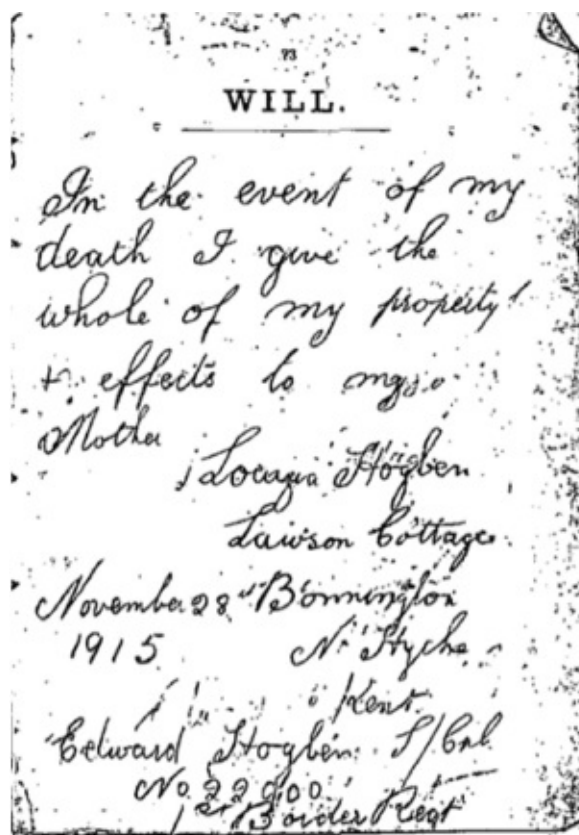
It seems likely that Edward Hogben was part of the evacuation from Helles, firstly to Mudros then on to Alexandria by 16 January 1916.

His service record shows he was with the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force from 24 November 1915 until 10 March 1916.

He left Alexandria for France in March 1916 and served with the 1st Border Regiment on the Somme from 11 March 1916.

He was promoted to Corporal in July 1916 while serving in France. In November he was sent on a bombing course. He returned from the course three days before Christmas, the day before his 20th birthday.

A month later he was killed in action. His body was not recovered.



He is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial, the memorial to the missing on the Somme. He has no known grave.

He was 20 years old.

... ..

Edward Hogben made his Will four days into the journey to Gallipoli in 1915. He left everything to his mother Louisa Hogben nee Bailey.⁶⁵

Among the items sent to his mother after his death were 14 photos. Perhaps one day they will surface like the mandolin, miraculously.

Footnotes

- 1 ARA: Artists Rifles
- 2 Wiki: Artists Rifles, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artists_Rifles accessed 30 June 2014
- 3 CWGC: Pearson Kenneth Herbert, 766615
- 4 FMP: De Ruvigny, Pearson Kenneth Herbert, 1918
- 5 May: 37
- 6 FMP: Births, Pearson Kenneth Herbert, 1899, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, England
- 7 FMP: 1901 Census, Pearson Kenneth Herbert, PRO RG 13, Cold Ash, Newbury, Berkshire, England
- 8 FMP: 1911 Census, Pearson Kenneth Herbert, PRO RG 14, Cold Ash, Newbury, Berkshire, England
- 9 Felsted: Roll of Honour, Pearson Kenneth Herbert

- 10 Stockport 1914-1918: Adshead Herbert, London Regiment Artists Rifles
- 11 Fuller: Bedfordshire Regiment 20-28 August 1918
- 12 VUW: NZ medical service Bapaume 21-31 August 1918.
- 13 Jerrold: 212
- 14 CWGC: Arnold Richard, 2362
- 15 FMP: 1901 Census, Arnold Richard Thomas, East Barnet, Barnet, Middlesex, England
- 16 FMP: 1911 Census, Arnold Richard Thomas, Great Clacton, Tendring, Essex, England
- 17 TNA: Medal cards, WO 372/1/120170
- 18 BBC: Battle of the Somme
- 19 Mason: Royal West Kent Regiment
- 20 GWF: In from the cold
- 21 CWGC: Lowrie, 9890
- 22 Edinburgh University: Roll of honour, Lowrie
- 23 SP: 1911 census, Lowrie George, Morningside, Edinburgh City, Midlothian, 685/06 063/00 006
- 24 SP: Deaths, Lowrie Janet Crichton, 1894, Galashiels, Selkirk, 775/00 0124
- 25 SP: Marriages, John Lowrie and Jane Smart, 1893, Galashiels,, Selkirk, 775/00 0048
- 26 School Guide Edinburgh: Boroughmuir High
- 27 Boroughdale School: Roll of Honour, Lowrie George
- 28 CWGC: Bell, 125333
- 29 Yorkshire Regiment: Crathorne Village
- 30 FMP: 1891 Census, PRO RG 12, Bell Gertrude M C, Coatham, Guisborough, Yorkshire, England
- 31 FMP: 1891 Census, PRO RG 12, Bell Richard W, Crathorne, Stokesley, Yorkshire, England
- 32 FMP: 1911 Census, PRO RG 14, Bell Thomas Hugh, East Rounton, Stokesley, Yorkshire, England
- 33 FMP: 1901 Census, PRO RG 13, Bell Richard W, Crathorne, Stokesley, Yorkshire, England
- 34 FMP: 1911 Census, PRO RG 14, Waller Christiana, West Rounton, Welbury, Yorkshire (North Riding), England
- 35 CWGC: Morgan 21382
- 36 FMP: 1881 Census, Morgan Edward, Stanton Lacy, Ludlow, Shropshire
- 37 FMP: Marriages, Edward Morgan and Annie Hill, 1892, Church Stretton, Shropshire, England
- 38 FMP: Births, Morgan Albert Arthur, 1893, Ludlow, Shropshire, England
- 39 FMP: 1901 Census, Morgan Albert, Diddlebury, Ludlow, Shropshire
- 40 FMP: 1911 Census, Morgan Albert, Diddlebury, Ludlow, Shropshire
- 41 TNA: Medal cards, Morgan Albert Arthur, WO 372/14/82524
- 42 CWGC: Gregory James, 2745
- 43 FMP: 1881 Census, Gregory Moses, Salford, Salford, Lancashire
- 44 FMP: 1891 Census, Gregory Moses, Salford, Salford, Lancashire
- 45 FMP: 1901 Census, Gregory Moses, Salford, Salford, Lancashire
- 46 FMP: Deaths, Gregory Moses, 1909, Salford, Lancashire, England
- 47 FMP: 1911 Census, Shakespere Thomas, North Manchester, Prestwich, Lancashire
- 48 FMP: 1911 Census, Gregory Hugh, Salford, Salford, Lancashire
- 49 FMP: 1911 Census, Gregory James, Salford, Salford, Lancashire
- 50 Baker, C. 1995-2014.
- 51 TNA: Medal cards, Gregory James

- 52 CWGC: Hogben Edward, 22900
- 53 Teignmouth: Smugglers Vol II, 153
- 54 Douch: 63
- 55 FMP: Marriages, John Bailey and Eliza Hogben, 1855, East Ashford, Kent, England
- 56 FMP: Marriages, John Bailey and Ellen Hammond, 1855, East Ashford, Kent, England
- 57 FMP: Marriages, George Hogben and Louisa Fanny Bailey, 1883, East Ashford, Kent, England
- 58 FMP: 1901 Census, Hogben Louisa, PRO RG 13, Bonnington, East Ashford, Kent, England
- 59 KF: Hogben Edward, Bonnington, Kent
- 60 FMP: 1911 Census, Hogben Louisa, PRO RG 14, Bonnington, East Ashford, Kent, England
- 61 FMP: 1911 Census, Hogben Edith Annie, PRO RG 14, East Ashford, Kent, England
- 62 FMP: Army service records, Hogben Edward, WO 363, Bonnington, Kent, England
- 63 TNA: Medal cards, Hogben Edward, WO 372/9/232376
- 64 FWW: Evacuation Anzac Cove
- 65 [GOV.UK](#): Wills, Hogben Edward, 1917

ANZAC

Scott's drum





Scott's drum is a watertight container for snuff. It is 3.9cm across by 1.8cm deep.

The King's head, carefully cut from a penny, has been soldered to the top between the metal drumsticks. The drum reflects the call to arms 'for King and Country'.



The drum has a 1.4cm hole in the base with a decorated brass cap that screws off. A fine rust-coloured powder falls from it on inspection; it has a faint smell of menthol.

A chain from the cap connects the drum to the brass fob.

The fob is 4.6cm at its widest point and 3.8cm from top to bottom. It has the letters NZR riveted to it and is counterstamped 40379 W K SCOTT.

Construction

The body of the drum is a hollow cylinder of ribbed brass – there are no side joins. The top and bottom are copper.

The hole in the base of the drum is lined with a 0.4cm deep circle of threaded brass.

The cap is a brass bolt with a hexagonal head. A further thin hexagonal brass plate is soldered to the top and decorated with flowers stamped from Os. A brass loop is soldered to this to hold the chain.

W.K.SCOTT
40379
NZR

The Research

SCOTT, WILLIAM KENNETH

Rank: Rifleman

Service No: 40379

Date of Death: 06/04/1918

Age: 23

Regiment/Service: New Zealand Rifle Brigade 2nd Bn.

Grave Reference: I. K. 10.

Cemetery: Gezaincourt Communal Cemetery Extension

Additional Information: Son of William and Bridget Scott, of Paeroa Rd., Waihi, New Zealand.¹

William Kenneth SCOTT 1894 – 1918

William Kenneth Scott sailed halfway round the world to fight for the lands of his parents. The following information comes from his service records in the New Zealand Archives.²

His father emigrated from Scotland around 1877. His mother emigrated from Ireland around 1879. They married and settled permanently in the North Island of New Zealand.



RFN. W. K. SCOTT of Waitekauri

William was born there on 10 July 1894. By the time he joined up he was working as a survey hand.

He was 22 and single when he joined the NZ Expeditionary Force in 1916.

He spent several months in training, then sailed for England on the Corinthic calling at Cape Town on the way and arriving at Plymouth in June 1917.

The next day he went to Sling Camp, a training camp on Salisbury Plain. The camp was used by New Zealanders, who carved a giant kiwi in the chalk hills overlooking the camp.



From postcard of Sling Camp published by Thomas Illingworth & Co.

William Scott spent nearly a year in Sling Camp. Near the end of his training he was promoted to Lance Corporal.

He left for France in July 1917 and marched into Etaples four days later. A month later he was transferred to the NZ Rifles.

He was detached to the Lewis Machine Gun School for two weeks of training in early 1918.

Not long after he finished his training he made a Will.

He was wounded in action near Doullens two weeks later. He was admitted to the NZ Field Ambulance and then to No 29 Casualty Clearing Station where he died of his wounds the following day.

He was buried at Gezaincourt. He was 23.

... ..

On each anniversary of his death for many years a notice was published in the In Memoriam columns of the NZ newspapers, similar to the one below from the New Zealand Herald on 7 April 1924.

ROLL OF HONOUR.

*IN MEMORIAM. **SCOTT**;— loving memory of Rifleman William Kenneth. (Ken) Scott, who died of wounds received in France, April 6. **1918**. Ever remembered. — Inserted by his parents, sisters and brother.*

Comment

William Scott was not transferred to the New Zealand Rifles until after he marched into Etaples suggesting that his NZR fob was made while he was serving on the Somme. Given that all other music pieces in this collection belonged to men who died on the Somme, it seems likely that the drum was made there behind the lines.

The symbolism of the drum with the call to arms ‘for King and country’ is particularly poignant given that William Scott came from the other side of the world to fight for the King and country of his emigre parents.

Ginger's cello



The brass cello is 10cm long by 2.7cm across and 1cm deep. Unlike other music pieces in the collection, the cello does not serve as a container.

Attached by a chain (which may replace an earlier leather strap) is a cylinder of brass which stands 4.6cm without the stopper; the stopper is 2.2cm high. Upright, this cylinder could serve as a cigarette holder.

The base of the cylinder is a silver French coin engraved H.G.GINGER 44 1652. The cylinder has a brass stopper with a lead core.

Construction

The front and back of the belly of the cello are soldered to the top and bottom of a single sidestrip of brass.

The fingerboard is a tapered piece of brass soldered to the top of the belly. It is strengthened by a second strip of brass riveted and soldered to the underside of the fingerboard and soldered to the side of the belly. This second strip is shaped at the end to represent the nut, pegboard and scroll. It also has a hole for the end of a chain.



The tailpiece and spike are soldered in place.

The cylinder is brass and sits in a wider brass base. A silver French coin is riveted and soldered to this base. The coin is etched H.G.GINGER and stamped with the numbers 44 and 1652.



The removable top is brass around a lead ball that seals the tube tightly. It has a brass cap with a central spindle to hold the end of the chain.

Comment

The cello is not functional. It is not a container and appears to be purely decorative – art for art’s sake.

The attached brass tube is the functional part of the piece.



The inventory sent to Ginger’s next of kin lists a cigarette holder among his personal effects. The brass tube could work as a cigarette holder, similar in concept to this cigarette holder made from bullets. It is copied from eBay for illustration purposes only and is not part of the collection.

The tube on Ginger’s piece stands firmly on its coin base and would hold a lit cigarette cleanly. With the lid in place to attach it as a fob, the holder is easily carried and ready for use, more practical in the trenches than an ashtray, and serving to hide the lit end of a cigarette temporarily if required.

H.G.GINGER

44

1652

The Research

GINGER, HERBERT GEORGE REGINALD

Rank: Private

Service No: 1652

Date of Death: 18/02/1917

Age: 20

Regiment/Service: Australian Infantry, A.I.F. 44th Bn.

Grave Reference: I. E. 22.

Cemetery: Trois Arbres Cemetery, Steenwerck

Additional Information: Son of Alfred Edward and Henrietta Ginger, of 47, The Drive, High Barnet, England.³

Herbert Ginger was just a teenager when he emigrated to Australia alone. He was still a teenager when he returned to fight for his country three years later.

Herbert George Reginald GINGER 1896 – 1917

Herbert Ginger was born in High Barnet, Hertfordshire in 1896.⁴

His father and brother worked in a tooth factory in London.⁵ By the time Herbert was 14 he was working as a printer's assistant.⁶

He left home alone at 16 to emigrate to Australia. In 1913 he travelled to Liverpool and boarded the Belgic bound for Western Australia. The lad who'd spent all his young life in the city described himself as a farm hand on his emigration papers.⁷

The Belgic docked at Fremantle and Herbert Ginger started a new life in Western Australia. He settled in Perth and found work as a despatch hand.

In January 1916 he enlisted in the AIF giving his father in High Barnet as his next of kin.⁸

He was old enough to leave home alone and travel to the other side of the world, but he needed his parent's or guardian's signature before he could enlist in the AIF.

He had already served six weeks with the 88th Infantry in Perth, a training unit of the Citizen Forces. Now he volunteered for the AIF and enlisted as Private Ginger 1652 in the 44th Battalion.

His unit left Fremantle on board HMAT Suevic on 6 June 1916 and arrived at Plymouth on 21 July 1916.

In the months that followed in England Herbert Ginger went AWOL three times and was punished accordingly:

OFFENCE Absent without leave from Tattoo 18.8.16 to Reveille 22.8.16. AWARD 5 days' detention TOTAL FORFEITURE 10 days' pay.

CRIME Absent without leave from Reveille 8.9.16 to 12.30pm 9.9.16 TOTAL FORFEITURE 7 days' pay

CRIME Absent from Reveille 25.9.16. AWARD 2 days confined to camp.

The following month he was transferred to the Signalling School for training. He was back with his unit a few weeks later and on 25 November 1916 he embarked at Southampton

for France.

In February 1917 he was wounded in action and treated by the 9th Australian Field Ambulance. He was admitted to the 2nd Australian Casualty Clearing Station with gunshot wounds to the thigh and calf and died of his wounds the following day.

He was buried in the Military Cemetery at Trois Arbres at Steenwerck, on the road to Armentieres in the north of France. He was 20.

... ..

On 20 April 1917, his father in High Barnet signed a receipt for a parcel of his son's effects.

The Inventory of Effects for the late 1652 Pte Ginger, H.G.H 44th Batt'n. A.I.F. listed the following items.

Discs2, Cigarette Holder, Steel Mirror, Wallet, Testament, Comb, Cigarette Lighter, Metal Wrist Watch & Strap, Badges 5, Letter, Photos.

Ladd's vesta case



The vesta case is hallmarked sterling silver – a professionally made piece. Engraved on the front in ornate flowing script are the initials EHL.



Attached to the case is a handcrafted brass ID tag. The hole is not symmetrical, and neither are the shoulders. One side of the tag is inscribed 5094 E.H.LADD.



The other side of the tag has the letters AFA stamped roughly on the etched flower and leaves.

Comment

This is a professionally made vesta case, possibly a parting gift for the soldier about to leave for war. The brass ID tag is handmade and added later.

E.H.LADD
5094

The Research

LADD, EDWARD WILDES HOLYOAK

Rank: Sergeant

Service No: 5094

Date of Death: 07/04/1917

Regiment/Service: Australian Field Artillery 12th A.F.A. Bde.

Grave Reference: II. J. 13.

Cemetery: Pozieres British Cemetery, Ovillers-la-Boisselle

Additional Information:⁹

I found Edward Ladd in the National Australian Archives.¹⁰ As I read through his file the story unfolded layer upon layer revealing one of the most compelling stories in this collection.

It is the story of a young man who fought at Gallipoli and survived only to die on the Somme. It is a story of mateship and courage under fire.

Edward Wildes Holyoak LADD 1889 – 1917

Edward Wildes Holyoak Ladd – ‘Ted’ to his friends – was born near Melbourne in 1889. He was one of six children, with four sisters and a younger brother Harry.¹¹



Edward Wildes Holyoak ‘Ted’ LADD
(1889-1917)

He left school at 14 to become an engraver and by the time war broke out he’d served 11

years of his apprenticeship.

Edward Ladd was one of the first to enlist. He was tall and slim with blue eyes, brown hair and a fair complexion. He had a scar over his right eye and a mark from a previous vaccination. In November he was accepted into the 12th Army Service Corps. He was 25.

He gave his mother Emily Ladd as his next of kin. Perhaps she gave him the sterling silver vesta case as a parting gift which he engraved in beautiful rolling script.

He sailed from Melbourne on the Chilka on 2 February 1915 and arrived at Alexandria in Egypt on 9 March. His 12th Army Service Corps was attached to the 3rd Light Horse Brigade who landed at Gallipoli without their horses on 12 May.

The noise was deafening. Their leader Chauvel

... was struck by the noise, which had intensified to the point of distraction....Some of the men at the front were not coping. Others were already deaf. It was a test of the coolest of nerves. Even soldiers prepared to commit the bravest acts in battle were a jangled mess because of the constant, nagging, at times eardrum-splitting whines, crashes, thuds and explosions ...¹²

Chauvel contracted pleurisy.

Doped with morphine, he was placed on the hospital ship Gascon and taken away from Anzac Cove. He was hospitalised in Alexandria and took convalescences at Heliopolis over seven weeks.

Edward Ladd suffered a similar fate – except that his pleurisy turned to pneumonia.

Edward was evacuated to Egypt and admitted to the First Australian General Hospital in Heliopolis.

His condition deteriorated rapidly and he became dangerously ill. He was discharged from duty. There were fears he might not survive and a telegram was sent to his mother.

*REGRET REPORTED PRIVATE E.W.H.LADD DANGEROUSLY ILL (PNEUMONIA)
WILL ADVISE UPON RECEIPT FURTHER PARTICULARS*

He hovered on the edge of death for weeks. As well as pneumonia, Edward showed signs of severe concussion – deafness, constant headaches and blurred vision. The hospital records describe his weakening condition.

*Contracted pneumonia had a bad attack – Is deaf in one ear & lost a lot of weight –
Complains of constant headache – does not make any progress in convalescence.*

A further entry adds:

*Patient is weak & anaemic + does not seem to make any progress in his convalescence
– Gets very short of breath on exertion & there is some thickening of the pleura. Also
initial blurring after exertion.*

Finally, after five weeks in hospital his case was put before the Medical Board. A formal report was prepared, repeating this information and adding

<i>Disability</i>	<i>Pneumonia</i>
<i>Origin of Disability</i>	<i>12th May 1915</i>

Active Service

The form titled ‘Opinion of the Medical Board’ had detailed instructions in small print.

On Ladd's form, the Board changed the cause of disability from 'Active Service' to 'Ordinary Military Service' to ease the rate of pension, perhaps because the disability was pneumonia which didn't manifest itself till he was back in Heliopolis.

To what specific conditions do the Board attribute it? Strain and Exposure.

(a) *Intemperance?* No

Is the disability permanent No

Do the Board recommend

(a) Discharge as permanently unfit? No

or (b) Change to Australia? Yes

Origin of Disability 12th May 1915"

• • • • •

It seems likely that this is the period when he decorated the brass ID tag and attached it to his silver vesta case, inscribing it E.H.LADD 5094 and on the reverse AFA for the Australian Field Artillery.

• • • • •

He was promoted to Bombardier in July and Sergeant in August 1916.

In March 1917 he was recommended for a mention in dispatches.

Sergeant Edward Wildes Holyoak LADD – 12th A.F.A Brigade.

This N.C.O. has on several occasions shown devotion to duty under shell fire which has resulted in valuable work in connection with communications being done and consequent valuable information being obtained. On two occasions this N.C.O. has laid a telephone wire in NO MAN'S LAND personally and gone forward with the Infantry in an advance and established communication immediately.

It was not awarded.

... ..

A month later, on 6 April 1917, he was in a gun pit alongside his mates near Nereuil when a shell exploded nearby.

Edward Ladd was mortally wounded.

There were fears that more shells would explode within the ammunition dump and the order was given to get him to safety. Three of his mates rushed to his rescue dragging his badly wounded body back through the line of fire to the field ambulance behind the lines.

It was only then that one of his rescuers – short, stocky Robert Pearce – collapsed. Robert Pearce himself had been wounded by the same shell and had eight wounds to his leg.¹³

Edward was admitted to the 13th Field Ambulance with a compound fracture of the left femur and gunshot wounds to his right leg. He was transferred to the Casualty Clearing Station and died of his wounds the following day.

Robert Pearce was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for his actions that day. His DCM was approved by General Birdwood a few weeks later -

... for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. Although himself severely wounded he assisted in removing a wounded comrade to a place of safety.

His citation reads -

At Nereuil on the morning of the 6th April 1917 two enemy shells burst in No.1 gun pit exploding a dump of 200 rounds of 18 pdr shell, severely wounding No. 5094 Sgt Ladd and wounding No. 20864 Sgt PEARCE in the leg in eight places.

The O.C. of the Battery called for assistance to get Sgt Ladd away as he was in danger of being hit again by the exploding shell in the dump.

Sgt Pearce with two other men helped to carry Sgt Ladd away to safety. Sgt Pearce collapsed and it was found that he himself had been wounded in eight places in the leg but had refrained from saying so until Sgt Ladd was in safety.

... ..

Edward Ladd and Robert Pearce were opposites in many ways.

Edward was over 6 foot tall and lanky. Robert was short and stocky – a mere 5 foot 4 inches. Edward was 25 when he enlisted, Robert was 34.

Edward was a city person born and bred in Melbourne, working as an engraver. Robert, born in Cornwall, was a station manager on one of the biggest cattle stations in Outback Queensland – Headingly Station at Urandangie – a legendary Kidman property. It was remote and isolated even in Outback terms.

Edward was recruited in Melbourne. Robert was recruited in Cloncurry in far west Queensland and traveled 600 miles to Townsville to enlist.



Headingly Station, Queensland

How strange then that these two men, born on opposite sides of the world and leading such different lives, should have their fate decided by the same shell in the trenches of the Somme.

Robert's injuries were so severe that after convalescence in England he was invalided back to Australia. His war was over.

... ..

It wasn't quite over. Perhaps he'd made a promise to his dying mate. Almost a year after returning to Australia he wrote this letter.

Dear Sir,

Would you be good enough to give me the address of the late Sergt Ladd's people, I would like to write to his Mother. Sergt Ladd was Signaller Sergt in the 12th Brigade 45th Battery Field artillery. I do not know his number but he was badly wounded in Nereul Gully just before Bullecourt, and died I think in number 3 Casualty Clearing Station. I was wounded by the same shell. I shall be very pleased if you can give me the desired information.

Yours faithfully

R.C.Pearce

The letter was signed 'Late Sergt R C Pearce 12th F A B (20864) 45th Battery', late in this case indicating he had been discharged.

The serial number on Robert Pearce's letter led to his file in the National Archives, where his act of bravery was recorded.

'When you get back, please tell my mother ...' There is no knowing the last words of Edward Ladd as he lay dying. But perhaps his mother drew comfort from the words of a fellow soldier who was wounded by the same shell, and who helped carry him from the battlefield. Her son did not die alone.

... ..

Edward Ladd – 'Ted' to his mates – was remembered for years in the Victorian newspapers.

His younger brother Harry enlisted in the same regiment and embarked for Egypt in June

1916. Harry served in France and was awarded the Military Medal. He survived the war and fought again in WW2.

Harry, a hero in his own right, named his first-born son Ted.

Sinclair's matchbox cover



The copper matchbox case may have been bought in Egypt. The decorative markings are designed to make the piece look like a book – a common style from that time.

The much cruder brass plaque has been added later, with J H SINCLAIR etched across the top and 2014 stamped in the circle around the central flower.



The case holds an empty box of Samaco Safety matches made in the USSR.



J H SINCLAIR
2014

The Research

SINCLAIR, JAMES H.

Rank: Sapper

Service No: 2014

Date of Death: 31/07/1917

Regiment/Service: Australian Engineers 5th Div. Signal Coy.

Panel Reference: Panel 7.

Memorial: Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial

Additional Information:¹⁴

James Haining SINCLAIR c1894 – 1917

James Haining Sinclair came from South Australia. The Advertiser, Adelaide's leading newspaper at the time, carried this article a month after his death.

THE LATE SIGNALLER SINCLAIR.

Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Sinclair, of Craigie Street Birkenhead, have received information of the death of their eldest son, Signaller James Haining Sinclair, who was in his 23rd year.

He was born at Alberton and spent his life in the Birkenhead district, where he was esteemed for his good comradeship and manly disposition. He was educated at Lefevre Peninsula public school, and was a member of the voluntary cadets for four years.

He joined the Naval Reserve and served with the Jervoisbridge naval guard at the outbreak of the war.

He enlisted in August 1915 and left Australia on February 22, 1916, as a signaller with the 14th Reinforcements of the 9th Light Horse.

He spent his 21st birthday on board the transport one day out from Fremantle.

On arriving in Egypt he volunteered for the artillery, and early in 1916 embarked for England, but was sent to France, where he remained until his death.

*A younger brother has served in France, but has been invalided home.*¹⁵

... ..

This article, presumably drawn from details supplied by his family, reflects the blurred details contained in letters home.

His service records in the National Archives of Australia fill out some of the details.¹⁶

James Sinclair in fact spent months in Egypt in and out of hospital with Nile fever before leaving for England on 1 August 1916.

He spent time in Bulford Camp on Salisbury Plain, near the New Zealanders' Sling Camp, before heading for Etaples in early October 1916.

He was detached to the Signalling School in France in March 1917 and was killed in action on 31 July 1917.

... ..

Alongside the tragedy on James's file were some interesting records.

His medical examination shows 'he does not present with the following conditions, viz.:-

Scrofula; phthisis; syphilis; impaired constitution; defective intelligence; defects of vision, voice, or hearing; hernia; haemorrhoids; varicose veins, beyond limited extent; marked varicocele with unusually pendent testicle; inveterate cutaneous disease; chronic ulcers; traces of corporal punishment, or evidence of being marked with the letters D. or B.C.; contracted or deformed chest; abnormal curvature of spine; or any other disease or physical defect calculated to unfit him for the duties of a soldier.

He can see the required distance with either eye; his heart and lungs are healthy; he has the free use of his joints and limbs; and he declares he is not subject to fits of any description.'



He satisfied the medical examiners and had a job as a baker's carter but he still needed permission from his parents to go to war because he was under 21.

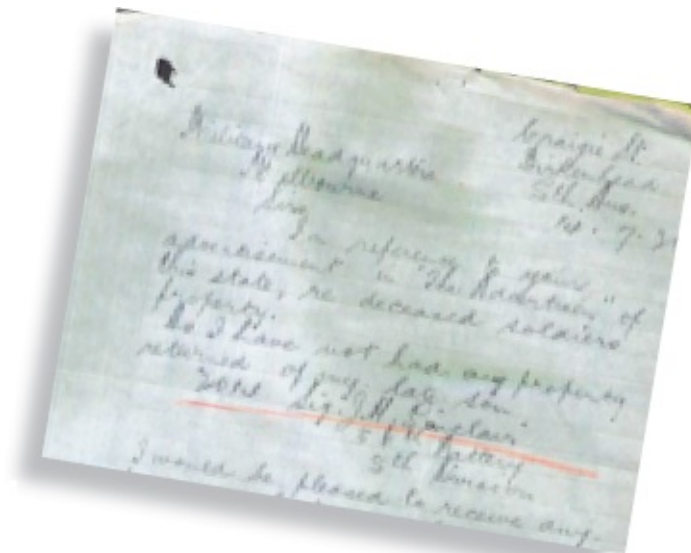
... ..

In the years that followed, there were questions about what happened to his personal effects.



After his death, a letter was sent to his mother informing her that his personal effects had been sent to her on the Barunga on 20 June 1918.

But years later, in 1921 his mother writes this letter, saying she has not received any of his effects:



The reply explains that unfortunately the Barunga was lost at sea with all cargo – the result of enemy action.

The troopship Barunga was torpedoed and sunk by a German U-boat in the North Atlantic on 15 July 1918. All 855 invalided troops travelling back to Australia were taken off before she sank but the cargo was lost.

... ..

There are other accounts of items missing from the Barunga – including this one from a mother whose son was killed in action in 1918 aged 23.¹⁷

Dear Sir

I was told several times that my son's belongings would be sent to me. He was killed on the 5th April two years ago and I have not heard what became of his baggage ... I saw a lot of luggage belonging to deceased soldiers in an auction room for sale and I would not like my boy's things to go to strangers.

Yours very sincerely Alice E Corcoran p.s. my son's name Lieutenant I.J. Barton MC, 52nd Battalion

She also was told her son's personal effects had been lost at sea.

I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 29th December, and in reply to state two packages of personal effects of your son ... containing articles as enumerated on the attached inventories, were included in a consignment shipped from England per SS 'Barunga', which vessel was lost at sea, with all cargo, as a result of enemy action. It is regretted no hope can be entertained for the recovery of these effects.

In the vast tragedy of the war, these were small hurts on top of so much pain. These letters from years after the war show the importance of small personal items to those who had lost loved ones.

... ..

It remains a mystery why Sinclair's matchbox cover was not lost at sea. The only effects on file 'Discs 3, Letters, Metal Souvenir' were despatched on 20 June 1918 and the Barunga sank on 15 July 1918.

It was not unusual to have personal effects sent in more than one parcel. There is however only one parcel recorded on Sinclair's file.

Hillman's matchbox cover



Hillman's brass matchbox cover is shaped to look like a book and has decorative markings on the spine. It is 5.7cm by 4.9cm by 2cm across the spine.



A pattern of arches has been etched on both the front and back with W.F.Hillman 3060 following the curves on the front and 1916 PK or POK on the back.

W.F.HILLMAN 3060
1916

The Research

HILLMAN, WILLIAM FRANK

Rank: Private

Service No: 3060

Date of Death: 16/10/1917

Regiment/Service: Australian Infantry, A.I.F. 49th Bn.

Panel Reference: Panel 7 – 17 – 23 – 25 – 27 – 29 – 31.

Memorial: Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial

Additional Information:¹⁸

William Frank Hillman looked like trouble from the start. He already had a bullet wound to the calf of his right leg when he enlisted in Brisbane as a 20 year old.¹⁹

He embarked on the Warilda on 5 October 1915, sailed to Egypt, and was taken on strength at Tel-el-Kabir in early 1916. He transferred to the 49th Battalion.

The day before he left Egypt for France with the 49th he went AWOL. His service record hints at what happened that day.

Crime: – A.W.L. on line of march Serapeum 4-6-16. (2) Neglectful loss of Web-equipment, rifle, bayonet, scabbard. 120 rounds of ammunition & clothing.

3

Enlistment of *Hillman William Frank* on Enlistment.

Army Form B. 103. Regimental Number 3080

Casualty Form – Active Service.

Regiment or Corps 10/9th 49th Battalion A.I.F.

Rank Pte. Surname HILLMAN Christian Name William Frank

Religion Christian Age on Enlistment years months

Enlisted (a) 15-6-15 Terms of Service (a) years months

Date of promotion to present rank Service reckons from (a)

Date of appointment to lance rank years months

Extended Re-engaged Qualification (b) or Corps Trade and rate

Occupation Signature of Officer.

Date	From whom received	Report	Place of Casualty	Date of Casualty	Remarks
		Embarked			
		Disembarked			
22-1-16	C.O. 9th Btn	Taken on strength	Tel-el-Kebir	21-1-16	AP3156 DO.10/1269
4-3-16	do	Transferred to 49th Btn	Habeita	25-2-16	AP5452 DO.22/3137
	C.O. 49th Btn	Taken on strength	Tel-el-Kebir	27-2-16	DO.1/420
6-6-16	B.C. Troops "Arcadian"	Proceeding to join B.C. Troops	Alexandria	6-6-16	LM5799
17-6-16	C.O. 49th Btn	Crime: - A.W.L. on line of march Serapeum 4-6-16. (2) Neglectful loss of Web-equipment, rifle, bayonet, scabbard. 120 rounds of ammunition & clothing Award: - Forfeits 1 days pay under A.A. Paye for unexpended value of arms & equipment (value to be assessed)	Harzeilles	18-6-16	R2089 AQ641 DO.5/2629
10-2-17	do	To Leave England	In the Field	9-2-17	D20/6
17-2-17	do	Rejoined from Leave	do	11-2-17	D20/7

(a) In the case of a man who has re-engaged (a), or entered into Section 51, Army Reserve, particulars of such re-engagement or enlistment will be entered.
 (b) Signature, Shipping Notice, etc.
 W. 103-B-1000 (Rev. 1-17) (GPO) C.P. & S. Ltd. Printed in Great Britain. 1P.T.O.

Loss of clothing? There's a story there somewhere. Perhaps his adventures in the Serapeum inspired the etching on the matchbox case where the arches on the case look like the arches of the Serapeum.

His name is etched around the arches suggesting the connection is personal. 1916 is on the back, the year he went AWOL and lost his clothing.

His records in the Australian War Memorial (AWM) told more about his background.²⁰

William Hillman hadn't been in Australia long when he enlisted in 1915 – he was still living at the Immigration Depot in Brisbane. This was very basic accommodation for new arrivals who were expected to move out within a week.



Inside the Serapeum. Photo © Templar 1307



A search revealed he was a relatively recent arrival.

In 1911 William Hillman was an inmate in Rossie House, 16 Queen Square in Holborn, one of the Homes for Working Boys in London.²¹

Working Boys' Homes

Working Boys' Home gained popularity in Victorian times. Typically, boys living in cottage homes or other institutions run by the Guardians of the Poor would leave school when they were 14 years old.

They would then be moved out of the cottage homes and into a working boys' home. They would have been trained in a skill or trade while at the homes, such as shoe-mending or carpentry and, in the working boys' home they would be encouraged, or

supported in getting a job. They would pay the home a proportion of their wages for their board and would perhaps have some money left over for themselves.

...

Generally boys would stay in the homes until they were settled in work or an apprenticeship or until they reached the age of 18.²²

I worked my way back through ancestry sites to find why William Hillman spent time in a boys' home.

William Frank HILLMAN c1895-1917

William Frank Hillman was born around 1895.

His father was a stableman in Weymouth, the son of a domestic servant who worked as a coachman.²³

William's parents lived with their inlaws in Weymouth after they were married.²⁴ Their first two children Percy and Lily were born in Weymouth. They then moved to London where William's father found work as a shop porter.²⁵

Five more children were born in London: Maud 1888, Fred 1892, William 1895, Rhoda 1897, and Emily 1899.

Early in 1901 their mother died.²⁶

The 1901 census shows William's father, now a widower, working as a horsekeeper in London, with Lily 17, Maud 13, Fred 9, William 6, Rhoda 4 and Emily 2.

Percy the oldest had left home, leaving Lily at 17 as notional mother of the family.

... ..

At 19 Lily married a blacksmith and had two children of her own.²⁷

When William's father died in 1909²⁸ the now orphaned children looked to Lily for support. Lily and her husband had a newborn baby of their own as well as their two young children. Fred and Rhoda moved in with Lily and her family.²⁹

William, motherless at 6 and orphaned at 14, became an inmate of the Boys' Home and worked as a shop assistant.³⁰

Whether he went to Lily's initially and got into enough trouble to warrant the Boys' Home is unclear. Somewhere in those years he suffered a gunshot wound to his leg.

... ..

By 1913 William was 18 and too old for the Boys' Home. He emigrated to Australia alone describing himself as a farm hand – despite having lived his life in London.

William Hillman left London on the steamship Roscommon bound for Brisbane on 23 July 1913. He travelled 3rd class, appearing on the passenger list in a group of fourteen young single men between the ages of 15 and 21 all classed as farm hands.³¹

It seems likely that his work after he arrived in Brisbane was itinerant, with the Immigration hostel useful as a permanent address.

... ..

He enlisted in the 9th Infantry Battalion of the AIF in Brisbane on 15 June 1915.

The Nominal Roll records his enlistment details. He gave the Immigration Depot in Charlotte Street as his address, and nominated Lily as his next-of-kin – ‘Mrs L. Sharman, sister, 14 Moreton Road Islington, London, N., England.’³² There were potential benefits for Lily, as the notes associated with the Nominal Roll explain.

The next of kin (NOK) could be anyone nominated by the soldier enlisting. Soldiers usually listed their mother, father, wife or other close family member. Usually, the next of kin was allotted a portion of the soldier’s Daily Pay, excluding Deferred Pay.

Private William Frank Hillman 3060 was bound for Egypt four months later.

... ..

The day after the escapade at the Serapeum, William Hillman embarked on the Arcadian bound for Marseilles and the battlefields of France and Flanders.

Apart from two short periods of leave in England, he served with the 49th Battalion on the Western Front from 12 June 1916 until he was killed in action in October 1917.

The Australian War Memorial gives the following account of the 49th Battalion during that period.

49th Battalion

... the 49th was predominantly composed of men from Queensland ...

Arriving in France on 12 June 1916, the 49th moved into the trenches of the Western Front for the first time on 21 June. It fought in its first major battle at Mouquet Farm in August and suffered heavily, particularly in the assault launched on 3 September.

The battalion saw out the rest of the year alternating between front-line duty, and training and labouring behind the line. This routine continued through the bleak winter of 1916-17.

Early in 1917, the battalion participated in the advance that followed the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line, supporting the 13th Brigade’s attack at Noreuil on 2 April.

Later in the year, the focus of the AIF’s operations moved to the Ypres sector in Belgium. There the battalion fought in the battle of Messines on 7 June and the battle of Polygon Wood on 26 September. Another winter of trench routine followed.

William Frank Hillman was killed in action on 16 October 1917 age 22. He has no known grave.

... ..

Three months before he died, William Hillman made a Will. He left everything to his sister Lily.

Wilkinson's map



The brass map of mainland Australia is 6.3cm by 5cm. It is an amulet or pendant suggesting the call to arms – for King and country.

It bears the letters ALH for the Australian Light Horse and the head of George V cut from a penny.

It is inscribed W.WILKINSON 751.

Construction

The map is cut or stamped from a flat piece of brass.

The bevelled brass letters are soldered to the map and riveted at the corners. The copper head is also soldered and riveted to the map.

The inscription W.WILKINSON above ALH appears to be etched by hand, with punch marks at the top and bottom of strokes. 751 is etched below the King's head.



There is a large brass ring for the chain. It loops through the hole in the map and is soldered permanently closed.

Comment

Wilkinson's map may well have been made during his long convalescence at Abbassia. The brass template is reasonably accurate and appears to have been made under controlled conditions, perhaps even supplied to patients. The King's head cut from a penny shows a more amateur craftsmanship, and the etching of name and number are done freehand rather than stamped from armourers' stamps.

W.WILKINSON
ALH
751

WILKINSON, WILFRED

Rank: Trooper

Service No: 751

Date of Death: 18/06/1918

Age: 23

Regiment/Service: Australian Light Horse 1st

Grave Reference: H. 83.

Cemetery: Jerusalem War Cemetery

Additional Information: Son of Frank and Emily Selina Wilkinson, of Sorrel St., Parramatta, New South Wales.
Native of Bowna, New South Wales.³³

It was possibly innocence that led Wilfred Wilkinson to months of ostracism and isolation in a foreign land far from home.

Wilfred WILKINSON 1895 – 1918

Wilfred Wilkinson was born in 1895 in Bowna, a small country town on the banks of the Murray River.

His father was a policeman in the nearby town of Howlong, a picturesque place according to travel brochures: 'The scenic approaches to the border town of Howlong follow the winding River Murray and billabongs festooned with pelicans and waterfowl. This is mixed farming country where tell-tale mullock heaps stand witness to the days when miners wrung gold from the ground'.³⁴

Wilfred grew up in this quiet place and became a baker.

He was one of the first to enlist when war was declared. He joined the Australian Light Horse in early December 1914 when he was 19.³⁵

He embarked in Sydney and sailed for Egypt on the Anglo Egyptian on 8 February 1915.

After training in Egypt he sailed for Gallipoli. Although he was in the Light Horse he went as infantry. Horses were unsuited to the gullies and cliffs of the Peninsula and only donkeys could manage the rugged terrain. The Light Horse served as infantry throughout the Gallipoli campaign.

Wilfred Wilkinson landed at Gallipoli on 15 July 1915.

He was wounded in action a few weeks later. A shrapnel wound to his wrist saw him evacuated on a hospital ship and admitted to the General Hospital at Heliopolis. A telegram was sent to his father at the Police Station at Howlong.

