

LEST WE FORGET



1914-1919

Skelton-in-Cleveland, North Skelton
New Skelton and Skelton Green



***"They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old.
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun, and in the morning;
We will remember them."***

This book is dedicated to the memory of the men of the villages of Skelton-in-Cleveland, Skelton Green, New Skelton and North Skelton who died as a direct consequence of their service "For King and Country" during the 1914-1918 Great War.

Their sacrifice shall not be forgotten.

Compiled by Peter Appleton

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Introduction

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All the modern, colour photographs are, unless credited otherwise, my own handiwork. The historic images have come from numerous sources; sources which, it is hoped, have been acknowledged above. If I have overlooked anybody, please attribute it to my failing memory and not to any ingratitude on my part. I have greatly appreciated all the help, advice and assistance which I have received.

I am deeply appreciative of the stamina and diligence of my proof-readers: Tony Harding and Josie Bland. However, any errors that remain, are entirely my fault.

The scope of the research

In the East Cleveland area of north-east Yorkshire, there are four villages that stand shoulder to shoulder: Skelton-in-Cleveland, Skelton Green, New Skelton and North Skelton. In these villages there are four memorials to the fallen of the Great War:

- Skelton War Memorial (on the village green)
- North Skelton War Memorial (in the garden of remembrance on Vaughan Street)

- Skelton Parish Roll of Honour (set into the north wall in All Saints church, Skelton)
- Stanghow Lane School Roll of Honour (in the foyer of the village hall, North Skelton)

There are also, in Skelton cemetery, six Great War casualties whose graves are in the care of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Altogether, there are 108 individuals from the four villages commemorated. Some of them appear on more than one of the memorials. It is these 108 men whose sacrifice is remembered in this book.

The research process

The starting point for this research was to photograph the War Memorials at Skelton-in-Cleveland and North Skelton and also the Roll of Honour plaques in All Saints parish church, Skelton-in-Cleveland, and in the village hall, North Skelton. Using these sources, it was possible to compile a list of the 108 men of the Skelton villages who died as a consequence of the Great War. Based on the information from the Roll of Honour in the church and from the North Skelton memorial, it was possible to place many of them into their regiments or other units.

Armed with this information it was then possible to turn to the **Commonwealth War Graves Commission** website and begin searching that online database for the relevant entries for each of the men. When a man was successfully found in that database, his service number then became known, together with the battalion number if he was a soldier. Armed with this additional data, a search was then made for his **WW1 Medal Index Card** at Ancestry.co.uk.

Once the known details of the men showed signs of firming up, each was then searched for in the online database **Soldiers Died in the Great War**. This often yielded supplementary information.

When the military data was showing signs of being nearly complete and probably correct, attention was turned to locating the War Diary entries that would cover the dates of death. This activity concentrated on those who were "Killed in Action" since the date of death would be the same as the date of the fatal action. For the men listed as "Died of Wounds", it was impossible to be certain how long they may have lingered before dying.

In parallel with this military-based research, searches were made in the 1911 census (this being the census nearest in time to the outbreak of the Great War). The results of this research were used to start building a picture of the men within the context of their families. Attempts were made to find the men in all relevant earlier censuses. When appropriate, the **Births, Marriages and Deaths Indexes** at Ancestry.co.uk were used to add additional detail to the bare bones of the census data.

The original work, which was begun in 2007, concentrated on just the men commemorated on Skelton's War Memorial. Sometime later, in 2012, the scope was extended to include the men on North Skelton's War Memorial. Even more recently, early 2013, the Stanghow Lane School Roll of Honour was also included. This means that some men have more complete coverage than others.

It is inevitable, however, that the results will always be incomplete. Some records just haven't survived. This is particularly true of the soldiers' service records. The building in which these records were stored was hit by German bombs during the Second World War. Only about 40% of the records survived and many of these were fire-damaged.