*REGRET REPORTED SON PRIVATE W WILKINSON ADMITTED 1st AUSTRALIAN
GENERAL HOSPITAL HELIOPOLIS SEPTEMBER 1st SHRAPNEL WOUND WRIST
WILL ADVISE UPON RECEIPT FURTHER PARTICULARS. SECRETARY DEFENCE
11/9/15.*

The telegram was followed by a formal letter updating Wilfred's condition.

After three weeks in hospital he was transferred to Helouan and discharged to light duties.

Six months later he was taken on strength with the 1st Australian Light Horse at Tukh el Khief and served with them for the next seven months.

In October 1916 he was admitted to hospital at Kantara. He had contracted gonorrhea in Alexandria. He was transferred to the venereal disease (VD) ward firstly at Kantara, then Port Said, and finally admitted to the Dermatology Section of the 14th Australian General Hospital at Abbassia.

In The ANZACS Patsy Adam-Smith describes the treatment of venereal disease.³⁶

This 'wilfully contracted disease' bore a terrible stigma ... the primitive measures taken against it were grim. The orders issued to the 'military guard' of the barbed wire compound in which venereal cases were camped on the Egyptian desert at Mena were:

'All patients will wear a white band on the right arm. The hospital is in quarantine and the O.C. guard will take all measures to ensure its isolation.

He will post four sentries, a flying picket will move among the tents and a picket on the southern side of the hospital near the latrines.

He will be responsible that the sentries do not speak to the patients, that no patient is allowed to leave the hospital lines or receive food or other articles from outside; that no visitors are allowed into the lines, that any unauthorised person entering or leaving is placed in the guard room'.

She goes on to quote Major B.T.Zwar of the Australian Army Medical Corps, who opposed the treatment and its consequences.

"This punitive method of treatment regarded the contraction of VD as a crime to be punished. The man must lose his pay and the hospital must be a penitentiary to impose a dread of the consequences of sexual misconduct. The man must have his disgrace kept well before him: it must be well branded in his pay book.

The natural consequence – concealment of disease – was bound to follow but was to be heavily punished if detected. The patient was made to feel like a criminal and the deterrent motive appealed to was fear, fear of losing pay, fear of being found out by his family, of losing the respect of other men, fear of the grisly sights and circumstances of a VD hospital. Complete loss of self-respect tending to reckless living often resulted.'

Wilfred Wilkinson spent 109 days in the VD compound at Abbassia before he was pronounced cured on 9 February 1917 and discharged to Moascar the following day.

... ..

He was taken on strength at Moascar on 10 February 1917.

He attended a signalling course in June and qualified as an instructor. He was transferred to the 1st Light Horse and taken on strength with the BEF on 21 June 1917.

He served with them in Palestine for a year before he was killed in action in the Jordan Valley on 19 June 1918.

He was 23.

Adams' tiny knife



Adams' knife is bone with a brass shaft and is 8cm long overall. The blade is wafer thin and tapered to a point. It is sandwiched between two brass plates that form the shaft. One side is inscribed J ADAMS ICC 571, the other 1916.

Construction

The bone of the blade is thin and runs from the point to the butt of the handle.

It is padded out with thin pieces of bone to a consistent width of 0.2cm between the two strips of brass that are glued in place to form the handle. There are no rivets.



J ADAMS
ICC 571
1916

The Research

ADAMS, JAMES ALEXANDER

Rank: Serjeant

Service No: 7/571

Date of Death: 27/12/1917

Regiment/Service: Imperial Camel Corps (New Zealand) 4th Bn.

Grave Reference: O. 87.

Cemetery: Cairo War Memorial Cemetery

Additional Information: Son of Mrs. Majory Adams, of 306, Bealey Avenue, Christchurch, New Zealand.³⁷

By the time James Adams carved his name on a tiny knife in Egypt or Palestine, he had already fought with the Anzacs at Gallipoli and been seriously wounded.

James Alexander ADAMS 1891 – 1917

James Alexander Adams was baptised in New Zealand in 1892.³⁸

He was tall and fit at 23, working as a labourer in Akaroa when war was declared. He was one of the first to enlist.

He joined others at the recruitment camp at the Abbington Show Grounds, completed his medical on 15 August and signed his Attestation papers on 20 August 1914, becoming Trooper Adams 7/571 in the Canterbury Mounted Rifles (CMR).³⁹

The CMR reached full strength within days of the start of recruitment – 26 officers and 523 other ranks. At full strength the regiment also had 608 horses – 528 riding horses, 74 draught horses and 6 pack horses.⁴⁰

By 15 October 1914 he was on his way to Egypt and Gallipoli. It was 50 days before he

disembarked at Alexandria. NZ History gives the following account of the journey.

The CMR travelled by ship from the South Island to Wellington in the North Island, where troops disembarked while the main convoy prepared for departure.

They embarked for Egypt on 15 October 1914 as part of the NZ Expeditionary Force (NZEf). The convoy stopped at Hobart on 21 October, and the men undertook a route March through the town before re-embarking and leaving the harbour the following day. On 28 October the NZ convoy arrived at Albany in Western Australia and joined up with the Australian Imperial Force (AIF).

The combined NZEF / AIF convoy left Albany on 1 November 1914 for the Indian Ocean, arriving in Colombo two weeks later. The men of the CMR were not granted leave.

The convoy left Colombo on 17 November, and faster ships including those carrying the CMR stopped for a day at Aden, before rejoining the convoy and arriving at Suez on 30 November.

On 3 December 1914, after passing through the Suez Canal, the CMR disembarked at Alexandria and travelled by train to Zeitoun Camp outside Cairo, where the regiment soon settled into 'a routine of training interspersed with sightseeing and sport'.

It took two weeks for the horses to become acclimatised, and then mounted training began.

... ..

For all the preparation, the CMR did not take their horses to Gallipoli, where the terrain was steep and rugged, as shown in the photograph below from the Australian War Memorial.

Like the Australian Light Horse, the CMR landed without their horses and fought as infantry.

James Adams was part of the ANZAC landing at Gallipoli on 12 May 1915.

He was wounded at Walkers Ridge on 6 July 1915.



***View from Walker's Ridge down Mule Gully towards the sea, 27 August 1915.
Tethered in the bottom of the gully are mules used to transport supplies and wounded men. [AWM P02321.041]***

He had shrapnel wounds to the left thigh and made the torturous journey down from the ridge to the narrow beaches below, where he was taken aboard the hospital ship Gascon. On 18 July he was put ashore at Malta and admitted to the Floriana Hospital. On 11 August he was transferred to a convalescent hospital on Malta where he spent the next two months.

On 27 October 1915 he finally rejoined his unit at Mudros on the island of Lemnos, where ANZAC troops from the Gallipoli campaign were rested and reorganised. He was sufficiently recovered to be charged with disobedience of orders and breaking camp on 8 November at the Sarpi Camp near Mudros, and was punished accordingly. A month later he was promoted to Lance Corporal.

The day after Christmas 1915 he was back in Alexandria.

James Adams served in Egypt and Palestine for the whole of 1916. He was promoted to Corporal in April.

He was admitted to hospital at Bir el Maler for a week with enteritis, and for four days for debility at Kantara.

On 23 October 1916 he transferred from the CMR to the Imperial Camel Corps (ICC) as Sergeant James Adams and was posted to Moascar.

... ..

James Adams served with the ICC for more than a year before he was wounded on 28 November 1917.

He was admitted to the hospital at Kantara on 1 December with gun shot wounds to his right shoulder and transferred to the British Hospital at Abbassia on 3 December. By 4 December he was listed as dangerously ill.

He hovered near death in the days that followed, still dangerously ill on 15 December.

On 22 December he was put aboard a ship at Abbassia bound for New Zealand and home but died of his wounds before the ship set sail.

James Alexander Adams died of penetrating gunshot wounds to the left arm and chest two days after Christmas 1917.

Donald's letter opener and pencil



Donald's letter opener is bone and copper 15.3cm long. The copper plate on the front is inscribed T A DONALD 6952 16th. On the back is a curved piece of copper with the cutout word AUSTRALIA.

A hole in the end of the handle allows for a chain or string or leather strap (the original may have been replaced).



With the knife is a commercially made silver pencil holder containing a sharpened Johann Faber pencil made in Bavaria. The case is approximately 8cm long when closed. There are hallmarks on one side. The other side has very faint engravings JGG 1906 in such ornate flowing script that it is difficult to decipher the letters accurately.

Construction

The knife is a single piece of shaped bone from the point of the blade to the tip of the handle.



The two inscribed strips of copper are recessed slightly into the bone and glued and riveted either side of the handle.

T A DONALD
6952
16th
AUSTRALIA

The Research

DONALD, THOMAS ALAN

Rank: Sergeant

Service No: 6952

Date of Death: 08/08/1918

Age: 20

Regiment/Service: Australian Infantry, A.I.F. 16th Bn.

Grave Reference: IV. H. 20.

Cemetery: Heath Cemetery, Harbonnieres

Additional Information: Son of David and Sarah Louisa Donald, of Newcastle Rd., Northam, Western Australia.⁴¹

Years after his death, Thomas Donald's mother desperately wanted to know where her son was buried: *'I saw in more than one paper that relatives were asked not to enquire but...'*

Thomas Alan DONALD c1898 – 1918⁴²

Thomas Donald was born in Western Australia around 1898.

He grew up in Northam in the wheatbelt area northeast of Perth and became a bank clerk.

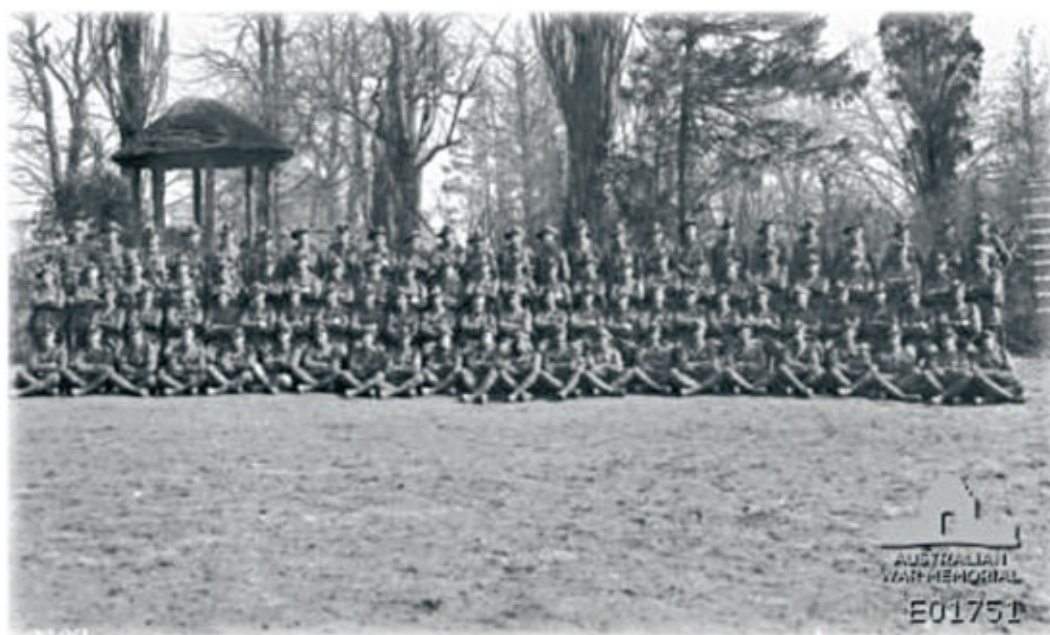
He was tall and fit and by the time he enlisted at the age of 18 he had already served 4.5 years in the Senior Cadets.

He left Australia on the Berrima two days before Christmas 1916 and disembarked at Devonport, England in mid February 1917.

It was three months before he left for France, after spending time in hospital for influenza. He was transferred to the 16th Battalion and moved in to Etaples. During the next few months in France he was promoted several times.

In January 1918 he was detached to the Australian Corps Gas School for six days' training before rejoining his unit.

The following photo from the Australian War Memorial was taken on the Western Front. It shows the NCOs of the 16th Battalion who survived until the last year of the war. Thomas Donald is in the back row, first on the left.



Photographer Unknown Australian Official Photographer Copyright expired – public domain

Object type Black & white – Glass original whole plate negative

Place made Western Front: Western Front (Belgium), Messines Area, Neuve Eglise

Date made 12 March 1918

Description

Group portrait of the NCOs of the 16th Battalion.

Left to right, back row: 6952 Sergeant (Sgt) Thomas Alan Donald (killed in action 8 August 1918 at Mericourt);...

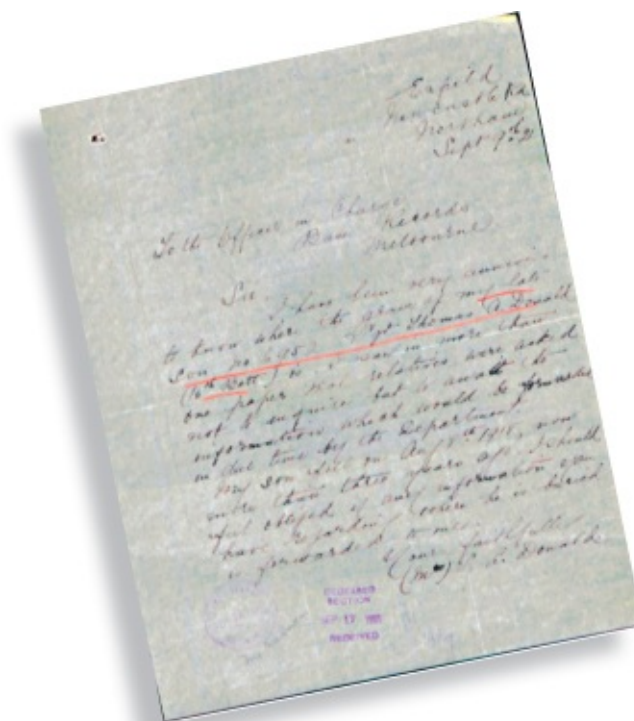
The full list of names is below, with those in red showing those who died before the Armistice. The print was made on 12 March 1918; there are two deaths before that date, so the photograph was taken before 31 January 1918.

Left to right, back row: 6952 Sergeant (Sgt) Thomas Alan Donald (killed in action 8 August 1918 at Mericourt); 2073 Corporal (Cpl) G. E. Smith MM; 2648 Cpl V. B. Currie MM; 2628 (2628A) Sgt William Gibson Bull (killed in action 16 August 1918 at Guillecourt); 391 Cpl W. H. Munro (O.T.B. 1 October 1918); 458 Cpl R. B. Baker; 2680 Sgt R. Bassham MM; 3553 Cpl L. Smyth; 34 Cpl G. W. Cadwallader MM; 6949 Sgt W. Marshall MM; 5657 Cpl A. E. Johnson; 5123 Cpl John Edward Jennings (killed in action 8 August 1918 at Mericourt); 3894 Sgt J. Elliott MM and Bar; 7079 Cpl Wesley John Cooke (killed in action 31 January 1918 at Heburterne); 3388 Cpl H. O'D. Kelly; 3415 Sgt A. T. H. Bloom MM; 167 Cpl R. Wheeler (wounded); 2827 Cpl Arthur William Roeszler (killed in action 8 August 1918); 2202 Sgt W. Dinnie MM; 3389 Cpl H. R. Bliss; 743 Cpl C. McQuade MM; 787 Cpl J. Loughlan; 1977

Sgt J. Butler MM; 750 Cpl W. Barker MM; 4773 Cpl L. J. Carey. Third row: 1183 Cpl P. Jenkins MM; 2781 Cpl R. Bennett MM; **5825 Cpl Edward George Sergeant (killed in action 5 March 1918 at Hebuterne)**; 6072 Cpl G. E. Payne MM and Bar; **650 Cpl George Ball MM (killed in action near Hamelet 4 July 1918)**; 5791 Sgt P. G. Trotter; 1948 Sgt A. T. King; 3508 Sgt D. Lester; 5394 Company Quartermaster Sergeant (CQMS) J. P. R. Manners MM; 1006 Sgt A. H. Beck; 2310 Sgt H. L. Thompson DCM; 664 Sgt C. L. Russell; 6946 C. W. Bradshaw MM; 225 Sgt D. Elliott; 1133 Sgt G. Brackenbridge MM; 1112 Sgt G. Yeates DCM; 2913 Sgt W. Murray DCM MM; 209 Sgt A. Mackie MM; 1465 Sgt V. Drew; 5973 Cpl S. Woodbrook; 3050 Cpl E. G. Hobbs; 1353 Cpl E. J. Millar MM; **618 Cpl Walter Westley Tilbrook MM (killed in action at Hebuterne 1 April 1918)**; 4609 Cpl F. S. Gladstone; **4199 Cpl Thomas Albert John Eldridge (killed in action at Hamel near Vaire Wood 22 June 1918)**. Second row: 471 Sgt L. H. Atkinson; **157 Sgt Horace Patrick Wilson (died of wounds Main Dressing Station 26 June 1918. Buried at Amiens)**; 1713 Sgt Archibald Leslie P. Ey; 3037 Sgt Leonard Ignatius Rzeszkowski MM; 6276 Sgt W. E. Inglis MM; 4791 Sgt F. Jordan; 11462 Sgt T. Corbett; 3556 Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant (RQMS) D. Smith; 341 Sgt S. McGrath MM; 1187 Company Sergeant Major (CSM) F. Luck; 228 Company Quartermaster Sergeant (CQMS) P. Grant MSM; **1701 Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM) James Henry Patrick Leunig DCM (later 2nd Lieutenant, died of illness 15 September 1918)**; **2250 Sgt Reginald Thomas Phillips (killed in action at Hebuterne 5 April 1918)**; 4007 Sgt R. Sweetman MM; 78 CQMS G. H. Martin MM; 1352 Temporary CSM F. R. Bullen; **1791 Sgt Reginald John Carter (died of illness 5 November 1918)**; 434 Sgt E. Head; 7006 Sgt A. Drabble; 1794 Sgt H. L. Choules MM; 18 Sgt W. H. Giles; 1809 Sgt C. G. Goad; 2815 Sgt H. E. Pittman MM and Bar; 7022 Sgt A. Oaklands. Front row: 5371 LCpl S. M. Longbottom; 6947 Cpl J. R. Hughes; 6349 LCpl E. W. Walker; **3411 LCpl Wallace William Beresford (died of wounds, 5th Casualty Clearing Station, 24 June 1918)**; 3006 LCpl W. J. Clarke; 3399 Cpl T. H. Axford VC MM; 3539 LCpl H. O'Donnell; 6790 Cpl G. D. Lummis MM; 2150 LCpl W. H. Barry; 2365 Cpl H. Schmidt MM; 1106 LCpl J. Walsh; 1317 LCpl F. G. Palmer; 3890 LCpl J. Douglas; 7400 LCpl W. A. Reardon; 6463 Sgt A. Wiseman; 6223 LCpl G. E. Bonser MM; 3540 Sgt J. Oxenham MM and Bar; 2612 Cpl F. K. Grant; 6047 Cpl F. A. B. Jones; 4947 Cpl H. H. Roots MM; 6953 Cpl A. Dewar; 1513 Sgt A. Pollard.⁴³

... ..

A letter from his mother three years later showed her heartache ‘I saw in more than one paper that relatives were asked not to enquire but to await the information which would be forwarded in due time by the Department ...’



The official reply with its O.H.M.S letterhead is brutal in its formality:

‘Failing the discovery and identification of the actual remains...’

... ..

There was perhaps little solace when the answer finally came: Grave 20 Row H Plot 4.
So many rows, so many graves.

Denton's paper knife



The knife is carved from a single piece of wood 19.3cm long. A carved bone head of a stock animal is added to the end of the handle. A bone inlay carries the inscription V.DENTON 618.

The head is stunning in its fine detail. To some it suggests a sheep; others see it as a bull or cow.

Victor Denton was a stockman on his family's station as well as working as a blacksmith. There is every likelihood that he carved the head himself.

The guard is engraved with the letters ALH for the Australian Light Horse.

Comment

The carving shows considerable skill. A single piece of wood has been cut away leaving a thicker handle with a guard and a nicely tapered blade.

The handle is etched with deep stripes to give a firm grip. A recess is carved on one side of the handle for the inlaid piece of bone. The inscription is carved into the bone.



V.DENTON 618
ALH

The Research

DENTON, VICTOR

Rank: Trooper

Service No: 618

Date of Death: 31/05/1915

Age: 20

Regiment/Service: Australian Light Horse 2nd

Grave Reference: I. J. 5.

Cemetery: Beach Cemetery, ANZAC

Additional Information: Son of Thomas Peter and Alice Ann Denton, of Nobby, Queensland.⁴⁴

When young Victor Denton was killed at Gallipoli in 1915, the small farming community of Nobby were shocked at the death of one of their own. They raised funds to build the first known WW1 memorial in Queensland.⁴⁵

Victor DENTON 1894 – 1915⁴⁶

Victor Denton grew up on a farm at Nobby near Clifton, itself just a dot on the map between Warwick and Toowoomba in Queensland.

He was the youngest of seven boys in the Denton family.

The first four, including a baby born on the voyage, arrived in Australia with their parents on the Duke of Westminster in 1886.⁴⁷

The family settled near Nobby on the Darling Downs. This was good farming land west of the ranges.

Three more sons were born in Queensland; Robert in 1888, Ernest in 1892 and Victor in 1894.⁴⁸

By 1914 when war was declared the family structure had changed. Three of the older sons were married and their mother Alice had died.

Victor was the first of the sons to enlist.

At the age of 20 he was tall, fit and single, and working as a blacksmith. He already had experience in the cadets and with the 3rd Light Horse. He enlisted as a trooper in the 2nd Light Horse on 4 October 1914.



Victor Denton embarked for Egypt on the A42 Boorara a few days before Christmas 1914. It was an adventure for the young country lad. When the ship called at Colombo he went absent without leave and was fined five shillings and given extra duties for seven days. His file, like that of many others, is blank for the months that followed, so his story becomes that of the regiment.

The 2nd Light Horse disembarked at Alexandria and spent time in training camps in Egypt.

Although they were in Egypt by April they were not part of the first landings at Gallipoli – horses were unsuitable for the rugged terrain with its steep hills and stony gullies. The 2nd Light Horse landed at Gallipoli without their horses on 12 May 1915.

Shortly before he embarked, Victor Denton made a Will. His mother had died. He left everything to his brother Ernest Thomas, the closest to him in age.

The rest of his story is distilled in five contradictory lines on a card in his service file.

The card shows he was killed in action on 31 May 1915 on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

The next entries say he was wounded seriously on 31 May 1915 at Monash Valley but died two weeks later on 13 June 1915.

D E N T O N	Victor (Pte)	618	2nd L.H.R. 1st Rft
Surname	Other Names	Regimental No.	Unit
PURPORT.			AUTHORITY.
Embarked at Sydney per A42 "Forty Two" on 20/12/14.			
1/5/15 Killed in action, Gallipoli Pen. (E.E.)			MEFO. 2/1-15
31/5/15 Wounded seriously, Monash Valley.			M.E.F.O. 9 10/6/15
13/6/15 Died of wounds			MEFO 15 24/6/15
13/6/15. Buried by Chaplain G.Green Hillside Cem. Anzac.			(O) MEFO 68/4-15

All records on file agree that Victor Denton was buried in the Hillside Cemetery at Anzac Cove by Chaplain Green on 13 June 1915.

... ..

Cables were sent to his father, but in an act of unintended cruelty they included the following telegram sent the day after Victor was buried.

REGRET PRIVATE V.DENTON WOUNDED NOT REPORTED SERIOUSLY NO FURTHER PARTICULARS AVAILABLE WILL IMMEDIATELY ADVISE ANYTHING FURTHER RECEIVED.

SECRETARY DEFENCE

14/6/15

In the months that followed, Thomas Denton sought answers through his federal member of parliament. His heartache and false hope can only be imagined as questions were asked on parliamentary letterhead and answers came back saying 'the nature of his wound and the place where he died are at present unknown in this office'.

It was 1918 before the contradictions in Victor Denton's file were clarified. The paymaster in Brisbane sought confirmation of his date of death and was told 'The records show date of death of the above-named soldier as 31.5.15. Army Form B 103 shows 13.6.15 as date of burial.'

Even this fails to explain the 'not reported seriously' cable after his burial.

The sad truth is that the records may be right. The form from the Australian Field Ambulance states that Victor Denton was admitted to hospital with a bullet wound to the chest on 31 May 1915 and died the same day.

Another form has handwritten entries 'W'ded seriously Monash Valley 31/5/15' immediately followed by 'Buried by Chaplain G Green. Hillside Cemetery Gallipoli 13/6/15'. The bottom of the page is a medley of information drawn from different sources.

It has two entries that highlight the anomalies.

DIED OF WOUNDS. HMAS 'Gascon' 13/6/15 31/5/15 Cabled 24/6/15

*Buried Beach Cemetery Grave 2 Row 10 at the Southern point of Anzac Cove 31/5/15
Chaplain's Report Page 5'*

There are 63 pages on Victor Denton's file in the National Archives of Australia. What follows is one interpretation of what is recorded in those pages.

Victor Denton suffered a bullet wound to the chest in Monash Valley on 31 May 1915.

Mortally wounded, he was transported by the Field Ambulance to the hospital ship Gascon.

There were no medical stations on the narrow beaches of the Gallipoli Peninsula. Casualties were transported to hospital ships lying off the Coast and evacuated to Lemnos or Cairo if necessary.

Victor Denton died on the Gascon later the same day.

According to the diary of a nurse in *The ANZACS*, the Gascon was at Cairo on 7 June 1915,⁴⁹ so Victor Denton may have died after the ship set sail for Cairo. Perhaps his body remained aboard until the Gascon returned to Gallipoli, when it was taken ashore for burial on 13 June 1915 with a service by the Chaplain.

... ..

In accordance with his Will, Victor Denton's effects were sent to his brother Ernest in a brown paper parcel containing 'Disc. Knife and Chain. Letters. Pencil. Medal. Note-Books'.



*Wounded soldiers evacuated from Gallipoli arrive alongside the hospital ship Gascon.
AWM A02740 (copyright expired – public domain)*

It was Victor's father who acknowledged receipt of the parcel.

Enclosed find receipt for package received consigned to E.T.Denton. I Thos P. Denton his father received the package – the said E.T.Denton is at present on active service in Egypt.

I am yours faithfully

Thomas P. Denton

Ernest Denton joined up six weeks after Victor died,⁵⁰ when questions and doubts about the circumstances of Victor's death were still unresolved.

Ernest followed Victor's path to Egypt. After training he was taken on strength with the Australian Camel Regiment at Abbassia.

A year later he was invalided back to Australia suffering from bilharziosis, a disease contracted from the contaminated waters of the Nile – described in Wiki as the 'second most socioeconomically devastating parasitic disease after malaria'.

Ernest Denton survived the war and the disease, and in 1919 was married in his home town of Nobby.

... ..

The death of Victor Denton resonated in the farming community of Nobby.

Today, the Victor Denton War Memorial is listed on a Queensland Government website for its historical importance. The text and image below is reproduced with permission from the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, Queensland Government.⁵¹

Queensland's first known WWI memorial doesn't stand in a public park or at a street intersection, it's in a small Darling Downs' cemetery. And unlike the others, it is in memory of one man.

Residents from the farming district of Nobby wanted to honour 20-year-old stockman Private Victor Denton who enlisted with the 2nd Light Horse Regiment just weeks after Australia announced it was at war in 1914. He died of battle wounds in June 1915 on the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey and was buried there. This memorial stands as a sign of the spontaneous highly visible grief that gripped the community and the nation.



The memorial is located within the Denton family plot, alongside the grave of Victor's

parents, in Nobby Cemetery. Toowoomba monumental masons Bruce Brothers created the concrete and stone memorial, the broken column symbolising a life cut short. It was unveiled November 1915 during a recruitment march from Warwick to Brisbane, by a group labelled the 'Dungarees'. The march's participants drew large crowds in every town.

Kelly's Tunnelling Corps box





Kelly's finger-jointed oak box is 24cm by 13cm by 7cm. It has two brass corners, a heavy leather handle, and a metal latch. The inscription N KELLY 2657 is burnt into the lid.

The box contains two inkwells, a spirit level and a pair of compasses. The inkwells cannot be easily removed; they are held permanently in place by brass bands fixed into the sides of the box. The spirit level is wedged firmly in place but is removable. The pair of compasses is free-floating; it has no designated place in the box.

When the box is carried or overturned, the ink bottles remain in place with the lids firmly closed. The spirit level also stays in place.

The box has a heavy leather strap and a metal latch. It is lined in patterned leather on the inside of the lid and the sides of the box. The floor of the box is lined in plain leather.



The spirit level is wood with a brass top. The initials W.T are scratched lightly into the brass.

The ink bottles have been well used with one showing traces of red ink and the other of blue. The caps are marked Made in England. The bottom of one is covered with dried red ink. The other has Velos visible in reverse through the glass base.

Construction

It appears that the box was heavily modified for the equipment. The box originally had a lift-off lid with protruding strips on the underside of the lid to stop it sliding off the box. One of these strips has been removed to allow for a continuous line of hinges 22cm long. The hinges are cut from a longer strip with regular 3cm segments; the segments at the ends are 1.5cm and 2.5cm.

The leather lining appears to be cut from a larger item such as a writing set for the desktop. The thickness of the leather gives soft pressure to hold the inkwell lids shut.

The brass straps holding the bottles in place do not fully penetrate the sides of the box. What are visible from the outside are four holes on the back that have been plugged closed. These do not match the interior, suggesting the box had different partitions originally.

The latch and strap were not part of the original box; these were added for portability when the box was modified.

Comment

The box has been customised to make a strong and practical container for equipment. This box belonged to a soldier in the Australian Tunnelling Corps, a miner who needed this equipment for working underground.

Maps, drawings, distances and levels were essential for the digging of tunnels and placement of explosives. The tools for calculations – the pair of compasses and the spirit level – and the means to record them with pen and ink were fundamental to the success of the tunnelling operation. The equipment needed to be portable and protected, able to withstand shocks.

The box provided that protection.

N. KELLY
2657

The Research

KELLY, NATHANIEL

Rank: Sapper

Service No: 2657

Date of Death: 14/09/1917

Age: 23

Regiment/Service: Australian Tunnelling Corps 1st Coy.

Grave Reference: V. C. 16.

Cemetery: The Huts Cemetery

Additional Information: Son of James and Catherine Kelly, of Station Hill, Bundamba, Queensland.⁵²

Nathaniel Kelly was 23 when he helped blow up Hill 60, an historic event that would be turned into a movie 100 years later.

Nathaniel KELLY 1894 – 1917

Nathaniel Kelly was the perfect candidate for the Tunnelling Corps – a young fit miner with experience in the coal mines around Ipswich west of Brisbane. And he already had 3 years in the militia with H Company of the 11th Infantry.

He was 21 when he enlisted in Ipswich in November 1915. After basic training he was sent to the Miners' training camp in Victoria before being assigned to the 3rd Reinforcements of the Mining Corps as Sapper Kelly 2657.



N.Kelly

photo: Queenslanders Who Fought in the Great War

He sailed from Melbourne on the Euripides on 4 April 1916 – and jumped ship at Colombo.

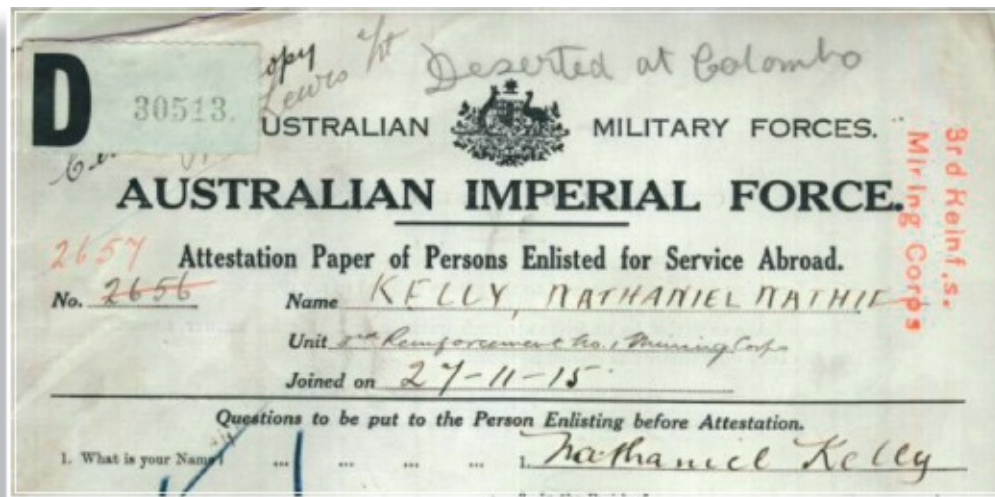
It would be seven months before he finally caught up with his unit.

The Euripides continued its journey without Kelly. The Mining Corps disembarked at Alexandria on 8 May and left for France almost immediately on the City of Edinburgh. They landed at Marseilles and marched in to Etaples on 1 June 1916, two months after leaving Melbourne.

Nathaniel Kelly's route to Etaples was more circuitous and less well documented.

The only mention of his jumping ship are three words written across page 1 of his 48 page file – 'Deserted at Colombo'.

There appear to be no consequences, no forfeiture of pay, no mention of where he was apprehended or how he got to Egypt. He simply reappears on 29 July 1916 at Alexandria embarking on the Arcadian bound for England.



He spent the next months in Parkhouse, a camp near the chalk hills of Bulford and the giant kiwi at Sling Camp.

It was October 1916 before he left for France and marched into Etaples, and another month before he finally rejoined his shipmates from the Euripides. On 23 November 1916 he was taken on strength with the 1st Australian Tunnelling Corps.



from a photo on www.shiptonbellinger.org.uk/SBHistory/AusSoldr_ParkhouseCamp

What happens next is portayed in the movie Beneath Hill 60. The story behind the movie is described in a book by Will Davis *Beneath Hill 60 – the true story behind the major Australian motion picture.*



On the back cover is the synopsis.

On 7 June 1917, 19 massive mines shattered the Messines Ridge near Ypres. Ten thousand German soldiers died and the largest man-made explosion in history up until that time smashed open the German frontline.

Two of those mines, at Hill 60 and the Caterpillar, were fired by men of the 1st Australian Tunnelling Company, made up of miners and engineers rather than parade-ground soldiers.

This is the untold, devastatingly brutal story of the battle underground during the First World War, where men suffocated in the blue-grey clay, drowned in the liquid chalk, choked on the poisonous air or died violently in the darkness and foetid air in hand-to-hand fighting.

Will Davies bases his book on the journals of Captain Oliver Woodward, the man who led Nathaniel Kelly and the men of the 1st Australian Tunnelling Company.

Nathaniel Kelly was with the 1st Australian Tunnelling Company from November 1916 through the climax at Hill 60 in June 1917, through to 14 September 1917.

The action of that year is telescoped invisibly between the lines on Sapper Kelly's file.

23 November 1916: 1st Australian Tunnelling Company – Taken on strength.

14 September 1917: 1st Australian Tunnelling Company – Killed in Action.

14 September 1917: 1st Australian Field Ambulance – Admitted (compound fractures to the skull and left arm) Dead. Accepted as Killed in Action.

Nathaniel Kelly, the miner from Ipswich, was dead at 23.

Hammond's Boer War locket and WW1 fob



This interesting piece belonged to an Australian soldier who served in both the Boer War and WW1.

The locket, chain, and the fob with the head of Queen Victoria come from the Boer War.

The 1915 penny with the remains of a spoon handle, the engraved 1915 halfpenny inside the locket, and the inscription ALH on the original Queen Victoria fob are from WW1.

The brass tag inscribed H. HAMMOND may have been there since the Boer War, or added in WW1. In either case, the service number 771 was not added until WW1.

The locket from WW1 is 3cm in diameter and 0.9cm high. It has the reverse of an 1899 penny on the underside of the base and the obverse of a Victorian penny on the lid.

The locket is copper with a tightly fitted removable lid.



A brass loop is soldered to the side of the locket for the chain.

Attached to the chain is a fob of Queen Victoria; the Queen's profile has been carefully cut from an English penny, with Britannia showing on the reverse.

... ..

The WW1 items are added later.



ALH for Australian Light Horse is etched on the Queen Victoria fob. A brass ID tag stamped H.Hammond 771 is attached to the chain, or 771 is added to the tag if it were there from the Boer War. A George V penny is riveted to the cut-off end of a teaspoon and also attached to the chain. The penny is uninscribed – the date is 1915.



Inside the locket is a 1915 halfpenny. A crucifix has been stippled on the reverse, with a rough hole at the intersection of the cross. There are two oval shapes with the letter H on either side of the crucifix.

Comment

This piece is part of a collection of items for H.Hammond. It comes in a beautiful old tea caddy along with three photos – uninscribed – and a small prayer book with cherubs on the front.



The inscription inside the prayer book reads 'Dear Gladys, With loving wishes from Her Mama' and the date 'Jany 1. 1915' in a different hand and a different ink.



Comment

The collection fascinates me.

The trench art suggests that H.Hammond served in both the Boer War and WW1. That alone is intriguing.

And the other items offer a tantalising challenge – can I identify the people in the photos and find the story behind the small cherub prayer book? I spend weeks researching the

possibilities and come up with what I think are plausible suggestions – but in writing it up I lose the thread of Henry Hammond’s story. So this time I’ve put the research in Research notes at the back of the book.

This is Henry’s story as I understand it, based on that research.

H.HAMMOND

771

ALH

The Research

HAMMOND, HENRY

Rank: Trooper

Service No: 771

Date of Death: 07/08/1915

Age: 38

Regiment/Service: 2nd Australian Light Horse

Grave Reference: IV. D. 13.

Cemetery: Shrapnel Valley Cemetery

Additional Information: Son of Charles and Mary Hammond. Native of South Australia.⁵³

Henry HAMMOND c1879 – 1915

Henry Hammond was born or baptised in Adelaide, South Australia, in 1879.⁵⁴



Henry is the small child in this family photo, seated on his grandfather’s knee. His grandfather was one of the more famous early pioneers in South Australia – Robert Sheppard Stacy.

Robert Sheppard Stacy was born near Exmouth in Devon in 1834.⁵⁵ His mother died soon after he was born leaving his father a widower with three young sons.⁵⁶ His father remarried in 1835⁵⁷ and in 1839 he emigrated to South Australia with his two older sons⁵⁸ leaving young Robert with his maternal grandparents in Devon.⁵⁹ After he was settled he sent for his new wife and youngest son Robert; they left London aboard the Orissa in May and arrived in Adelaide in November 1841.⁶⁰ They were among the earliest free settlers in

South Australia, which had never been a convict colony.



Robert Stacy ~ The Strand, Exmouth
Art Gallery of South Australia

By the time Robert was sixteen in 1851 he had travelled back to England to live once again with his grandparents in Devon.⁶¹ He was an apprentice cabinet maker, but he was also interested in photography. His grandfather was a painter and possibly encouraged his interest. Daguerreotype printing was in its infancy and Robert mastered the technique, as shown in his image of the Strand in Exmouth, near his grandparents' place.



Robert Stacy
Art Gallery of South Australia

Later in the 1850s, Robert Sheppard Stacy travelled back to Adelaide and rejoined his family. He married in 1857⁶² and a year later his first daughter – Henry's mother – was born.⁶³

Robert soon established himself as a photographer with expertise in daguerreotype printing.

He set up numerous studios around Adelaide and worked as a travelling photographer in country areas.

He eventually earned a reputation as one of the colony's foremost photographers. His

works now hang in the Art Gallery of South Australia who kindly gave permission to reproduce the two images above – the Strand near Exmouth and Robert Stacy with his travelling studio.

His son, also Robert Sheppard Stacy – Henry's uncle – worked with him as a photographer and took over the business when he died.

Robert Stacy's daughter married⁶⁴ and gave birth to her first child Henry Hammond in 1879.

... ..

Henry Hammond grew up in relative affluence. He was well-educated and worked as a clerk. His grandfather and uncle travelled by horse around country Victoria with their photography and Henry may well have been a good horseman.

In 1901 he volunteered for the Boer War.

The standards for enlistment in 1899 asked for tall single men 20 – 40 years of age with preference given to tall, young, single men who could shoot and ride.


The following accounts come from The Official Records of the Australian Military Contingents to the War in South Africa compiled and edited for the Department of Defence by Lieut-Colonel P.L.Murray around 1911.

*In all cases, volunteers were desired ... bushmen were enrolled; men accustomed to the exigencies of rough life in the backwoods, daring riders, expert shots, experienced in finding their way in tangled country, and hardened against privations.*⁶⁵

Henry was tall, young and single when he signed the Attestation papers in January 1901. He was accepted as a trooper in the Fifth South Australian Imperial Bushmen Contingent and was listed on the Nominal Roll as Sergeant Henry Hammond 386.⁶⁶



*from a photo of a Trooper, 5th South Australian Imperial Bushmen's Contingent. AWM:
A04948*

South  Australia

FIFTH CONTINGENT—IMPERIAL.

ATTESTATION OF

Name in full	Henry Hammond
Regimental No.	356
Age	21 Henry Ave
Place of Birth	Adelaide
Height	5 ft 9 1/4 in
Complexion	Dark
Hair	Dark
Eyes	Brown
Trade	Officer
Religion	Church of England
Rank	Private
Date of Presentation	
Name of Regiment— Present Address	1st Bn. 1st Cont. 1st Imp. A. Cont.

I, Henry Hammond
do solemnly swear, and attest that I will be faithful and true to the King and to the Empire, and that I will faithfully serve with the Fifth South Australian Contingent, Imperial, until I shall be discharged.

Witness my hand and seal at Adelaide, this 1st day of August 1901.

Signature of the Private

Attestation of Henry Hammond ⁶⁷

Murray's account is summarised and quoted below. ⁶⁸

The Fifth Contingent left Port Adelaide on the Ormazan in February 1901, called in at Albany West Australia and Cape Town South Africa before disembarking at Port Elizabeth on 23 March 1901.

By the time the Sixth Contingent joined them a month later they had already trekked 291 miles. They formed one regiment under Major Shea and 'did outstanding work in the north-eastern corner of the Orange River Colony.'

After battles where they 'captured the whole of De Wet's convoy with six months supplies' they trekked from the Harrismith district to Klerksdorp and then on to Bloemfontein.

An attack was made upon General Smut's laager at Grootvallier. Lord Kitchener, in his despatch of the 8th August, stated that- "... Major Shea, with 200 South Australians, made a gallant attack on Smut's commando at Grootvallier Farm, near the Vet River.

Wire fencing, unseen in the darkness, prevented complete success of the plans, and enabled the Boers to escape, despite the fact that the South Australians pressed forward on foot, with fixed bayonets ... accounted for 40 prisoners, 147 stand of arms, 600 horses, and 2,000 cattle."

Three separate convoys were captured. Colonel De Lisle on 2nd August congratulated the regiment on the successful night enterprises, and said that "the very dashing night attack at Grootvallier was worthy of the best traditions of Australian troops in the war."

The next six months 'involved hardships and trying work, long marches, and the digging of entrenchments along the front. The duties of keeping watch on the always alert enemy

became so arduous that even the officers were ordered by the General to take their turn on sentry.'

At one stage the Contingent rode 75 miles in 22 hours to relieve troops after a battle at Brakenlaagte.

On 18 March 1902, orders were received to mobilize for home.

The men had not had three consecutive days in one place. In conjunction, the two Contingents trekked 3,825 miles.

The men caught, and broke in for themselves, 867 veldt ponies; in addition, they received 630 remounts, so that it was a rarity for a man to be dismounted longer than a day or two.

Henry Hammond was there for this whole campaign, his presence confirmed in the book as Sergeant Henry Hammond 386 in the Fifth Contingent.⁶⁹

On 27 March 1902 he embarked at Capetown on the Montrose, proceeded to Durban and transferred to the Manchester Merchant for the journey home via Albany. He disembarked at Port Adelaide on 27 April 1902 and the Contingent was subsequently disbanded.

Trooper Henry Hammond returned to civilian life in South Australia.

... ..

In 1910, Henry Hammond married Helen Scott in Adelaide.⁷⁰



By then his closest sister Olive Louise had married,⁷¹ had children and moved to Queensland where two more children were born.^{72 73}

When war broke out in August 1914 his younger brother Roy was one of the first to enlist.⁷⁴

Roy had already spent 18 months in the South Australian Garrison Artillery before the war. He was working in Brisbane as a salesman for the Pianola Company when war was declared. Roy was 28 – taller than Henry, young and single – and in September he was

accepted into the 2nd Australian Light Horse. He was transferred to the Field Ambulance as a sergeant in October and shortly before Christmas 1914 he embarked on HMAT Borda bound for Egypt and Gallipoli.

Henry, veteran of the Boer War, was older and married. The standards for enlistment in 1914 were for tall men aged 18 – 35. These standards were changed in mid 1915, but in 1914 and early 1915 it seems likely that Henry Hammond would have been rejected.

Or he may have assumed he would be rejected based on his knowledge of the Boer War. Whatever the reason, when Henry Hammond enlisted he was no longer an older married man working as a clerk in Adelaide – he was a young single drover working as an overseer on a station in outback Queensland.

He'd made the long journey to the remote cattle station in Blackall where his sister Olive Louise lived with her husband and young children and created a new identity for himself.

This photo suggests he travelled by boat – the only practical way to make the journey from Adelaide to Brisbane – along the coast of South Australia and Victoria and up the eastern seaboard to Brisbane and Rockhampton. Then it was inland over the ranges by horse or slow steamtrain to the outback town of Blackall.



He enlisted in Blackall on 2 January 1915.⁷⁵

This time he was accepted – he had transformed himself into the ideal candidate. He was tall, young (30 he said) and single (he said) and an excellent horseman – a drover who spent his working days in the saddle.

The day before he enlisted, it seems he was given the small prayer book. He had a 4 year old niece Gladys who was born the year he and Helen were married. Perhaps he and Helen were her godparents. He accepted Gladys' prayer book and he wrote the date – Jan'y 1 1915 – in his own firm hand. The next day he filled out his enlistment form in the same firm hand, and he was accepted into the Australian Light Horse.

AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES.
AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.
Attestation Paper of Persons Enlisted for Service Abroad.

No. 771 Name Henry Hammond
Unit 2nd Light Horse
Enlist on 2 January 1915 7 MD

Questions to be put to the Person Enlisting before Attestation.

1. What is your Name? Henry Hammond
2. In the Parish of St. Andrew in the County of South Australia
3. Are you a natural born British Subject or a Naturalized Subject? (If the latter, please state in what Country) Natural born
4. What is your age? Nearly 30 years
5. What is your trade or occupation? Station Carver
6. Are you at this time in the service of the Government? No
7. Are you married? No
8. What is your next of kin? Henry Hammond (brother)
Rankin Street
Adelaide
South Australia
9. Have you ever been convicted by the Civil Power? No
10. Have you ever been discharged from any part of His Majesty's Forces with Suspicion or on Suspended Sentence, or on account of Disobedience of Orders, or of a Breach of Good Conduct, or have you been discharged with Disgrace from the Army? No
11. Do you now belong to or have you ever belonged to the Regular Army, the Militia, the Yeomanry, the Territorial Force, the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, or to any other branch of the Armed Forces of His Majesty? No
12. St. Andrew S.D. Co.
Diocese of Adelaide
13. Have you signed the whole, or any, of your previous enlistment papers? No
14. (For married men, indicate with initials, and address where the wife resides, or the name of the nearest relative.)
15. Do you understand the nature of the service to which you are enlisting, and are you able to perform the duties of the service?

I, Henry Hammond, do solemnly declare that the above answers are true, and I am willing and lawfully entitled to serve in the Military Forces of the Commonwealth of Australia.

Attest: 2 January 1915 Henry Hammond
Signature of person enlisting

Henry Hammond 771, a young single drover, was off to war.

He boarded the Itria in Brisbane in February 1915 bound for Egypt and Gallipoli.

... ..

Henry Hammond wasn't part of the landing at Anzac Cove on 25 April 1915. The 2nd Light Horse landed without their horses at Gallipoli on 12 May.

There are gaps on his file for the early months of 1915.

Henry's first surviving entry was for a misdemeanor. He went AWOL for three days in Heliopolis from 1 May 1915.

The next entry shows he left Alexandria for the Dardanelles to join – or rejoin – his unit on 9 July 1915.

He was killed in action on 7 August 1915 and was buried at Shrapnel Gully the following day. His younger brother Roy arrived at Gallipoli the day after Henry was buried.

... ..

Henry Hammond's enlistment story fell apart in the months after his death.

His wife Helen wrote asking about pensions, only to be told that Henry had claimed to be single. He'd given his mother as his next of kin and was living a long way from Helen when he enlisted.



It's the small coin hidden in Henry's locket that shows where his heart lay. It's a love token with initials for Helen and Henry either side of a crucifix, dated 1915.

... ..

Helen died in 1947 – still Helen Scott Hammond, with no children. She died intestate and the Public Trustee sent Henry Hammond's medals to the Australian War Memorial, with a letter to that effect added to his file.

His effects were presumably sent to his mother as next of kin, to be stored with his family photos in an old tea caddy.

... ..

His age remained ambivalent. Both the CWGC and the AWM Roll of Honour show he was 38 when he died at Gallipoli in August 1915.⁷⁶

The South Australian record of 1879 may well be his baptism rather than his birth. The one fact that seems certain is that he was older than 30 when he enlisted in January 1915.

Rootes' bone crucifix knife



This is a small folding knife in a container. The knife is 6cm long. The brass blade folds back into the bone handle.



The King's head from a George V halfpenny is inlaid on one side of the handle. A copper crucifix is inlaid on the other side; it has ROOTES etched on the crossbar and 2989 on the upright.

The knife fits into the container with the blade extended or closed.

... ..

The container is 9.2cm from the base to the tip of the lid.





The cylinder of the container is horn. It is hollow with a George V penny as the base. The lid is brass and copper. The dome is made from a 1916 halfpenny with the reverse showing.

The lid screws into the threaded brass at the neck of the container.

Construction

The knife is beautifully constructed.

The handle is made from two pieces of bone. A slot is carved in each piece to form a groove for the blade. The head of George V has been cut from a copper coin and riveted into a recess on one side of the handle.

A copper crucifix is riveted into a recess on the other side. It is inscribed ROOTES 2989.

A larger rivet at the top holds the two sides of bone together. A rivet at the bottom allows the blade to swivel and secures a brass wrap for strength.

The blade folds back into the handle leaving just the tip exposed for releasing the blade.

Comment

The knife is beautiful to hold, smooth with no rough edges. Held between thumb and forefingers it is ideal for cleaning dirt from fingernails or grit from a wound.

It's possible the knife was made by Henry Rootes himself, assuming he wrote his own name and number. The final 9 of his service number is partly obscured by the rivet that holds the crucifix in place, suggesting it was carved before construction. The wraparound brass plate is riveted over the bottom edge of the crucifix.

The symbolism is clear – honour and duty. The name on the crucifix declares his faith. The coins show the cause 'for King and country' with the date 1916. The shape of the container suggests a lighthouse.

H.L.ROOTES
2989

The Research

ROOTES, HENRY LEONARD

Rank: Private

Service No: 2989

Date of Death: 02/09/1918

Age: 23

Regiment/Service: Australian Infantry, A.I.F. 55th Bn.

Grave Reference: I. C. 19.

Cemetery: Peronne Communal Cemetery Extension

Additional Information: Son of Mrs. Ada L. Bellamy, of Park St., Thornleigh, New South Wales.⁷⁷

‘I think it is very hard after three years active service, to only get one old razor strop, all mouldy & stuck together with clay ...’

Henry Leonard ROOTES (1895 – 1918)⁷⁸

Henry Rootes was a young Australian who joined up in July 1915, embarked for Egypt on the Argyllshire on 30 September and was taken on strength at Tel-el-Kebir on 6 January 1916.

He sailed from Alexandria to Marseilles on the Caledonian and arrived in France at the end of June 1916.

He survived two years on the battlefields of the Somme before he was killed in action near Peronne in September 1918.

In the midst of the formal documents about his service and his death, there is an emotional letter.

It was from his mother who believed she had been sent the wrong belongings after his death. Her anger and hurt are painfully exposed in the raw emotion of her letter which is quoted here verbatim.

Sir,

I acknowledge having received the so call'd persolal effects of the late Pvt H.L. Rootes 55 Batt, in the first place, he never had a razor strop he alway got some one to shave him what about his pocket book or wallet, I think it is very hard after three years active service, to only get one old razor strop, all mouldy & stuck together with clay, & a metal ring, and I know he had more than that in his kit, for he told me in one of the last letters that he wrote me, that he has some coins and different trophies that he had gathered, & was waiting an oppertunity to send them to me, I take it as an insult, too the lad who fell for King and country, and also to me his broken hearted mother.

Ada Bellamy

Parks St
Thornleigh
25/5/19

Sir,

I acknowledge having received the so called personal effect of the late Pvt H. L. Rootes 55 Batt, in the first place, he never had a razor strope he always got some one to shave him, what about his pocket book or wallet, I think it is very hard after three years active service, to only get an old razor strope, all mouldy & stuck together with clay, & a metal ring, and I know he had more than that in his kit, for he told me in one of the last letters that he wrote me, that he has some coin and different trophies that he had gathered, & was waiting an opportunity to send them to me, I take it as an insult, too the lad who fell for King & country, and also to me his broken hearted mother.

Ada Bellamy

W. Morgan 29/5

RECEIVED
MAY 29 1919

RECEIVED
MAY 29 1919

It is almost too personal to read. Ada Bellamy opened a parcel expecting personal items from her son, only to recoil in horror. 'I take it as an insult, too the lad who fell for King and country, and also to me his broken hearted mother.'

In a sad postscript, Ada wrote to the authorities again a year later.

Sir,

I am very sorry for troubling, at such late date, after receiving the photo of the grave (temporary) of the late Pvt H. L. Rootes but a friend has just noticed that the number, on the cross is 2987 it should be 2989

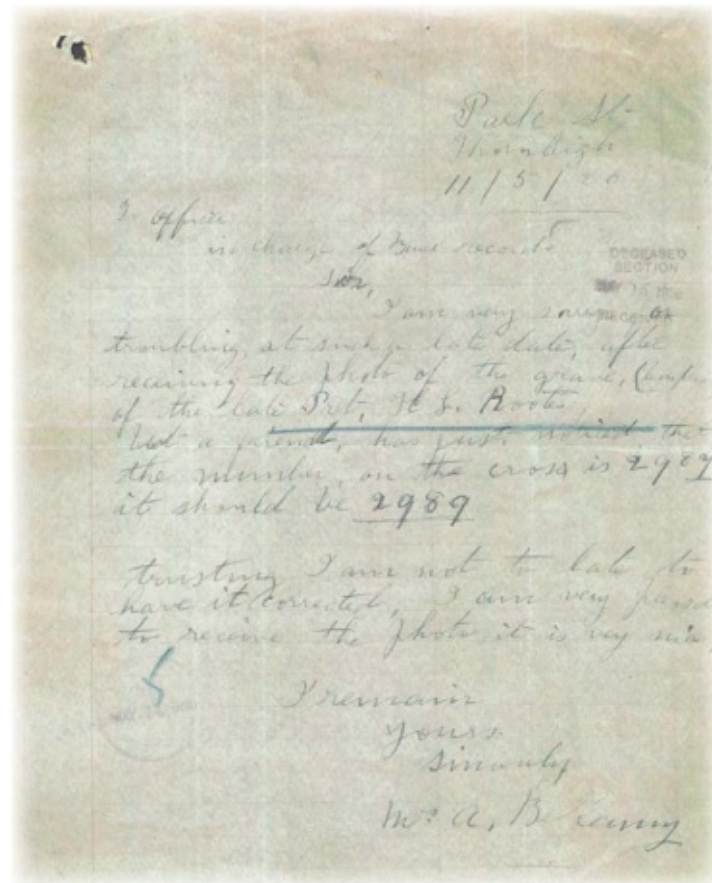
trusting I am not too late to have it corrected, I am very pleased to receive the photo it is very nice.

I remain

Yours

Sincerely

Mrs A. Bellamy



The rage is gone. There is real pathos in her humble plea to have her son's service number corrected, and in her gratitude for the nice photo.

... ..

Ada did receive her son's identity discs in 1919 but there is no record of any other packages.

There is no mention of the beautiful bone knife bearing the crucifix carved with her son's name and number.

Footnotes

- 1 CWGC: Scott, 40379
- 2 ANZ: Archway, Scott William Kenneth, 40379, R7815410
- 3 CWGC: Ginger, 1652
- 4 FMP: Births, Ginger Herbert George R, 1896, Barnet, Middlesex, England
- 5 FMP: 1901 Census, Ginger Herbert G R, PRO RG 13, Barnet, Middlesex, England
- 6 FMP: 1911 Census, Ginger Herbert George, PRO RG 14, Barnet, Middlesex, England
- 7 FMP: Passenger lists, Ginger Herbt G R, 1913
- 8 NAA: B2455, Ginger Herbert George Reginald
- 9 CWGC: Ladd, 5094
- 10 NAA: B2455, Ladd Edward Wildes Holyoak
- 11 VIC: BDM, Ladd
- 12 Perry, 2010: 81
- 13 NAA: B2455, Pearce Robert

- 14 CWGC: Sinclair, 2014
- 15 Trove: Signaller Sinclair, Adelaide Advertiser, 30 August 1917
- 16 NAA: B2455, Sinclair James Haining
- 17 NAA: B2455, Barton Irvine Julius
- 18 CWGC: Hillman, 1916
- 19 NAA: B2455, Hillman William Frank
- 20 AWM: AWM145, Hillman William Frank
- 21 FMP: 1911 Census, Hillman William Frank, PRO RG 14, St Andrew Holborn Above the Bars with St George the Martyr, Holborn, London, England
- 22 Former Children's Homes: Cottage homes
- 23 FMP: 1881 Census, Hillman George, PRO RG 11, Melcombe Regis, Weymouth, Dorsetshire, England
- 24 FMP: Marriages, George Hillman and Rhoda Long E Collins, 1881, Weymouth, Dorset, England
- 25 FMP: 1891 Census, Hillman George, PRO RG 12, Greenwich, Greenwich, London, England
- 26 FMP: Deaths, Hillman Rhoda Long E, 1901, Holborn, London, England
- 27 FMP: 1911 Census, Sharman Lily, Islington, Islington, London, England
- 28 FMP: Deaths, Hillman George, 1909, Islington, London, England
- 29 FMP: 1911 Census, Sharman Lily, Islington, Islington, London, England
- 30 FMP: 1911 Census, Hillman William Frank, PRO RG 14, St Andrew Holborn Above the Bars with St George the Martyr, Holborn, London, England
- 31 FMP: Passenger lists, 1913
- 32 AWM: Nominal rolls, AWM8, Hillman William Frank
- 33 CWGC: Wilkinson, 751
- 34 Discover Murray River: Howlong
- 35 NAA: B2455, Wilkinson Wilfred
- 36 Adam-Smith: 69-70
- 37 CWGC: Adams James Alexander, 571
- 38 NZ BDM: Adams James Alexander, 1892
- 39 ANZ: Scott William Kenneth, WW1 40379
- 40 NZH: CMR
- 41 CWGC: Donald, 6952
- 42 NAA: B2455, Donald Thomas Alan
- 43 AWM: Collections, E01751
- 44 CWGC: Denton, 618
- 45 MA: MIV, Denton
- 46 NAA: DENTON VICTOR
- 47 QA: Immigrant arrivals, Denton
- 48 QLD: BDM, Denton
- 49 Adam-Smith: 108
- 50 NAA: DENTON ERNEST
- 51 QLD: Victor Denton Memorial
- 52 CWGC: Kelly, 2657
- 53 CWGC: Hammond, 771

- 54 GSA: Births, Hammond Henry, 1879, Adelaide, SA
- 55 FMP: Births, Stacy Robert Sheppard, 1834, Exmouth, Devon, England
- 56 FMP: 1841 Census, Stacy Robert Sheppard, PRO RG 9, Littleham, St Thomas, Devon, England
- 57 FMP: Marriages, Thomas Smyth Stacy and Sarah Catherine Hussey, 1835, Gittisham, Devon, England
- 58 FHSA: Passenger lists, 1839, Stacy Thomas Smyth, sons Wm John Sheppard and Thos Sheppard Stacy (1st wife)
- 59 FMP: 1841 Census, Stacy Robert Sheppard, PRO RG 9, Wellington Place, Littleham, St Thomas, Devon, England
- 60 FHSA: Passenger lists, 1841, Stacy Mrs Thomas Smyth nee Sarah Catherine Hussey (2nd wife), son Rbt Sheppard (1st wife)
- 61 FMP: 1851 Census, Stacy Robert, PRO RG 10, Littleham, Saint Thomas, Devon, England
- 62 GSA: Marriages, Robert Sheppard Stacy and Maria Tatham Dean, 1857, Adelaide, SA
- 63 GSA: Births, Stacy Mary Anne Maria Sheppard, 1858, Adelaide, SA
- 64 GSA: Marriages, Charles Hammond and Mary Ann Maria Sheppard, 1878, Adelaide, SA
- 65 Murray: 341
- 66 AWM: Boer War, Hammond Henry
- 67 NAA: AP613/7, 386 Hammond H
- 68 Murray: 265-366
- 69 Murray: 368
- 70 GSA: Marriages, Henry Hammond and Helen Scott, 1910, Adelaide, SA
- 71 GSA: Marriages, Andrew Wilson and Olive Louise Hammond, 1902, Adelaide, SA
- 72 QLD: Births, Wilson Joan Ayre, 1906
- 73 QLD: Births, Wilson Charles Frederick Dean, 1909
- 74 NAA: B2455, Hammond Roy
- 75 NAA: B2455, Hammond Henry
- 76 AWM: AWM145, Hammond Henry
- 77 CWGC: Rootes, 2989
- 78 NAA: B2455, Rootes Henry Leonard

Faith

Sawyer's crucifix



The medallion is a handcrafted crucifix on a backplate. The crucifix is 6.5cm by 3.6cm, the backplate 5.1cm by 2.8cm. It is sterling silver and has three small markings of 925.

It is engraved with the letters H and R on the front and R.SAWYER 1905 on the back.

Construction

The medallion has been made from a completely different item, perhaps something from the officers' mess. The crucifix is made from three separate pieces soldered to the backplate. The three pieces retain their original shape.

The backplate is asymmetrical and also appears to retain its original shape.

The letters H and R have been engraved on the front suggesting H for a loved one and R for Ralph. R SAWYER is on the back together with his service number 1905.

The tiny figures 925 appear three times – upside down on the upright of the crucifix, on the backplate under the engraved R and again under the H. This last mark is intriguing. If the backplate is from a single piece as it appears to be from the reverse, why was it stamped twice so closely together? The third 925 is rough.



Perhaps it has been added for symmetry after the letters have been engraved and encircled. A fine line of dots has been added as a border around the open space.

Comment

A utilitarian piece of silver has been transformed into a personal talisman for faith and love.



This is a personal piece, to be worn around the neck. The chain was held closed by a tiny strip of fine leather that snapped from age when handled.

R.SAWYER
1905
H R

The Research

SAWYER, RALPH

Rank: Rifleman

Service No: 1905

Date of Death: 12/08/1915

Age: 21

Regiment/Service: Hampshire Regiment 1st/8th Bn.

Panel Reference: Panel 125-134 or 223-226 228-229 & 328.

Memorial: Helles Memorial

Additional Information: Son of William J. and Deborah M. Sawyer, of 32, Trafalgar Rd., Newport, Isle of Wight.¹

Ralph Sawyer's tragically short war is condensed between two official records. His medal card shows he first entered the theatre of war at Gallipoli on 10 August 1915.² His CWGC entry shows he died there two days later.

Ralph SAWYER 1894 – 1915

Ralph Sawyer was born on the Isle of Wight in 1894.³

He grew up on the Isle of Wight, the second son of eight children born to the local

blacksmith and his wife.⁴

By 1911, he was working as a clerk for a local grocer.⁵

Ralph Sawyer was involved with the local community. He went to church, joined the Scouts and became a patrol leader, and went on to secondary school. He got a job in the grocery store. He joined the local branch of Oddfellows and was a member of the Newport Literary Society.

He enlisted in the Isle of Wight Rifles and trained at Newport, then Bury St Edmunds, and finally at Watford.

He sailed from Liverpool on 30 July 1915 and landed at Mudros on 6 August. From Mudros he sailed to Gallipoli and anchored off the coast on 9 August.

On 11 August 1915 he landed at Suvla Bay. The next day he was reported missing presumed dead.

Comment

The Isle of Wight Family History Society has drawn together information from various memorials and combined it with family history to honour the fallen.⁶ From their memorial site, I learned that Ralph's older brother was killed in action in 1917 in France. I also found a diary, not from Ralph Sawyer but from a fellow soldier Frank le Brun who travelled with him on that fateful journey to Gallipoli.

Lance Corporal Frank le Brun kept a diary.

I was intensely moved by his diary, knowing the context and what lay ahead. He describes the journey with beautiful simplicity and awful innocence – *'The sun is lovely not a cloud in sight.'*

I contacted Geoff Allan of the Family History Society explaining my project and seeking permission to use the diary as published by them in one of their articles. With the kind permission of Anita Roe – Frank le Brun was her great uncle – I reproduce the diary for the two weeks leading to 12 August 1915 when both young soldiers were mortally wounded.

... ..

Transcription of the Diary kept by Lance Corporal Frank Le Brun No. 2092 1/8 Battalion Hampshire Regiment – Princess Beatrice's Isle of Wight Rifles, covering the period Thursday July 29th 1915 to Thursday August 12th 1915.

Thurs July 29th 1915

Left Watford about one p.m. for Dardanelles via Liverpool Aquitania on board same night

Friday July 30th

Left Liverpool Alexandra Dock about 1.30 p.m. stood out till about 10 p.m. Wrote short letter to Nellie & Mother Have bad cold.

Saturday July 31st

Well out no land in sight escort of 5 torpedos had to turn back presumably owing to wrough(sic) sea feeling very queer but not sick. On deck for about 2 hrs high wind.

Sunday Aug 1st

Evidently crossing Bay of Biscay Ship rolling terribly sea looks fairly calm but high wind. Feeling rotten still. Detailed for 24 hour guard (which I could very well do without) in charge of 6 men attending Fire hose. The boat is packed with soldiers. 6 Battalions on board 10th & 11th City of London 4th & 5th Norfolks 5th Suffolks & 8th Hants.

August 2nd Monday Bank Holiday

Sighted land about 3 p.m. and proceeded up straights. Rumour on Board that wireless message received that it was reported in England that the Aquitania had been sunk – another report was that a vessel following us laden with ammunition had been sunk and that was the reason the former report had gained currency. The sun is lovely not a cloud in sight. Beginning to notice the warmer weather. On the look out for Gibraltar. Sea very calm. Feeling much better now cold better & recovered from sickly & giddy feeling. Coast in sight resembles highland mountains. Have seen several towns. Houses are white in appearance and seem to be built irregularly. Quite a number of small craft about. Saw a shoal of flying fish. Meal times on board 8 a.m. 1 p.m. 6 o'clock

Tuesday Aug 3rd

Slept on Deck last night. Now between Gibraltar & Malta. Sea extraordinary calm this morning. Lovely breeze on deck. Now 3 o/c waiting for Raiting parade. Commenced writing letter to Nellie. A little cloudy & sun not so hot. When we came aboard on Friday volunteer stokers were asked for – said that they could not get stokers at any price as they would not risk lives for fear of submarines. It is said that this boat narrowly missed being torpedoed on the last journey. What a wonderful ship this the Aquitania is, simply enormous, one could easily loose themselves aboard. Really wonderful the organization of feeding & sleeping accomodation. Nothing much in sight as we go along Meditteranean Sea. Making for Malta for Coal.

Wed Aug 4/15 (no entry)

Thurs Aug 5/15 (no entry)

Friday Aug 6/15

Arrived safely at Lemnos 8 a.m. Greek Archipeligo

Saturday Aug 7/15

We are lying in a Bay off the Isle of Lemnos. On all sides one sees camps which I believe are rest camps for the soldiers brought from the firing line which is, they say, not many miles from here. The Bay is quite a sight full of all kinds of sea craft passing to and fro. We see troop ships cruisers hospital ship etc., no less than seven of the latter passed us yesterday. Laying off about 100 yds away is the Lord Nelson.

Sunday Aug 8th 1915

Orders to leave Aquitania – messing about all night.

Monday Aug 9/15

Boarded Osmanieh for at about four a.m. conditions awful no food for 14 hours then only hard biscuit. Bought chocolate & biscuit from Greeks who came and laid by – went aboard Aquitania for dinner. Left shortly after dinner up the Dardenelles (saw warship firing) to nearer base Slept aboard this boat, hot daytime cold at nights.

Tuesday Aug 10th 15

Still aboard Osmanieh living on Iron Rations simply squashed on here. Sitting on cold water tank on top deck. Managed shave this morning. Saw enemy “Taube” come over attempted to drop bomb on Warship. Chased by our aircraft and fired at.

Wednesday Aug 11th 15

Some troops landed but 8th Hants still aboard. Another visit from enemy aircraft. Gulf of Saros (Samos?) where we are landing warship shelling enemy positions. Saw town burning. Landed and moved up just behind firing line.

Thursday Aug 12/15 (no entry)

(On August 12th Frank received severe head and facial injuries during the attack across the Anafarta Ova and died from his wounds on August 14th. He was buried at sea.)

... information provided by : Anita Roe. F Le Brun is her great uncle.’

... ..

Ralph Sawyer was killed in action at Gallipoli the day Frank le Brun was mortally wounded.

... ..

The following is an abridged account of the same action from jacksontree.co.au.

Suvla Bay, Gallipoli – 12 August 1915

The 1/8 Hampshire Regiment (Isle of Wight Rifles) ... sailed from Liverpool, aboard the Aquitania, bound for Lemnos in Greece, from where smaller vessels took them to Suvla Bay, Gallipoli. ...1/8 Hampshires were landed on 10 August 1915 in order to attack the Turkish positions on Anafurta Ridge ... On 12 August 1915 at 1645hrs, the advance was ordered across terrain varying from thick scrub to abandoned fields, all cut with dried watercourses. Their objective was to clear the area of snipers prior to a Divisional attack on Anafarta Ridge the next day. The enemy were armed with machine guns and supported by dozens of snipers ... The Isle of Wight Rifles lost 89 men on this day.

Ralph Sawyer was one of those 89 men.

... ..

The following information from the Isle of Wight Memorial site is reproduced here with their kind permission.

Ralph Sawyer was reported missing in the Isle of Wight County Press on 11 September 1915.

‘Rfn. Ralph Sawyer, D Co., missing, is the second son of Mr. W. Sawyer, of 32 Trafalgar-road, Newport, and was employed in Messrs. Jordan & Stanley’s clerical department.’

The memorials in his honour show a young man deeply involved in his local community.



Ralph Sawyer went to Newport County Secondary School.



He was a Patrol Leader with the Newport 1st Scout Group



a member of the Newport Literary Society



a member of the Newport Castlehold Baptist Church



and a member of Newport Oddfellows.



He is remembered on the Isle of Wight Rifles memorials in both the Newport Drill Hall and the Chapel of St Nicholas, Carisbrooke Castle.

The soldier with no known grave on the Gallipoli Peninsula, unidentified among so many dead, is remembered on eight separate memorials in his homeland.

Gough's crusader case



The brass container looks like a crusader's shield. It is approximately 6cm across the top and 5.5cm high. A handcut copper cross has been bevelled slightly and soldered to the front of the container. Attached by a chain, not necessarily the original, is a 1912 penny fob engraved J.GOUGH G.H.

Construction

The container is made from two flat shield-shaped pieces of brass joined by a 1cm wide side strip. The front and back pieces are curved at the lip to give a smooth opening.



An initial attempt to hinge the lid to the body has been abandoned and the holes plugged with solder. Instead, a strip of brass is soldered to the side forming a loop for the lid.



The lid is a 2cm wide strip of brass curved into flanges at the sides to overlap the body. A brass strip is soldered to the top, bent through the loop at right angles and bent again to be soldered in place, permanently hinging the lid to the body.



A smaller brass loop is soldered to the lip of the lid, holding a 2.2cm loop. This loop hooks over a smaller brass loop on the body to close the container firmly with no gaps. With the fob chain in place the container cannot be opened.

The clasp on the fob chain releases easily. A loop at the other end of the chain is permanently closed through a hole in a 1912 penny which is roughly inscribed J.GOUGH G.H.

Comment

This crusader's shield is particularly well-made. It is functional and symbolic. The fact that Jim Gough worked as a blacksmith's striker as a teenager suggests that he had the skills to make it himself, adding the cross to affirm his faith.

J.GOUGH
G.H.

The Research

GOUGH, J

Rank: Private

Service No: 242309

Date of Death: 22/05/1917

Age: 22

Regiment/Service: Gordon Highlanders 1st/7th Bn.

Grave Reference: XXV. D. 16A.

Cemetery: Etaples Military Cemetery

Additional Information: Son of Thomas and Sarah Elizabeth Gough, of 350, Main St., Darnall, Sheffield. Native of Darnall.⁷

Jim GOUGH 1895 – 1917

Jim Gough was born in 1895.⁸

All records except one show he was born in Sheffield and lived in Attercliffe near Darnall. His record in Soldiers Died in the Great War shows he enlisted in Attercliffe but gave his birthplace as Glasgow – perhaps a small deception to be accepted into the Gordon Highlanders.⁹ However his record in the Scottish National War Memorial shows his birthplace as Sheffield.¹⁰

Jim was the second youngest of nine children born to Sarah and Thomas Gough, a steelworker, over nearly 20 years between 1879 and 1898.¹¹

It seems the children went to church but not to school, according to the censuses. Jim Gough is remembered on the Holy Trinity Roll of Honour in Darnall and on a memorial stone at Emmanuel Church, Attercliffe.

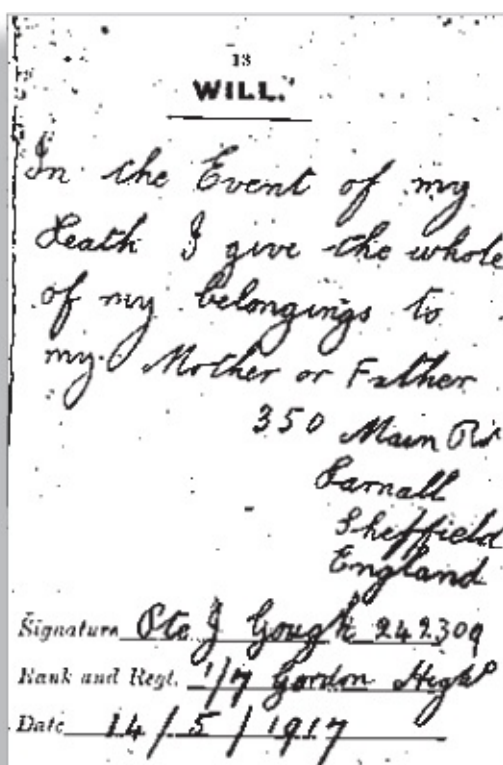
Most of the children followed their father into the steelworks as teenagers. By the age of 15 Jim was working as a blacksmith's striker.¹²

His medal card shows he joined the Gordon Highlanders as Private Jim Gough S/12909 and entered the war in France on 24 November 1915 as 242309.¹³

He died of wounds on 22 May 1917 at the No 18 General Hospital at Camiers. The Gordon Highlanders were involved in particularly heavy fighting around Arras on 16 – 17 May and suffered heavy casualties, although his name does not appear on the casualty lists drawn from diaries for those days.

He is buried in the Etaples Military Cemetery, age 22.

.....



Jim Gough knew he might not survive. He wrote his Will eight days before he died of his wounds.¹⁴

Castle's candleholder & matchbox cover



The candleholder is made from a piece of wood, smooth on one side, naturally worn away on the other. The wood is dense and dark as if it has lain buried in a swamp for many years.



A brass stand is screwed to the base. A brass candle holder has been recessed into the top with a flange to catch falling wax. It stands 22.5cm tall.

The crucifix is marked by four brass discs and a George V halfpenny. A George V penny is below the cross, suggesting loyalty to the cause.



L.CASTLE is carved on the smooth side near the base.

Comment

I find this one of the most emotional pieces to hold. The candleholder feels smooth and heavy. The curves fit the palm of my hand and I am moved by the symbolism. The natural

shape of the wood suggests the Madonna. The recess for the crucifix is naturally eroded. The only carving other than the name appears to be the setting for the brass discs and copper coins of the crucifix.



There are traces of wax. The association of candles with churches and prayers adds to my emotional response. This is a beautiful piece – a religious work of art from found objects.

... ..

The candleholder is accompanied by a matchbox cover with penny fob.

‘For King and Country’ is also suggested on the matchbox cover, where the King’s head from a penny is the centrepiece.

A brass hook is soldered to the top of the case to allow for the fob. The fob is a 1912 George V penny. The top of a key has been soldered into a V-shaped groove to hold the thin leather strap that links the fob to the matchbox cover.



The inscription L.CASTLE is stamped on the reverse with the service number 345369 at right angles to the name.

L.CASTLE
345369

The Research

CASTLE, LESLIE VINCENT

Rank: Lance Corporal

Service No: 345369

Date of Death: 10/09/1918

Age: 23

Regiment/Service: Devonshire Regiment 16th (Royal Devon and R. North Devon Yeomanry) Bn.

Grave Reference: I. B. 1.

Cemetery: Templeux-Le-Guerard British Cemetery

Additional Information: Son of Tom and Fanny Elizabeth Castle, of 3, Crosspark Terrace, Heavitree, Exeter.¹⁵

Leslie Vincent CASTLE (1894 – 1918)

Leslie Vincent Castle grew up in Crosspark Terrace in Heavitree.

I found this Edwardian postcard on the Exeter memories website, together with their mention of Leslie Castle. I reproduce it here with their kind permission.



*The monkey puzzle tree in the garden of one of the houses of Crosspark Terrace can be plainly seen in this Edwardian postcard. A similar tree is flourishing today. It is sobering to think that there were four casualties from the terrace during the First World War – Lance Corporal Leslie Vincent Castle aged 23 and Private, William Ernest Chapman, aged 19, Sapper, Martin de Thierry, aged 27 and Lance Corporal, Lionel Laver, aged 23.*¹⁶

Leslie Castle lived there with his family from at least 1901 when he was six.¹⁷

His parents met when they were both working at the Somerset and Bath Asylum.

His father Tom started his working life as a pupil teacher.¹⁸ But by 1891, he was working as a stores porter at the Somerset and Bath Asylum. Among the servants and attendants

listed in the census are numerous ‘Attendants in Insane’.¹⁹

It appears likely that this is where he met Leslie’s mother Fanny.

Fanny Elizabeth Vincent was the daughter of a butcher who was also a Sergeant At Mace, an official dignitary of some standing in the community. As the oldest of the children living at home after her mother died, Fanny took over the role of ‘Butcher Sergeant at Mace Daughter’ at the Marketplace in Glastonbury as well as potentially mothering the seven younger children.²⁰

By 1891 Fanny Vincent was also working at the Asylum as an ‘Attendant in Insane’.²¹ A year later she and Tom Castle were married.²²

They moved to Heavitree and their first son, Leslie Vincent Castle, was born. By 1901 the family were living at 3 Crosspark Terrace – Tom and Fanny with Leslie (6), Gladys (5), Reginald (3) and a 13 year old domestic servant from Dorset.²³

Tom continued to work at the asylum, becoming clerk and storekeeper by the 1911 census. Leslie, 16, was working as a junior clerk in a draper’s shop.²⁴

It is unclear when Leslie joined the army. It appears that reservists were employed at the asylum. Tom worked alongside men who were in the army reserve. Of the 22 attendants on Tom’s page in the 1891 census, four were described as ‘Attendant in Insane and Private 1st Class Reserve Army’.

Leslie Castle was with the 16th Battalion of the Devonshire Regiment when he died. This battalion was formed in Egypt in early 1917 from dismounted Devon Yeomanry. After it was formed, the 16th saw action in Palestine and France and Flanders.²⁵ (The date of Leslie Castle’s death on this record, 10 June 1918, differs from that on the CWGC record, 10 September 1918).

Leslie Vincent Castle was killed in action at the age of 23. He is buried on the Somme near Peronne.

Comment

It seems likely that the candle holder came from the Somme.

The compressed wood may have lain for many years under the mud of France or Flanders until a soldier saw the shape of the Madonna in its twisted roots.

With a few copper coins and a brass reference to candles, Leslie Castle created a work of art. One hundred years on, others can see what Leslie Castle saw in an old weathered tree root.

Fisk's crucifix and horn



These two pieces are symbolic rather than functional. The brass horn has the insignia of the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC). The horn is 9.7cm long; the RAMC insignia is 1.6cm by 4.5cm.

The crucifix is brass with a small 1916 Belgian coin on the front bearing the inscription W.FISK. The crucifix is 6.3cm by 3.5cm; the coin is 2.2cm in diameter.



Construction

The horn is a hollow brass tube made from two pieces of different thickness. They are joined before the R of RAMC. A small silver insignia is soldered over the join. The end of the thicker piece has been heated and forced into a bell shape to make the horn.

RAMC is soldered to the underside of the horn. A small brass loop is soldered at the top to hold the leather strap.

The crucifix is cut from a flat piece of brass. It is slightly asymmetrical and appears to have been cut by hand. Lead or solder has been pushed into the back to form raised mounds at the four corners of the cross at the front. The coin from Belgium is soldered to the front with W.FISK counterstamped.

The service number 20294 is engraved on the cross.

W.FISK
RAMC
20294

The Research

FISK, WILLIAM

Rank: Private

Service No: 20294

Date of Death: 21/03/1918

Age: 26

Regiment/Service: Royal Army Medical Corps 18th Field Amb

Awards: M M

Panel Reference: Panel 95.

Memorial: Pozieres Memorial

Additional Information: Husband of Marion Fisk, of 76, Queen's Rd., Gorton, Manchester.²⁶

The research on W.Fisk was a challenge. His wife's name Marion was transcribed as Mason on a census, an error that even a soundex search failed to find. Compounding the mystery was the fact that his last home address on his Military Medal was different from his wife's address as shown on his CWGC record.

... ..

William Fisk survived three long years in the battlefields of the Somme and was recognised for his acts of courage under fire. He found wartime romance and married his sweetheart only to be killed in action a few weeks later.

William FISK 1890 – 1918

William Fisk was born in Colchester Essex in 1890,²⁷ the oldest son of a stoker in a gas works.²⁸ As the family grew his father left the gas works and found work as a farm labourer.²⁹ The family moved around the farms of Essex and by 1911 most of them were living in Tendring – but not William.³⁰

In 1911 William was stationed at the Citadel in Cairo.³¹ He was Private Fisk 2982,³² a Rifleman with the 4th Battalion Rifle Brigade.

He was mobilised on the outbreak of WW1 and drafted to France, entering the theatre of war on 20 December 1914. He sought a discharge from the Rifle Brigade and transferred to the Royal Army Medical Corps as Private Fisk 20294 of the 18th Field Ambulance.³³

His entry in Soldiers Died in the Great War shows he took part in some of the most devastating trench warfare in France and Flanders and was awarded the Military Medal.

FISK, W. (M.M.), Private, R.A.M.C.

Mobilised in August 1914, he was immediately drafted to France and took part in the Battles of Mons, the Marne, La Bassee, Ypres (I), Neuve Chappelle, Hill 60, Ypres (II), the Somme, Arras, Ypres (III), and Cambrai, where he was awarded the Military Medal for conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty in the Field.

He was unfortunately killed in action on the Somme on March 21st, 1918, and was also entitled to the Mons Star, and the General Service and Victory Medals.