Facts and figures

There are, across all the memorials, representatives of the Royal Navy, nineteen different Regiments of the Army, the Royal Flying Corps and the Merchant Navy.

There are four individuals from the Royal Navy, one from the Royal Flying Corps, two from the Merchant Navy and ninety nine soldiers. There are also two individuals who have defeated all attempts to obtain a positive identification.

Of the ninety nine soldiers, more than half, fifty two to be precise, were men of the Yorkshire Regiment. Of these, thirty three were in the 4th Battalion, whose recruiting heartland was the ironstone mining communities of Cleveland and the iron and steel communities along the River Tees.

The spread of ages ranges from the youngest, Henry Naisbitt, at 17 years (and therefore a young man who almost certainly lied about his age in order to enlist) to William Gibson Rimington, at 54 years.

Brothers in arms

Among the fallen were seven pairs of brothers:

- Arthur and Robert Cooke
- James Horace Young and Walter Edward Day
- Joseph William and Wilfred Arthur Forster
- James and William Harding
- Allan Horatio and James Rooks
- Harry and John William Rudd
- Joseph Wright and Robert Edward Scuffham

By one of those strange quirks of fate, James Horace Young Day was the first casualty from the villages and his brother, Walter Edward, was the last.

Relatives

During the course of this research it became apparent that several of these men were actually related to me. They are:

- Robert Appleton
- Fred Carver
- Thomas Edward Dove
- Allan Horatio Rooks
- James Rooks

Their relationships to me are described in their entries or footnotes thereto.

Peter Appleton
Skelton-in-Cleveland
10 August 2014

The biographies

The results of all the research have been brought together into the individual biographies that form the bulk of this work.

It is inevitable that some biographies have more detail than others. At best, a biography will contain detailed information from the man's service record, several censuses and a battalion's war diary. More commonly, in addition to the information from the censuses, it will contain only the basic information gleaned from the *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* and *Soldiers Died in the Great War* databases.

There are some individuals for whom there is even less information. For these, a description of the problem, and the research undertaken to try and resolve it, have been provided. Even where detailed information has been found, there often remains a concern that this might not be the correct individual. Every effort has been made in the biographies to make it clear when there is some lingering doubt.

Some entries of interest:

Two men with very complete service records are:

- Walter Edward Day
- Wright Freeman.

Two men with very detailed War Diary entries are:

- Robert Archer
- Thomas Robinson Glover.

H Alcock

This individual is known only from the **Stanghow Lane School Roll of Honour**, which lists him as “H Alcock”. A search of the **Commonwealth War Graves Commission** database for WW1 casualties with surname “Alcock” produced 127 matches. Of these, 2 were in the Australian forces, 2 were in the Canadian forces and the rest were in the UK forces. There were fifteen individuals with forenames that matched the initial “H”. Of these fifteen, eleven could be ruled out using the addresses given in the additional information. The remaining four were:

- H Alcock of the West Riding Regiment
- Lion Harry Alcock of the King’s Royal Rifle Corps
- Henry Alcock, Royal Navy, HMS Hawke
- George Henry Alcock, Merchant Navy, son of Samuel and Charlotte Alcock of 47 Garnet Street, Saltburn (a local connection!)

A search of **Soldiers Died in the Great War** for the surname “Alcock” yielded 96 matches. This list was reviewed, paying particular attention to the two Army casualties from the short list above, but also monitoring the birthplaces of all other entries. The two Army individuals on the above short list were ruled out based on their places of birth and of enlistment. One other entry caught my eye: James Alfred Alcock, of the King’s Royal Rifle Corps, born Skelton, Yorks. *[Of course, there are at least four other Skeltons in Yorkshire besides those in East Cleveland]*

The research had narrowed down the list to just three possible candidates:

- Henry Alcock, Royal Navy
- George Henry Alcock, Merchant Navy
- James Alfred Alcock, Army

Henry Alcock:

A search of the **Naval Casualties 1914-1919** database on Findmypast.co.uk for “Henry Alcock” found just the one match. Henry Alcock, SS/999 AB Seaman aboard HMS Hawke, who was killed on 15th October 1914, was born 8th July 1886 at Clerkenwell, London. His next of kin details are for his father in London and a sister in Leytonstone. I feel that he, too, can be eliminated from our enquiries.