“A costly sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.”

216, Viaduct Street, Ardwick, Manchester. Z6103³⁴

The Viaduct Street address on this register is different from that of his wife Marion in the CWGC record.

After he left home and before he joined the Rifle Brigade, William worked in Manchester for the Shrewsbury & Challiner Tyre Company who list him in their Roll of Honour.³⁵ The Viaduct Street address may well be where he was living when he worked there.

He married Marion Hodnett, a waitress, in Chorlton in early 1918.³⁶ Marion was born in Chorlton³⁷ and had lived there all her life.³⁸ It seems likely that the marriage took place while William was on leave or convalescing in England.

There was no time to set up house together. A few weeks after the marriage William went back to the battlefields of France. He never returned.

William was killed at Pozieres on 21 March 1918. His body was not identified. He is remembered on the Pozieres Memorial.

*The POZIERES MEMORIAL relates to the period of crisis in March and April 1918 when the Allied Fifth Army was driven back by overwhelming numbers across the former Somme battlefields ... The Corps and Regiments most largely represented are The Rifle Brigade with over 600 names ...*³⁹

... ..

Marion was only ever married for a few weeks of her life. She remained a widow and died in Manchester at the age of 76.⁴⁰

Smith's booklet and ring



These two pieces are among the most beautiful in the collection.

Smith's brass and leather booklet is small, 5.7cm by 4.8cm. It looks like a precious book, leather bound with a brass clasp. It opens to reveal a brass relief of Christ on the cross surrounded by the stations of the cross.

The facing page has two copper strips that would hold a small photograph in place, with G.SMITH 1316 inscribed on the brass. On the cover is the insignia of the Royal Horse Guards.

The ring is heavy, not brass, maybe 9 carat gold, professionally made and later modified. *G. Smith* is inscribed in tiny cursive letters inside the ring, perhaps marked by the jeweller who made the original ring. G.SMITH is stamped boldly on the back.

The King's head from a copper farthing has been cut to a square and set in a handmade copper frame as the centrepiece of the ring.

The ring shows signs of having been worn for some time; the back of the band has become asymmetrical from constant wear and is noticeably thinner at one point.

The booklet and ring came with a swagger stick marked with regimental insignia.





The symbolism of these two pieces is simple and strong: the Royal horse Guards, Christ on the Cross, the King on the ring, and love – Godfrey Smith was married. The photo of a loved one could be held safely inside the booklet. Loyalty, love, faith, honour and duty – all in two small items that fit in the palm of a hand.

Comment

The booklet is so beautifully made that I contacted the Royal Horse Guards to see if they knew of similar items. The archivist replied that no, he'd seen nothing like it before and he believed it to be unique.

G.SMITH
1316
ROYAL HORSE GUARDS

SMITH, GODFREY

Rank: Trooper

Service No: 1316

Date of Death: 22/04/1918

Age: 30

Regiment/Service: Royal Horse Guards

Grave Reference: XXIX. L. 2A.

Cemetery: Etaples Military Cemetery

Additional Information: Son of Henry and Alice Mary Smith, of Bradfield, Berks; husband of M.L.Smith.⁴¹

Godfrey SMITH 1888 – 1918

Godfrey Smith was born on a great estate in Berkshire, Sulhamstead Abbots, in 1888.⁴²



Sulhamstead Abbots

The 1881 census shows the lifestyle into which he was born.

His father Henry Smith lived at Home Farm with his wife and family. He was a farmer managing 600 acres employing 15 labourers and 3 boys. There were two domestic servants and a governess for the children.⁴³

Lord of the manor in 1881 was William Richard Mortimer Thoyts, a retired Major in the Royal Berkshire Militia who lived in the manor with his wife and two daughters. They were attended by a lady's maid, lady's companion, nurse, butler, two footmen, groom, cook, two housemaids, kitchen maid, dairymaid, scullery maid and a serving woman.⁴⁴

Godfrey Smith spent his childhood at Home Farm. As 'daughters of farmer' his sisters were spared from work through to adulthood. Godfrey and his brother were at school from the age of 3.⁴⁵

By the age of 13 Godfrey was a boarder at The Park Ealing, a school run by Dr Benjamin Brucesmith.⁴⁶

Seven years later, on 6 April 1908, Godfrey Smith enlisted in the Royal Horse Guards. His service records are among the few to survive in England; the following account is based on those records.⁴⁷

He was tall and fit when he enlisted – just under six feet tall according to his Attestation

papers. He was 20 years old and had been working as a butcher. He had served some time with the Naval Senior Cadet Corps. He specifically wanted to join the Corps of the Household Cavalry, but understood that if he were not accepted by them he would still be committed to serving 12 years with the army.

Godfrey Smith was accepted into the Royal Horse Guards as a trooper and moved into the Combermere Barracks at Windsor.⁴⁸

He received extra training in 1908 and 1909, and on 25 July 1911 qualified as a machine gunner.

Later that year he was admitted to hospital after being kicked in the eye by a horse while on military duty at Hyde Park. His commanding officer gave the following account of the accident.

No 1316 Tpr Smith G R.H.Guards on the 17th of October at Hyde Park Barracks, was riding a young horse in the school. He reared up, threw him to the ground & put his foot in his eye.

I consider he was in no way to blame.

Although Smith spent 10 days in hospital, the wound was classified as ‘trivial’.

... ..

Trooper Smith served the six years between 1908 and 1914 at home in England with the Royal Horse Guards.

When war broke out, he was one of the first to be sent abroad. On 15 August 1914 he embarked at Southampton for France and served there with the cavalry until mid December, when a sprained ankle saw him admitted to the No 2 Clearing Hospital and transferred to the Rawalpindi Hospital near Boulogne. On Christmas Day 1914 he was transferred to a hospital ship and evacuated back to England.

He remained in England all through 1915. His military history sheet shows he married Marjorie Lillian Brown in St Philips Church, Kensington, on 18 December 1915.

On 19 September 1916, he made a Will at Regents Park Barracks leaving everything to Marjorie.⁴⁹

Army Form W. 3297.

USE EITHER THIS FORM OR THE FORM OVERLEAF, BUT NOT BOTH.

Form of Will to be used by a soldier desirous of leaving the whole of his property and effects to one person.
(See overleaf for Form of Will leaving legacies to more than one person.)

In the event of my death I give the whole of my property and effects to

Name of Legatee in full Mrs H. L. Smith
(Mr., Mrs., or Miss)

Relationship to soldier, if any Wife

Address of legatee in full 40 Pembroke Square
Kensington W

Signature of Soldier (full name) Godfrey Smith

Rank and Regimental Number Spr. 1316

Regiment Royal Horse Guard

Date 19/9/18

Signed and acknowledged by the said (a) Godfrey Smith
 as and for his last Will in the presence of us, present at the same time, who, in his presence, at his request, and in the presence of each other, have hereunto subscribed our Names as Witnesses*

(a) Insert full name of soldier making the Will.

(b) Regt H Bk MU

(c) C. W. de Clippin

(b) Regents Park Barracks, NW

(c) Regents Park Barracks, NW

*N.B.—The Witnesses must NOT be persons intended to benefit under the Will, or husbands or wives of such persons.

(28) W. 155/9562. 500M. 5/15. C.P., Ltd. 21/1197. (P.T.O.)

Two days later he left for France once more. He embarked at Southampton on 21 September 1916 and rejoined his regiment in November 1916. The whole of 1917 was spent in the field, apart from 2 weeks of training with an Equitation School.

On 19 April 1918, he was admitted to the General Hospital at Etaples with influenza. Three days later he died of pneumonia, 'due to privation or exposure while on military duty'.

It was 10 years almost to the day since he first enlisted.

Cortez' pyx and sacramental box



The pyx comes with a small box for sacramental oils.

The pyx is 5cm in diameter across the base and stands 1.9cm tall. It is bone with a decorative wooden inlay on the lid with the carved initials CW. It has an ornate brass hinge and a brass clasp.



The pyx is lined with fine leather on both the base and the lid. The number 203255 is stippled into the bone.

Comment

The pyx was instantly recognised as such by those within the Catholic church. It was designed to carry communion wafers and may have been used to administer the last rites to wounded soldiers.

The box carried small vials of sacramental oils and together with the pyx could be used to deliver communion outside the church.

The initials WC were also read as possibly having religious significance: inverted, they could be seen as the Christian symbol of the fish over an M for Mary.

Perhaps the letters were both.

... ..

A silver-plated plaque to Sancta Teresia a Jesu Infante has been added to the base in later years. It was not part of the original pyx.



Saint Theresa, the 'Little Flower of Jesus', lived from 1873 to 1897 but was not canonised until 1925.

The pyx is a holy object and it appears that steps were taken to preserve it and continue its use after the death of Cortez.

Construction

The pyx is made from the hollow horn of an animal. The base is 1.2cm high. The lid is 0.7cm. The natural shape of the horn tapers in a gentle curve from 5cm diameter at the base to 4.5cm across the top of the lid.

Three decorative bands are carved around the bone sides, two on the lid and one around the base.

A curved brass plate 1.1cm by 3.5cm is riveted to the side of the body. A narrower brass plate is riveted on top of this. The decorative brass hinge is soldered to the narrow plate and riveted to the lid in four places: two at the side of the lid and two at the top. This may even have been added later to preserve the pyx, when the plaque of Saint Theresa was added.



A brass hook is screwed to the side with a corresponding brass pin on the side of the lid to hold it firmly shut. The leather lining hides the protruding end of the screw.

The smooth letters on the wooden inlay are expertly carved in relief against a mottled background.

The box

The pyx came with a William Cortez medal (not part of this collection) and a small wooden box.

The box is 8.7cm by 5cm by 2.2cm.

It is lined with felt on both the body and the lid.



While the box itself may have been professionally made, the decorative brass clasp and the Jerusalem cross on the lid appear to have been done by an amateur hand.

The curved tag of the brass clasp sits 0.2cm below the bottom of the box meaning the box does not sit flat. The Jerusalem cross is off-centre and asymmetrical. It appears to have been carved out and filled with a shallow layer of solder or zinc, smoothed to a silvery finish.

The carved woodwork of the cross requires similar skills to the carved monogram of the pyx.

Both may well have been made by William Edward Cortez who learnt his skills – and perhaps his faith – in the Homes for Little Boys in Kent.

W C
203255

The Research

CORTEZ, WILLIAM

Rank: Corporal

Service No: 203255

Date of Death: 09/09/1918

Age: 29

Regiment/Service: Wiltshire Regiment 2nd Bn.

Grave Reference: E. 24.

Cemetery: Le Vertannoy British Cemetery, Hinges

Additional Information: Adopted son of Alexandra Baker.⁵⁰

The official records paint a picture of a lost child boarding with strangers as a 2-year-old, an inmate of the Homes for Little Boys at 13, adopted out when he was old enough to be put to work, who left home and joined the army as soon as he could. His adoptive parent/employer was the closest he had to family but he lost track of where that person lived.

His faith was his emotional salvation.

William Edward CORTEZ c1888 – 1918

William Cortez was born in Stanford Northamptonshire around 1888.

By the time he was 13 he was living as an inmate in the Homes for Little Boys in South Darenth near Farningham in Kent.⁵¹ These homes accommodated around 300 young orphans and homeless children who lived with carers in cottages in groups of about 30 children.

The cottage homes were an attempt to break away from the large institutional orphanages of Victorian England but the model was not without its problems. On the website for the Farningham Homes for Little Boys a visitor recorded his memories:

*Farningham Homes for Boys may seem, through rose-tinted glasses, to be an ideal environment, but lurking beneath the surface was wide-spread bullying, harsh discipline, corporal punishment and, occasionally, sexual abuse. I was there from 1951 to 1960, age 11 to 20, and I have very few happy memories.*⁵²

This was 50 years after William Cortez was an inmate but his experience may have been similar.

It is unclear why William was in the Homes for Little Boys. The information above comes from the 1901 census. The 1891 census has no William Cortez.

The name on his handwritten medal card is transcribed as CORTEY in the National Archives.⁵³

The 1891 census has William Cortey as a 2 year old 'boarder' and his 4 months old baby sister Connie as a visitor in the household of Edwin Churchill, a pastrycook living with his wife and widowed mother in Islington.⁵⁴

Their own son was a one year old baby; perhaps they took in William and Connie to care for them rather than see them abandoned in a hospital or orphanage. 'Boarder' suggests a foster care arrangement.

What is known is that he was in the Home for Little Boys by 1901 and that he was later adopted by Alexandra Baker when he was old enough to go out to work. Children in the homes were sent to school and taught trades to prepare them for work.

He gave Alexandra Baker as his next of kin when he joined the Territorial Forces, but gave no address for his adoptive parent. William was living in Chelsea when he enlisted in the Wiltshire Regiment at Chippenham.⁵⁵

His medal card shows him as Private W.E.Cortey 1570 of the Wiltshire Regiment, indicating he volunteered for the Territorial Forces (TF) as a part-time soldier before the war.

TF units were automatically mobilised at the outbreak of war and on 4 December 1915 he entered the theatre of war in France.

In early 1917 all men serving with TF units were renumbered from four digits to six digits and the medal card for Private W E Cortey was updated to Private William E Cortey 203255.

He served with the 2nd Battalion of the Wiltshire Regiment in France until he was killed in action near Bethune in September 1918.

... ..

William Edward Cortez, sometimes recorded as William Cortey, was 29 when he died.

He did not know or did not record the address of his next of kin. He served three years in the trenches of France and Flanders but when he died there was no-one to inform of his death.

His war medals including the 15 Star were returned as undeliverable.

... ..

There are discrepancies in his official records. The CWGC shows he died as Corporal William Cortez 203255 who was killed in action on 9 September 1918.

His record in Soldiers Died in the Great War shows Private William Edward Cortez 203255 was killed in action on 11 September 1918.

It's possible that William Cortez became a priest or was qualified to deliver communion in the field. With the pyx to carry communion wafers and the box for sacramental oils, the last rites could be given to dying soldiers on the battlefield.

The added plaque to Sancta Teresia a Jesu Infante suggests that after the death of Cortez, the pyx was passed back to the Church as a holy object to be ritually used in the years that followed.

Footnotes

- 1 CWGC: Sawyer, 1905
- 2 TNA: Medal cards, Sawyer Ralph
- 3 FMP: Births, Sawyer Ralph, 1894, Isle of Wight, Hampshire, England
- 4 FMP: 1901 Census, Sawyer Ralph, PRO RG 13, Shalfleet, Isle of Wight, Hampshire, England
- 5 FMP: 1911 Census, Sawyer Ralph, PRO RG 14, Newport, Isle of Wight, Hampshire, England
- 6 Allan: Isle of Wight Memorials
- 7 CWGC: Gough, 242309
- 8 FMP: Births, Gough Jim, 1895, Sheffield, Yorkshire, England
- 9 FMP: Soldiers died, Gough Jim, 1917
- 10 SNWM: Honour roll, Gough Jim, 242309
- 11 FMP: 1901 Census, Gough Jim, PRO RG 13, Attercliffe cum Darnall, Sheffield, Yorkshire (West Riding)
- 12 FMP: 1911 Census, Gough Jim, PRO RG 14, Sheffield, Yorkshire (West Riding)
- 13 TNA: Medal cards, Gough Jim, WO 372/8/78610
- 14 [GOV.UK](#): Wills, Gough Jim, 1917
- 15 CWGC: Castle, 345369
- 16 Cornforth, D. 2012
- 17 FMP: 1901 Census, Castle Leslie, PRO RG 13, Heavitree, St Thomas, Devonshire, England
- 18 FMP: 1881 Census, Castle Thomas, PRO RG 11, Butleigh, Wells, Somersetshire, England
- 19 FMP: 1891 Census, Castle Thomas, PRO RG 12, St Cuthberts Out Wells, Wells, Somersetshire, England
- 20 FMP: 1881 Census, Vincent Fanny, PRO RG 11, Glastonbury, Wells, Somersetshire, England
- 21 FMP: 1891 Census, Vincent Fanny, PRO RG 12, St Cuthberts Out Wells, Wells, Somersetshire, England
- 22 FMP: Marriages, Tom Castle and Fanny Elizabeth Vincent, 1892, Wells, Somerset, England
- 23 FMP: 1901 Census, Castle Leslie, PRO RG 13, Heavitree, St Thomas, Devonshire, England
- 24 FMP: 1911 Census, Castle Leslie Vincent, PRO RG 14, Heavitree, St Thomas, Devonshire, England
- 25 FMP: Soldiers died, Castle Leslie Vincent, 1918
- 26 CWGC: Fisk, 20294
- 27 FMP: Births, Fisk William, 1890, Colchester, Essex, England
- 28 FMP: 1891 Census, Fisk Wm, St Peter, Colchester, Essex, England
- 29 FMP: 1901 Census, Fisk Willm, Fordham, Lexden, Essex, England
- 30 FMP: 1911 Census, Fisk James, Kirby Le Soken, Tendring. Essex, England
- 31 FMP: 1911 Census, Fisk William, Overseas military
- 32 TNA: Medal cards, Fisk William, WO 372/7/76163
- 33 TNA: Medal cards, Fisk W, WO 372/23/106211

- 34 FMP: Soldiers died, Fisk W, 1918
- 35 FMP: Manchester Roll of Honour
- 36 FMP: Marriages, William Fisk and Marion Hodnett, 1918, Chorlton, Lancashire, England
- 37 FMP: 1911 Census, Hodnett Mason, Gorton, Chorlton, Lancashire, England
- 38 FMP: 1901 Census, Hodnett Marion, Gorton, Chorlton, Lancashire, England
- 39 CWGC: Pozieres
- 40 FMP: Deaths, Fisk Marion, 1967, Manchester, Lancashire, England
- 41 CWGC: Smith, 1316
- 42 FMP: Births, Smith Godfrey, 1888, Bradfield, Berkshire, England
- 43 FMP: 1881 Census, Smith Henry, PRO RG 11, Bradfield, Bradfield, Berkshire, England
- 44 FMP: 1881 Census, Thoyts W R M, PRO RG 11, Sulhampstead Abbots, Bradfield, Berkshire, England
- 45 FMP: 1891 Census, Smith Godfrey, PRO RG 12, Bradfield, Bradfield, Berkshire, England
- 46 FMP: 1901 Census, Smith Godfrey, PRO RG 13, Ealing, Brentford, Middlesex, England
- 47 FMP: Service records, Smith Godfrey, WO 363, Bradfield, Berkshire, England
- 48 FMP: 1911 Census, Smith Godfrey, PRO RG 14, New Windsor, Windsor, Berkshire, England
- 49 [GOV.UK](#): Smith, 1918
- 50 CWGC: Cortez William, 203255
- 51 FMP: 1901 Census, Cortez William, PRO RG 13, Horton Kirby, Dartford, Kent, England
- 52 Former Children's Homes: Cottage homes
- 53 TNA: Medal cards, Cortey William E, WO 372/5/32831
- 54 FMP: 1891 Census, Cortey William, PRO RG 12, Islington, London, England
- 55 FMP: Soldiers died, Cortez William Edward, 1918

Love

Adams' crucifix hearts



This is a simple piece rich with the symbolism of love, honour, duty, and faith – a talisman for troubled times. It is a brass pendant approximately 6.4cm by 4.8cm. It consists of two intertwined hearts with a superimposed crucifix. One heart bears the insignia of the RAF; the other is inscribed T.H.ADAMS 7919.

The chain is attached at a point such that the piece hangs evenly when worn.

Construction

The simplicity of design belies the complexity of construction. The double heart shapes are simple in outline but the ridges that define the hearts are soldered on after the flat brass sheet is cut, giving a softened decorative edge to the outline.

The crucifix made from three brass strips is pressed into the hearts with its shape evident at the back.



Comment

This appears to be an example of art therapy. It required thought and concentration and skill. As an air mechanic Thomas Adams had both the skills and the tools to make it.

It is designed to be worn on a chain around the neck, its symbolism readable like Braille by fingers in the dark.

T H O ADAMS
7919
RAF

The Research

ADAMS, THOMAS HOLLEGUM¹ OXLEY

Rank: Air Mechanic 2nd Class

Service No: 7919

Date of Death: 07/12/1918

Age: 24

Regiment/Service: Royal Air Force 19th Balloon Coy.

Grave Reference: XLVII. B. 7.

Cemetery: Etaples Military Cemetery

Additional Information: Son of Kate Adams, of 43, Cooke St., Barking, Essex.²

The kite balloons of WW1 were huge and cumbersome. It was Thomas Adams' job to keep them airborne.

Thomas Hollegum Oxley ADAMS 1894 – 1918

Thomas Adams was born in Barking in 1894, the son of a gas stoker. He grew up in Barking and at 17 was working as a milkman.³

He joined the Royal Flying Corps as an air mechanic on 23 August 1915 with pay of two shillings a week.⁴

The Royal Flying Corps became the RAF in April 1918. Thomas Adams appears on the RAF Muster Roll for 1918 with K.B.S. (SilPl) beside his name. I tried silver plater for SilPl with no success. My attempts to decode K.B.S. led me to the Kingston Bagpuize Southmoor site which had images of a village war memorial. I wrote asking for names on the memorial and was referred to the family historian, Rob Belk. There was no Thomas Adams, but Rob did his own research and came up with the following.

Dear Judy,

I have now checked Thomas Hollegum Oxley Adams's pre-war occupation. At age 17, in 1911 he was a milkman with the Co-operative Society, still living at home, in Barking.

*The occupation 'K.B.S. (SilPl)' noted on the RAF Muster Role was his job in the RAF. It means **Kite Balloon Section (Silicol Plant)***

In those days, balloons were inflated with hydrogen – and each balloon section had its own plant for producing the gas.

So, I'm sorry that Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor wasn't part of his life – but it did lead you down a path towards finding out more about him and what his job was in WWI.

I haven't checked his cause of death, but it could have been accident, wounds received prior to the Armistice – or Spanish Influenza.

*With kind regards,
Rob Belk.*

Kite balloons were used throughout WW1 for observation over the battlefield. They were tethered to the ground and had baskets underneath to hold observers.

At full height they provided a view over the trenches and observers could report on enemy positions and activity.

The balloons were deflated for transportation to the battlefield and inflated onsite. Thomas Adams' job within the Kite Balloon Section was to look after the silicol plant that produced hydrogen for the balloons.

Thomas Adams entered France with the RFC on 15 October 1915.
His RAF service records tell his story. ⁵

Thomas Adams was transferred to the RAF on 1 April 1918 as an air mechanic grade 3 and upgraded the following day to air mechanic grade 2.

He survived the war till after the Armistice.

On 25 November 1918 he was admitted to the General Hospital at Etaples with influenza. His condition deteriorated rapidly and two days later he was listed as dangerously ill with bronchial pneumonia.

He hovered near death for 10 days.

On 7 December 1918 Thomas Adams died of bronchial pneumonia and was buried in the Etaples Military Cemetery.

He was 24.

... ..

There is a rather sad correspondence between the War Office and his family after he died. There was no Will, but his mother made a claim that he had talked to her about what he wanted to happen in the event of his death. The correspondence that followed her claim is summarised below. ⁶

Thomas Adams' mother was asked to give details of his statement on an enclosed form sent on 31 July 1919 which asked -

1. *Exactly on what date and at what place the statement referred to was made by the deceased;*
2. *The exact words used by him in making the statement;*
3. *The full names and addresses of any other persons other than yourself, who were present at the time and heard the statement made.*

His mother's reply is on file.

I am not quite sure of the date, but I think it was Jan 13th 1918, at my home, 43, Cook St, Barking.

Should anything happen to me mother, I hope you will get everything.

She stated that present at the time were James Kerley, son-in-law, and her daughter Ada Marion Kerley, of 32 Talbot Road Barking East Hants.

On 2 September 1919 the same form is sent to Ada Kerley asking her to provide the same details.

Ada's reply is brusque and to the point:

Dear Sir,

I am not quite sure of the Date but I think it was January (13th 1918) at my home (43 Cooke Street Barking) Should anything happen to me Mother I hope you will get everything.

Mrs A M Kerley

32 Talbot Rd

Barking

The form is also sent to Ada's husband in October 1919. Ada's frustration shines through in her reply which is quoted below verbatim.

Sir,

I have already filled in one form the very same has you sent to have had it signed by an (Official) I should think that is sufficient.

I can give you the date the will was made out & the place

(The Words were)

I am not quite sure of the Date but I think it was January 13th 1918 at my home 43 Cooke St Barking E.

Should anything happen to me Mother I hope you will get everything.

Yours Faithfully

A.M. Kerley

The forms and letters are countersigned by a Minister of Religion and in 1920 the verbal Will of Thomas Adams is finally accepted, leaving everything to his mother.

Hogg's matchbox cover



Hogg's copper matchbox case is shaped to look like a book with an inscribed heart and banner on the front. It is handcrafted; the heart and banner are not perfectly symmetrical and there are several slicks of solder on the case.

The matchbox case is 5.4cm by 4.4cm by 2cm.



Construction

The case is copper with the spine indented to resemble a book.

The heart and banner are cut from a separate piece of copper and soldered to the case.

O.HOGG RN has been etched on the heart. 1916 is stamped below. WINNIE is etched on the banner. The inscriptions are delimited by punched fullstops.

O.HOGG
RN
1916
WINNIE

The Research

HOGG, OWEN FREDERICK

Rank: Able Seaman

Service No: R/1549

Date of Death: 25/10/1918

Age: 31

Regiment/Service: Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve Hawke Bn. R.N. Div.

Awards: M M

Grave Reference: LXVII. L. 23.

Cemetery: Etaples Military Cemetery

Additional Information: Son of Frederick Birkett Hogg and Lydia Hogg, of Birmingham; husband of

Winifred F. Hogg, of 96, Anderton Park Rd., Moseley, Birmingham. Resident of Paignton, Devon, before joining up.⁷

Owen Hogg's records presented a conundrum – how did an Able Seaman who 'died at sea' become buried in the Etaples Military Cemetery?⁸

Owen Frederick HOGG 1887 – 1918

Owen Hogg was born in Birmingham on 10 December 1887.⁹ He grew up with his parents, his sister and an uncle in Solihull.¹⁰

His father worked as a managing clerk for a manufacturer. Owen became a bank clerk and his sister a school teacher.¹¹

The young woman he married, Winifred Florence Payne, was born in Aston in 1888.¹² Winifred was the daughter of a brass founder,¹³ and grew up in Aston.¹⁴

Owen Frederick Hogg married Winifred Florence Payne in late 1914.¹⁵ He later carved her name 'Winnie' on a copper matchbox cover when he went to war in 1916.

... ..

Owen Hogg R/1549 joined the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve (RNVR) on 10 December 1915, a year after he married Winifred.¹⁶

The answer to how an Able Seaman who 'died at sea' was buried at Etaples lies firstly in Jerrold's book on the Hawke Battalion.

Jerrold explains that at the outbreak of war Churchill had far more men in the navy than he had ships. Volunteers from the Nelson, Hawke, Hood and Anson Royal Navy Battalions formed infantry battalions and entered Belgium in 1914. The Hawke Battalion went on to fight as infantry at Gallipoli as well as in France and Belgium.¹⁷

Owen Hogg's service history below is drawn from his Royal Navy service record.¹⁸

Owen Frederick Hogg entered active service on 6 June 1917 and was promoted to Able Bodied seaman as from 14 September 1917.

He passed a Signalling course at Blandford in January 1918.

From Blandford he was drafted to the Nelson Battalion as part of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF). He embarked at Folkestone on 14 March 1918, disembarked at Boulogne and moved up to Calais. He was detailed to the Hawke Battalion and proceeded to the Corps Reinforcement Camp on 19 March 1918.

Three months later he was admitted to the Canadian General Hospital at Etaples with influenza. After a week in hospital he was transferred to the convalescent depot at Etaples and finally discharged on 17 July. It was 2 September 1918 before he rejoined his battalion after his bout of influenza.

On 8 October 1918 he was severely wounded at Cambrai. He was admitted to the Chicago General Hospital at Dannes-Camiers two days later with gunshot wounds to his left thigh and left knee. His next of kin – he'd nominated Winifred – was advised on 15 October that he was seriously ill. His condition deteriorated and a further telegram was sent: 'dangerously ill – may be visited'.

Owen Frederick Hogg died of his wounds on 20 October 1918 and was buried in the Military Cemetery in Etaples.

On 15 January 1919 he was posthumously awarded the Military Medal. His service history shows it was listed in the London Gazette of 20 August 1919 on page 10559.

Comment

With no service number, this piece presented a challenge for research.

Even after reconciling the seaman who died at sea with the soldier who died on the Somme, there were difficulties tracking down his Military Medal.

It was there in the National Archives – but under the name Gwen Frederick Hogg. The O for Owen on the handwritten original was transcribed as a G, and Owen Frederick became Gwen Frederick, disguising the medal card from searches.¹⁹

... ..

Owen Frederick Hogg is remembered on the family headstone in the cemetery at Solihull. The headstone and the memorial details are reproduced here with the kind permission of the Jim Pedersen of The War Graves Photographic Project.²⁰



Hogg, Owen Frederick

Cemetery: Solihull Cemetery

Country: England

Area: Warwickshire

Rank: Able Seaman

Official Number: R/1549

Unit: Hawke Battalion R.N.Div.

Force: Royal Navy

Nationality: British

Details: M M. Wounded at Cambrai. 25th October 1918. Son of Frederick and Lydia Hogg of Birmingham; husband of Winnifred Hogg of 96 Anderton Park Road, Moseley Birmingham. Resident of Paignton, Devon before joining up. Family Memorial in Section B3 North Grave 77. Interred at LXVII.L.23 Etaples Military Cemetery

Long's cameo and box



This is a beautiful piece, reminiscent of a cameo.

The pendant is made of lead with a 1911 penny recessed into the back. The word 'Love' is etched faintly on the front.



1916 T.LONG is engraved on the back. 1916 is Long's service number rather than the date.

A heavy fob chain is attached with faded hallmarks.

It came with a small wooden trinket box with decorative hinge and clasp.

The box has the insignia of the Sherwood Foresters NOTTS & DERBY on the lid and a 1911 penny recessed into the base.

T.LONG 1916 is hand-engraved in angular letters on the penny.



Construction

The pendant is handmade, possibly cast in a mould made from mud which dries and hardens. Molten lead is poured into the mould and left to cool and harden. The penny is pressed into the lead before it sets.

A matchstick or splinter of wood leaves a hole for the chain.

The engraving is rough and the letters are angular – definitely not stamped.

The box may have been bought and personalised with the insignia of the regiment and the inscribed penny embedded in the base.

Comment

I thought about the cameo for some time, feeling its weight and trying to understand why it was made. What follows is my personal interpretation of the piece.

The pendant is about love but does not appear to be made as a gift. It is heavy and masculine, made of lead and copper in place of silver and gold. The chain is heavy, too short for a lady's pendant. The chain suggests it is meant to be worn as a fob, a talisman to be carried close to the heart.

The elements of the cameo are romantic – a beautiful girl, love, and the date 1911, signed by T.Long service number 1916.

Perhaps Thomas Long bought the wooden box with the decorated hinge and clasp for the safekeeping of the pendant. It is the perfect size for the cameo and chain.

He then marked the box as his own. He carved the shape of the Sherwood Foresters' badge in the lid and fixed it in place. On the base he could have carved his name in the wood. Instead he carved a recess for a penny. And instead of showing the King's head for King

and country he wrote his name on the reverse of the coin with the date 1911.

Perhaps it is coincidence that both coins were 1911 but these are carefully crafted pieces requiring thought and attention to detail.

Thomas Long was caught up in one of the most devastating and brutal theatres of war. Perhaps this was his secret talisman, like the coded entry in a diary – the memory of a girl he loved in 1911 when he was 20 years old and his country was at peace.

T.LONG
1916

The Research

In researching this piece it is important to note that 1916 refers to the service number of Thomas Long rather than the date.

LONG, THOMAS JOSEPH

Rank: Private

Service No: 1916

Date of Death: 14/10/1915

Age: 25

Regiment/Service: Sherwood Foresters (Notts and Derby Regiment) 1st/5th Bn.

Panel Reference: Panel 87 to 89.

Memorial: Loos Memorial

Additional Information: Son of Mr. and Mrs. I. D. Long, of 138, College St., Long Eaton, Nottingham.²¹

Thomas Joseph LONG c1890 – 1915

It seems likely that Thomas Long was the son of Joseph Dominic Long of Long Eaton, Nottingham.

‘Son of Mr. and Mrs. I.D.Long’ in the CWGC record presents a problem.

There is an Isaac David Long in census records but he does not fit with what is known. Perhaps the J of Joseph was transcribed as an I in the CWGC record.

Research suggests Thomas Joseph Long was the oldest son of Joseph Dominic and Mary Long. All but the oldest daughter were still living at home in 1911, with ages 20 (Thomas), 16, 14, 12, 9, 7, 5 and 3. Their father was a railway wagon builder. The older boys were workers. One of the girls left school to be a domestic servant at 14, while some of the younger ones were still at school.²²

Thomas Long joined the Sherwood Foresters in the North Midland Division and was with them when they first landed in France on 25 February 1915.²³ He served with them through some of the harshest battles on the fields of France and Flanders.²⁴ In May they became part of the 46th Division.

He was killed in action on 14 October 1915 at the Battle of Loos.

The following are extracts from Paul Reed’s account of the Battle of Loos.

The Battle of Loos ... was the first major British offensive on the Western Front, and also the first time the British used gas in the Great War.

The major stumbling block at Loos was the Hohenzollern Redoubt ... Many units fought here, and in the last phase of fighting at Loos on 13th October 1915, the 46th (North Midland) Division was wiped out ...

At 4.00am on 14 October, an enemy bombing attack was repulsed by the 7th and 8th Sherwood Foresters.

Thomas Joseph Long died later that same day.

... ..

Private Thomas Joseph Long of the Notts and Derby Regiment left a Will but it was never found.

One of his fellow soldiers made a sworn statement two years later.

Statement by No 38531 Lance Corporal Thomas Broughton, No 268 Protection Company, Royal Defence Corps.

I was formerly in the 1/5th Battalion of the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Regiment and was on active service in France with that Regiment.

I knew No 1916 Private Thomas J. Long of that Regiment while on active service. He was in the same section as myself.

One day about February 1915 I cannot remember the exact date or place but it was while we were on active service Pte Long told me he was going to make his Will and I saw him write it out in his Small Book, Army Book 64. He also told me he was leaving everything, money and property to his mother but I did not read his Will. No other persons were present other than myself when the Will was made.

I asked Pte Long at the time to write out a Will for me the same as his as I wanted to leave everything to my Mother and he wrote it in my Small Book and said it was the same as his. I cannot remember the exact words.

Sometime after this I was severely wounded and for about six weeks I was nearly unconscious and my memory was not so good after that. I cannot therefore remember the exact date and place the Wills were made.

*When I received back my papers afterwards my Will had been taken out of my Small Book which I now have.*²⁵

... ..

So there is a Will in Thomas Long's handwriting leaving everything to a Mother, but it was for Thomas Broughton.

Broughton himself must have been near death in those six weeks after the Wills were made. Perhaps the Will in Broughton's Army Book was taken because he was not expected to survive.

It appears that Thomas Long's wishes were honoured and that his Will was accepted – an honourable and practical triumph over the strict rules of bureaucracy.

Garrett's photo frame



Garrett's brass photo frame is 6.5cm by 3.5cm with a 2cm hinged stand at the back.

The frame has three separate pieces: the main frame, a slide-out tray and a window.

A photo can be placed on the tray, covered with the slide-out window, and slid into the main frame where it is held securely. The raised lip of the tray seals the opening. The fit is firm with no looseness. With the hinged legs collapsed the piece is small and compact.

Construction

The back of the main frame is a flat piece of brass with rounded corners at one end. A 0.5cm brass rim is soldered to the base on three sides leaving an open slot on the fourth side. A bevelled frame is soldered to the rim leaving a 0.2cm gap between it and the backplate.



A hinged piece of copper is soldered to the back to give fold out legs that lie flat when not in use.



The slide-out tray is a single sheet of brass with a raised tag for easy withdrawal. E.GARRETT 241437 is roughly stamped on the back of the tray.

The slide-out window is made from four strips of brass soldered at the corners. The solder is smoothed flat.

Comment

Elijah Garrett was working as a pipe fitter by the time he was 15 so he had the skills to make this well-crafted piece. The bevelled front may have come from a buckle but there are no joins or protrusions. It may have been heated and beaten into shape over a buckle. The frame has been made to fit the shape of the buckle except at the opening where it needs to be squared rather than have rounded corners.

The frame fits easily in the palm of the hand and is surprisingly smooth with the legs collapsed. Like many pieces it is pleasantly tactile.

E.GARRETT
241437

The Research

GARRETT, ELIJAH

Rank: Corporal

Service No: 241437

Date of Death: 28/08/1918

Age: 23

Regiment/Service: Sherwood Foresters (Notts and Derby Regiment) 1st Bn.

Grave Reference: IV. H. 3.

Cemetery: Orchard Dump Cemetery, Arleux-en-Gohelle

Additional Information: Son of Elijah and Martha Garrett, of 41, Burnell St., Brimington, Chesterfield.²⁶

Elijah GARRETT 1895 – 1918

Elijah Garrett was born in Derbyshire in 1895.²⁷

His mother Martha Evans was a widow with a 6 year old son²⁸ when she married Elijah's father in 1889.²⁹ Together they had nine more children over the next 13 years, with the youngest born in 1903 when Martha was 44.³⁰

Elijah was somewhere in the middle of the family. His father, himself the son of an agricultural labourer,³¹ was a general labourer who worked as a furnace labourer and a butcher's carter.³²

The middle children appear to have missed out on schooling. At the age of 15 Elijah was working as a pipe fitter.

He joined the Territorial Forces as Private Elijah Garrett 4294 in the Notts and Derby Regiment.³³

He was 19 when he entered the war in France on 10 November 1915. His medal card shows he was killed in action on 28 August 1918 as Corporal Elijah Garrett 241437.

Comment

I found Elijah Garrett on a Brimington memorial site where the home page for The Fallen features a photo of Elijah. The site was created by Sally Mullins.

Sally gave ready consent to publish with the comment 'We have been researching for 15 years all 120 men from our village who died in the Great War, and produced a book and have only just launched the website. I used to live close to where Elijah was born and lived and there were still 'Garretts' living there at the time – but they are all gone now...'

I reproduce part of the page for The Fallen and the obituary below with her kind permission.

... ..

Corporal Garrett was the eldest son of Mr & Mrs Garrett of 14 Burnell Street. He enlisted during the first few months of the war as a private and during training, he was promoted to Lance Corporal and then made up to full Corporal during 1916.

One of the village men



Corporal Elijah Garrett Killed in action 28th August 1918 Aged 23³⁴

His battalion fought on the Somme in 1916 and at Passchendaele in 1917. Then in late summer 1918 his battalion was caught up in the fierce hand to hand fighting at Oppy Wood near Arras in France, and heavy losses were incurred. He was one of 24 men lost from the 1st Sherwoods.

Upon his death his Commanding Officer wrote to his parents to tell them "I cannot speak too highly of your son. He had the full confidence of his men and myself".

He was 23 years old.

... ..

Ten days after Elijah Garrett entered the war in France, he wrote a Will in his Army Book leaving everything to his mother.

WILL.

In the event of my death
I give the whole of my
property and effects to my
Mother.

Mrs Martha Alice Garratt
41 Birrell St
Birmingham

No Chesterfield
Derbyshire

Signature 261, 437 E. Garratt

Rank & Regiment Le. Col. 6th Sherwood Fore

Date Nov 20th 1915

Platt's Boer War locket, horse brass & paper knife



The locket and horse brass

Platt's locket is heavy, masculine and complex. It holds a small portrait of a woman.

The locket and its attached horse brass are made from pennies and a halfpenny where the dates of the coins appear deliberate and significant. In all cases the reverse of the coin is the side that is showing. The horse brass has 1899, 1900 and 1901 in sequence.

The frame for the locket are two pennies 1899 and 1902 braced by two brass posts to form a sleeve 0.4cm wide.



The locket swivels around one of these brass posts. It has two parts: a cradle made from a thin piece of copper and a copper lid that conceals the photograph.

The cradle has a brass loop at the side; this serves as a handle to swivel the locket from the frame and also as a holder for the chain.





The lid of the cradle has a small copper loop at the side to lift the lid easily from the cradle. The cradle has a notch for the lid's loop to allow the lid to sit flush.

The paper knife



The attached horse brass is made from three coins riveted to a brass bar in the following order: 1899 penny, 1900 halfpenny, 1901 penny.

A heavy brass D possibly from a buckle is riveted to the pennies. A silver fob chain with clasps at both ends links the horse brass to the locket.

The folding paper knife is carved from bone. It is 15.5cm long when extended, 9.5cm closed and 2cm at its widest point, with a depth of 1cm.

One side of the handle is inlaid with silver insignia stamped with W PLATT 3411. On the reverse a silver threepence has been smoothed so that only Queen Victoria's head shows faintly.

The sides of the sheath are carved in the shape of a Victorian lady.

The blade is held in place by a brass rivet that allows it to swivel. The fit is tight and the blade sits firm in any position.

A separator wedge is riveted between the sides at the head leaving a gap of 0.45cm for the blade. The wedge is shaped to accommodate the point of the blade.

W.PLATT
3411

The Research

The story of Private Platt is held together by the service number etched on the bone knife – 3411.

The Boer War records show him as Private J. Platt 3411 of the 2nd Battalion of the Lancashire Fusiliers.

The Lancashire Fusiliers' own records show him as Private W. Platt 3411 of the 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers.³⁶

It seems likely that both records refer to the same man, John William Platt.

John William PLATT

Private Platt 3411 was wounded on 17 January 1900 at Venter's Spruit, and was invalided out on 31 March 1900.³⁷

He was awarded the Queen's South Africa (QSA) Medal Clasps: Relief of Ladysmith.

The 2nd Battalion of the Lancashire Fusiliers embarked at Southampton on 2 December 1899.