George Henry Alcock:

He was, apparently, captain (or master) of the “Kut Sang” when she was torpedoed by a German U-boat in the Far East. His father, Samuel, had been an officer in the Royal Engineers (retiring with the honorary rank of Major). George’s mother, Charlotte, was born in Ireland as were at least three of the children, including George. Samuel and Charlotte and the family are difficult to pick up in the censuses, undoubtedly because Samuel’s military career would have taken him abroad regularly. The best census is that of 1891, which shows the family living together at Scarcroft Road, York. George is enumerated as an Apprentice in the Mercantile Marine. So, once he had completed his apprenticeship, his career would be spent at sea. Therefore he, like his father, is difficult to pick up in censuses. However, given that family background, it seems perhaps unlikely that George Henry Alcock would have had any of his schooling at Stanghow Lane School. However, I feel that he cannot be eliminated from this enquiry. That reference to Saltburn on his **Commonwealth War Graves Commission** entry is too compelling to be overlooked!

James Alfred Alcock:

Soldiers Died in the Great War shows him as C/12307 Rifleman James Alfred Alcock, serving in 21st Battalion, King’s Royal Rifle Corps. It states that he was born in “Skelton, Yorks” and enlisted in Scarborough. His **Commonwealth War Graves Commission** entry confirms his name, rank, number and unit but gives no additional useful data. The **UK Census Collection** on Ancestry.co.uk was searched

for a James Alcock, living in Yorkshire. There were 11 matches in the 1911 census, including a James Alfred Alcock, age 25 born in Skelton-in-Cleveland and residing in Scarborough. That gives some excellent matches with the details in his ***Soldiers Died in the Great War*** entry! In 1901 there is a James A Alcock, age 15 born in Skelton, Yorks living at 11 Park Street, Skelton-in-Cleveland with his parents and some siblings. In 1891 the same family group can be found living at the same address.

If this is, indeed, the right man, his details follow.

James Alfred Alcock, C/12307 Rifleman, 21st King's Royal Rifle Corps

Census details (1911):

Address: 52 Murchison Street, Scarborough
Age: 25
Occupation: Insurance Agent
Status: Married
Wife's name: Florence (age 25)
Children (if any): Percy William (age 3)

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 17th September 1916
Age at death: 30
Commemorated: Thiepval Memorial; Pier and Face 13 A and 13 B

Service Record details:

James Alfred Alcock attested into the King's Royal Rifle Corps on 15th November 1915 at Scarborough. His record noted that his next of kin was his wife, Florence (nee Watson) whom he had married at Scarborough on 19th December 1906. They had one child, Percy William born 7th October 1907 at Scarborough. His other relatives noted were: father: William Alcock, Stanley Street, Scarborough, mother: deceased, brother: Frank Alcock, age 31, Stanley St, Scarborough and sister: Emma Lambert, age 44, Bradford

He joined 21st KRRC in France on 5th May 1916 and was quickly into the thick of things. His Casualty Form (Army B 103) carries the following entries:

- 15/7/1916 Admitted to 139 Field Ambulance and passed on to 140 Field Ambulance for treatment of a broken denture
- 16/9/1916 Wounded in action
- 30/10/1916 Missing (Believed K)
- 6/1/1917 Killed in Action

The address for contact with his widow is given as: Fulford Cottage, Fulford Road, South Cliff, Scarborough on one form and as 52 Murchison Street, Scarborough on another.

War Diary details:

"DELVILLE WOOD – Sept. 16th & 17th

The Battalion paraded at the QUARRY DUMP at 11 a.m. and moved off to the SWITCH TRENCH where they remained about an hour & then received orders to return to FLARE ALLEY where they remained in support until the following evening, when they were relieved and returned to the POMIERES redoubt."

Conclusion:

If, and that is a big if, George Henry Alcock did attend Stanghow Lane School, he would be the ideal fit.

Alternatively, the ***Soldiers Died in the Great War*** entry for James Alfred Alcock provides a link to “Skelton, Yorks”. His 1911 census entry provides an excellent match with the details of the ***Soldiers Died in the Great War*** entry and with his ***Service Record***. Tracing James Alfred Alcock back into the 1901 and 1891 censuses provides a positive link to the Skelton villages, in a family whose names and age structure match precisely with the details given in his ***Service Record***. These census entries also place him firmly in the catchment area for Stanghow Lane School.

On the one hand we have George Henry Alcock with, at best, a tenuous connection to Stanghow Lane School, but a good match with the forename initial of “H”; and on the other hand we have James Alfred Alcock, with a stronger connection to Stanghow Lane school, but with totally the wrong set of forenames to match off with the initial “H”.

Which one is the right man? It’s anybody’s guess!

Robert Appleton¹

3101 Private, Army Cyclist Corps

Census details (1911):

Address: 30 Green Road, Skelton
Age: 15
Occupation: Apprentice Bricklayer
Parents' names: John Appleton and Annie (nee Legg)

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 24th May 1915
Age at death: 19 (it would have been his birthday the following day)
Commemorated: Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial; Panel 56

Service Record details:

He attested into the 4th Battalion, Yorkshire Regiment on 23rd November 1914; being assigned the service no. 3101. His medical report at that time shows him as being 19 years 6 months old and of height 5ft 5¾ins. His attestation papers were witnessed by Martin J Videan, the secretary of Skelton Co-operative Society and the father of Stanley Videan, another of the village's casualties.

Robert's original attestation was into the Territorial Force and, as a "Terrier", he was not compelled to serve outside the United Kingdom. However, on 9th December 1914 he signed Army Form E624 agreeing "...to serve in any place outside the United Kingdom...". His signature on this document was witnessed by his commanding officer, W H A Wharton.

On the 15th December 1914 he was transferred to the Northumbrian Division Cyclists Battalion, part of the Army Cyclist Corps. His unit embarked at Southampton on 18th April 1915 and disembarked at Le Havre the following day.

War Diary details:

The War Diary for 50th Division Cyclists Company gave an intriguing insight into the strength and duties of the Cyclist Companies:

"April 16th 1915, Newcastle-on-Tyne

Left Benton Hall, Newcastle-on-Tyne and proceeded to Southampton

Strength of company: 8 Officers, 192 Other ranks and attached 2 R.A.M.C., 1 A.S.C.

Transport of company: 1 G.S. wagon (supplies), 1 G.S. wagon (baggage), 1 G.S. limber (S.A.A. cart), 4 heavy draught and 2 light draught horses"

"19/4/15 to 15/5/15 At STEENVOORDE

Work done by the company during this period:

Road Traffic Control; Police Control at POPERINGHE; Searching for Ammunition and Stores in the farms which had been used as billets by the troops; Patrolling roads in the district and bringing in all stragglers; Finding Guards for Divisional H.Q.; Cyclist Training"

¹ Robert was a cousin of Fred Appleton, the author's grandfather. It is through this family connection that the interest in researching the lives and deaths of all the men commemorated on the villages' War Memorials came about.

In respect of the date of Robert's death, the entry gave the following details:

"2.00AM, May 24th, G.H.Q. Line in I.16.a and I.16.b (Sheet 28)

The enemy started a very heavy artillery bombardment which lasted until 8.00PM on the same day. At dawn on 24th May the enemy began a gas attack followed by an infantry attack.