The date 1899 on both the horse brass and the locket suggests that John William Platt was with them on that first voyage. He may well be among those in the photo below, reproduced here with the kind permission of Joe Eastwood for the Lancashire Fusiliers.³⁸

William Platt's Boer War record provides the following details.

He was wounded on 17 January 1900 at Venter's Spruit, a small tributary of the Thukela River in Natal Colony, 'now apparently submerged by the Spionkop Dam'.



Photo by the Absent Minded Beggars Corps THE 2nd LANCASHIRE FUSILIERS EMBARKING AT SOUTHAMPTON, December 2, 1899 The battalion greatly distinguished itself under General Woodgate in the 'week of battles' leading up to the attack on Spion Kop, and furnished the largest contingent for that bloody battle.

It was the extreme western edge of British operations on the upper Thukela in 1899 and 1900 ... Lt-Gen Sir C. Warren's force crossed the Thukela River at Trichard's Drift on 17 January 1900 ... Warren ordered a trestle bridge built over the spruit at this crossing and established his principal bivouac here. This then became known as Venter's Laager, Venter's Spruit Laager or Venter's Spruit Drift.

The date suggests that William Platt was wounded during the initial crossing of the Thukela River.

Platt's wounds were serious; with a bivouac being established, it seems likely that he stayed with the regiment rather than there being any attempts to evacuate him.

This is borne out by his medal clasp. The Relief of Ladysmith is generally dated 1 March 1900. Platt was invalided on 31 March 1900, so it seems likely he was still with them during the Relief of Ladysmith, albeit as a wounded soldier.

Comment

The locket and the horse brass suggest that William Platt stayed on in some capacity after he was invalided.

The locket is for the period 1899 – 1902. There is a strong similarity between it and Hammond's locket which was dated 1899. Hammond left South Africa in 1902.

Hammond's Boer War locket is on the left with his WW1 love token inside; Platt's is on the right with the photo of the young woman enclosed.

Both have handmade copper lockets with date-significant pennies on the base and lid. The similarity suggests that both lockets were made in South Africa, and that William Platt was still there in 1902.

... ..



There is a possibility that John William Platt, like Henry Hammond, served again in WW1.

PLATT, JOHN WILLIAM

Rank: Lance Serjeant

Service No: 14610

Date of Death: 23/07/1916

Age: 36

Regiment/Service: Lancashire Fusiliers 17th Bn.

Panel Reference: Pier and Face 3 C and 3 D.

Memorial: Thiepval Memorial

Additional Information: Son of J. F. Patt (sic); husband of Edna Hewitt (formerly Platt), of 46, Lindsay St., Stalybridge, Cheshire.³⁹

The age at death of this John William Platt is consistent with Boer War service, and the regiment is once again the Lancashire Fusiliers, but there is no definitive link between this John William Platt and the owner of the locket. Adding to the uncertainty are the errors in the additional information, with Platt misspelt, and his wife's name given as Edna Hewitt (formerly Platt), which while possible seems more likely to be an error.

... ..

The Boer War items belonging to William Platt came with four cabinet photos.



The two older people could be his parents.

The younger ones are from the Vandyke and Brown studios in Bold Street Liverpool.⁴⁰ Vandyke and Brown dissolved their partnership in 1877 so the photos are post 1877 (one is from Vandyke, one from Brown). The Vandyke studio was still operating under his name until 1902.



Perhaps the young man is William Platt.

And the young woman? She may be the one whose portrait he took to war and held close to his heart in a secret makeshift locket.

Footnotes

- 1 Hollegum was variously spelt Hologum, Hollingum, Hollingham in different records
- 2 CWGC: Adams, 7919
- 3 FMP: 1911 Census, Adams Thomas, PRO RG 14, Barking, Romford, Essex, England
- 4 FMP: RAF Muster roll, Adams T H O
- 5 FMP: RAF Service records, Adams Thomas Hollegum Oxley
- 6 [GOV.UK](#): Soldiers' Wills, Adams Thomas, 1918
- 7 CWGC: Hogg, 1549
- 8 FMP: RN 1914-1919, Hogg Owen Frederick, GRO Navy deaths
- 9 FMP: Births, Hogg Owen Frederick, 1887, Birmingham, Warwickshire, England
- 10 FMP: 1901 Census, Hogg Owen F, PRO RG 13, Yardley (Worcs), Solihull, Warwickshire, England
- 11 FMP: 1911 Census, Hogg Owen Frederick, PRO RG 14, Aston, Warwickshire, England
- 12 FMP: Births, Payne Winifred Florence, 1888, Aston, Warwickshire, England
- 13 FMP: 1891 Census, Payne Winifred F, PRO RG 12, Bordesley, Aston, Warwickshire, England
- 14 FMP: 1911 Census, Payne Winifred Florence, PRO RG 14, Aston, Warwickshire, England
- 15 FMP: Marriages, Owen F Hogg and Winifred F Payne, 1914, Aston, Warwickshire, England
- 16 FMP: RN Service records, Hogg Owen Frederick, ADM339
- 17 Jerrold: 2003
- 18 FMP: RN service records, Hogg Owen Frederick
- 19 TNA: Medal crads, Hogg Gwen Frederick, WO 372/23/121069
- 20 Pedersen: Hogg
- 21 CWGC: Long, 1916
- 22 FMP: 1911 Census, Long Thomas Joseph, Long Eaton, Shardlow, Derbyshire, England
- 23 TNA: Medal cards, Long Thomas J, WO 372/12/131627
- 24 FMP: Soldiers died, Long Thomas Joseph, 1915
- 25 [GOV.UK](#): Soldiers' Wills, Long Thomas, 1915
- 26 CWGC: Garrett, 241437
- 27 FMP: Births, Garrett Elijah, 1895, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, England
- 28 FMP: 1891 Census, Garrett Martha, PRO RG 12, Brimington, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, England
- 29 FMP: Marriages, Elijah Garrett and Martha Evans, 1889, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, England
- 30 FMP: 1901 Census, Garrett Elijah, PRO RG 13, Brimington, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, England

- 31 FMP: 1861 Census, Garrett Elijah, PRO RG 9, Aston Le Walls, Banbury, Oxfordshire, England
- 32 FMP: 1911 Census, Garrett Elijah, PRO RG 14, Brimington, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, England
- 33 TNA: Medal cards, Garrett Elijah, WO 372/7/212617
- 34 Mullins: Brimington
- 35 [GOV.UK](#): Garrett, 1918
- 36 LF: Platt W, 3411
- 37 FMP: Boer War, Platt J, 3411
- 38 LF: Spion Kop
- 39 CWGC: Platt John William, 14610
- 40 Cartes de Visites: Vandyke Aaron

Letters home

Beaver's inkwell



This beautiful brass inkwell stands 5cm tall and is 5cm across the widest part of the body. The inside has a coating of ink suggesting it has been well used.

A George V penny is recessed into the base. A Royal Fusiliers button decorates the lid.



A horizontal brass tag with a central hole acts as a penholder. An oval brass ID tag is attached to the penholder by a figure of eight copper wire. B.C.BE AVER 62365 is inscribed on the ID tag around an indented cross.

There are signs of ink both inside the inkwell and on the penholder. The pen is commercially made and bears the maker's mark M. Myers & Sons Ltd CROWSKILL

5062 EF on the nib.



Construction

The body of the inkwell appears to be made from a decorative brass bedhead. The base is 3.4cm in diameter. The 3cm penny sits flat within the base surrounded by a narrow band of solder.

The hinged lid is handcrafted and opens awkwardly. It appears that a narrow strip of brass has been left as a protrusion when the top of the finial was cut off, and that this protrusion has been fed through a hole in the lid and closed into a loop to work as a hinge.

The Royal Fusiliers button is soldered to the lid. A small piece has been cut from the button near the hinge to allow the lid to open.

The penholder has an indented hole for the pen and is soldered to the rim of the striped body.

Comment

As discussed in the account below, Bernard Beaver spent time convalescing in France. The inkwell may well have been made during that time.

... ..

The inkwell and pen came with a second item – a fobwatch with halfpenny fob.

The watch is a military pocket watch in working condition. The watch has the maker's marks on the back – a three-pronged up arrow with G.S.T. 101924.



The fob is a 1914 George V halfpenny cut to the shape of a Maltese cross with a medallion for a shooting award soldered on the reverse.

B.C.BEAVER
62365

The Research

BEAVER, BERNARD CHARLES

Rank: Private

Service No: 62365

Date of Death: 08/08/1918

Age: 23

Regiment/Service: Royal Fusiliers 9th Bn.

Grave Reference: III. C. 22.

Cemetery: Beacon Cemetery, Sailly-Laurette

Additional Information: Son of Alfred and Annie Beaver, of 56, Cold Overton Rd., Oakham, Rutland.¹

Bernard Beaver's story was easy to research. There is a tribute on the BBC's History Remembrance site, complete with photo.

An even more detailed story appears on the family history website produced by Shane Beaver. The site is six years old and my request for permission to publish received no reply. I reproduce parts of it here with acknowledgement.

Bernard Charles BEAVER (1895 – 1918)

Bernard Charles Beaver was born in Oakham on 1 February 1895.²



His father Alfred Beaver was a tailor in Oakham, Rutland. Bernard followed in his father's footsteps, apprenticed as a tailor's cutter by the time he was 16.³

The BBC History Remembrance site has the following photograph and notes contributed by Shane Beaver on Remembrance Day 2008.

The BBC account reads as follows.

Born at Oakham, Rutland, on February 1, 1895, he was employed as a tailors cutter as a teenager.

Moving to Gravesend in Kent, he joined the Army in October 1915 with the City of London Yeomanry. Receiving the number 62365, he later moved to the 9th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers, where he became a Lewis machine-gunner.

He took part in the Irish Rebellion of 1916, the Battle of Cambrai (Nov-Dec 1917), the Battles on the Somme (March 1918), the Battle of Arras (Mar 28, 1918) and others before he was killed in action at Morlancourt, France (Battle of Amiens) on August 8, 1918. He is buried at Beacon Cemetery, Sailly-Laurette, France. He was unmarried. Another kinsman not forgotten.⁴

There are further comments in Shane Beaver's family history. Bernard Beaver was wounded and spent time in convalescence, adding a poignant note to the BBC biography:

He was well known as a promising violinist, and was in an orchestra in Ireland and also in France during his stay at a convalescent camp.⁵

Comment

Bernard Beaver was one of the last of his line. The family tree shows that of his three siblings, one died as a child of eight, a sister died unmarried, and the only child of his third sibling never married and remained childless.

A promising violinist...

Promising musicians have died young in the past, but they are remembered and celebrated because in times of peace their talent was recognised and nurtured.

We will never know what talents were lost to the world with the death of so many young men in WW1.

Cobb's candleholder



The brass candleholder sits on a three-legged stand. It is about 7.6cm tall with the lid on, and 5cm without. It has a curved brass handle and a lid decorated with regimental insignia. The lid is linked to the base by a copper chain.

Hung from the chain is a cutdown 1914 penny with H.T.COBB A S H stamped roughly on the obverse and 303106 on the reverse.

Construction

The holder is shaped like a bullet head, with decorative markings on the outside. It is securely soldered to a brass plate that stands on three brass legs.



The shaped handle is riveted to the plate opposite a brass loop for the chain. The lid is a brass cylinder with a regimental button fitted as a cap. A brass loop is soldered to the lid for the chain.

Comment

This is one of the most beautiful pieces in the collection. It is well-designed and functional as well as decorative. It is nicely balanced and the handle gives an easy grip. It is stable on a flat surface or with the legs set into mud. The lid quickly hides a light.



H.T.COBB A S H
303106

The Research

COBB, H T

Rank: Private

Service No: 303106

Date of Death: 09/04/1917

Regiment/Service: Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders 1st/8th Bn.

Grave Reference: I. B. 22.

Cemetery: Roclincourt Military Cemetery

Additional Information:⁶

Henry Thomas COBB c1897 – 1917

The candleholder is a work of art, created from scraps of metal from the battlefield.

A search back through Henry Cobb's family history throws some light on where Henry may have learnt or inherited his skills.

His father Thomas was born in 1861, the son of a platelayer on the railway.⁷ By 1881 Thomas was working as an apprentice to a builder, George Roberts.⁸

Lavinia Roberts was living nearby. Lavinia had left home by the time she was 15 and was working as a domestic servant.⁹ It appears that romance flourished between Lavinia and the young apprentice and in 1888 they were married.¹⁰

Thomas became a journeyman bricklayer, and Lavinia took up dressmaking.¹¹ Their three children were born in the years that followed, including Henry Thomas, the youngest, in 1897.¹²

By 1901 Thomas and Lavinia were innkeepers in Doncaster. Their three children lived

with them, their daughter doing housework and Henry attending school.¹³

Henry stayed at school till he was at least 14.¹⁴

He joined the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and fought with them on the Somme. He was killed in action in April 1917 when he was just 20.

Grainger's candleholder



This is a brass candleholder with a removable lid. It stands 5.2cm tall with the lid in place. Both the holder and the lid have handles. The lid is topped by a George V penny inscribed J. GRAINGER E Y RT 15048.

Construction

The holder is a hollow cylinder of brass with a flanged stand, all one piece.



The handle is a loop of brass soldered to the cylinder. Two indented brass semicircles are soldered to the loop for a firm finger grip.

A small groove is cut from the top of the holder. It may have been part of the original design but serves no function in the finished piece.

The lid is a brass cylinder. A long groove in the lid slides over the handle of the base.

The lid itself has a small handle. With the lid in place this handle sits opposite the base handle.

A slightly rounded George V penny is soldered to the top of the lid. J. GRAINGER E Y RT 15048 is stamped around the penny. It appears the original intention was to inscribe REGIMENT but when spacing became an issue the first E was over stamped as a T and REGIMENT became RT.

Comment

This is a well designed piece, practical and attractive. The lid fits snugly but not tightly and stays in place with the groove over the handle stopping it from swivelling.



The penny gives an idea of scale. The candleholder fits easily in the palm of a hand. Like many pieces it has a tactile smoothness and is pleasant to hold, the fingertips easily exploring the loops and curves and the lid sliding easily on its tracks.

J. GRAINGER . E. Y. RT.
15048

The Research

GRAINGER, JAMES

Rank: Private

Service No: 15048

Date of Death: 10/08/1917

Age: 27

Regiment/Service: East Yorkshire Regiment 6th Bn.

Panel Reference: Panel 21 and 31.

Memorial: Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial

Additional Information: Son of George and F. Grainger, of 65, Dean Rd., Low Spennymoor, Co. Durham.¹⁵

James GRAINGER 1889 – 1917

James Grainger was born into a mining family in Spennymoor, County Durham in 1889.¹⁶

The 1901 census describes his father George as a coal hewer and his older brother Joseph as ‘coal helper up underground’. His older sister was a domestic servant. It was a large family with children born every couple of years. From Joseph the oldest at 17 the ages were 15, 13, 11 (James), 7, 5, 2 and 4 months.¹⁷

There was a change of mothers after James was born. His mother Annie died in 1892 when she was 26.¹⁸ James was still a toddler, the youngest of four children. A year later his father remarried¹⁹ and had five more children. By 1901, James’ widowed grandmother was living with the family in Spennymoor.

James does not appear to have had any formal schooling and by 1911 he was also working down the mines.²⁰

He joined the 6th Battalion of the East Yorkshire Regiment and served with them on the Gallipoli Peninsula. His medal card shows he first entered the theatre of war in the Balkans on 7 October 1915.²¹ This was not the first landing of the 6th Battalion. An earlier

contingent arrived on Mudros in July and landed at Suvla Bay in August.²² James was part of reinforcements in October 1915.

He was in time for the general retreat from the Gallipoli Peninsula in December 1915. These were harsh times. The website for the 6th Battalion describes the conditions.

17.12.1915 Evacuated to Mudros due to heavy casualties from combat, disease and severe weather.

The action over the next months for James Grainger and the 6th Battalion is condensed in the following lines.

04.02.1916 Moved to Alexandria to defend the Suez Canal.

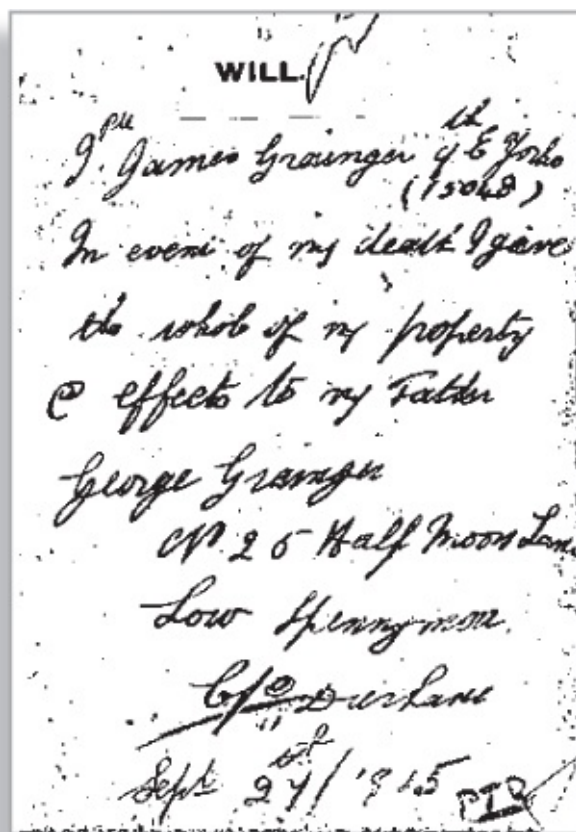
*10.07.1916 Moved to France landing at Marseilles...*²³

James Grainger survived just over a year on the Western Front.

He was killed in action near Ypres on 10 August 1917 and is one of the 54,000 listed on the Menin Gate Memorial as missing with no known grave.

... ..

James Grainger wrote his Will in his Army Book on the way to Gallipoli.



²⁴

He left everything to his father. His mother died when he was a toddler, and although his father remarried, he did not name his stepmother in his Will. There is a tantalising PTO at the bottom of the page for 'please turn over' but the next page is not recorded on file.

Pelham's inkwell



Pelham's brass inkwell could well have been bought, although the decorative lines around the centre are too irregular to have been machined. It has then been modified.



A 1916 penny is engraved and soldered to the lid. A piece has been cut from the penny to allow for the hinged handle.

The original lid shows signs of a rivet on the underside but there is no evidence of a rivet through the penny. It is possible that a previous decoration has been replaced by the inscribed penny.

The inscription has been over stamped in several places suggesting it has been done inexpertly.

It is pleasantly heavy and shows signs of having been used as an inkwell.

Comment

This belonged to a gunner who saw action in France between 1916 and 1918. It has similarities to Beaver's inkwell and like his may have been made or modified during convalescence.

RF
A
PELHAM
A
24711

PELHAM, ARTHUR ALBERT

Rank: Gunner

Service No: 24711

Date of Death: 29/08/1918

Age: 27

Regiment/Service: Royal Field Artillery "A" Bty. 110th Bde.

Grave Reference: II. C. 40.

Cemetery: Peronne Road Cemetery, Maricourt

Additional Information: Husband of Harriet Pelham, of 15, Middleton Street, Pendleton, Manchester.²⁵

Arthur Pelham had a special reason to write letters home – he was newly wed when he enlisted.

Arthur Albert PELHAM 1891 – 1918

Arthur Albert Pelham was born in 1891,²⁶ the oldest son of a shoemaker. He lived in the same house at 76 Collyhurst St Manchester from the time he was born until he left to marry in 1913.

Arthur was born 2 months before the census of 1891, the second surviving child of a shoemaker.²⁷

By 1901, the family had grown. There were six children now, including a newborn baby.²⁸

The following year, Arthur was admitted to the Holland Street Boarding School in Manchester, having previously attended St James' School to Grade III.²⁹

His mother died when the seventh child was born, in 1904.³⁰

The baby survived. The 1911 census shows the widower father (47) a clog maker, Martha (26) a cap cutter, Arthur (20) a bale marker cloth, Leonard (17) an oil sheet repairer, Doris (15) a cap winder cotton, Arnold (12) school hairdressmaker part time, Ernest (10) and Gladys now 7.

The census also shows there were ten children born of whom only seven were still living; three had died, perhaps explaining the gap in ages between Arthur and his older sister Martha.

... ..

Arthur Pelham married Harriet Bell in early 1913.³¹

In 1914 he enlisted at Salford.³² The National Roll of the Great War has the following entry.³³

PELHAM, A.A., Gunner, R.F.A.

He volunteered in September 1914, and was retained at home until May 1916, when he was drafted to France. In this theatre of war he participated in the Battles of the Somme and Cambrai, and in many engagements during the Retreat and Advance of 1918.

He was unhappily killed in action near Albert on August 27th, 1918, and was buried at

Peronne.

He was entitled to the General Service and Victory Medals.

“Whilst we remember, the sacrifice is not in vain.”

15, Middleton Street, Pendleton. Z2287A

He is also remembered on the Salford War Memorial.

Brewer's scimitar and scabbard



Brewer's brass letter opener is shaped like a scimitar. It sits in a brass scabbard with a copper lip.

The sword is 13cm long of which 8.5cm is the blade. When the sword is sheathed in the scabbard the piece measures about 15cm.



Construction

Apart from the rounded guard, the paper knife appears to be one piece of moulded brass.

The guard is soldered to the hilt and has two small rivets for extra stability. It is decorated with unevenly spaced holes, seven at the top and five at the bottom.

S.W.BREWER 1807 is stamped in an arc under the top holes with THE BUFFS below.



The scabbard consists of two pieces of brass crimped around the edges to form a sleeve. Two copper strips are soldered to the mouth of the scabbard and riveted at the overlapping ends.

Comment

The curve of the blade follows the curve of the scabbard but there is a point where the blade sticks, and it takes considerable pressure to sheath the sword up to its hilt. While the sword may have been bought, the scabbard appears to be handcrafted, as is the guard on the sword.

S.W.BREWER 1807
THE BUFFS

The Research

It needed perseverance to find S.W. Brewer. The service number on his hand written medal card in the National Archives was creased and an error was made in transcription, ruling it out as a candidate. It has now been corrected on the basis of the CWGC record.

BREWER, S W

Rank: Private

Service No: 1807

Date of Death: 26/08/1916

Regiment/Service: The Buffs (East Kent Regiment) 1st/5th Bn.

Grave Reference: XIV. E. 3.

Cemetery: Amara War Cemetery

Additional Information: Son of William John Brewer, of 53, Bletchley Rd., Bletchley, Bucks.³⁴

Sidney Brewer was 22 and a long way from home when he died of illness in the awful heat of Mesopotamia.

Sidney William BREWER 1893 – 1916

Sidney William Brewer was born in Newport Pagnell in 1893,³⁵ the oldest son of William John Brewer and his wife Kate Polton.

In 1901 he appears to be an only child. His father worked as a railway engine stoker.³⁶

The family was still living at the same address in 1911. Sidney's father was a locomotive stoker on the L and N W Railway. Sidney at 17 was an assistant in a draper's shop, living at home with his parents and widowed grandmother. And he had a sibling after many years, a three year old brother.³⁷

... ..

Sidney Brewer joined the East Kent Regiment in Ashford, Kent.

His medal card shows he entered the war in Mesopotamia on 9 December 1915,³⁸ two days after the start of the siege at Kut-al-Amara.

British troops were retreating down the Tigris towards Basra when they were forced to stop at Kut-al-Amara, some 120 miles south of Baghdad. Ottoman forces formed a blockade to the south of Kut, stopping the British and cutting them off from their supply lines in Basra.

The Ottomans also put up a blockade to stop any rescue attempts from Basra.³⁹

The garrison at Kut-al-Amara was already besieged by the time Sidney Brewer arrived in Basra.

The first British rescue expedition set out from Basra in January 1916. It seems likely that Sidney Brewer was part of that expedition. The mission was repulsed with heavy losses. Repeated attempts over the next few months failed and led to heavy casualties.

What follows is drawn from Duffy's account of the siege.⁴⁰

A final attempt to break the blockade was made by a paddle steamer that tried to reach the town with supplies. When that failed, an armistice was declared, leading to surrender.

The Turks agreed to send 10 days of food into the garrison while the six-day armistice was in effect. While the talks were in progress the British took the opportunity of destroying anything of value in the town, aware of its imminent surrender.

The abortive relief efforts came at a heavy cost.

An additional 23,000 British casualties have been suffered during the relief efforts ...

... ..

Sidney Brewer survived the relief efforts and was promoted to Lance Corporal only to die a few months later of illness.

Conditions were appalling. The Long, Long Trail gives this account.

*Like Gallipoli, conditions in Mesopotamia defy description. Extremes of temperature (120 degrees F was common); arid desert and regular flooding; flies, mosquitoes and other vermin: all led to appalling levels of sickness and death through disease.*⁴¹

Sidney Brewer was 22 when he died. He is buried in the Amara War Cemetery.

Footnotes

- 1 CWGC: Beaver, 62365
- 2 FMP: Births, Beaver Bernard, 1895, Oakham, Rutland, England
- 3 FMP: 1911 Census, Beaver Bernard, PRO RG 13, Oakham, Oakham, Rutland
- 4 Beaver. 2008: BBC contribution
- 5 Beaver. 2007: Beavers of Oakham
- 6 CWGC: Cobb, 303106
- 7 FMP: 1861 Census, Cobb Thomas Henry, PRO RG 9, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, England
- 8 FMP: 1881 Census, Cobb Thomas Henry, PRO RG 11, Blyton, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, England
- 9 FMP: 1881 Census, Roberts Lavinia, PRO RG 11, Blyton, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, England
- 10 FMP: Marriage, 1888, Thomas Henry Cobb and Lavinia Roberts, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, England
- 11 FMP: 1891 Census, Cobb Thomas H, PRO RG 12, Blyton, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, England
- 12 FMP: 1901 Census, Cobb Thomas H, PRO RG 13, Blyton, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, England
- 13 FMP: 1901 Census, Cobb Thomas H, PRO RG 13, Blyton, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, England
- 14 FMP: 1911 Census, Cobb T, PRO RG 14, Blyton, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, England
- 15 CWGC: Grainger, 15048
- 16 FMP: 1891 Census, Grainger James, PRO RG 12, Whitworth, Auckland, Durham, England
- 17 FMP: 1901 Census, Grainger James, PRO RG 13, Tudhoe, Durham, Durham, England
- 18 FMP: Deaths, Grainger Annie, 1892
- 19 FMP: Marriages, George Grainger and Fanny Heath
- 20 FMP: 1911 Census, Grainger James, PRO RG 14, Tudhoe, Durham, Durham, England
- 21 TNA: Medal cards, Grainger James, WO 372/8/95235
- 22 FMP: Soldiers Died, Grainger James, 1917

- 23 Forces War Records: East Yorkshire Regiment
- 24 [GOV.UK](#): Soldiers' Wills, Grainger James, 1917
- 25 CWGC: Pelham Arthur Albert, 24711
- 26 FMP: Births, Pelham Arthur Albert, 1891, Manchester, Lancashire, England
- 27 FMP: 1891 Census, Pelham Arthur A, PRO RG 12, Manchester, Lancashire, England
- 28 FMP: 1901 Census, Pelham Arthur A, PRO RG 13, Manchester, Lancashire, England
- 29 FMP: Manchester School Admissions, Pelham Arthur, 1902
- 30 FMP: Deaths, Pelham Mary Jane, 1904, Manchester, Lancashire, England
- 31 FMP: Marriages, Albert A Pelham and Harriet Bell, 1913, Manchester, Lancashire, England
- 32 FMP: Soldiers died, Pelham Arthur Albert, 1918
- 33 FMP: National roll, Pelham A A, Salford, England
- 34 CWGC: Brewer, 1807
- 35 FMP: Births, Brewer Sidney, 1893, Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire, England
- 36 FMP: 1901 Census, Brewer Sidney, PRO RG 13, Fenny Stratford, Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire, England
- 37 FMP: 1911 Census, Brewer Sidney William, PRO RG 14, Fenny Stratford, Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire, England
- 38 TNA: Medal cards, Brewer S W, WO 372/3
- 39 TNA: Mesopotamia campaign
- 40 Duffy: Siege of Kut-al-Amara
- 41 Baker: Long Long Trail, Mesopotamia

I was here

Collings' HMS Contest cap



The sailor's cap is copper and brass with HMS CONTEST inscribed around the band. The cap is 4cm across the top, 3.4cm across the rim, and 1.8cm deep without the metal tags. A hallmarked sterling silver fob chain is permanently attached to the top of the cap.



The base / lid unscrews from a central threaded spindle to reveal a leather-lined cavity for snuff. The lid is also lined with leather. The lid has a brass handle that allows easy opening. The spindle from the inside top of the cap screws into a small hole in the lid. The lid has a lip that slides neatly over the body of the piece to give a watertight fit.

A 1917 halfpenny is recessed into the brass lid. It is inscribed T.COLLINGS RN.

Construction

The HMS Contest band is a strip of copper inscribed and soldered in place.



The cap is a brass cup fitted into a copper cap. The central spindle runs through both to give a loop for the fob chain at the top. The gap between the cup and the rounded cap gives the spindle stability.



Comment

This was one of the earliest pieces in the collection and helped define what I was looking for.

There were many caps and hats made from coins on eBay. This was different in that it was personal. It was hand made with links to the owner. It seemed likely that it was made by the seaman himself from a coin and scraps of metal and leather found on the ship. It was small and beautifully made, designed to be carried as a fob.

HMS CONTEST
T.COLLINGS
RN

The Research

COLLINGS, THOMAS BOSWORTH

Rank: Able Seaman

Service No: J/15112

Date of Death: 18/09/1917

Age: 24

Regiment/Service: Royal Navy H.M.S. "Contest."

Panel Reference: 21.

Memorial: Plymouth Naval Memorial

Additional Information: Son of William and Mary Collings, of Bradmore, Notts.¹

This small piece, engraved with the name of T. Collings, was rescued from a torpedoed ship shortly before it sank in 1917.

Thomas Bosworth COLLINGS 1894 – 1917

Thomas Collings was born in 1894, one of eight children born to William and Mary Collings in Bradmore, Nottingham. He grew up in Bradmore where his father and brothers worked as labourers.² By the time Thomas was 17 he was living with his aunt and uncle, working on a farm nearby.³

By the end of that year, 1911, Thomas was a 2nd class Boy on HMS Ganges II, a shore based training ship for the Royal Navy.⁴

On his 18th birthday, 15 January 1912, Thomas Bosworth Collings joined the Royal Navy for a period of 12 years.

Thomas Collings was a slightly built, fresh-faced youth of 18 when he joined the Navy, with dark brown hair and hazel eyes. He was still growing, his 5 foot 4 inches at enlistment increasing to 5 foot 4 1/4 inches when he was measured six months later.

The following is a summary of the years that followed, based on his Royal Navy service record.

12 December 1911 – 21 March 1912	HMS Ganges II (shore training ship)
21 March 1912 – 3 June 1912	HMS Prince George
4 June 1912 – 21 November 1912	HMS Carnarvon

22 November 1912 – 13 January 1914	HMS New Zealand
13 January 1914 – 30 April 1914	HMS Vivid I (Navy barracks at Devonport)
1 May 1914 – 9 September 1915	HMS Blake (depot ship) HMS Alarm (destroyer)
10 September 1915 – 15 December 1915	HMS Vivid I
16 December 1915 – 5 March 1917	HMS Vengeance
6 March 1917 – 13 August 1917	HMS Vivid I
14 August 1917 – 31 August 1917	HMS Hecla (depot ship) HMS Contest (destroyer)
1 September – 18 September 1917	HMS Apollo (depot ship) HMS Contest

The final entry reads ‘Died 18 September 1917. Killed when HMS Contest was sunk.’

... ..

The destroyer HMS Contest served as an escort for ships in the English Channel during WW1.

On 18 September 1917 HMS Contest was escorting the steamship City of Lincoln when she was hit by a torpedo in the English Channel. The Contest went to her aid and was herself torpedoed and sunk by a German U-boat. With the Contest sinking, the U-boat withdrew.



HMS Contest, launched in 1913, was similar to this ship HMS Shark

Accounts vary as to the number of casualties aboard the Contest, although there is general consensus that 35 men were killed.

Thomas Bosworth Collings was one of those killed. His body was not recovered and he was lost at sea.

Survivors – variously estimated to be between 40 and 60 men – were transferred to the City of London which made it back to port.

Comment

The number of survivors suggests that there was time to check those who were killed, and to remove ID tags and personal items. This could explain how the small sailor's hat with personal ID survived the sinking of the Contest.

Thomas Bosworth Collings is remembered on the Plymouth Naval Memorial for those lost at sea.

He is also remembered in the Bradmore Methodist Church War Memorial and the Bunny St Mary War Memorial for WW1.

Bass' lighter and matchbox case



The cylinder to hold lighter fluid is brass with a screw cap at the base.



The wick is still visible at the base with the cap off, but not at the top. A small removable brass cap protects the wick when not in use, and a brass shield protects the flame.

A narrow brass cylinder is attached to the side for the wheel. The flint is held close to the wheel by a spring which is secured by a small screw at the base of the cylinder.

The carefully carved wooden jacket gives a firm finger grip allowing the thumb to spin the wheel and strike the flint to produce the spark to light the wick. Windows in the protective shield allow the flame to be extinguished easily.



A George V silver sixpence is embedded in the wood. The inscribed brass fob is attached to the base of the lighter by a chain.

The matchbox case is brass with decorative cutouts to the sides. The base has a hook to attach to webbing.

Comment

The inscription on the dogtag is enigmatic. The shape of the tag could be attempts at a heart.

The word LOVE on the ID tag suggests a gift tag – *‘To 490137 H.BASS with love F.RF’*.

Horace Bass was single. His next of kin were his parents.

He was living with his parents in 1911. Also living with them were newlyweds – his sister Alice and her husband Frank Foxon.

490137
H. BASS
LOVE
F.RF

The Research

BASS, HORACE

Rank: Sapper

Service No: 490137

Date of Death: 27/09/1918

Age: 28

Regiment/Service: Royal Engineers 446th Field Coy.

Grave Reference: I. G. 11.

Cemetery: Glageon Communal Cemetery Extension

Additional Information: Son of Fredrick and Ann Bass, of 44, Woodland Terrace, Burbage, Hinckley.⁵

The search for F.RF did not find any plausible answers, but it did show the awful impact of war on families. Frank Foxon's younger brothers also died in the war.

Horace BASS c1890 – 1918

Horace and his siblings were born in Burbage. By 1901 the older ones Frederick, Rose and Alice were all working in the local hosiery factory. Horace (10) was too young to work in the factory.⁶

Frank Foxon and his sister also worked in the hosiery factory in 1901. Like Horace, Frank's younger brothers Sidney (7) and Ernest (2) were too young.⁷

Frank married Alice in 1910.⁸ They moved in with Alice's parents and both continued working at the hosiery factory.⁹

The young Foxon brothers went off to war. They are remembered alongside Horace Bass on the same memorial in Burbage.

FOXON, SIDNEY CHARLES

Rank: Private

Service No: 41954

Date of Death: 18/01/1918

Age: 24

Regiment/Service: Royal Army Medical Corps 1st/5th London Field Amb

Grave Reference: X. B. 15.

Cemetery: Rocquigny-Equancourt Road British Cemetery, Manancourt

Additional Information: Son of James and Catherine E. Foxon, of 15, Sketchley Rd., Burbage, Hinckley.¹⁰

FOXON, ERNEST EDWARD

Rank: Sapper

Service No: 458279

Date of Death: 18/11/1920

Age: 22

Regiment/Service: Royal Engineers

Grave Reference: New ground 2. 55.

Cemetery: Burbage (St. Catherine) Churchyard

Additional Information: Son of James and Catherine E. Foxon, of 15, Sketchley Rd., Burbage, Hinckley.¹¹

Two families united by marriage. Three young men dead. One shared gravestone.

Geddie's match holder



This appears to be a professionally made snuff container converted by amateur hands into a holder for matches.

The original container is very ornate with pressed metal on the main body and engraved metal on the sides and hinged lid. It is 6.7cm by 3.8cm by 1.7cm wide.



The body of the container is lined with heavy cloth.

Construction

A block of wood has been screwed to the underside of the lid to make a holder for matches. A brass strip is screwed to the top of the block. Eleven holes are drilled through both the brass and the wood to hold matches.



A second brass strip has been added to the end of the block. It is crosshatched to make a strike for the matches.

George V pennies have been recessed into each side of the block with the obverse

showing in both cases. One side of the block has J GEDDIE 39484 burned into the wood. A brass clasp has been added to the original piece. It latches over a brass stud added to the lid.

Comment

There is considerable stiffness opening and closing the lid.

The end of the block is curved but the fit is tight as it closes. The block may have been cut down a little at the base and refitted to ease the tightness; the bottoms of the pennies have been shaved away on either side.

J GEDDIE
39484

The Research

GEDDIE, JOHN

Rank: Private

Service No: 39484

Date of Death: 10/10/1918

Age: 26

Regiment/Service: Highland Light Infantry "C" Coy. 1st Bn.

Grave Reference: Plot 2. Row B. Grave 7.

Cemetery: Bangalore (Hosur Road) Cemetery

Additional Information: Son of William Spence and Susan Winchester Geddie, of Braemoray, Fortrose, H'land.¹²

John Geddie should never have been in India in 1918. He'd been discharged as medically unfit years before.

John GEDDIE 1892 – 1918

The following information comes from the entry in Du Ruvigny's Roll of Honour for Private John Geddie, No. 39484. 1st Battn. (71st Foot) The Highland Light Infantry.¹³

John Geddie was the younger son of William Spence Geddie, of Braemoray, Fortrose, General Merchant, by his wife, Susan, daughter of the late Capt. Winchester, of Crosshill, Garmouth.

He was born in Fortrose, county Ross in Scotland on 18 February 1892.

He grew up in Fortrose. He was educated at the Academy there and became a bank clerk.

At the outbreak of war he volunteered for active service, and in November 1914 enlisted in the 8th Cameron Highlanders. It is unclear whether he saw active service with them because shortly afterwards he was discharged as medically unfit.

It took repeated applications before he was again accepted, and enlisted in the Highland Light Infantry in May 1917.

He proceeded with a draft to India in September 1917, where he joined his regiment at Bangalore.

John Geddie died at Moorhouse Barracks on 10 October 1918 of influenza, contracted while on service.

He is buried in the Hosur Road Cemetery, Bangalore.

He was a keen sportsman, and an excellent shot.

... ..

A search of his family history reveals the tragedy that bound his family together.

His father William Geddie was the son of a shipbuilder, James Geddie, who in 1871 employed 16 men and 2 boys in the village of Garmouth in Urquhart.¹⁴

His mother Susan Winchester was the daughter of ship's Captain and ship owner John Winchester.¹⁵

It was the tragic story of the sloop Beatrice that linked the families together.

The following account is from the Banffshire Journal, quoted at length in a family history for John Winchester in Rootsweb.¹⁶

James Geddie, shipbuilder, built a sloop of 50 tons called the Beatrice for Captain Winchester.

Captain Winchester was running a cargo of coal and iron from Leith to Speymouth on the Beatrice when she ran into bad weather. According to the Banff Journal she lay to during the night in the expectation of getting into the harbour next morning. But the wind shifted and the gale increased. Heavy seas struck the Beatrice and broke her rudder, leaving her completely unmanageable.

On board were Captain Winchester and his wife and young daughter, together with two men and a boy as crew.

The crippled Beatrice was at the mercy of the wind and the waves. Rudderless, she drifted helplessly and struck on Stotfield Rocks.

The crew had betaken themselves for refuge to the rigging, when, in one instant, the mast broke, and precipitated the whole of them into the raging element – the captain having his wife clasped in his arms ...

His wife and child, a girl of about ten years of age, were swept away in the raging seas. The two men and the boy of the crew were also lost.

When daylight came the Beatrice was found with a lone figure on board.

Here the scene which presented itself was truly affecting. The captain, who was well known and respected, was observed standing alone on deck, holding fast with one hand ...

Captain Winchester alone survived. He became tangled in the rigging and was washed back onto the vessel, the sole survivor of the shipwreck.

His rescuers 'found the poor fellow in a deplorable condition, and almost sinking from debility'.

... ..

The wreck of the Beatrice happened in 1837. Captain Winchester married a much younger woman who bore him 12 more children after 1845, including a daughter Susan born in 1857.¹⁷

Susan Winchester married William Spence Geddie, the son of the man who built the Beatrice.¹⁸

They had a son John Geddie born in 1892 who studied at the Academy in Fortrose, became a bank clerk, enlisted after many attempts in the Highland Light Infantry and died in Bangalore, India.

West's matchbox cover



West's brass matchbox case is 6cm by 3.8cm by 2cm. It is commercially made with Made in England on the spine. It has fine patterning front and back and a small smoothed rectangle on the front for a monogram. This is left blank.



The case has been personalised with a brass nameplate engraved T.WEST 69457 and 23 in Roman numerals riveted to the front. The waist of the Xs are at slightly different heights suggesting they are hand crafted.

The case holds an empty box of matches that may or may not have been with the cover when Thomas West owned it. The Ship matchbox was made in Sweden. It is marked Safety Match J. John Masters & Co. Ltd. London. Average contents 42.

T.WEST
69457
XXIII

The Research

WEST, THOMAS WILLIAM

Rank: Private

Service No: 69457

Date of Death: 29/06/1918

Age: 19

Regiment/Service: Northumberland Fusiliers 23rd (Tyneside Scottish) Bn.

Grave Reference: VIII. H. 24.

Cemetery: Cabaret-Rouge British Cemetery, Souchez

Additional Information: Son of Thomas and Florence Jane West, of 24, Culloden St., Poplar, London.¹⁹

Thomas William WEST 1899 – 1918

Thomas West was born and bred in London.

In 1911 the household was relatively small, just Thomas and his younger brother Percy, his parents Thomas and Florence Jane and his widowed grandmother. The boys were at school. Their father worked as a carman, or driver, for a bricklayer.²⁰

Thomas was 15 when the war began.

He joined the Training Reserve and became TR/10/41696 in the 51st Graduated Battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment.²¹

He then transferred to the 23rd Tyneside Scottish as Private West 69457.

Until mid 1918, Thomas West was too young to be sent overseas; he needed to be at least 19.

He was born in London in the June quarter of 1899, ²² so unless he lied about his age he did not enter France until the June quarter 1918.

He died of wounds the day before the end of the June quarter, 1918. He was 19.

Mickle's matchbox case



1916
FRICKLE
.....
MACHINE
GUN CORPS
.....
70569

Mickle's brass matchbox case resembles a book. It measures 5.5cm by 4.5cm by 1.8cm. The scroll on the front of the case is roughly inscribed 1916 F MICKLE MACHINE GUN CORPS 70569 with two rows of dots underlining the words.

The back of the case is blank. It has signs of use and is slightly dented.

Construction

The basic brass case has been modified to look like a book.

The rounded spine is made from a strip of brass curved over a mound of solder. The scroll is cut from a flat sheet of brass and soldered to the front of the case.

Brass strips have been doubled over the open side edges to give a smooth rounded finish.

1916
F MICKLE
MACHINE
GUN CORPS
70569

The Research

MICKLE, FREDERICK WILLIAM

Rank: Private

Service No: 70569

Date of Death: 14/07/1917

Age: 26

Regiment/Service: Machine Gun Corps (Infantry) 141st Coy.

Grave Reference: III. E. 23.

Cemetery: Woods Cemetery

Additional Information: Son of Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Mickle, of 8, Church Rd., Maxton, Dover.²³

Frederick William MICKLE c1890 – 1917

Frederick William Mickle was working as a commercial clerk in 1911.²⁴

He joined the Buffs on 22 November 1915 shortly before his 25th birthday, with service number either 4320 or 4326. There appears to be a prior service number 6177.²⁵

He served at home in England until August 1916 when he transferred to the 18th Battalion of the London Regiment with service number 70569. He was posted to France.

In late November 1916 he transferred to the Machine Gun Corps (MGC). He served with the MGC in France and Flanders until 14 July 1917 when he died of wounds received in the field.

He is buried in Woods Cemetery near Armentieres and Lille.

Comment

Frederick Mickle's service records are among the few that survived in England. Their

content is summarised above and in the Dover War Memorial.

There is one form on his service records that shows something of his private life.

Statement of the names and addresses of All the Relatives of the above-named deceased Soldier in each of the degrees specified below that are now living.

Widow of the soldier	- none	
Children of the soldier	- none	
Brothers of the soldier -	Full blood	none
	Half blood	none
Sisters of the soldier -	Full blood	none
	Half blood	none

Only his father and mother were still living.

I checked back through the births and deaths and censuses looking for siblings. There were none.

There were deaths of Mickle children but they were Frederick's cousins, the children of his Uncle Alfred.

Frederick William Mickle was an only child.

His parents Joseph William Mickle and Eliza Ann Fagg married in Dover in 1886.²⁶ Joseph had worked on the railways all his life, starting as an engine cleaner when he was 19²⁷ and working his way up to locomotive fireman at 29²⁸, and railway engine driver at 39.²⁹

Eliza Ann, or Annie Eliza, worked as a general servant until she married Joseph at 23.³⁰

Frederick was born 5 years later.³¹

Joseph and Annie nurtured their only child. They arranged piano lessons with Clarrissa Capell, the wife of a steam engine maker.³² Clarrissa entered Frederick in the Trinity College London music examinations when he was 10.

The Dover Express of 22 November 1901 carried the following article.

TRINITY COLLEGE, LONDON

DOVER CENTRE

The following is a list of the candidates who were successful at the recent examination in vocal and instrumental music. All the candidates, unless otherwise stated, entered for pianoforte playing.

PREPARATORY DIVISION

Rhoda A. Cooke (Mr. C.H.Anderson)

Edith Sanders (Mrs. Snoad)

Doris E.L.Balfour (Miss Bartlett)

Rosalie Broadbridge (Miss Postlethwaite)

Dorothy R.Jones (Mrs Snoad)

Helen E.Hichens, violin (Miss Larie, A.Mus.T.C.L)

Victoria M.Bean (Mrs Snoad)

Frederick Mickle (Mrs. Capell)

Edward R.Frow (School of Music, Miss Bartlett)

George N.Butcher (Miss Martin, L.R.A.M)

Winifred F.Parker (Miss Wadsworth)

Florence H.Jackson (Mrs. Capell); Frederick A.Tyrell (Mrs Capell) – equal.

Harold D. Hollway (Miss Howells).

The public distribution of prizes will take place in December.

Clarrissa Capell had three students on the prize list. Frederick was her star pupil.

Clarrissa became head of the household by 1911 after her husband died. At the age of 61 she was working as a Teacher of Pianoforte. Her daughter Janet was a professional musician.³³ Frederick had received professional instruction and had performed well.

... ..

Frederick Mickle was mentioned in the Dover Express again on 24 January 1913 when he was 22.

DOVER MUNICIPAL SCHOOL OF ARTS

... Examinations were taken for the London Chamber of Commerce, Royal Society of Arts, Pitman's, St John's Ambulance ...

Dover Chamber of Commerce

*... Shorthand: 1st prize, Lilian B.Shephard; 2nd, **Frederick W. Mickle.***

So many hopes and dreams were lost in the mud of Flanders.

Williams' matchbox cover



Williams' matchbox cover is brass with decorative cutouts. It is 5.5cm by 4cm by 2cm.



It has a George V farthing on the spine, a Welsh military badge on the front and an inscribed brass tag on the back.

W.WILLIAMS
2646

The Research

WILLIAMS, W

Rank: Corporal

Service No: 2646

Date of Death: 05/04/1918

Age: 28

Regiment/Service: Welsh Guards 1st Bn.

Grave Reference: VI. G. 23.

Cemetery: Bucquoy Road Cemetery, Ficheux

Additional Information: Son of Mr. P. R. Williams, of 22, Pierefield Place, Cardiff.³⁴

William WILLIAMS 1889 – 1918

Even with his next of kin shown on the CWGC site, William Williams was difficult to find among so many of that name.

The most useful information came from Soldiers Died in the Great War where his service number identified him among so many others.³⁵ His record showed his birthplace as Aberaman, which helped identify him in censuses.

William Williams was born to coal miner Philip Williams and his wife Ellen Ann Rees the year they were married, 1889.³⁶ They boarded with a blacksmith and his family in

Aberdare in 1891.³⁷

Surprisingly, William appears to be an only child. By 1901 they are living at a different address in Aberdare, and different again in 1911, but always just the three of them.³⁸

I looked for infant deaths in the years after the marriage for the surname Williams in their district and was shocked at the number of babies who died before they were one year old. Whether any were born to William's parents is unclear.

William left school by the time he was 12 and followed his father down the mines. By 1911 both William and his father Philip were working as hewers in the coal mines, digging coal from the face of the rock deep in the pits.³⁹

... ..

William enlisted in the Welsh Guards in Newport, Monmouthshire. His service number suggests he enlisted in early March 1916. He served with the 1st Battalion in France and Flanders and was promoted to Corporal.

He was killed in action on 5 April 1918 and is buried in the Bucquoy Road Cemetery south of Arras.

King's matchbox cover



The matchbox cover is brass with a decorative frieze. It is 5.5cm by 5cm by 2.2cm.. The edges of the cover are turned in like a hem to give smooth openings.



The frieze is intricate but irregular and may have been cut by hand. It is soldered to the case.

A 1915 penny is cut to an oval and soldered to the front, showing Britannia and the date.

A copper oval of similar size is soldered to the back. It is stamped P.E.KING . DR. 10.

P.E.KING
D R
10

The Research

KING, PHILIP EMBREY

Rank: Private

Service No: 58387

Date of Death: 08/08/1919

Age: 21

Regiment/Service: Devonshire Regiment 10th Bn.⁴⁰

Panel Reference: Screen Wall. Panel 6

Memorial: Haidar Pasha Memorial

Additional Information: Son of the late Thomas Williams⁴¹ Love King and Anne King (buried Batoum British Cemetery).⁴²

By the time Philip King was 11 he was an orphan. At 12 he went to live with a most interesting aunt, an artist in Surbiton.

Philip Embrey KING 1898 – 1919

Philip Embrey King was born into a successful legal family in Islington in 1898.⁴³

His grandfather Thomas was a barrister's clerk.

His father Thomas Williams Love King was an articled clerk for a solicitor when he was 24 and still living at home. The family kept a domestic servant.⁴⁴

Thomas Williams Love King married Anne Harman in 1887⁴⁵ and set up house in Hornsey, working as a solicitor.

Their first child Harold was born in 1889, and when baby Cyril was born in 1891 a nurse was hired as well as the general servant.⁴⁶

Three more children were born – Frank 1893, Winnifred⁴⁷ 1895 and Philip 1898.

By 1901 there were signs that all was not well with the family. On census night both parents were absent and the children were in the care of others. A female housekeeper was in charge of Harold 12, Frank 8, Winnifred 6 and 2 year old Philip.⁴⁸

A search showed Cyril had died as a toddler in 1894.⁴⁹ And the children's mother Anne died in the last months of 1900.⁵⁰

It is not clear where Philip's father Thomas Williams Love King was in 1901. He may have been involved in the Boer War. He may have been abroad. All that is certain is that his children were in the care of others.

... ..

In 1910, Thomas Williams Love King died in Edmonton at the age of 51 leaving Philip an orphan at 11.⁵¹

The older boys had left home. Winnifred became a boarder at St Wilfrid's school in Chelsea.⁵²

Philip went to stay with his aunt Alice Price King in Surbiton. It was an interesting household.⁵³

Alice Price King was a painter and artist. She had been married for 23 years but her husband was abroad in 1911. Staying with her in The Avenue were her own son David, a 22 year old bank clerk, two of her sister's sons working as clerks and solicitors' clerks, and schoolboy Philip Embrey King age 12. These four were first cousins from three families.

Alice Price King was an artist of some renown. Her painting of Conwy Castle hangs in the Conwy Town Council and with their kind permission I reproduce it here.

How Philip Embrey King went from an artist's household in Surbiton to The Batoum British Cemetery is shrouded in mystery and misprints.

... ..



He initially enlisted in the Royal Field Artillery as Private Philip Embrey King 181553 but this does not show on his medal card.⁵⁴ He then joined the Devonshire Regiment with his medal card showing him as Private Philip Embrey King 58287⁵⁵ and all other sources including CWGC showing 58387.

Philip Embrey King was killed in action in 1919 and buried at Batoum. The following extracts provide a context for 'killed in action' so long after the Armistice.

The first is from a diary by Edmund Lenfestey transcribed by his grandson Shane Langlois and I reproduce it here with his kind permission. This extract covers the lead-up to the action at Batoum.

... It was now November 1918 and Bulgaria and Germany had signed the Armistice.

After only two months in Greece the 27th Division was ordered to Russia.

We had two boats to carry us from Salonica and going through the Dardanelles we saw sunken ships and had splendid views of Constantinople.

We went through the Bosphorous to the Black Sea, arrived at Batoum, Russia on Christmas Eve and spent Christmas Day unloading wagons, guns, horses, ammunition, food and forage for ninety days rations, in heavy drizzling rain. The worse Christmas I have ever spent.

We stayed in Batoum for fifteen days chasing the Turks away then entrained for the 200 mile journey inland to Tiflis where we spent another fifteen days doing the same thing.

We then moved 300 miles up country to Baku on the Caspian Sea.

We had not tasted bread for two months.

At Baku we met up with Allenby's army which had had a hard time marching through Persia. Baku, as other places, was in disorder with a mixed population of Georgians, Armenians, Kerenskys, Bolsheviks, Russians etc.

We had rather a hot time patrolling the towns, being fired on from time to time.

One of the main objects of the British was to guard the oil wells, all along the railway line from Baku to Batoum, some 500 miles, were four rows of big oil pipes.

*The place was swarming with diseases of all kinds.*⁵⁶

... ..

A more formal account is given in Field Marshal Sir George Milne's introduction to Part 2 of *Adventures in the Near East*.

... After the signing of the Armistice with Turkey in 1918 it was decided to send troops to Batoum and to safeguard the railway to Tiflis and Baku, in order to open up communication with the British troops which were in occupation of Baku and with those acting in conjunction with the Russians on the eastern side of the Caspian ...

*The whole district south of the Caucasian range was in a state of disorder, fermentation, and incipient revolution; local wars were in progress, and the danger of an outbreak of disease and starvation was imminent. To maintain order in this large area, amongst a population often actively and always latently hostile, there was available only one division of British and Indian troops, rapidly decreasing in numbers by demobilization ...*⁵⁷

... ..

Philip Embrey King was one of the last awaiting demobilization. He was killed in action long after the Armistice, on 8 August 1919.

He was buried in the British Cemetery at Batoum. He was 21.

Chenery's tin matchbox cover



The matchbox cover is made of tin which is unusual. It is 5.5cm by 3.5cm by 2cm.

A brass clasp has been wrapped over the top of the side and soldered in place.

A 1916 penny is soldered to the front. The inscription A G CHENERY 6135 is roughly stamped around the penny with uneven spacings.



Comment

This simplest of pieces shows signs of care in its construction. The case is made from a single piece of tin, but close inspection shows the sharp edges have been turned in around all the edges, with dove-tailing at the corners to give a smooth finish.

Arthur Chenery was in the cavalry. The brass clasp allowed his matchbox cover to be attached to his webbing.

A G CHENERY
6135

The Research

CHENERY, ARTHUR GEORGE

Rank: Private

Service No: 6135

Date of Death: 10/11/1918

Age: 24

Regiment/Service: 16th (The Queen's) Lancers

Grave Reference: IV. O. 1.

Cemetery: Tournai Communal Cemetery Allied

Additional Information: Son of Joseph and Martha Chenery, of 29, Caxton Rd., Shepherd's Bush, London.⁵⁸

Arthur Chenery survived many historic battles only to be killed in action the day before the Great War finally ended.

Arthur George CHENERY 1894 – 1918

Arthur George Chenery was a Londoner born and bred.⁵⁹

His father was a cabman in Paddington in 1891,⁶⁰ but he moved with the times and by 1911 he was a 'motor-washer', presumably of the early London cabs. There were three boarders living with the family, one of them a hackney carriage driver.⁶¹

Arthur was a butcher's assistant by then and at 17 was still living at home.

The family moved to Shepherd's Bush and Arthur enlisted at Hammersmith. He joined the 16th Lancers (The Queen's) in the Household Cavalry and Cavalry of the Line.⁶²

Arthur Chenery's medal card shows he entered the war in France on 18 May 1915 with the 16th Lancers. By this time, the 16th Lancers had become part of the 2nd Cavalry Division.

The Long Long Trail outlines the action of the 2nd Cavalry Division from May 1915 until the Armistice, summarised below.⁶³

<i>Battle of St Julien</i>	<i>26 April – 3 May 1915</i>
<i>Battle of Bellewaarde</i>	<i>24 – 25 May 1915</i>

<i>First Battle of the Scarpe</i>	<i>9 – 11 Apr 1917</i>
<i>The Tank Attack</i>	<i>20 – 21 Nov 1917</i>
<i>Capture of Boursin Wood</i>	<i>24 – 28 Nov 1917</i>
<i>The German Counter Attacks</i>	<i>30 Nov – 3 Dec 1917</i>

<i>Battle of St Quentin</i>	<i>21 – 23 Mar 1918</i>
<i>Battle of Amiens</i>	<i>8 – 11 Aug 1918</i>
<i>Battle of Albert</i>	<i>21 – 23 Aug 1918</i>
<i>Second Battle of Bapaume</i>	<i>31 Aug – 3 Sep 1918</i>
<i>Battle of the Canal Du Nord</i>	<i>27 Sep – 1 Oct 1918</i>
<i>Battle of the St Quentin Canal</i>	<i>29 Sep – 2 Oct 1918</i>
<i>Battle of Beaurevoir</i>	<i>3 – 5 Oct 1918</i>

<i>Battle of Cambrai</i>	<i>8 – 9 Oct 1918</i>
<i>The Pursuit to the Selle</i>	<i>9 – 12 Oct 1918</i>
<i>Battle of the Sambre</i>	<i>4 Nov 1918</i>
<i>Capture of Mons</i>	<i>11 Nov 1918</i>

The war started for the British at the Battle of Mons in August 1914 and ended with the capture of Mons in November 1918.

Arthur George Chenery survived many battles, only to be killed in action on 10 November 1918, one day before the Armistice.

Dicks' pocket knife holder



The bone and brass container stands 8cm tall with 1.7cm sides. It has an Edward VII penny as a plaque on the front.

A 1914 George V halfpenny fob is attached by a chain at the back.

It has a rough hole consistent with being hit by a bullet or flying shrapnel. The inscriptions – 235622 on the obverse and E.J.DICKS on the reverse – appear to have been made before the coin was hit, with the E almost obliterated by the impact.

Inside the container is an old pocket knife stamped with the maker's name 'Richards Sheffield England'.

Construction

The four sides and the base of the container are made of bone. A smoothed and bent Edward VII penny is inlaid and riveted to the front and sides. A piece of brass with a hook for the chain is riveted to the back and sides.



The bone is capped with a piece of copper, which in turn is joined to a threaded brass cylinder. The threaded brass cap has a loop for the chain soldered to the top.

The closed knife fits neatly into the container with just enough loop protruding to allow fingers to grip it. The inside seems shaped to fit the knife – the lid only shuts when the knife is in the right position.

This piece is deceptive. A close inspection of the inside shows that it is made from a single piece of bone hollowed out in the middle to form a cylinder. The lines that make it look like a four-sided built piece are in fact shallow grooves.



Comment

This is an intriguing piece. The knife fits snugly and does not rattle. Dicks was an older man – 39 when he died – who was married with children. Perhaps he concealed the knife in a container that possibly wouldn't be confiscated if he were taken prisoner of war.

It's a small knife but it could conceivably cut through rope or leather or sever an artery. Similar items are now forbidden on passenger aircraft.

... ..

It came with a collection of items – a postcard photo, an Active Service Gospel 1914, and a small Book of Common Prayer.

The postcard with its photo of Edwin James Dicks was produced by Fred.C.Palmer of Herne Bay.

The 1914 Active Service booklet has 'E Dicks' very faintly written in pencil in the front page.



The leather-bound prayer book has a hallmarked silver cover with four cherubs. It has 1903 hand-written on the back page.

E J DICKS
235622

The Research

DICKS, EDWIN JAMES

Rank: Private

Service No: 235622

Date of Death: 25/09/1917

Age: 39

Regiment/Service: York and Lancaster Regiment 12th Bn.

Grave Reference: I. E. 1.

Cemetery: Roelincourt Military

Additional Information: Husband of Alice Maud Dicks, of 46, Atheldene Rd., Earlsfield, London.⁶⁴

Edwin James DICKS c1878 – 1917

Edwin Dicks was married with three young children when he went off to war.



Edwin had a history of interest in furniture and fine arts. His father worked as a domestic coachman in Twickenham when Edwin was born⁶⁵ but moved to Cobbold Road in Hammersmith to become a 'Messenger Fine Arts' – presumably using his prior reputation as a coachman to deliver fine works of art.⁶⁶

By 1901, Edwin had left home to board with a furniture dealer in Camberwell. He became a shop assistant in the furniture dealership.⁶⁷

A year later he married Alice Maud Brooks in Fulham.⁶⁸

Their first child, a daughter, was born in Battersea in 1903. The beautiful sterling silver hallmarked cherub prayer book, with the handwritten date 1903, may have been a gift to mark the occasion.

They moved to Wandsworth and by 1911 they had three children, including a six months old baby. Edwin's mother had come to visit. Edwin was working as a pawnbroker's salesman.⁶⁹

Edwin Dicks was 36 when war broke out in 1914. His 1914 Active Service booklet suggests he was one of the first to enlist, or had been a member of the Territorial Forces; however his medal card shows only his 6-digit service number, presumably generated in 1917.⁷⁰

Three years later on 25 September 1917 Private Edwin James Dicks, husband of Alice, died and was buried in the Roelincourt Military Cemetery near the road from Arras to Lens.

Armour's whistle and pipe tamper



This is a whistle and pipe tamper in one piece made of tin, brass and lead. It is 7.5cm long and has no maker's marks.



It has a hallmarked silver fob chain with an inscribed 1914 penny fob. The reverse of the penny has been smoothed and lines etched to keep the printing straight. The inscription is 241124 R M ARMOUR.

Construction

The whistle is tin with brass trims. The brass base appears to be one solid piece of decoratively shaped brass with a slightly rounded lead base for use as a pipe tamper.

A brass wire is coiled around the base and twisted to make a loop for the fob chain. The loop is soldered permanently closed around the end link of the chain.

R M ARMOUR
241124

The Research

ARMOUR, ROBERT MERRY

Rank: Private

Service No: 241124

Date of Death: 10/10/1918

Age: 24

Regiment/Service: King's Own Scottish Borderers "B" Coy. 1st/5th Bn.

Grave Reference: I. G. 11.

Cemetery: Zantvoorde British Cemetery

Additional Information: Son of James and Helen Armour, of "Meninwood," Pleasance Avenue, Maxwelltown, Dumfries. Also served at Gallipoli and in Palestine.⁷¹

Robert Armour served three years in three theatres of war – Gallipoli, Palestine and the Somme, only to be killed in action a month before the Armistice.

Robert Merry ARMOUR 1894 – 1918

Robert Armour grew up in a family involved with the newspaper industry.⁷²

Both his father and mother were printer compositors, and by the time Robert was 17 he followed them into the trade. He became an apprentice compositor.⁷³

He was working as a linotype operator with a Dumfries newspaper when he enlisted in June 1915.⁷⁴

He joined the 1/5 King's Own Scottish Borderers but was not with them when they first sailed from Liverpool for Gallipoli. That landing was on 6 June 1915.⁷⁵

Robert Armour's medal card shows he first entered the theatre of war in the Balkans on 22 September 1915. He was part of much needed reinforcements on the Gallipoli Peninsula and the subsequent withdrawal firstly to Mudros and then to Alexandria.

He served in Egypt and Palestine for the next two years.

According to the Scottish War Memorials Project he was wounded at Gaza and spent some time in convalescence.

The King's Own Scottish Borderers moved from Egypt to Marseilles in April 1918 and on to the battlefields of France and Flanders. This is where Robert Armour rejoined his unit after his convalescence.

He was killed in action on 10 October 1918 at Ypres, age 24.

Comment

Robert Armour's service number 4412 in the Territorial Forces was changed to 241124 in the renumbering of 1917. The number engraved on his penny fob is 241124 so the whistle with its embedded pipe tamper may have been made during his convalescence.

Footnotes

¹ CWGC: Collings, 15112

² FMP: 1901 Census, Collings Thomas, PRO RG 13, Bradmore, Basford, Nottinghamshire

³ FMP: 1911 Census, Collings Thomas, PRO RG 14, Bradmore, Basford, Nottinghamshire, England

⁴ FMP: RN seamen, Collings Thomas Bosworth, ADM 188/677/15112, Bradmore, Nottinghamshire, England

- 5 CWGC: Bass, 490137
- 6 FMP: 1901 Census, Bass Horace, PRO RG 13, Burbage, Hinkley, Leicestershire
- 7 FMP: 1901 Census, Foxon Frank, PRO RG 13, Burbage, Hinkley, Leicestershire
- 8 FMP: Marriages, Frank Foxon and Alice Bass, 1910, Hinckley, Leicestershire, England
- 9 FMP: 1911 Census, Bass Horace, PRO RG 14, Burbage, Hinkley, Leicestershire
- 10 CWGC: Foxon, 41954
- 11 CWGC: Foxon, 458279
- 12 CWGC: Geddie John, 39484
- 13 FMP: De Ruvigny, Geddie John
- 14 FMP: 1871 Census, Geddie James, PRO RG 10, Urquhart, Moray, Scotland
- 15 FMP: 1861 Census, Winchester Susan, PRO RG 9, Urquhart, Moray, Scotland
- 16 Rootswed: Winchester John
- 17 FMP: 1861 Census, Winchester John, PRO RG 9, Urquhart, Moray, Scotland
- 18 FMP: 1881 Census, Geddie William S, PRO RG 11, Rosemarkie, Ross and Cromarty, Scotland
- 19 CWGC: West Thomas William, 69457
- 20 FMP: 1911 Census, West Thomas William, PRO RG 14, Poplar Borough, Bromley, London, England
- 21 FMP: Soldiers died, West Thomas William, 1918
- 22 FMP: Births, West Thomas William, 1899, Poplar, London, England
- 23 CWGC: Mickle, 70569
- 24 FMP: 1911 Census, Mickle Frederick, PRO RG 14, Dover, Dover, Kent, England
- 25 FMP: Service Records 1914-1920, WO 363, Dover, Kent, England
- 26 FMP: Marriages, Joseph William Mickle and Eliza Ann Fagg, 1886, Dover, Kent, England
- 27 FMP: 1881 Census, Mickle Joseph, Dover St Mary the Virgin, Dover, Kent, England
- 28 FMP: 1891 Census, Mickle Joseph W, Buckland, Dover, Kent, England
- 29 FMP: 1901 Census, Mickle Joseph, Dover, Dover, Kent, England
- 30 FMP: 1881 Census, Fagg Eliza A, Dover St Mary the Virgin, Dover, Kent, England
- 31 FMP: Births, Mickle Frederick William, 1891, Dover, Kent, England
- 32 FMP: 1891 Census, Capell Clarissa J, Charlton, Easry, Kent, England
- 33 FMP: 1911 Census, Capell Clarrissa, Dover, Dover, Kent, England
- 34 CWGC: Williams, 2646
- 35 FMP: Soldiers died, Williams William, 1918
- 36 FMP: Marriages, Philip Williams and Ellen Ann Rees, 1889, Merthyr Tydfil, Glamorganshire, England
- 37 FMP: 1891 Census, Williams Wm, PRO RG 12, Aberdare, Merthyr Tydfil, Glamorganshire, England
- 38 FMP: 1901 Census, Williams William, PRO RG 13, Aberdare, Merthyr Tydfil, Glamorganshire, England
- 39 FMP: 1911 Census, Williams William, PRO RG 14, Gelligaer, Merthyr Tydfil, Glamorganshire, England
- 40 The Devonshire Regiment 10th Bn confirms the inscription DR 10, in the absence of a service number on the matchbox cover
- 41 Williams is William in some records
- 42 CWGC: King, 58387
- 43 FMP: Births, King Philip Embrey, 1898, Edmonton, Middlesex, England
- 44 FMP: 1881 Census, King Thomas W, Islington, Islington, Middlesex, England
- 45 FMP: Marriages, Thomas William L and Anne Harman, 1887, Islington, London, England

- 46 FMP: 1891 Census, King Thos W L, PRO RG 12, Hornsey, Edmonton, Middlesex, England
- 47 Winnifred is Winifred in some records
- 48 FMP: 1901 Census, King Philip, PRO RG 13, Southgate, Edmonton, Middlesex, England
- 49 FMP: Deaths, King Cyril Williams, 1894, Edmonton, Middlesex, England
- 50 FMP: Deaths, King Anne, 1900, Edmonton, Middlesex, England
- 51 FMP: Deaths, King Thomas Williams L, 1910, Edmonton, Middlesex, England
- 52 FMP: 1911 Census, King Winifred, PRO RG 14, Chelsea, London, England
- 53 FMP: 1911 Census, King Philip Embrey, PRO RG 14, Surbiton, Kingston, Surrey, England
- 54 FMP: Soldiers died, King Philip Embrey, 1919
- 55 TNA: Medal cards, King Philip E, WO 372/11/172720
- 56 Langlois: Lenfestey diary, post-war intervention in Russia
- 57 Rawlinson: Intelligence in Transcaucasia
- 58 CWGC: Chenery, 6135
- 59 FMP: Births, Chenery Arthur George, 1894, Paddington, London, England
- 60 FMP: 1891 Census, Chenery Joseph, PRO RG 12, Paddington, Paddington, London, England
- 61 FMP: 1911 Census, Chenery Arthur George, PRO RG 14, Paddington, Paddington, London, England
- 62 FMP: Soldiers died, Chenery Arthur George, 1918
- 63 Baker, C: Long Long Trail, 2nd Cavalry Division
- 64 CWGC: Dicks, 235622
- 65 FMP: 1881 Census, Dicks Thomas, PRO RG 11, Twickenham, Brentford, Middlesex, England
- 66 FMP: 1891 Census, Dicks Edwin J, PRO RG 12, Hammersmith, Fulham, London, England
- 67 FMP: 1901 Census, Dicks Edwin James, PRO RG 13, Camberwell, London, England
- 68 FMP: Marriages, Edwin James Dicks and Alice Maud Brooks, 1902, Fulham, London, England
- 69 FMP: 1911 Census, Dicks Edwin James, PRO RG 14, Wandsworth, London, England
- 70 TNA: Medal cards, Dicks Edwin J, WO/372/6
- 71 CWGC: Armour, 241124
- 72 FMP: 1901 Census, Armour Robert M, PRO RG 13, Troqueer, Troqueer, Kirkcudbrightshire, Scotland
- 73 SP: 1911 Census, Armour Robert Merry, Troqueer,, Kirkcudbright, GROS 882/00 006/00 030
- 74 Scottish War Memorials Project: Armour Robert M
- 75 FMP: Soldiers died, Armour Robert Merry, 1918

Carvings

Barnes' bone crucifix



The crucifix is carved from a single piece of bone. It is tiny, only 5 cm long. The front and sides of the cross are carved in a crisscross pattern; the back of the cross is plain.

A George V farthing is riveted to the base. A copper disc on the back carries the inscription V.BARNES OB RGT.

Two metal loops at the top allow for a chain.



Comment

This tiny crucifix is beautiful. It is also tactile. It sits easily between the fingers and is recognisable by its contours even in the dark. Its simple symbolism of honour and duty, signed on the back, is moving.

V BARNES
OB
RGT

The Research

BARNES, VALENTINE WALTER

Rank: Sergeant

Service No: 21840

Date of Death: 18/10/1918

Age: 25

Regiment/Service: Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry 1st Bn.

Grave Reference: Plot 4. Row Q1. Grave 16.

Cemetery: Bangalore (Hosur Road) Cemetery

Additional Information: Son of Thomas and Clara Barnes, of 75, Burns Rd., Harlesden, London.¹

It was sunstroke and dysentery that caused the death of Valentine Barnes in a foreign land far from home.

Valentine BARNES 1893 – 1918

Walter Valentine Barnes was born in Willesden, Middlesex in 1893.²

He was still Walter Valentine in 1901. He lived at 75 Burns Road with his family – his mother and father (a carpenter and joiner), his siblings including an adopted daughter, his uncle (also a carpenter and joiner), and a baby boy being nursed.³

By 1911 he was simply Valentine. He was 17 and working as a clerk in the building industry. His older brother was also a clerk; his sister was a dressmaker. They still lived at 75 Burns Road.⁴

Valentine Walter Barnes initially joined the Royal Fusiliers as Private Barnes 17392. He then transferred to the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry 1st Battalion with service number 21840.⁵

The National Roll of the Great War records his story with awful simplicity.

BARNES, V. W., Sergt., Oxford and Bucks L.I.

He joined in 1915, served in Mesopotamia, where he contracted dysentery and sunstroke, and after being invalided to India, died there in 1918. He was entitled to the General Service and Victory Medals.

75, Burns Road, Harlesden⁶

... ..

The National Archives has this account of the Mesopotamia campaign, following Turkey's entry into the war in October 1914.

'British and Indian troops, sent to the Persian Gulf in early November to protect British oil interests ... occupied the towns of Basra and Kurna ... Despite the unforgiving climate, British forces continued to march steadily up the River Tigris in 1915. By 28 September ... they had taken the town of Kut-al-Amara just 120 miles south of Mesopotamia's major city, Baghdad ...

The tide turned quickly, however ... it was a bloody affair. The survivors then endured a dangerous and exhausting retreat to Kut-al-Amara without decent medical or transport facilities ...

The siege of Kut-al-Amara lasted 147 days, before the 11,800 British and Indian troops inside the garrison town finally surrendered on 29 April 1916.

Conditions during the siege were appalling. In bitterly cold weather and with little medical treatment, many of the soldiers did not survive the winter ...

... the surrender of Kut-al-Amara led to ... far more horrific repercussions ...

Captured British and Indian soldiers were brutally treated on their march to Turkish prisoner-of-war camps in Anatolia. Of the 11,800 men who left Kut-al-Amara with their captors on 6 May 1916, 4,250 died either on their way to captivity or in the camps that awaited them at the journey's end.⁷

The harsh conditions, with bitter cold in winter and the awful heat of summer, took their toll and Valentine Barnes died of dysentery and sunstroke a few weeks before the end of the war.

He was 25.

Bateman's dice box



The wooden dice box has slightly tapered sides and is 4.7cm across the base and 5.5cm across the lid.

It stands 2.9cm high to the rim of the lid which is slightly curved to the inset penny. BATEMAN 40908 is carved in relief around the penny.



The well is 3.7cm across and holds two 1.5cm dice.

The box is made from two pieces of wood with unmatched grain. A 0.3cm piece of leather is glued to the underside of the base.

Construction

A 1915 penny fits into a recess carved in the lid. A central hole is punched through the penny and carved through the wood to hold a metal pin topped by a brass knob. The underside end has a nut or solder; it is hidden by a heavy cloth lining glued to the underside of the lid.

The bottom of the well is similarly lined.

Comment

The penny inset and the carving are clearly handcrafted. The box itself may be commercially made but the lining suggests otherwise. It was glued in place after the penny was added and matches the lining on the base in texture and colour, suggesting they were done at the same time.



BATEMAN
40908

The Research

BATEMAN, GILBERT

Rank: Private

Service No: 40908

Date of Death: 27/08/1918

Age: 20

Regiment/Service: Norfolk Regiment 1st Bn.

Grave Reference: V. B. 10.

Cemetery: Bagneux British Cemetery, Gezaincourt

Additional Information: Son of Jephthah and Caroline Anna Bateman, of 7, Campbell St., Queensbury, Bradford, Yorks.⁸

Gilbert BATEMAN c1898 – 1918

Gilbert Bateman came from a long line of factory workers in the West Riding of Yorkshire.

His grandfather Jephthah was a wool washer in the mills of Halifax.⁹

His father Jephthah was a wool sorter.¹⁰ His mother Caroline was one of four daughters of a coachman; she and her sisters also worked in the woollen mills.¹¹

Gilbert's parents were older than average when they married in 1896¹² and Gilbert, born in 1898,¹³ appears to be their only child.

Jephthah died when Gilbert was 9¹⁴ leaving Caroline to raise her only son alone. She went back to work as a weaver in the woollen mills. She managed to keep Gilbert in school but

by the age of 12 he also worked part-time as a doffer.¹⁵

Wiki gives the following account of doffers.

The industrial revolution created growing demand for child labor in the mills and factories, since children were easier to supervise than adults and good at monotonous, repetitive tasks that often required little physical strength, but where small bodies and nimble fingers were an advantage.

Children were employed in the mills as spinners, sweepers and doffers, with girls usually starting as spinners and boys as doffers and sweepers. When the bobbins on the spinning frames were full, the machinery stopped. The doffers would swarm into the mill and, as quickly as possible, change all the bobbins ...

The doffers were usually the sons of poor people, and were small and skinny. They were sometimes called “The Devil’s Own” for the tricks that they would get up to. As a rule they would go barefoot except at the coldest times of year.¹⁶

... ..

Gilbert Bateman was a Private in the 1st Battalion of the Norfolk Regiment. He was only 15 at the outbreak of war and was thus too young for the first landings in France.

It seems likely that he was with the 1st Norfolks when they returned to France in 1918, arriving at Doullens on 8 April as part of the Great Advance.¹⁷

This was the same theatre of war that saw the death of Kenneth Pearson of the Artists Regiment, the owner of the banjo that started this collection.

Gilbert Bateman died of wounds on 27 August 1918, the same day that Kenneth Pearson was mortally wounded.

They are buried in the same cemetery at Gezaincourt – Gilbert in grave V.B.10 and Kenneth in VI.B.34.

Gilbert Bateman, only child of a widowed mother, was 20.

Longman's bone shield



Longman's bone identity tag is 6.5cm by 5.5cm.

The intricately carved pattern on the front appears to be professionally done. In contrast to this, the shield is asymmetrical suggesting it has been cut from a larger piece by an amateur hand.



Q W R is hand carved on the front. F.W.LONGMAN -1916- is carved on the back. One suggestion from an antique dealer is that it may have been cut from the top of an ornate tobacco box.

It comes with a bought item, a solid gold 9ct sweetheart brooch hallmarked London, for 1915, set into and around tortoise shell. The insignia is that of the 12th County of London which is the Queen's Westminster Rifles.

Comment

These sweetheart brooches are not uncommon although the 9ct gold version makes it an attractive item.

F.W.LONGMAN
Q W R
1916

The Research

LONGMAN, FRANK WILLIAM

Rank: Rifleman

Service No: 553689

Date of Death: 14/08/1917

Age: 34

Regiment/Service: London Regiment (Queen's Westminster Rifles) 16th Bn.

Grave Reference: Enclosure No.4 V. G. 8.

Cemetery: Bedford House Cemetery

Additional Information: Son of John and Annie Longman, of 65, Lower Richmond Rd., Putney, London.¹⁸

Frank Longman had already willingly served in the Territorial Forces, but that did not stop him from being conscripted in 1916.

Frank William LONGMAN 1883 – 1917

Frank William Longman was born in Lambeth London in 1883¹⁹ and grew up in Putney.

He was the oldest of three sons born to Annie and John Longman who worked as the cashier in a brewery. The family kept a servant and the boys were sent to school.²⁰

By the age of seventeen Frank was working as a tea warehouseman and his younger brother was an insurance clerk. His father had been promoted to Secretary in the brewery.²¹

It was difficult to find Frank Longman in the 1911 census. He was not living with his family at 65 Lower Richmond Road Putney on the night of the census and there are no convincing records of him elsewhere in the UK. He may have joined the army but is not listed as serving with the overseas military. Perhaps his work with the tea company took him overseas on business.

Frank William Longman served with the 16th Battalion of the London Regiment.

The Surrey Recruitment Registers show that he was conscripted between 29 September and 8 December 1916 and that he was 33 years old living at 65 Lower Richmond Road Putney and working as a traveller when he filled out his attestation papers at Kingston on 3 October 1916.²²

His medal card shows two service numbers, a four-digit number and a six-digit number both with the 16th London Regiment.²³ This suggests he had already served time with the Territorial Forces.

The Long Long Trail describes the Territorial forces as

*... a part-time form of soldiering ... whose stated role was home defence. Men were not obliged to serve overseas, although they could agree to do so ... Some regiments were exclusively TF and had no regular units at all: chief among these was the London Regiment ...'*²⁴

It gives the following clues for researching service numbers in the Territorial Forces, which help explain Frank Longman's medal card.

In early 1917 all men then serving with TF units were given new six digit numbers.

Prior to that most TF men would have had three or four digit numbers; most TF units began their numbering starting from 1 on 1 April 1908. Just having a four digit number is of itself not enough to tell that a man served with a TF unit, as many of the New Army units did the same thing when they were established in 1914. But if your soldier has such a number, replaced by a six digit number, you can be confident that he was a Terrier.

It then shows a medal card identical in form to that of Frank W Longman, where he is recorded as a Private in the 16th London Regiment with service numbers 7330 and 553689.

This raises the question of why he was conscripted if he had already enlisted.

The www.parliament.uk site gives the following account of conscription.

Lord Kitchener's campaign – promoted by his famous "Your Country Needs You" poster – had encouraged over one million men to enlist by January 1915. But this was not enough to keep pace with mounting casualties ...

The government saw no alternative but to increase numbers by conscription – compulsory active service ...

In March 1916 the Military Service Act was passed. This imposed conscription on all single men aged between 18 and 41, but exempted the medically unfit, clergymen, teachers and certain classes of industrial worker.

Conscientious objectors – men who objected to fighting on moral grounds – were also exempted, and were in most cases given civilian jobs or non-fighting roles at the front.

A second Act passed in May 1916 extended conscription to married men.²⁵

Frank Longman was conscripted in October 1916. Those already in the Territorial Forces could still be conscripted even if the initial term they signed up for had been completed.

He did not contest his conscription and served with the 16th Battalion London Regiment (Queen's Westminster Rifles) in France and Flanders.

Frank Longman died of illness on 14 August 1917 age 34.

He is remembered on the Bedford House memorial on the road from Ieper to Armentieres.

Kidd's tobacco box



Kidd's tobacco box is made from a rifle butt. It is 9 cm long by 4cm wide by 4.5cm high.



It has a brass lid with a latch to hold the lid shut.

A 1916 coin from Belgium with the service number 291674 is riveted to the lid.

T.KiDD is carved in relief on one side with 1917 on the other side. The letters and numbers have decorative crosshatching on the surface.

Construction

The original rifle butt was hollow to hold the cleaning kit for the rifle, including the weighted pull-through that cleans the barrel.



A cross-section has been cut from the narrower end of the hollow butt. A new wooden base has been fitted, with leather glued to the underside to give a smooth base.

The top of the case is carved into a curve with a recess for the brass hinge.

The hinge is screwed into the wood but soldered rather than riveted to the brass lid.

The lid is curved to follow the curve of the case. A second hinge is riveted to the underside of the lid to hold a brass lift-up latch. This latch has a small soldered knob that fits a hole carved in the wooden base. It is a good fit; if the knob is pressed firmly in place the lid stays shut when the case is upended.

T.KIDD
291674
1917

KIDD, THOMAS

Rank: Private

Service No: 291674

Date of Death: 26/03/1918

Age: 20

Regiment/Service: Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) 7th Bn.

Panel Reference: Bay 6.

Memorial: Arras Memorial

Additional Information: Son of Thomas and Mary Kidd, of 3, Eastfield, Jappa, Portobello, Midlothian.²⁶

Thomas KIDD c1898 – 1918

Thomas Kidd was born in Moonzie,²⁷ a small village on the southern side of the Grampians in Scotland where the main occupations were agriculture and weaving.