The Company losses on the day were:

LIEUT. J. L. REID, 2ND LIEUT. G. O. HARPER – wounded

4 Other ranks killed, 18 Other ranks wounded"

ARMY CYCLIST CORPS	
COY. SGT. MAJOR	PRIVATE
NEWICK G. J.	HARRIS C.
	HOWLETT G. A.
CORPORAL	JONES J. W.
CUNNINGHAM S. H.	JONES T.
	KAINE C. A. R.
LANCE CORPORAL	LONG G.
FOWLER J.	LONGSTAFF J. L.
	MCGORAN T.
PRIVATE	MAINS R.
APPLETON R.	O'CALLAGHAN F.
CAMERON J. A.	OSBORNE T.
CONNELL J.	RYAN C. F.
DARLINGTON G.	SAMUELS J. M.
EDWARDS J.	SIMMONS G.
ELLISON G. T.	SMITH A.
FORDHAM W. H.	SMITH T. C.

Robert Archer

200897 Private, 4th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 22 Boosbeck Road, Skelton

Age: 15

Occupation: Ironstone worker

Parents' names: Mary Ann Archer (widow)

Robert Archer was born on 9th March 1896 at Skelton-in-Cleveland. He was the son of George Archer and Mary (nee Wood) and was baptized on 2nd April 1896 at All Saints parish church in Skelton.

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 23rd April 1917

Age at death: 21

Commemorated: Arras Memorial; Bay 5

Robert was killed in action on the opening day of the Second Battle of the Scarpe (one of the battles that made up the Arras Offensive in the spring of 1917).

This was to be the bloodiest day of the war for the men from Skelton. Five of them died that day; Robert, Harry Dale, Herbert Arthur Dowey and William Dowey from 4th Yorks and Jack Hart from the Royal Field Artillery. As far as is known, the two Dowey boys, despite sharing the same surname and coming from the same village, are not related to one another.

Service Record details:

His Service Record has not survived but he enlisted into the 4th Battalion, Yorkshire Regiment and was assigned the service number 3276. During the war, when new service numbers were issued, he became 200897 Private Robert Archer.

War Diary details:

The battalion's War Diary describes, in great detail, the events of that day:

"22nd April 1917

During the night 22-23 April the Battalion assumed positions for the operations of the 23rd. W, X and Z Coys took up positions in the front line in that order from right to left: W to the south, X & Z northward of the railway.

23rd April 1917

4.15am

By 4.15am 23rd April, Y Coy was in position behind X & Z Coys. Bn HQ had moved to M.23.c.5.2 the previous night.

4.45am

The barrage (a creeping barrage) was very good, heavy & accurate. The German barrage came down very promptly (within 20 seconds) but was chiefly field guns, except for the 105 & 150mm barrage along the bed of the COJEUL and westward of WANCOURT. The battalion suffered few casualties from this barrage & during the first 3 minutes several of our men ran into our own barrage, whose pace (25 yards a minute) they found rather slow during the early stages of the attack.

Taking the attack from right to left of the battalion: W Coy met considerable opposition from rifle and M.G. fire from the enemy first line, and had to take up positions in shell holes about 50 yards away from that line.

5.00am

Not until they had established superiority of fire & a tank had come up through them were they enabled to rush the trench which they found strongly held. Many prisoners came out and the trench was full of dead and wounded Germans. It was a good trench & was not battered out of recognition.

4.45am

Meanwhile X Coy reached the enemy front trench earlier & had less opposition from the inhabitants of the trench: but they had about 30 casualties from M.G. and artillery fire before they reached the trench.

Z Coy on the north were facing N.E at zero hour: but swung round, aligned themselves with X Coy & reached the first German positions with fewer casualties and less opposition than either of the other Coys. All Coys made a rich haul of prisoners at this line.

The Battalion, by now considerably thinned but still a continuous line, then moved east to the German support trench, which did not run parallel to, but was a switch (SW to NE) of the front line. This was reached by 5.25am

5.25am

It was found to be a broad trench literally filled with dead Germans except for the occupants of two deep dugouts on X Coys front. No prisoners were taken here. By this hour our line had become very thin: no E. Yorks were observable on the right and the 44th Inf.Bde. appeared not to have progressed on the left. The Battalion however, moved forward, captured a 3 gun howitzer battery in O.19.a & proceeded to dig itself in along a line 100 to 200 yards W of the first objective.

6.05am

Enemy rifle & artillery fire had practically ceased; but M.G. fire was increasing in intensity & a particularly deadly stream of bullets was directed on to our left flank from the direction of O.14.a. Capt. HIRSCH (now the only Officer left) therefore established a defensive flank with half of Y Coy. This half Coy was dug in along a line above & parallel to the river in O.19.a. With the remainder of the Battalion (about 150 men) he decided to hold on to his, & sent back for reinforcements and S.A.A.

6.30am

A Coy of 5th DLI were sent up to reinforce & with S.A.A. The special object of this Coy was to try to extend our line on the right across the railway & if possible get in touch with the E Yorks. They finally reached our line and established themselves across the railway but found their right flank as much in the air as W Coy's had previously been.

7.15am

Capt HIRSCH (who had previously been wounded) was killed & Mr LUCKHURST of the T M Battery appears to have taken over the Battalion for a short time. His fate is now uncertain.

7.40am

The Battalion appears to have maintained itself near the first objective (Z Coy being slightly forward, W Coy swung back forming a defensive flank facing SE) for a matter of something over an hour & a half. But by 7.30am the Germans were seen massing for a counter-attack: one party were creeping down the low ground along the COJEUL: others were seen coming

forward from the trenches in front of VIS-EN-ARTOIS: & a third bloc of men on our right rear, previously mistaken for E Yorks, were now observed to be Germans.

A retirement in successive phases was therefore undertaken: first to the German 2nd line, then to his first line, then to our front line. The whole was carried out under heavy MG fire and directed by not more than half a dozen junior NCOs who state that throughout the line was under control, & that with sections of riflemen constantly fought rearguard actions to cover the retirement of the rest.

8.10am

By 8.10am our men were back in our front line: they state that to their knowledge no unwounded prisoners were taken.

Casualties:

Officers – 3 killed (a), 7 wounded (b), 1 missing (believed killed)

(a) Includes 2nd Lt. WELBOURNE killed 21.4.17

(b) Includes Capt. THEAKSTON wounded 22.4.17 and 2nd Lt. MINISTER wounded 22.4.17

Other Ranks – 352 – the proportions of killed, wounded and missing is not yet ascertained with sufficient accuracy to give Nos.

6.00pm

The remnants of the Battalion under Major STEAD remained in our front line in support to the attack undertaken by 9th DLI and 5th Border Regt. Bn. HQ moved back to WANCOURT"

John Anderson Atkinson

1554 Private, 4th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 53 High Street, Skelton
Age: 17
Occupation: Estate Woodman
Status: Single

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 21st June 1916
Age at death: 22
Commemorated: Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord; Grave II E 178

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

Not searched for (Died of wounds)

John Anderson Atkinson was born, probably at 53 High Street, in Skelton-in-Cleveland, in the autumn of 1893. He would appear to be the illegitimate son of Elizabeth Atkinson. In 1911 he was living with his mother and her brother, Edward Atkinson, at 53 High Street Skelton, and was shown as being an Estate Woodman. The Skelton Estate Wages Books showed that he entered employment on the estate on 10th May 1909 and left on 3rd September 1914 (presumably to enlist, although there is no comment to that effect in the book). After the war, his mother lived at 63 High Street, Lingdale.



H Ayres

This man appears only on the *Stanghow Lane School Roll of Honour*.