His father was a joiner and cartwright with his own business. One of those he employed was his oldest son James who worked for him as an apprentice cartwright. The younger children went to school; Thomas was still at school at 13.²⁸

Thomas Kidd was 16 when war was declared. He needed to be 18 to join the regular army and 17 to join the Territorial Forces. The earliest he could join was 1915.

He joined the 7th (Fife) Battalion of the Black Watch Territorial Forces.²⁹ Their role was to defend the coast of Fife against German invasion and prepare drafts for France. The 3/7th was a third line unit which also provided a unit for wounded soldiers in preparation for their return to the battlefield.

The 1/7th entered France in May 1915 but Thomas Kidd was too young to go with them. He needed to be at least 19 before he could be sent overseas.

It was 1917 before he entered France and Flanders with the Black Watch.

He was killed in action on 26 March 1918 and is remembered on the Arras Memorial for the missing.

Comment

The Belgium coin and the date 1917 carved on the tobacco box strongly suggest it was made on the Somme. There was no shortage of damaged rifles. The 7th Battalion had second and third line units which spent time back from the direct line of fire, so he had time and opportunity.

Perhaps Thomas Kidd, the son of a joiner and cartwright, found comfort in carving. He converted a weapon of war into a benign tobacco box and over many hours of concentration carved his name into the wood. And then he decorated it with fine crosshatching. He carved the date on the other side and decorated it in the same style, holding the piece easily in the palm of his hand as he worked.

The resulting piece is comforting to hold, smooth and reassuring, its carvings easily traceable in the dark and as readable as Braille.

He has no known grave but he carved his own small memorial on the remains of a rifle

butt.

Hale's snuff mull Crimea



The bone snuff mull is from the Crimean War. It stands just over 6cm tall with the lid on. It is made from a piece of horn, hollowed out. An 1854 Napoleon III French five centimes copper coin is fitted into the bottom of the horn to form the base. The coin is partly ground down to give a tight seal. It is held in place by two nails; these nails protrude a little and the mull does not sit flat.



A small spigot of bone has been inset into the side of the horn to allow for the chain that secures the top.

The top is a lead ball soldered to the brass lid, giving a tight fit.

The carving around the horn is intricate and beautiful. H.Hale is carved in ornate script with a roughened infill showing the smooth letters in relief.



The front edge opposite the spigot is carved with RA in flowing script above the carved insignia of the Royal Artillery.

The sharp point of a tiny pinhead is embedded in the base of the first H suggesting that the pattern has been traced from paper, with the fine tip of the pin snapping off.

Comment

This is a fascinating piece, strange at first to my eyes. Searches for ‘antique snuff mull’ threw up photos of superbly crafted and highly collectable snuff mulls from the 18th and 19th centuries made from horn and silver. The Hale piece is a remarkable handcrafted version from the battlefields of the Crimean Peninsular.

Steve found this piece at a military fair and put a protective deposit on it while he checked with me to see if I wanted it. I did, although it sounded strange from his description. When Steve went back a day later to claim it before the deadline he found a queue of prospective buyers. The stall holder said he could have sold it ten times over even at the relatively high price.

It is a stunning piece made from found objects. The carving is intricate and beautiful. It is a signed work of art.

H.HALE

The Research

The combination of H.Hale with the insignia of the Royal Field Artillery led straight to Gunner Hale. Unfortunately it was from an unattributed website (glostesters.tripod.com/crimrax.htm) and did not point to the original source. It is quoted here with apology.

**‘ROYAL ARTILLERY -
GRAVES IN THE CRIMEA & SCUTARI**

Sacred to the memory of the men of E Field Battery. No.1 Co. 3rd Battn. Rl Artillery who died or were killed in the Crimean Campaign of 1854-5

...

Sacred to the memory Gunner **H. HALE** J Batty. R.A. died June 1855 aged 20.
(Grave at Karani, J. Heavy Field Battery grave).'

... ..

Henry HALE – 1855

Gunner Hale was serving with the Royal Artillery in Crimea during the siege of Sebastopol. The following is drawn from publications around that time centred on Karani where Gunner Hale was buried.



1855 Crimean War – Sebastopol and Karani A Double Page From The Illustrated London News Dated 1855

By May 1855 after a long and bitter winter the fighting was nearly over but cholera was raging through the camps.

Conditions for the sick and wounded had improved after intensive lobbying from Florence Nightingale, but many still died of illness.

One nurse wrote about those times. The following is an extended extract from the autobiography of Mary Seacole.³⁰

The following letter was written to Mary Seacole after the cholera outbreak in 1855.

Camp, near Karani, June 16, 1856.

My dear Mrs. Seacole, — As you are about to leave the Crimea, I avail myself of the only opportunity which may occur for some time, to acknowledge my gratitude to you, and to thank you for the kindness which I, in common with many others, received at

your hands, when attacked with cholera in the spring of 1855. But I have no language to do it suitably ...

Nurse Seacole recorded the letter in her diary with the following emotional reflections on the aftermath of the cholera outbreak.

But I had other friends in the Crimea — friends who could never thank me.

Some of them lay in their last sleep, beneath indistinguishable mounds of earth; some in the half-filled trenches, a few beneath the blue waters of the Euxine. I might in vain attempt to gather the wild flowers which sprung up above many of their graves, but I knew where some lay, and could visit their last homes on earth.

And to all the cemeteries where friends rested so calmly, sleeping well after a life's work nobly done, I went many times, lingering long over many a mound that bore the names of those whom I had been familiar with in life, thinking of what they had been, and what I had known of them. Over some I planted shrubs and flowers, little lilac trees, obtained with no small trouble, and flowering evergreens, which looked quite gay and pretty ere I left, and may in time become great trees, and witness strange scenes, or be cut down as fuel for another besieging army — who can tell?

And from many graves I picked up pebbles, and plucked simple wild-flowers, or tufts of grass, as memorials for relatives at home. How pretty the cemeteries used to look beneath the blue peaceful sky; neatly enclosed with stone walls, and full of the grave-stones reared by friends over friends.

I met many here, thoughtfully taking their last look of the resting-places of those they knew and loved. I saw many a proud head bowed down above them. I knew that many a proud heart laid aside its pride here, and stood in the presence of death, humble and childlike. And by the clasped hand and moistened eye, I knew that from many a heart sped upward a grateful prayer to the Providence which had thought fit in his judgment to take some, and in his mercy to spare the rest.

Some three weeks before the Crimea was finally evacuated, we moved from our old quarters to Balaclava, where we had obtained permission to fit up a store for the short time which would elapse before the last red coat left Russian soil.

The poor old British Hotel! We could do nothing with it. The iron house was pulled down, and packed up for conveyance home, but the Russians got all of the out-houses and sheds which was not used as fuel. All the kitchen fittings and stoves, that had cost us so much, fell also into their hands. I only wish some cook worthy to possess them has them now.

We could sell nothing. Our horses were almost given away, our large stores of provisions, etc., were at any one's service. It makes my heart sick to talk of the really alarming sacrifices we made.

The Russians crowded down ostensibly to purchase, in reality to plunder. Prime cheeses, which had cost us tenpence a pound, were sold to them for less than a penny a pound; for wine, for which we had paid forty-eight shillings a dozen, they bid four shillings. I could not stand this, and in a fit of desperation, I snatched up a hammer and broke up case after case, while the bystanders held out their hands and caught the

ruby stream. It may have been wrong, but I was too excited to think. There was no more of my own people to give it to, and I would rather not present it to our old foes.

We were among the last to leave the Crimea.

Before going I borrowed a horse, easy enough now, and rode up the old well-known road — how unfamiliar in its loneliness and quiet — to Cathcart's Hill. I wished once more to impress the scene upon my mind.

It was a beautifully clear evening, and we could see miles away across the darkening sea. I spent some time there with my companions, pointing out to each other the sites of scenes we all remembered so well.

There were the trenches, already becoming indistinguishable, out of which, on the 8th of September, we had seen the storming parties tumble in confused and scattered bodies, before they ran up the broken height of the Redan.

There the Malakhoff, into which we had also seen the luckier French pour in one unbroken stream; below lay the crumbling city and the quiet harbour, with scarce a ripple on its surface, while around stretched away the deserted huts for miles.

It was with something like regret that we said to one another that the play was fairly over, that peace had rung the curtain down, and that we, humble actors in some of its most stirring scenes, must seek engagements elsewhere.

I lingered behind, and stooping down, once more gathered little tufts of grass, and some simple blossoms from above the graves of some who in life had been very kind to me, and I left behind, in exchange, a few tears which were sincere.

A few days later, and I stood on board a crowded steamer, taking my last look of the shores of the Crimea.

Footnotes

- 1 CWGC: Barnes, 21840
- 2 FMP: Births, Barnes Walter Valentine, 1893, Hendon, Middlesex, England
- 3 FMP: 1901 Census, Barnes Walter V, PRO RG 13, Hendon, Middlesex, England
- 4 FMP: 1911 Census, Barnes Valentine, PRO RG 14, Hendon, Middlesex, England
- 5 FMP: Soldiers died, Barnes Valentine Walter, 1918
- 6 FMP: National Roll, Barnes V W
- 7 TNA: Mesopotamia campaign
- 8 CWGC: Bateman, 40908
- 9 FMP: 1881 Census, Bateman Jephthah, PRO RG 11, Horton, Bradford, Yorkshire (West Riding), England
- 10 FMP: 1881 Census, Bateman Jephthah, PRO RG 11, Clayton, Bradford, Yorkshire (West Riding), England
- 11 FMP: 1891 Census, Bell Caroline, PRO RG 12, Northowram, Halifax, Yorkshire (West Riding), England
- 12 FMP: Marriages, Jephthah Bateman and Caroline Anna Bell, 1896, Bradford, Yorkshire, England
- 13 FMP: Births, Bateman Gilbert, 1898, Halifax, Yorkshire, England
- 14 FMP: Deaths, Bateman Jephthah, 1908, Halifax, Yorkshire, England
- 15 FMP: 1911 Census, Bateman Gilbert, PRO RG 14, Queensbury, Halifax, Yorkshire (West Riding), England
- 16 Wiki: doffer

- 17 FMP: Soldiers died, Bateman Gilbert, 1918
- 18 CWGC: Longman, 553689
- 19 FMP: Births, Longman Frank William, 1883, Wandsworth, London, England
- 20 FMP: 1891 Census, Longman Frank W, PRO RG 12, Putney, Wandsworth, London, England
- 21 FMP: 1901 Census, Longman Frank, PRO RG 13, Putney, Wandsworth, London, England
- 22 FMP: Surrey recruitment, Longman F W, England
- 23 TNA: Medal cards, Longman Frank W, WO 372/12/133952
- 24 Baker et al: Long Long Trail, Territorial Force 1914-1918
- 25 Parliament UK: Conscription
- 26 CWGC: Kidd, 291674 (*Note: Jappa should read Joppa*)
- 27 FMP: 1901 Census, Kidd Thomas B, Dairsie, Fife, Scotland
- 28 SP: 1911 Census, Kidd Thomas, Cupar, Fife, 420/00 009/00 007
- 29 FMP: Soldiers died, Kidd Thomas, 1918
- 30 Seacole: 194-198

Coins

Hogg's fork and spoon



Hogg's collection is wonderfully simple and ingenious in design. It consists of a fork and spoon with a fob, although the original leather strap or chain is missing, and a ring made from a 1917 penny.



These are made from six copper coins, two copper tubes, a little brass and not much else.

Both these images show segments made from three pennies and the halfpenny fob.

The tines of the fork are cut from a smoothed penny. The fork is 11.5cm long. The tines of the fork are 1.5cm across.

The bowl of the spoon is a George V penny. The spoon is 11cm long and 2.8cm across the bowl.

The fob is a 1913 halfpenny smoothed on the reverse and roughly stippled J.Hogg 20413 with H.L.I in cursive script.

The ring is made from a George V penny. A circular piece has been removed from the centre leaving an annulus 0.6cm wide. This annulus has been softened and deformed into the ring in the illustration. The remaining obverse of the penny is now the outer surface of the ring, and the reverse is the inner surface showing the date. There is no inscription but the date 1917 is clearly visible.



Construction

The handle of the fork is a copper tube with a brass end for a chain or leather strap. The join between the copper and brass is concealed by a penny that is wrapped around the end and soldered in place.

The spoon has a similar construction. A piece of brass is wedged into the end of the shaft for connection to the bowl of the spoon.

Both are made from pennies. The bowl of the spoon is a George V penny shaped and soldered to the end of the shaft and riveted twice for extra strength.

The tines of the fork are cut from a smoothed penny and similarly soldered and riveted in place. The 19 of the date shows faintly near the handle. The bottom rivet hides the remaining digits of the date.

Comment

The design of these pieces is ingenious. Five pennies and a halfpenny have been converted into a fork, a spoon and a man's ring.

John Hogg served in Mesopotamia where conditions were stiflingly hot in confined encampments, with long hours of tedium overshadowed by the threat of sniper attack and enemy bombardment.

He had the materials and the time to create these intriguing pieces.

J.Hogg
20423
H.L.I

The Research

HOGG, JOHN

Rank: Private

Service No: 20413

Date of Death: 25/10/1918

Age: 25

Regiment/Service: Highland Light Infantry 1st Bn.

Panel Reference: Panel 35 and 64.

Memorial: Basra Memorial

Additional Information: Son of Jonathan and Jane Ann Hogg, of Bank Houses, Low Row, Carlisle.¹

John HOGG 1893 – 1918

John Hogg came from the Border region between England and Scotland. He was the son of a gamekeeper, Jonathan Hogg.²

Jonathan Hogg grew up in the Longtown Union Workhouse. He and his brother and sisters appear on the 1881 census without their parents: John (13), Jonathan (11), Isabella (9) all born in Bewcastle, and Euphemia (7) and Margaret (3) born across the border in Scotland.³

It is unclear why the children ended up in the poorhouse. Perhaps their parents died, although children could be taken into care if there were signs of extreme poverty. They did receive an education and all but Margaret were at school in 1881.

Jonathan left the workhouse by the time he was 21 and found work as a general servant with a farming family in West Linton.⁴

In 1891 he married Jane Ann Glendinning,⁵ the daughter of a local woman who worked as a farm labourer to keep herself and her daughter.⁶

Jonathan and Jane Ann appear to have only one child, John Hogg born in 1893.⁷

By 1901, Jonathan found work as a gamekeeper and the extended family moved into a cottage in the grounds of Castletown House. Jane Ann's brother and elderly widowed mother lived with them. John attended school.⁸

John Hogg served with the Border Regiment as Private John Hogg 23367 before enlisting in the Highland Light Infantry (HLI) with service number 20413.⁹

He served with the 1st Battalion of the HLI who arrived in Mesopotamia in January 1916, shortly after the start of the siege at Kut-al-Amara. The 1st HLI remained stationed on the Tigris for the rest of the war.

John Hogg was killed in action on 25 October 1918 aged 24. He is remembered on the Basra Memorial.

Brunt's dog tag



Brunt's dog tag is made from a solid silver coin 3cm in diameter. The coin is polished smooth on both sides and pressed into a slightly convex shape.



JOHN BRUNT is stippled around the top half of the coin with service number 8760 stippled down the centre line.

It is attached to a silver chain with a hallmarked silver clasp. Two holes are punched in the coin to hold the chain.

Comment

The dog tag is simple and beautiful. The stippling requires a steady hand and long periods of concentration. It is consistent with other pieces out of Mesopotamia.

JOHN BRUNT
8760

The Research

BRUNT, JOHN

Rank: Private

Service No: 8760

Date of Death: 24/08/1917

Age: 25

Regiment/Service: Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry 'B' Coy. 1st Bn.

Grave Reference: Plot 8. Row Q. Grave 23.

Cemetery: Bangalore (Hosur Road) Cemetery

Additional Information: Son of William and Emily Brunt, of Chatham.¹⁰

John BRUNT c1892 – 1917

John Brunt was the son of a publican. When he enlisted in 1907 he was living at The Dove in Cage Lane in Chatham Kent. His Attestation papers show his next of kin living there with him: his father and mother William and Emily Brunt and his four brothers William, Alfred, Bert and Frank.¹¹

William and Emily had managed beer shops and pubs in Chatham for many years. They were the licencees for the Three Brothers at Slykates Hill in 1881,¹² then at 55 Cross Street in 1891,¹³ moving up to the High Street by 1901.¹⁴



The Dove at top of Cage Lane

Their children went to school until they were about 14, then the daughters worked as barmaids and the sons helped around the pub.

They made a success of the business as a family.

I found this photo on a blog about The Dove taken around the time of the war.¹⁵ I failed in my attempts to contact the owner and reproduce it here with apologies assuming the owner will find it interesting. I think John Brunt is the owner's great uncle.

A further entry on the blog confirms the story.

I remember The Dove really well, I lived at 31 Cage Lane and Bert Brunt lived in The Dove and also owned our house along with several others in the area. My mum came home from work one day and all the houses owned by Bert had been painted pink and maroon, she was hopping mad at the time but got over it ...

Bert and his siblings took over The Dove and were licencees well into the 40s and 50s.

... ..

John chose not to follow the same path.

Seven years before the start of WW1 he joined the army.

John Brunt had just turned 17 when he signed up for the Buffs in 1907. He was such a slight lad he would have been rejected by the Australian army – a mere 5 feet 3 1/2 inches weighing 7 stone 4 pounds (161.3cm and 48.8 kg).¹⁶

A year later he was Private Blunt 8760 in the Oxford Light Infantry and by 1911 he was living at the Shorncliffe Army Camp, a large military camp near Cheriton in Kent.¹⁷

The following accounts are from *The Long, Long Trail*.¹⁸

The Ox and Bucks were deployed to India in August 1914 where they came under the command of the 6th (Poona) Division of the Indian Army. They moved into Mesopotamia in October 1914 in a bid to secure oil supplies for the Royal Navy.

They had early successes as they moved up the Tigris towards Baghdad but faced a heavy defeat at Ctesiphon in November 1915.

The 6th (Poona) Division advanced upriver, leaving a very thinly stretched supply line of hundreds of miles behind it, only to receive a bloody repulse at Ctesiphon. A ragged and dispiriting retreat back to Kut-al-Amara began.

The Turks pursued them and soon surrounded them. They were cut off from their supply lines to the south by entrenched Turkish troops who subjected them to intermittent bombing and rifle fire. A garrison was formed and supplies rationed. The siege of Kut-al-Amara had begun.

There were rescue missions from the south but these were repulsed with heavy casualties.

The siege lasted nearly 5 months from early December 1915 until 29 April 1916 when the garrison finally surrendered.

John Brunt survived the siege and more than a year of its aftermath. *The Long, Long Trail* describes the conditions he faced.

Like Gallipoli, conditions in Mesopotamia defy description.

Extremes of temperature (120 degrees F was common); arid desert and regular flooding; flies, mosquitoes and other vermin: all led to appalling levels of sickness and death through disease.

More than 12,000 men died of sickness during the campaign in Mesopotamia.

... ..

John Brunt didn't die of sickness.

INFORMAL WILL.	
W.O. No. 1 498819/1	DOMICILE. English
Record No. 319/552489 17/18	
Name John Brunt	The enclosed document dated — and signed Rte J. Brunt
Regt. No. and Rank 8460 Pte	appears to have been written or executed by the person named in the margin while he was "in actual military service" within the meaning of the Wills Act, 1837, and has been recognised by the War Department as constituting a valid will.
Regt. 1st Ox & Bucks LI	
Killed accidentally at Bangalore	
Date of Death 24/8/17	

A covering document attached to his informal Will shows he died as the result of an accident.¹⁹

John Brunt was killed accidentally at Bangalore while on active service.

A search on 'John Brunt accident Bangalore 1917' led to a record from the European Cemetery at Hosur Road that says he died of a fractured skull.

*PVT. J. BRUNT No. 8760, B Company, 1st Oxford & Bucks L Infantry 27 yrs, died of fractured skull on 24-8-1917.*²⁰

... ..

His handwritten Will attached to the covering note is blurred and difficult to read. It is filed with 'a true copy of a true copy' made by the War Office in 1918. 'In the Event of my Death I give the whole Property to my Sister Lottie 242 Canterbury Ghillingham Kent'.

Lottie was his oldest sister.

Lottie – Charlotte in her younger days – was working as a barmaid in the family pub from the time she was 16.²¹ She was still working as a barmaid at The Dove in 1911 when John was in the training camp at Shorncliffe.²²

A letter from Lottie's solicitor to Somerset House attached to the Will reveals that both parents were now deceased. John named them as next of kin in his Attestation papers so they died after he enlisted.

There was money left in the bank, 'a small sum' of about 110 pounds, that was part of John's share of his parents' estates. Lottie's solicitor clarified that this money could go to

her.

Comment

Lottie wasn't the oldest in the family, and she had brothers who took over the running of the pubs.

There are 11 English Wills for soldiers researched for this collection. All but one left everything to the women in their lives.

Seven left everything to their mothers. One left half to his sister and half to a woman 'friend'.

John Brunt left everything to his sister.

One left everything to his mother or father.

Only one left everything to his father; his mother died when he was a toddler.

Perhaps it was the urge to protect, a continuation of what had driven them to enlist in the first place.

Booth's coin holder



Booth's coin holder is made for halfpennies. It is brass and copper with a penny base and cut-out penny top. It is 3cm in diameter and stands 4.1cm tall.



Inside the cylinder is a heavy spring. It is topped with an Edward VII halfpenny which depresses when coins are slotted into the container. When there are no loose coins this halfpenny sits firmly at the top as a lid.

The fob is a 1909 Edward VII penny. It has no ID – only the crudely indented hole that suggests a hit from a bullet or flying shrapnel.

The copper seam is marked W BOOTH RFC 33605.

Construction

The coin holder is made from a piece of brass joined at the side to form a cylinder with a George V penny as the base. There are faint decorative etchings on the brass.



A strip of copper covers the seam. The copper strip is pinched into a raised loop part way along the seam with a hole to carry the chain for the fob.

A second strip of copper wraps halfway round the top of the side, soldered and riveted in place, providing a base for the cutout crescent-shaped penny that holds coins in place.



Comment

William Booth was an air mechanic with the Royal Flying Corps (RFC). It seems likely that he made this piece himself; as an air mechanic he had the skills.

This is one of the few pieces where name and service number are not on the fob. Perhaps the damaged penny tells its own personal story.

W BOOTH
RFC 33605

The Research

BOOTH, W

Rank: Air Mechanic 2nd Class

Service No: 33605

Date of Death: 24/08/1917

Age: 29

Regiment/Service: Royal Flying Corps 63rd Sqdn.

Grave Reference: III. K. 2.

Cemetery: Basra War Cemetery

Additional Information: Son of Alfred and Sarah Helen Booth, of Bury; husband of Bessie Booth, of 53, Todd St., Fernhill, Bury.²³

William BOOTH c1888 – 1917

From his CWGC record, William Booth was born around 1888, the son of Sarah Helen and Alfred Booth of Bury, Lancashire. He married Bessie and died in Basra in 1917.

It appears that William Booth was known as Willie O Booth in official records up to that time.

Willie O Booth was born in Bury to Sarah E (Ellen rather than Helen) and Alfred Booth in Bury in 1888²⁴ and married Bessie Earnshaw in Bury in 1914.²⁵ He is consistently Willie O through the 1891,²⁶ 1901²⁷ and 1911²⁸ censuses and his marriage to Bessie.

The National Archives medal cards and the RFC war records have entries for Willie O Booth as follows:

- Willie O Booth has a medal card showing he was a 2nd class air mechanic with the RFC who first entered the theatre of war on 20 December 1915.²⁹
- W.O. Booth has an entry on the RAF muster roll as an air mechanic class 1 on 8 September 1914 promoted to air mechanic class 2 on 1 November 1916.³⁰

These records present the first major discrepancy between Willie O Booth and William Booth. Both entries for Willie O Booth have service number 16937, whereas William Booth is 33605 in the CWGC record.

There is a medal card for William Booth 33605 but it is incomplete.³¹ The medal card for Willie O Booth 16937 is also incomplete.

Neither medal card records his death. And neither card is complete in terms of medals:

- William Booth 33605, 2nd class air mechanic in the RFC, is due the Victory and British medals.
- W.O. Booth 16937, 2nd class air mechanic in the RFC, is due only the 15 Star.

These two records combine to form one military history. According to The Great War, the Star cannot stand alone.

*The 1914-15 Star was awarded to all who served in any theatre of war against Germany between 5th August 1914 and 31st December 1915 ... the 1914-15 Star was not awarded alone. The recipient had to have received the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.*³²

It seems likely that William Booth and Willie O Booth are one and the same person. The story below is based on that assumption.

... ..

Willie Osborn Booth was the youngest of five children born to Alfred and Sarah Booth. Alfred worked as a dyer and his older sons followed him into the mills as banders, general hands and helpers in the dyeing and textile finishing industry. The children went to school when they were young but were working by the time they were 12.³³

Alfred died in 1898 leaving Sarah a widow.³⁴ Her older sons took jobs as railway engine cleaners and her daughter became an apprentice dressmaker. Willie O left school. At 13 he

was unemployed.³⁵

Sarah took up work as a housekeeper. Willie became a joiner in the building trade.³⁶

A few months before war was declared Willie married Bessie Earnshaw,³⁷ the daughter of a blacksmith. Bessie was a cotton weaver.³⁸

Willie O Booth was one of the first to enlist. By 8 September 1914 he was a driver with the Motor Transport section of the RFC, classed as an air mechanic grade 1.

He entered the war in France with the RFC on 20 December 1915. It is possible that this is where the 1909 penny was hit by a bullet or shrapnel and became a token to be treasured. The coinholder is similar in style to other personal items created on the Somme.

In November 1916 Willie O Booth 16937 was promoted to 2nd class air mechanic and transferred to the newly formed 63rd Squadron of the RFC as William Booth 33605. This squadron went to Mesopotamia according to the following account in Wiki.

No. 63 Squadron was formed on 31 August 1916 at Stirling, Scotland as a squadron of the Royal Flying Corps.

The squadron was intended to operate as a day-bomber unit over the Western Front in France ... however at the last minute the squadron was re-tasked to operate against the Turkish army in Mesopotamia (Iraq)

*... the squadron arrived in the Middle East in August 1917.*³⁹

William Booth arrived in Mesopotamia in August 1917.

A blog on the Great War Forum describes the conditions when he arrived.

*63 Squadron arrived in Basra on 13th August 1917 into the baking heat of well over 100 deg F. and promptly went down with heat stroke. Only six out of the 30 officers were left standing and only 70 men out of 200.*⁴⁰

William Booth died 11 days after arriving in Mesopotamia. He is buried in the Basra War Cemetery.

Ford's engraved tank



Ford's detailed etching of a tank is on a 1916 French franc 2.3cm in diameter. The obverse has been completely smoothed before engraving. The reverse is unchanged.



The etching is finely done. The tank is shown in detail with crosshatching below the tank to depict action in the trenches.

The inscription Cpl G.H.FORD 38747 M.G.C (H.B) France 1917 is done freehand rather than stamped.

M.G.C (H.B) is the Machine Gun Corps (Heavy Branch). The Heavy Branch separated from the MGC to become the Tank Corps in 1917.

Comment

The engraving on this coin is stunning. The etching is beautiful, meticulously done with great attention to detail. This is art for art's sake, therapy in its time-consuming hours of concentration.

The barely perceptible variations in the finely detailed border show that it was etched by hand rather than stamped. The border alone suggests many hours of work.

Cpl G.H.FORD
38747
M.G.C (H.B)
France 1917

The Research

It seems Corporal G.H.Ford 38747 survived the war. The service number produced no records in either the CWGC site or the medal cards in the National Archives.

There are two candidates for G H Ford in the National Roll of the Great War, both from Birmingham. Both served with the Machine Gun Corps (MGC) on the Somme.

The first G H Ford was a young soldier in the MGC who was killed in action at Cambrai

in November 1917 – but he was a Private not a Corporal.

The second is Company Sergeant Major G.H. Ford of the MGC, from Birmingham. The following account is based on his entry in the National Roll of the Great War.

George Henry FORD 1887 – ?

George Henry Ford was a career soldier who first enlisted in 1903.

He'd been with the army for 11 years by the time he saw action at the Battle of Mons in 1914. I looked for him in the census of 1891 and found George H Ford in Birmingham, 4 years old, just eligible to enlist in 1903.⁴¹

The occupations of his parents were interesting. His father was a metal refiner and his mother was a 'steel pen maker' – an ideal environment to foster an interest in calligraphy and engraving.

This is the complete entry in the National Roll of the Great War.

FORD, G.H., C.S.M., M.G.C.

Serving with the Colours since June 1903, he was immediately drafted to France at the outbreak of war and played a distinguished part at the Battle of Mons, and many subsequent engagements.

He also saw service in Palestine, and later was transferred to India, where in 1920 he was still engaged on important garrison duties.

He was wounded three times during the course of hostilities, and was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal for conspicuously good work in the Field. He also holds the Mons Star, and the General Service and Victory Medals.

*1 Back 33, Clissold Street, Brookfields, Birmingham. 3330.*⁴²

He was wounded three times, so it is possible that he did the fine engraving during convalescence.

Comment

Interestingly, I saw a similar engraving on a flask for an officer in the Tank Corps. I followed the auction on eBay but did not bid because it looked like a presentation piece rather than a personal item.

WW1 BRITISH AUSTRALIAN ANZAC TANK CORPS OFFICERS HIP FLASK WITH ENGRAVED TANK Named to C S I Hodges F Battalion Tank Corps – listed on eBay



The etching is remarkably similar and leads me to think it was by the same hand, perhaps copied from a poster. The scale is different so it is not traced or imprinted. This etching on an officer's hip flask may well have been a suitable project for a talented soldier during convalescence.

Pelham's rupee Mesopotamia



This is a beautifully inscribed 1914 Indian rupee. It is 3cm in diameter.



The obverse has been completely smoothed before inscription. A peaceful scene from Mesopotamia is carefully etched with meticulous attention to detail, with the inscription France 1914-15 and Mesopotamia 1916-.

The reverse is smoothed around the one rupee India 1914 centre and etched with W.Pelham C.E 8349 Royal Sussex, C.E denoting Church of England.

Comment

This coin is reminiscent of a picture postcard. It has an openness and simplicity that belies the fact that it is a record of military service written in the midst of a great war.

It was etched in Mesopotamia. There is potential poignancy in the unfinished story – the dash after 1916 leaving the future open-ended.

In fact the story has a happy ending, all the more amazing because it spanned the war from start to finish and covered action in two of the most tragic theatres of war.

W.PELHAM
C.E
8349
ROYAL SUSSEX
FRANCE 1914-15
MESOPOTAMIA 1916-

The Research

William Thomas PELHAM 1887 – 1978

William Thomas Pelham was born in Lewes Sussex in 1887.⁴³

He was 18 when he enlisted in 1905. His attestation papers show he had been working as a general labourer for Mr Pay of the Railway Inn in Newhaven.⁴⁴

He was slightly built – 5 feet 5 inches tall and weighing just on 8 stone (165cm weighing 51 kg).

By 1911 he was serving with the overseas military in India – Serjeant William Thomas Pelham L/8349 with the 1st Battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment in Rawalpindi in the Punjab.⁴⁵ He was 23.

He spent some time on the Indian Unattached List, according to his medal card.⁴⁶ This was made up of NCOs from the British army who worked within the Indian Army on conditions similar to secondment. William Pelham was 1086 on the Indian Unattached List.

Some battalions of the Royal Sussex stayed on in India during WW1, but William Pelham returned to England at the start of the war. His medal card shows he entered the battlefields of France on 14 October 1914, verifying the inscription on the rupee FRANCE 1914-15.

He survived France and Flanders and was sent to Mesopotamia in 1916, earning the Iraq clasp for his service there with the Royal Sussex.

William Thomas Pelham survived the war and returned to England.

He transferred to the Royal West Kent Regiment and was renumbered 6390299.

In 1919 he was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal (MSM), a relatively rare award, for his services in Mesopotamia.⁴⁷

His MSM was listed on page 3142 of the Supplement to the Edinburgh Gazette, 24 September 1919 – the only entry that day for the Royal Sussex Regiment: ‘L/8349 Sjt. Pelham, W. T., 1st Bn. (Newhaven)’.

... ..

William Thomas Pelham married Winifred Gore in Thanet Kent in 1927 when he was 40 and Winifred was 38.⁴⁸ They had one child, a daughter Mary, born in 1929.⁴⁹

He lived till he was 91.

William Thomas Pelham died in Thanet in 1978, his death certificate confirming he was born on 19 June 1887.⁵⁰

... ..

There are records that suggest William Pelham came from a family of soldiers. A William Pelham from Lewes was a trumpeter with the Sussex Artillery for nearly 30 years before he was discharged as medically unfit in 1890.⁵¹

In 1901 there is a William Pelham age 14 born 1887 living at the Military Barracks at Woolwich as the son of a soldier in the Sussex Artillery.⁵²

Ten years later William Thomas Pelham 8349 born 1887 was serving with the Royal Sussex in India. He may be the lad who grew up in the Military Barracks at Woolwich with family links to a trumpeter with the Sussex Artillery.

Johnson's identity bracelet





A Turkish coin 2.8cm in diameter has been used to make this identity bracelet. The obverse has been completely smoothed before being engraved.

A circle frames the intricate etching of a minaret and mosques and palm trees labelled BAGHDAD 1917.18. The border around the circle is inscribed Pte A.JOHNSON 302300 * M.T.A.S.C. *.

Two lugs are attached for the leather band which appears to be in original condition, worn but well preserved.

PTE A. JOHNSON 302300
M.T.A.S.C.
BAGHDAD
1917.18

Alfred Johnson survived the war. The 1920 demobilisation papers for Private Alfred Johnson 302300 of the Mechanical Transport Company of the Royal Army Service Corps (M.T.A.S.C) give sufficient details of age and address to trace his family history.⁵³

Alfred JOHNSON 1897 – 1952

Alfred Johnson's mother Bertha started her young life in the workhouse. The 1881 census shows her mother Sarah Taylor, a nurse, as an inmate in the Aston Union Workhouse with her daughters Clara (9), Elizabeth (4) and Bertha (3).⁵⁴

Sarah claims to be married but there is no sign of Sarah's husband in the Workhouse.

By 1891, Sarah and the children have moved out of the workhouse and are living with her husband Isaac in Aston. There is a new child in the family, a son aged 6.⁵⁵

By 1901 Sarah is a widow. She is head of the household and much has changed.⁵⁶

Elizabeth has married and has a two year old son; Elizabeth, her husband and son all live with Sarah.

Bertha has also married and has a three year old son Alfred. She and Providence Johnson married in 1898⁵⁷ and baptised Alfred the same year,⁵⁸ when Bertha was 20 and Providence was 21. Bertha and Providence and their son Alfred also live with Sarah at Little Green Lane.

... ..

They were still there in 1911, the small household of three – Bertha, Providence and Alfred Johnson – at 5 Fir Terrace, Little Green Lane, Aston. The others had moved on.

Bertha and Providence stayed together for many years but Alfred appears to be their only child.⁵⁹

... ..

The following account is drawn from Alfred Johnson's demobilisation papers mentioned above.

Alfred Johnson was born on 24 September 1897, the year before his parents were married.

He enlisted on 29 November 1915. He was a turner by trade and a Wesleyan by religion. He gave his mother Bertha as his next of kin.

He served with the Army Reserve until 22 March 1917, when he was posted to Grove Park.

On 29 April 1917, Alfred Johnson embarked for Mesopotamia.

He disembarked at Durban on 9 June and stayed for a month, reembarking on the Empress of Britain on 10 July, disembarking at Bombay on 27 July and leaving almost immediately.

He finally disembarked at Basra on 1 August 1917 and was taken on strength four days later.

On 15 October 1917 Alfred Johnson was admitted to the Basra General Hospital with 'sandfly fever', later diagnosed as malaria. It was months before he was well enough to

rejoin his unit in the field, in March 1918.

He served in the field until February 1919 when a repeat attack of malaria saw him hospitalised for three months. He rejoined his unit in May 1919, but another bout saw him not rejoin his unit from hospital till 13 July 1919.

Alfred Johnson was home in London by 2 March 1920.

At demobilisation on 30 March 1920, the Medical Board assessed his condition.

Complains has had two attacks of malaria in last 3 months – shivering, sweats, headaches. Last attack 3 weeks since (very severe). Weakness for 2 days.

However his general physical condition was classified good, with ‘No tenderness nor enlargement of liver or spleen, pulse 120, HS and BS normal, no anaemia. Tongue clean.’

His degree of disability from malaria was calculated as less than 20 percent, and his initial disability allowance of 8 shillings per annum appears to have been cancelled after 6 months.

On 30 March 1920 Alfred Johnson was not discharged; he chose to transfer to the Army Reserve.

McBlain's rupee dog tag



McBlain's identity tag has been made from a 1917 Indian rupee shaped to fit a wrist. The rupee is 3 cm in diameter.



The obverse of the coin has been completely smoothed and engraved with J.McBLAIN 12703 1916-17-18 MESOPOTAMIA around the insignia of the RAF. The reverse is left in its original condition.

Two lugs are attached for a strap, possibly leather. One has been snapped near the join but remains closed.

Comment

The engraving is meticulously done with fine detail on the feathered wings of the RAF insignia. The inscription appears to have been done freehand rather than stamped with even spacing and fine calligraphy.

J.McBLAIN
12703
RAF
1916-17-18
MESOPOTAMIA

The Research

J.McBlain remained a mystery until his RAF service history became available online.

The faded handwriting on the pages of his file gave his age at enlistment (18 and 270/365 years) and the address of his father as next of kin – 2 Mutual St, Wallsend on Tyne.⁶⁰ A search revealed that James McBlain had lived at 2 Mutual St since he was a child of 4, and his story fell into place.

James McBLAIN 1897 – 1922

James McBlain was born in Tynemouth Northumberland in 1897.⁶¹

He was the oldest son of a boilermaker. In 1901 he lived at 2 Mutual St, Wallsend, with

his parents and three siblings and a domestic servant.⁶²

The family was still there in 1911. Their father worked as a ship plater and James at 14 was an office boy. There were eight children now with ages ranging from 15, 14 (James), 12, 10, 8, 6, 4, down to 1.⁶³

James McBlain was a clerk by the time he joined the RFC as an air mechanic. He enlisted on 2 November 1915 at the age of 18. He was blue-eyed and fair with light brown hair.

His engraved dog tag shows he served in Mesopotamia from 1916 to 1918. His service records confirm this.

On 2 August 1917 he was admitted to the British General Hospital at Amara suffering from colitis. His condition deteriorated and on 8 August he was transferred to the British General Hospital at Basra. On 19 August he was diagnosed with influenza. A week later he was transferred back to Amara and admitted to the British Convalescent Depot with dysentery.

It was 12 September 1917 before he was discharged for duty at Amara.

The RFC became the RAF in April 1918. James McBlain was transferred to the RAF as air mechanic class 3 on 1 April 1918 and reclassified on 1 May 1918 to air mechanic class 2. A subsequent faded entry on his file could be a further promotion on 1 October 1918.

The entries for 1919 are almost illegible, ending with transfers to Boscombe in October 1919.

Elsewhere on file it says he was transferred to the RAF Reserve on 5 December 1919.

James McBlain was transferred to the Reserve Pool at Spittlegate (now Spitalgate) on 11 April 1921.

He was 'Recalled Indefinite Leave' on 8 June 1921 and transferred from Spittlegate to E Reserve the following day.

The next entry on file is the last – 'Died 20.11.22'.

KAZEMIAN dinar



This beautifully engraved coin is an Iranian 5000 dinar smoothed and engraved on the obverse in a mixture of Arabic and Roman script. It is 3.5cm in diameter.

The inscription reads KAZEMIAN 1917-18 under an etching of minarets. No.579 MTPC is inscribed around the lower edge.



The reverse is unchanged.

The seller on ebay offered the following description.

Kazemain, also spelled Kazmain, probably refers to modern day Kadhimiya (al-Kāzimiyyah or al-Kāzimayn) which is a town located in what is now a northern neighbourhood of Baghdad, Iraq. The inscription may have something to do with the British 'March on Baghdad' which began in 1917. The area was also an important center of resistance against the British after World War One. What the letters 'M T P C' stand for is a mystery to us. The 'PC' may stand for Prison Camp? Possibly Turkish?

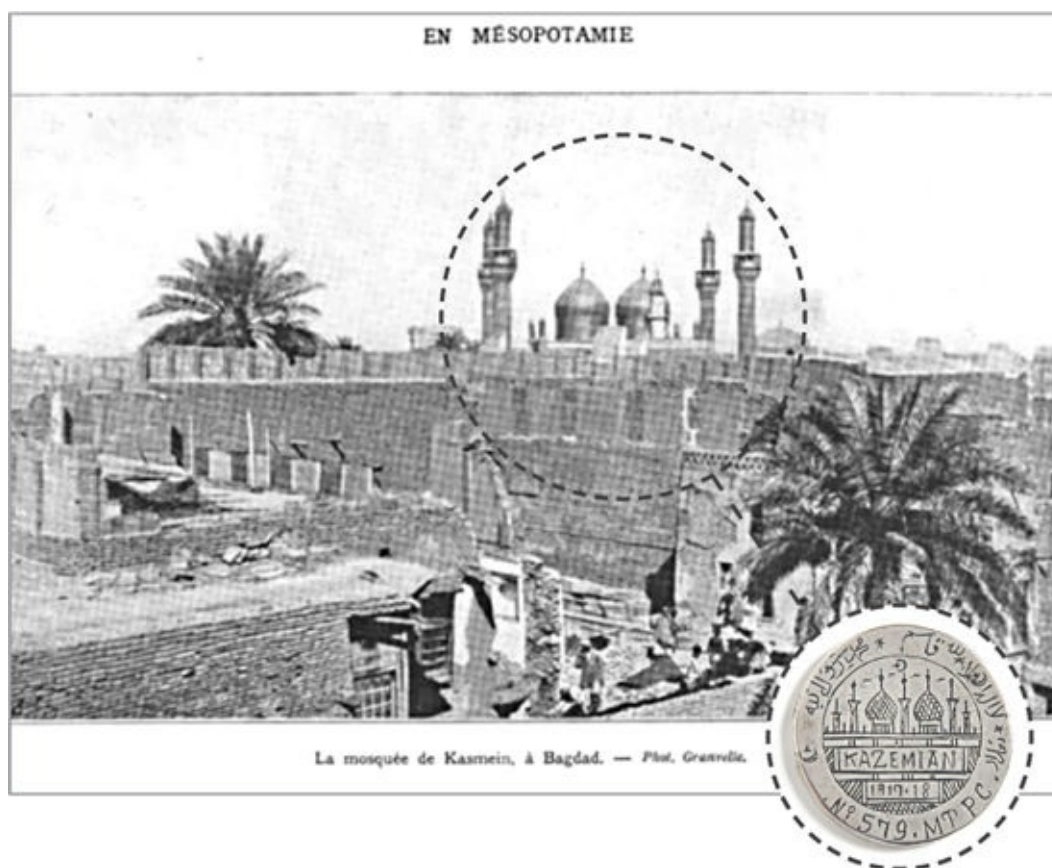
KAZEMIAN
1917-18
No. 579. MTPC.

The Research

This piece remains a mystery. The Arabic script may well have been inscribed by a Turk – the Turks used Arabic script until the 1920s when they converted to Roman script. The star and crescent symbol is consistent with Turkish influence.

The search for service number 579 turned up no convincing candidates. There are 262 medal cards for soldiers with the service number 579 in the National Archives. None of these cards were a convincing fit. There is a medal card for Kaka Khan described as 'Mule Corps 579 Driver. Supply and Transport Corps' which could almost be No 579 MTPC but most records seem to refer to the Mule Corps rather than the Mule Transport something Corps.

There were Motor Transport corps in Mesopotamia but no candidates with service number 579.



Comment

In the absence of personal discoveries I bought a reproduction page from a French illustrated newspaper showing the mosque at Kazemian in Baghdad in 1917.

The mosque at Kazemian (la mosquée de Kasmeïn, a Bagdad) appears to be the subject of the artwork on the coin.

While this beautifully engraved coin does not reveal the person who etched it, it does point to a time and place in history. It carries forward a story of a tumultuous time behind the minarets of Mesopotamia.

No 579 chose to record the beauty of the minarets rather than the ruined walls around them. The interwoven languages on the coin speak of the possibility of peace.

The second photograph on the page shows British troops entering Baghdad on 11 March 1917. A translation of the text follows.

Entry of British troops under General Maude into Baghdad, 11 March 1917

The battle under the walls of the city lasted two days from 9 to 10 March; the heat was overwhelming. The sand blinded the combatants. Turned back first at the centre, the Turks lost the battle after the domination of their left wing by the British right.



L'entrée des troupes britanniques du général Maude à Bagdad, le 11 mars 1917.

La bataille engagée sous les murs de la ville dura les deux journées des 9 et 10 mars; la chaleur était accablante. Le sable soulevé aveuglait les combattants. Refoulés d'abord au centre, les Turcs lâchèrent pied après l'enfoncement de leur aile gauche par la droite britannique.

... ..

Footnotes

- 1 CWGC: Hogg, 20413
- 2 FMP: 1901 Census, Hogg John, PRO RG 13, Rockliff, Carlisle, Cumberland
- 3 FMP: 1881 Census, Hogg Jonathan, PRO RG 11, Arthuret, Longtown, Cumberland, England
- 4 FMP: 1891 Census, Hogg Jonathan, PRO RG 12, West Linton, Longtown, Cumberland
- 5 FMP: Marriages, Jonathan Hogg and Jane Ann Glendinning, 1891, Longtown, Cumberland, England
- 6 FMP: 1881 Census, Glendinning Jane Ann, PRO RG 11, West Linton, Longtown, Cumberland, England
- 7 FMP: Births, Hogg John, 1893, Longtown, Cumberland, England
- 8 FMP: 1901 Census, Hogg Jonathan, PRO RG 13, West Linton, Longtown, Cumberland
- 9 FMP: Soldiers died, Hogg John, 1918
- 10 CWGC: Brunt, 8760
- 11 FMP: Service Records, WO 363, Chatham, Kent, England
- 12 FMP: 1881 Census, Brunt William, PRO RG 11, Chatham, Medway, Kent, England
- 13 FMP: 1891 Census, Brunt William, PRO RG 12, Chatham, Medway, Kent, England
- 14 FMP: 1901 Census, Brunt William, PRO RG 13, Chatham, Medway, Kent, England
- 15 KHF: 2014
- 16 FMP: Service records 1760-1915, Brunt John, WO 96, St Mary's, Chatham, Kent, England
- 17 FMP: 1911 Census, Blunt John, PRO RG 14, Cheriton, Elham, Kent, England
- 18 Baker et al: Long, Long Trail, Ox and Bucks, 1914
- 19 [GOV.UK](#): Blunt John, 1917
- 20 ReoCities: Bangalore cemetery, Brunt
- 21 FMP: 1891 Census, Brunt Charlotte, PRO RG 12, Chatham, Medway, Kent, England

- 22 FMP: 1911 Census, Brunt Charlotte, PRO RG 14, Chatham, Medway, Kent, England
- 23 CWGC: Booth, 33605
- 24 FMP: Births, Booth Willie O, 1888, Bury, Lancashire, England
- 25 FMP: Marriages, Willie O Booth and Bessie Earnshaw, 1914, Bury, Lancashire, England
- 26 FMP: 1891 Census, Booth Willie O, PRO RG 12, Radcliffe, Bury, Lancashire, England
- 27 1901 Census, Booth Willie O, PRO RG 13, Bury, Bury, Lancashire, England
- 28 1911 Census, Booth Willie Osborn, PRO RG 14, Bury, Bury, Lancashire, England
- 29 TNA: Medal cards, Booth W O, WO 372/2/217037
- 30 FMP: RAF muster roll, Booth W O
- 31 TNA: Medal cards, Booth William, WO 372/2/216859
- 32 The Great War. 1998-2013.
- 33 FMP: 1891 Census, Booth Willie O, PRO RG 12, Radcliffe, Bury, Lancashire, England
- 34 FMP: Deaths, Booth Alfred, 1898, Bury, Lancashire, England
- 35 FMP: 1901 Census, Booth Willie O, PRO RG 13, Bury, Bury, Lancashire, England
- 36 FMP: 1911 Census, Booth Willie Osborn, PRO RG 14, Bury, Bury, Lancashire, England
- 37 FMP: Marriages, Willie O Booth and Bessie Earnshaw, 1914, Bury, Lancashire, England
- 38 FMP: 1911 Census, Earnshaw Bessie, PRO RG 14, Bury, Bury, Lancashire, England
- 39 Wiki: No 63 Squadron
- 40 GWF: RFC in Mesopotamia
- 41 FMP: 1891 Census, Ford George H, PRO RG 12, Birmingham, Warwickshire, England
- 42 FMP: National Roll, Ford G H, England
- 43 FMP: Births, Pelham William Thomas, 1887, Lewes, Sussex, England
- 44 FMP: Service records, Pelham William Thomas, St Johns, Lewes, Sussex, England
- 45 FMP: 1911 Census, Pelham William Thomas, PRO RG 14, Overseas Military, Ships and Overseas Establishments
- 46 TNA: Medal cards, Pelham William T, WO 372/15/187701
- 47 TNA: Medal cards, Pelham William Thomas, WO 372/24/101025
- 48 FMP: Marriages, William T Pelham and Winifred Gore, 1927, Thanet, Kent, England
- 49 FMP: Births, Pelham Mary, 1929, Thanet, Kent, England
- 50 FMP: Deaths, Pelham William Thomas, 1978, Thanet, Kent
- 51 FMP: Service records 1760-1915, Pelham William, Southover, Lewes, Sussex, England
- 52 FMP: 1901 Census, Pelham William, PRO RG 13, Woolwich, London, England
- 53 FMP: Service records 1914-1920, Johnson Alfred, WO 363, Birmingham, Warwickshire, England
- 54 FMP: 1881 Census, Taylor Sarah, PRO RG 11, Aston, Warwickshire, England
- 55 FMP: 1891 Census, Taylor Sarah, PRO RG 12, Aston, Birmingham, Warwickshire, England
- 56 FMP: 1901 Census, Taylor Sarah, PRO RG 13, Aston, Warwickshire, England
- 57 FMP: Marriages, Bertha Taylor and Providence Johnson, 1898, Aston, Warwickshire, England
- 58 FMP: Births, Johnson Alfred, 1898, Birmingham, Warwickshire, England
- 59 FMP: 1911 Census, Johnson Alfred, PRO RG 14, Aston, Warwickshire, England
- 60 FMP: RAF Service records, McBlain James, AIR 79/103
- 61 FMP: Births, McBlain James, 1897, Tynemouth, Northumberland, England
- 62 FMP: 1901 Census, McBlain James, PRO RG 13, Wallsend, Tynemouth, Northumberland, England
- 63 FMP: 1901 Census, McBlain James, PRO RG 13, Wallsend, Tynemouth, Northumberland, England

Epilogue

The draft of the book was with the graphic designer when this small engraved French franc turned up.



It defied my generalisations about those who carved their names. This small stippled coin did not belong to an NCO or OR.

It belonged to Major General Sir Samuel Guise Moors, a most distinguished and decorated surgeon who went on to become honorary surgeon to King George V after the war. There are two portraits of him in the National Portrait Gallery.

The following information is taken from the catalogue archives of auction house DNW, who auctioned his medals in 2007.

... ..

Samuel Guise Moors was a surgeon who served on the North West Frontier in the relief of Chitral in India in 1890.

He served in the Boer War and was twice mentioned in despatches.

In the years following the Boer War he was Surgeon-Major to the Scots Guards.

He served in France throughout the Great War, becoming Director of Medical Services – the D.M.S on the engraved coin – as follows:

... with the 7th Division for the relief of Antwerp; present at the first battle of Ypres, October 1914; battle of Neuve Chapelle, March 1915; first gas attack on Ypres, April 1915; battle of the Somme, July 1916 and third and fourth battles of Ypres.

*For his wartime services he was five times mentioned in despatches ...*¹

... ..

The collection went to auction on 7 March 2007.

The K.C.B., K.C.V.O., C.M.G. group of thirteen awarded to Major-General Sir Samuel Guise-Moores, Royal Army Medical Corps, Honorary Surgeon to King George V, Colonel Commandant of the R.A.M.C., 1927-33

... 'S. G. Moores' on all named medals, very fine and better (16)

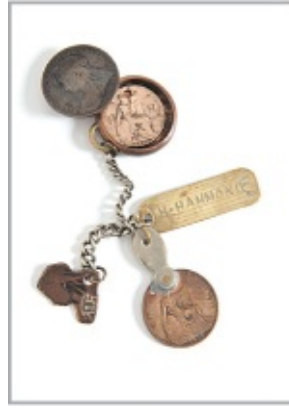
The 16 medals, very fine or better, sold for £2,800.

The humble talisman above, roughly stippled, was not among them. Yet it is the most precious of all, showing as it does that even this most honoured and decorated man felt the urge to write his own name and create a small talisman in times of trauma.

Footnote

¹ http://www.dnw.co.uk/auction-archive/catalogue-archive/lot.php?auction_id=100&lot_id=56813 Accessed 20 October 2014

RESEARCH NOTES – Hammond's Boer War locket and WW1 chain



This interesting piece spans two wars.

The original piece comes from the Boer War. The WW1 items are added later.

This piece is part of a collection of items for H. Hammond. It comes in a beautiful old tea caddy along with three photos – uninscribed – and a small prayer book with cherubs on the front.

The collection fascinates me. I know that the trench art will point to the war story of H. Hammond 771 ALH – but what about the other items? The only handwriting is the inscription within the prayer book 'Dear Gladys, With loving wishes from Her Mama' and the date in a different hand and different ink 'Jany 1. 1915'



So what can I find from these anonymous items – where the only clue is that they are relevant to H. Hammond 771 ALH?

I start with H. Hammond 771 in the CWGC.

HAMMOND, HENRY

Rank: Trooper

Service No: 771

Date of Death: 07/08/1915

Age: 38

Regiment/Service: Australian Light Horse 2nd

Cemetery: Shrapnel Valley Cemetery

Additional Information: Son of Charles and Mary Hammond. Native of South Australia.

There is no official Boer War record for Henry Hammond in the Australian Archives – but his enlistment form shows he served with the Imperial Bushmen's Corps until the Boer War ended in 1902. It's likely that this is where he made the locket with the cutout Queen Victoria fob.

He signs up again for WW1. This is the story from his service records.

Henry Hammond enlists on 2 January 1915 in Blackall – a small town in outback Queensland. He is working as an overseer on a remote cattle station and is described as a drover on the Nominal Roll. He says he is 30 and single and gives his mother in Adelaide as his next of kin.

He joins the 2nd Light Horse and travels down to Brisbane to embark on the Itria for Egypt, where he spends several months in training. He goes AWOL in Heliopolis for three days and has his pay appropriately docked. In August he leaves Alexandria to join the Anzacs on the Gallipoli Peninsula, where he killed in action a few weeks later. He is buried in Shrapnel Gully.

... ..

The story unravels as I look further into his file. He is 30 when he enlists in January 1915 – but 38 when he dies seven months later at ANZAC Cove.

And it appears he is married. After his death there is a letter from a woman called Helen Scott Hammond from South Australia who claims to be his wife.

I look for a marriage between 2 January 1915 when he enlists and 9 February when he embarks on the Itria – but find none. In fact South Australian records show that Henry Hammond marries Helen Scott in Adelaide in 1910 – five years before he enlists.

I check his enlistment form. Not only does he mark 'Single' for marital status – he crosses out the options of leaving one third or one half of his pay to a wife. And he names his mother in Adelaide as his next of kin. He signs the form in his own strong hand. So it is more than a slip of the pen.

Helen Scott Hammond is asked to show that she was in fact married to Henry Hammond and that they were not separated or divorced. She does this and goes on to claim a war widow's pension of one pound a week from the time of his death. She receives his medals ahead of his mother whom he names as next of kin – with no challenge from his mother when they check with her. So she knows about Helen. When Helen dies intestate in 1947 with no children, the Public Trustee sends Henry Hammond's medals to the Australian War Memorial.



So here's the mystery. Why did Henry Hammond leave his wife and travel hundreds of miles to work on a remote cattle station? And then say he was single?

And who was Gladys, who gave him this small prayer book – a childhood gift from her Mama – the day before he enlisted in Blackall?



I study the three photos – all presumably featuring Henry Hammond. This one – a formal photo on a postcard – I assume is of Henry and Helen on their wedding day in 1910.

The others are more intriguing. I challenge myself to find out who the people are.

I search the South Australian archives. I find that Henry's parents are Charles Hammond and Mary Ann Maria Sheppard Stacy who marry in Adelaide in 1878. Henry is born a year later.

His mother's name is interesting – Mary Ann Maria Sheppard Stacy Hammond.

Two brothers – William John Sheppard Stacy and Robert Sheppard Stacy – both marry in 1857 in Adelaide and each has a daughter in 1858.

William's baby is Mary Ann Maria Stacy. Robert's is Mary Ann Maria Sheppard Stacy (Henry's mother).

I sense a matriarch – Mary Ann Maria Sheppard?

I study the photo. The body language suggests a family gathering – but not necessarily of couples. There is affection but not intimacy. The potential matriarch is seated on the right – is she the Mary Ann Sheppard whose name is carried forward through the generations?



I puzzle over the photo for weeks. Unlike the postcard it is clearly a reproduction – perhaps restored from a tattered original or copied from a family album. There are no names – the back of the print is blank. It's a tantalising challenge – can I name these seven people from the clues I have?

... ..

The brothers who married in 1858 – William John Sheppard Stacy and Robert Sheppard Stacy – were not born in South Australia. I look for them in the 1841 census in England.

I can't find William John Stacy in the census.

I find Robert Sheppard Stacy born 1834 – he's a Stacy living with the Sheppards. He's 7 years old living with his grandparents and their grownup children near Exmouth in Devon. This is the Sheppard family whose name lives on – but there is no sign of Mary Ann.

I look for Robert's parents in the old parish registers. I find that Mary Ann Sheppard marries Thomas Smyth Stacy in Devon in 1830. They have three sons born 'near Exmouth' in Devon – Thomas Sheppard Stacy, William John Sheppard Stacy and Robert Sheppard Stacy born 1834.

So why is Robert the only one I can find in the 1841 census?

The answer lies in the passenger lists for South Australia – an online site with composite information drawn from various attributed records. This is the story in those records.

Thomas Smyth Stacy emigrates to Australia in 1839 aboard the Anna Robertson with two of his sons – Thomas Sheppard Stacy and William John Sheppard Stacy. They are among the earliest pioneers to settle in South Australia – the colony is barely three years old.

The passenger records show that two years later in November 1841 (after the census) his youngest son Robert Sheppard Stacy joins him in Adelaide – travelling with Thomas's second wife Sarah Catherine Hussey Stacy.

So Mary Ann died. Robert's father remarries in 1835 – a year after Robert is born – so possibly she died in childbirth. Her parents near Exmouth take the baby and care for him until he is seven.

... ..

I go back to the family photo.



I think this is a Stacy family photo set in Adelaide around 1888. It's about three brothers who emigrated as children after their mother died. The matriarch is Sarah Catherine Hussey Stacy – a widow by now (her husband Thomas Smyth Stacy has died).

The child is Henry – sitting on his grandfather's knee.

From left to right: William John Sheppard Stacy, his daughter Mary Ann Maria Stacy, Robert Sheppard Stacy, grandson Henry Hammond on his knee, Henry's mother Mary Ann Maria Sheppard Stacy, her uncle Thomas Sheppard Stacy, Sarah Catherine Hussey Stacy.

Robert Sheppard Stacy is looking at his daughter Mary Ann Maria Sheppard Stacy born 1858 – Henry's mother.

William John Sheppard Stacy is on the left with his daughter Mary Ann Maria Stacy also born 1858 – who looks at her namesake cousin.

The third brother who emigrated, Thomas Sheppard Stacy, dies in South Australia in 1848. A fourth son – a half brother whose mother is Sarah Catherine Hussey – was born that year 1848 and is named Sheppard Stacy. I think he stands near his mother in this photo – looking at the camera.

... ..

Robert Sheppard Stacy is a relatively famous figure in South Australia's pioneer history – he is one of the colony's first photographers. His photographs and cartes de visite are held in the Art Gallery of South Australia and his biography is published on history-of-design sites. He worked as a photographer in Adelaide and surrounding country areas and achieved a certain level of recognition for his scenes and portraits. One of his sons – also Robert Sheppard Stacy – worked with him in the photographic business. He – the son – marries in 1888. It's possible that this photo was taken when the Stacy family was assembled for his wedding. He takes over the business when Robert Sheppard Stacy dies two years later aged 56.

... ..

I found a slight variation in Robert Sheppard Stacy's story from the one presented in official biographies. I agree that he came to Australia aged 7 with his stepmother in 1841 – but I think he goes back to the grandparents who raised him as a child after his mother dies. Perhaps he travels as a cabin boy. In 1851, the census records show that Robert Stacy age 16 is living with the same Sheppard family in the same dwelling near Exmouth, described as their grandson. His grandfather is a 'retired painter' and Robert is an

apprentice cabinet maker – which according to the biography in the South Australia Art Gallery is how he describes himself on his marriage certificate in 1857 – and how he is listed in an 1862 directory.

I think Robert learns photography in England and buys his equipment there. The daguerreotype photographic process is very new and Robert is one of the first to introduce it to South Australia. I think ‘painter’ for his grandfather William Sheppard is in the sense of ‘artist’ – he may have encouraged Robert to take up photography.

I found support for my theory in the list of Robert Sheppard Stacy’s photographs in the Art Gallery of South Australia. One of the photos is titled ‘The Strand, Exmouth’ – presumably taken before he returns to Australia.

As a cabinet maker, Robert was a candidate for an Assisted Passage back to South Australia, where he reappears in time for his marriage to born-at-sea emigre Mary Tatham Dean in 1857 – and the birth a year later of his daughter Mary Ann Maria Sheppard Stacy, mother of Henry Hammond.

... ..

This brings me to the third photo – and the same challenge. With no clues on the back, can I identify the people in the photo? I assume this is Henry shortly before WW1 aged 37.



Once again it looks like a family photo. I go back to the South Australian archives.

Henry has three sisters – Olive Louise born 1880, Winifred Muriel born 1882, and Hilda Marjorie born 1887 – and a brother Roy born 1885.

Olive Louise marries a distant cousin Andrew Wilson in Adelaide in 1902.

I have a sudden insight. At last – something to tie the faraway outback town of Blackall to Adelaide. When Henry Hammond enlists in Blackall he gives his occupation as ‘overseer of cattle station’ and his contact as ‘Drew Wilson’.

I check the Queensland archives and find that Olive Louise Stacy and Andrew Wilson have two children born in Queensland – Joan Ayre born 1906 and Charles Frederick Dean born 1909. So when Henry Hammond enlists in 1915 he is staying with his sister and her family on a cattle station in Blackall. That could be Olive Louise with six-year-old Charles

in the photo.

I look for the second child. Hilda Marjorie marries in 1910 and has a son Jack the following year in Adelaide – he could be the four-year-old with his mother Hilda and aunt Winifred.

So where are they? It's a real ship – the shadows show it is not a studio photo. They could be travelling down the Queensland coast to see Henry off in Brisbane – but this is my part of the world and the clothes are all wrong. No-one wears coats in sub-tropical Brisbane in January – the height of summer.

I mentally retreat to Melbourne or Adelaide where the weather is famously variable – and go looking for Roy.

Roy Hammond is one of the first to enlist after war is declared in August – he enlists in the Australian Light Horse on 25 September 1914 in Brisbane. He's a salesman for the Pianola Company. He gives his father as Charles Hammond of North Adelaide – and I think he goes back to Adelaide to see his family and tidy up his affairs before he embarks on HMAT Borda in Brisbane on 15 December 1914.

This is what I think happens. The family – including Olive Louise from Blackall – gathers in Adelaide in late 1914 to farewell Roy. Henry Hammond – veteran of the Boer War – also applies to join the Light Horse. But he is rejected – too old at 37. His younger brother Roy is accepted – he is only 28.

Veteran Henry Hammond devises an alternate path into the Light Horse. He decides to go to Queensland with his sister Olive Louise and take on a new identity. He drops 8 years from his age and becomes an overseer of a remote cattle property. He wants to join the Light Horse instead of the infantry – so on paper he becomes a drover. To maintain his new identity he needs to be a long way from people who know him – and he needs to be single to avoid any awkward questions.

I think the photo could be Henry leaving Adelaide for Queensland and his new adventure. He is buoyant. His sisters are a little excited at what lies ahead. Only his mother beside him is subdued. She has seen him go off to war once before.

I know this is conjecture – but it makes emotional sense. The trench art locket says that Henry Hammond still loves his wife. He didn't desert her or run away with another woman. Inside the locket is a small smoothed coin – a 1915 halfpenny – which looks like real 'trench art' in that it could have been inscribed by hand in the trenches. It has a small crucifix painstakingly stippled on the reverse – and either side of the cross in hand drawn ovals are the initials H H – Helen and Henry.

And the small bone-covered prayer book from Gladys? I think this came from little Gladys Stacy who was born in 1910 – the year Henry and Helen were married. They may even have been her godparents. Perhaps her mother suggested she give it to her Uncle Henry to take with him to the war – and gave it to Olive Louise to give to Henry before he enlisted. Someone wrote 1 Jan'y 1915 in an adult hand under the original inscription, in a different ink. Henry enlisted the next day in Blackall.

This is of course conjecture – but it appears that whatever Henry may have done, the family approved of it. He had no children, but the ID chain from two wars was kept with

the small prayer book for over a century.

... ..

Postscript to the story

Helen dies in 1947 – still Helen Scott Hammond, with no children.

Roy survives the war. He and Henry serve at Gallipoli around the same time. Roy is wounded and is discharged as medically unfit in 1918.

And the trench art collection? Henry's personal effects were sent to his mother – but what of the photos? I think about those photos. The family photo of Henry as a child is all about the emigres – the brothers whose mother died in childbirth, who came out to Australia as children and made lives in a new colony. I think the photo was taken for the grandparents back home in Devon who had looked after them after their mother died. 'Here are William and Robert with their daughters named after Mary Ann.... and Robert's grandson Henry...'

I think the Sheppard family in Devon already had that photo and the one of Henry and his sisters on the ship. Perhaps the trench art piece and the prayer book were sent to them after Henry's mother died, maybe with the wedding postcard which was blank on the back and had been in a frame for years. That would explain why generations later the photos were reproduced in modern formats from old family albums – and how Steve found the collection at a militaria fair in Devon and purchased it for my collection in Australia..... where I found the story of a mother who died in childbirth – and the sons who kept her memory alive in a far distant land.

RESEARCH NOTES – Edward Wildes Holyoak Ladd

Edward Wildes Holyoak LADD was a tall blue-eyed Aussie from Victoria.

When he enlisted in 1914, he was an 'Engraver'. He'd been working in Melbourne as an apprentice jeweller for 11 years, since he was 14.

I imagine he engraved his initials on the silver Vesta case. It's a nice piece, hallmarked sterling silver and made by a professional jeweller – maybe a parting gift from his employer, or his mother.

The dog tag with his name and number crudely etched with AFA came later when he was transferred to the Australian Field Artillery.

He was listed as 'dangerously ill' in Egypt. A 'very bad' case of pneumonia left him weakened and anaemic. He lost a lot of weight and suffered severe and constant headaches. There were concerns at his slow convalescence.

By 1916 he was deemed fit for service once more. He went by troopship to Marseilles and up to the battlefields of France. The casualty rate on the Somme was appalling; in a few short months he was promoted from private to acting corporal to Bombardier and a month later to Sergeant, as others were killed or wounded.

He was wounded in action on 6 April 1917 and admitted to the Field Ambulance with gunshot wounds and compound fractures to the leg. He died next day in the emergency clearing station.

... ..

I worked my way through his file in the Australian Archives. There was the comprehensive inventory of his personal effects sent to his mother via the 'Euripedes' – but no mention of the silver vesta case. I thought it may have been nicked – it was a nice piece.

There was correspondence between the war office and his mother about his medals. He'd named her as his next of kin when he enlisted, but the war office wanted to know 'is his father still alive?'. They enclosed a hierarchy of official relatives – and fathers came before mothers. The medals went to his father at his city address rather than his mother in Beaconsfield.

I was mulling over the fairness or otherwise of this when I came across another letter in his file. This was from a soldier, Robert Pearce, to the records office in 1918.

Dear Sir,

Would you be good enough to give me the address of the late Sergt Ladd's people, I would like to write to his Mother. Sergt Ladd was Signaller Sergt in the 12th Brigade 45th Battery Field artillery. I do not know his number but he was badly wounded in Nereul Gully just before Bullecourt, and died I think in number 3 Casualty Clearing Station. I was wounded by the same shell. I shall be very pleased if you can give me the desired information.

RCPearce

I checked their records – Edward Ladd:

and Robert Pearce:

fire to the relative safety of the trenches and the stretcher bearers – and the casualty clearing station for medical help.

Edward Ladd died – but not abandoned in no-man's land. Maybe a merciful shot of morphine and a hand to hold. And someone to pass a message to his Mother....

... ..

Robert Pearce's story has a happier ending.

When he enlisted he was a 34 year old bachelor working on a remote cattle station in outback Queensland.

His wounds were so severe that he was sent back to Australia and discharged. He joined his father on a property outside Orange in NSW.

A 1959 letter on his file tells the rest of the story. He marries and settles on a nearby sheep and cattle station – Doondi, outside Coonamble. He prospers. A search on Doondi reveals that by 1925 he was a shareholder in Amalgamated Textiles Australia – a large chain of woollen mills 'Owned and Controlled by Graziers'.

He dies at 78. His wife Lorna is with him.

Doondi
Coonamble
N.S.W.

Army Records Office
Albert Park Barracks
Melbourne

Dear Sirs,

My husband
Robert Claude Pearce
died in Coonamble on
June 24th. I am unable
to find his service number
& unit. He was in the
Tussockland artillery in
the 14-18 war in a gun team
with Tom & Boyd Cullen was
wounded there. The local
secretary of the Returned
Soldiers suggested that
I write to you
I hope you will be able

to help me in this matter
I enclose & stamped &
addressed envelope.

I remain
yours truly
Toma Pearce

My late husband was
born at St Blage (spelling?)
Cornwall, England & was
78 years old

Sgt Robert Claude Pearce DCM

12th PBE FAB

20864

Research Clues

ARTISTS REGIMENT 1st 28th KHP 766615

R ARNOLD 2362 RWKENT

G LOWRIE 9890 Royal Highlanders – Black Watch

R W BELL 125333 RFA

A A MORGAN 21382

J GREGORY 2745

E HOGBEN 22900

W K SCOTT 40379 NZR

H G GINGER 44 1652

E H LADD 5094

J H SINCLAIR 2014

W F HILLMAN 3060 1916

W WILKINSON ALH 751

J ADAMS ICC 571 1916

T A DONALD 6952 16th AUSTRALIA

V DENTON 618 ALH

N KELLY 2657

H HAMMOND 771 ALH

H L ROOTES 2989

R SAWYER 1905 H R

J GOUGH G H

L CASTLE 345369

W FISK RAMC 20294

G SMITH 1316 ROYAL HORSE GUARDS

W C 203255

T H O ADAMS 7919 RAF

O HOGG RN 1916 WINNIE

T LONG 1916

E GARRETT 241437

W PLATT 3411
B C BEAVER 62365
H T COBB A S H 303106
J GRAINGER E Y RT 15048
RF A PELHAM A 24711
S W BREWER 1807 THE BUFFS
HMS CONTEST T COLLINGS RN
490137 H BASS LOVE F RF
J GEDDIE 39484
T WEST 69457 XXIII
1916 F MICKLE MACHINE GUN CORPS 70569
W.WILLIAMS 2646
P.E.KING DR 10
A G CHENERY 6135
E J DICKS 235622
R M ARMOUR 241124
V BARNES OB RGT
BATEMAN 40908
F.W.LONGMAN Q WR 1916
T.KIDD 291674 1917
H.HALE
J.Hogg 20423 H.L.I
JOHN BRUNT 8760
W BOOTH RFC 33605
Cpl G.H.FORD 38747 M.G.C (H.B) France 1917
W.PELHAM C.E 8349 ROYAL SUSSEX FRANCE 1914-15 MESOPOTAMIA 1916-
PTE A. JOHNSON 302300 M.T.A.S.C. BAGHDAD 1917.18
J.McBLAIN 12703 RAF 1916-17-18 MESOPOTAMIA
KAZEMIAN 1917-18 No. 579. MTPC.
maj-gen s. guise.moores D M S 2nd army

ABOUT THIS BOOK

I have taken a few liberties with the range of items included in the book. There are some that strictly speaking are not trench art. I included them because I think the stories behind the items – and the people who owned them – are relevant and compelling, and because they were made by people facing the dangers of the unknown.

I am conscious of using ‘he’, ‘his’ and ‘men’ throughout when referring to those who owned the items in the collection. They were all men; none of the items were owned by women.

I have slightly reformatted some obituaries for readability.

The Artists Regiment began as the Artists’ Regiment. A decision was made to drop the apostrophe in 1937 and I use the current form except in quotations.

I have chosen the convention of using ANZAC to refer to the army corps and Anzac for references to the men who served with them, other than in direct quotations.

... ..

Nearly all the pieces came from World War 1.

They came from several theatres of war and were owned by Anzacs and soldiers from the UK.

Some commonalities are clear – all 12 pieces representing musical instruments came from soldiers who died on the Somme, including Anzacs.

While not attempting any serious analysis of the origin of the pieces, I have used the Index to suggest answers to the following questions about the collection.

Which pieces came from the different theatres of war? What other categories do the pieces belong to?

... ..

I have included a list of Research Clues, as a start point for those who may wish to do their own research. I welcome feedback from those who can add to or challenge the stories I have found. My website trenchart.com.au is under construction.

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Index

A

ADAMS [108](#), [183](#)

Adams' crucifix hearts [181](#)

Adams' tiny knife [106](#)

ANZAC

Adams, James Alexander [108](#)

Denton, Victor [118](#)

Donald, Thomas Alan [113](#)

Ginger, Herbert George Reginald [78](#)

Hammond, Henry [134](#)

Hillman, William Frank [97](#)

Kelly, Nathaniel [127](#)

Ladd, Edward Wildes Holyoak [83](#)

Rootes, Henry Leonard [144](#)

Scott, William Kenneth [73](#)

Sinclair, James Haining [91](#)

Wilkinson, Wilfred [103](#)

ARMOUR [273](#)

Armour's whistle and pipe tamper [271](#)

ARNOLD [35](#)

Arnold's mandolin [33](#)

at sea

Colling's HMS Contest cap [231](#)

B

Bangalore

Barnes' bone crucifix [274](#)

Brunt's dog tag [299](#)

Geddie's match holder [240](#)

BARNES [276](#)

Barnes' bone crucifix [274](#)

BASS [238](#)

Bass' lighter and matchbox case [236](#)

Bateman's dice box [278](#)

BEAVER [212](#)

Beaver's inkwell [209](#)

BELL [46](#)

Bell's drum [43](#)

bone

Adams' tiny knife [106](#)
Barnes' bone crucifix [274](#)
Denton's paper knife [116](#)
Donald's letter opener [111](#)
Longman's bone shield [282](#)

bone / horn

Hale's snuff mull [290](#)

BOOTH [307](#)

Booth's coin holder [305](#)

BREWER [228](#)

Brewer's scimitar and scabbard [226](#)

BRUNT [300](#)

Brunt's dog tag [299](#)

C

carving

Barnes' bone crucifix [274](#)

Bateman's dice box [278](#)

Denton's paper knife [116](#)

Hale's snuff mull [290](#)

Kidd's tobacco box [286](#)

Longman's bone shield [282](#)

CASTLE [162](#)

Castle's candleholder and matchbox cover [159](#)

CHENERY [264](#)

Chenery's tin matchbox cover [262](#)

COBB [216](#)

Cobb's candleholder [214](#)

coins

Booth's coin holder [305](#)

Brunt's dog tag [299](#)

Hogg's fork and spoon [295](#)

Johnson's identity bracelet [319](#)

Kazemian dinar [326](#)

Pelham's rupee Mesopotamia [315](#)

COLLINGS [234](#)

Collings' HMS Contest cap [231](#)

CORTEZ [179](#)

Cortez' pyx and sacramental box [175](#)

Crimea

Hale's snuff mull [290](#)

D

DENTON [118](#)

Denton's paper knife [116](#)

DICKS [270](#)

Dicks' pocket knife holder [266](#)

DONALD [113](#)

Donald's letter opener and pencil [111](#)

E

Egypt and Palestine

Adams' tiny knife [106](#)

Wilkinson's map [101](#)

F

faith

Adams' crucifix hearts [181](#)

Barnes' bone crucifix [274](#)

Beaver's inkwell [209](#)

Castle's candleholder and matchbox cover [159](#)

Cortez' pyx and box [175](#)

Fisk's crucifix and horn [164](#)

Gough's crusader case [155](#)

Hammond's locket and fob [130](#)

Rootes' bone crucifix knife [141](#)

Sawyer's crucifix [147](#)

Smith's booklet and ring [169](#)

FISK [166](#)

Fisk's crucifix and horn [164](#)

Ford's engraved tank [311](#)

France and Flanders

Adams' crucifix hearts [181](#)

Armour's whistle and pipe tamper [271](#)

Arnold's mandolin [33](#)

Bass' lighter and matchbox case [236](#)

Bateman's dice box [278](#)

Beaver's inkwell [209](#)

Bell's drum [43](#)

Castle's candleholder and matchbox cover [159](#)

Chenery's tin matchbox cover [262](#)

Cobb's candleholder [214](#)

Cortez' pyx and box [175](#)

Dicks' pocket knife holder [266](#)

Donald's letter opener [111](#)

Fisk's crucifix and horn [164](#)

Ford's engraved tank [311](#)
Garrett's photo frame [197](#)
Ginger's cello [76](#)
Gough's crusader case [155](#)
Grainger's candleholder [218](#)
Gregory's ukelele [55](#)
Hillman's matchbox cover [94](#)
Hogben's mandolin [61](#)
Hogg's matchbox cover [186](#)
Kelly's tunnelling corps box [123](#)
Kidd's tobacco box [286](#)
King's matchbox cover [256](#)
Ladd's vesta case [81](#)
Longman's bone shield [282](#)
Long's cameo and box [191](#)
Lowrie's bagpipes [38](#)
Mickle's matchbox case [248](#)
Morgan's grand piano [49](#)
Pearson's banjo [25](#)
Pelham's inkwell [222](#)
Rootes' bone crucifix knife [141](#)
Scott's drum [71](#)
Sinclair's matchbox cover [89](#)
Smith's booklet and ring [169](#)
West's matchbox cover [245](#)
Williams' matchbox cover [253](#)

G

Gallipoli

Adams' tiny knife [106](#)
Denton's paper knife [116](#)
Hammond's locket and fob [130](#)
Sawyer's crucifix [147](#)

GARRETT [199](#)

Garrett's photo frame [197](#)

GEDDIE [242](#)

Geddie's match holder [240](#)

GINGER [78](#)

Ginger's cello [76](#)

GOUGH [157](#)

Gough's crusader case [155](#)

GRAINGER [220](#)

Grainger's candleholder [218](#)

GREGORY [58](#)

Gregory's ukelele [55](#)

H

HALE [292](#)

Hale's snuff mull Crimea [290](#)

Hammond. *See* RESEARCH NOTES

HAMMOND [134](#)

Hammond's Boer War locket and WW1 fob [130](#)

HILLMAN [97](#)

Hillman's matchbox cover [94](#)

HOGBEN [64](#)

Hogben's mandolin [61](#)

HOGG [188](#)

HOGG, John [297](#)

Hogg's fork and spoon [295](#)

Hogg's matchbox cover [186](#)

J

JOHNSON [321](#)

Johnson's identity bracelet [319](#)

K

KAZEMIAN [327](#)

KAZEMIAN dinar [326](#)

KELLY [127](#)

Kelly's Tunnelling Corps box [123](#)

KIDD [288](#)

Kidd's tobacco box [286](#)

KING [257](#)

King's matchbox cover [256](#)

L

LADD [83](#)

Ladd's vesta case [81](#)

letters home

Beaver's inkwell [209](#)

Brewer's scimitar and scabbard [226](#)

Castle's candleholder and matchbox cover [159](#)

Cobb's candleholder [214](#)

Grainger's candleholder [218](#)

Pelham's inkwell [222](#)

Platt's paper knife [202](#)

LONG [194](#)

LONGMAN [284](#)

Longman's bone shield [282](#)

Long's cameo and box [191](#)

love

Adams' crucifix hearts [181](#)

Bass' lighter [236](#)

Garrett's photo frame [197](#)

Gregory's ukelele [55](#)

Hammond's locket and fob [130](#)

Hogg's matchbox cover [186](#)

Long's cameo and box [191](#)

Platt's Boer War locket [202](#)

Sawyer's crucifix [147](#)

Smith's booklet and ring [169](#)

LOWRIE [40](#)

Lowrie's bagpipes [38](#)

M

McBLAIN [324](#)

McBlain's rupee dog tag [323](#)

Mesopotamia

Barnes' bone crucifix [274](#)

Booth's coin holder [305](#)

Brewer's scimitar and scabbard [226](#)

Brunt's dog tag [299](#)

Geddie's match holder [240](#)

Hogg's fork and spoon [295](#)

Johnson's identity bracelet [319](#)

Kazemian dinar [326](#)

McBlain's rupee dog tag [323](#)

Pelham's rupee Mesopotamia [315](#)

MICKLE [249](#)

Mickle's matchbox case [248](#)

MORGAN [53](#)

Morgan's grand piano [49](#)

music

Arnold's mandolin [33](#)

Bell's drum [43](#)

Fisk's crucifix and horn [164](#)

Ginger's cello [76](#)

Gregory's ukelele [55](#)

Hogben's mandolin [61](#)
Ladd's vesta case [81](#)
Lowrie's bagpipes [38](#)
Morgan's grand piano [49](#)
Pearson's banjo [25](#)

P

patriotism

Barnes' bone crucifix [274](#)
Bass' lighter [236](#)
Beaver's inkwell [209](#)
Castle's candleholder and matchbox cover [159](#)
Geddie's match holder [240](#)
Hammond's locket and fob [130](#)
Platt's Boer War paper knife [202](#)
Smith's booklet and ring [169](#)
Wilkinson's map [101](#)
Williams' matchbox cover [253](#)

PEARSON [29](#)

Pearson's banjo [25](#)

PELHAM [224](#)

Pelham's inkwell [222](#)

Pelham's rupee Mesopotamia [315](#)

PELHAM, William Thomas [316](#)

pictorial engraving

Ford's engraved tank [311](#)
Johnson's identity bracelet [319](#)
Kazemian dinar [326](#)
McBlain's rupee dog tag [323](#)
Pelham's rupee Mesopotamia [315](#)

PLATT [205](#)

Platt's Boer War locket, horse brass and paper knife [202](#)

R

ROOTES [144](#)

Rootes' bone crucifix knife [141](#)

S

SAWYER [149](#)

Sawyer's crucifix [147](#)

SCOTT [73](#)

Scott's drum [71](#), [72](#)

SINCLAIR [91](#)

Sinclair's matchbox cover [89](#)

SMITH [172](#)

Smith's booklet and ring [169](#)

South Africa

Platt's Boer War locket, horse brass and paper knife [202](#)

Hammond's Boer War locket and WW1 fob [130](#)

W

WEST [247](#)

West's matchbox cover [245](#)

WILKINSON [103](#)

Wilkinson's map [101](#)

WILLIAMS [254](#)

Williams' matchbox cover [253](#)