The following investigation was undertaken in an attempt to establish details of this casualty's identity:

- The **Commonwealth War Graves Commission's** online database was searched for a First World War casualty with surname Ayres and Initial H. There were 12 hits. The details of each was called up and reviewed. On the assumption that he was from a local family, some could be eliminated by virtue of the details of next of kin. Those that remained were:
 - Ayres, H – Gunner 86407 Royal Garrison Artillery
 - Ayres, Henry – Private 280119 London Regiment (Royal Fusiliers)
- The ***Soldiers Died in the Great War*** online database was then searched for these two to seek additional information:
 - Ayres, Horace – 86407 Royal Garrison Artillery, born Rushden, Northants enlisted Northampton
 - Ayres, Henry – 280119 London Regiment, born Dalston enlisted Shaftesbury St., N.
- So, neither of them seems a likely candidate.

The 1911 census was searched for any male Ayres living in Yorkshire.

- There were 167 of them. These were reviewed to find all those with births or residences in the East Cleveland area. There were 13 living in Middlesbrough, 12 in Eston and three in Coatham; none lived any nearer than that. Of those 28 individuals, just three had a match with the initial H:
 - Thomas Henry Ayres, born c.1900 Grangetown
 - Robert Hurst Ayres, born c.1883 Norton, Stockton
 - Charles H Ayres, born c.1886 Middlesbrough
- None of them looks to be a particularly close match

Whoever he was, he doesn't seem to appear as a WW1 casualty or to have a census connection to the area.

As a final throw of the dice, an attempt was made to locate H Ayres in the Medal Index Card database. There were 86 of them. With no criteria by which to refine the selection, this line of investigation has hit a brick wall!

Perhaps the assumption that he was from a local family is in error. Perhaps he was a member of the teaching staff who had moved into the area from some distance away. Whatever, and whoever, he was, he remains an enigma.

Herbert George Baldwin

20319 Lance Corporal, 23rd (Tyneside Scottish) Northumberland Fusiliers

Census details (1911):

Not found

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 12th November 1917

Age at death: not known

Commemorated: Tournai Communal Cemetery Allied Extension; Grave IV N 20

Service Record details:

None found

War Diary details:

Not searched for

Lance Corporal Baldwin is somewhat a man veiled in mystery. It has not, to date, been possible to identify his place of birth, his date of birth or his parents. However, his WW1 Medal Index Card clearly ties him to Skelton. On its reverse, it bears the comment: "*Mrs E Baldwin makes app for her late husbands 1914-15 Star 28.6.20" and the contact address is given as "1 Harker Street, High Green, Skelton-in-Cleveland"*.

All we can say with confidence about Lance Corporal Baldwin, is that he originally enlisted at Newcastle-upon-Tyne as 6245 Private Baldwin in the Army Cyclist Corps (almost certainly in the Northumbrian Division Cyclist Company). Also, on the day of his death, Tournai was in German hands and so it would seem that Herbert George Baldwin must have been taken prisoner of war at some time previously.

Frederick Bannister

235003 Private, 4th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 143 High Street, Skelton
Age: 15
Occupation: Butcher's Assistant
Parents' names: George and Elizabeth Bannister

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 27th May 1918
Age at death: 22
Commemorated: Soissons Memorial

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

"26th-27th May 1918 – CRAONNE-BEAURIEUX-MAIZY Battalion took up a support position round CRAONNELLE and LA HUTTE. Enemy bombardment started about 1am

27th May

Heavy gas shelling as far back as MAIZY. The enemy broke through on our left and pushed on towards BEAURIEUX arriving there about 10am. The enemy also came through on our right using tanks over the flat country to the east of CRAONNE. This party also pushed on towards BEAURIEUX and surrounded the Brigade in the line. The enemy then pushed on towards MAIZY. All troops in MAIZY and the few who had got out of BEAURIEUX then made a stand on the hills to the south of the village. At about 11:15am these troops were withdrawn from this position. The next position was held at GLENNES and later a line on the hill north of FISMES."



George William Batterbee

24468 Private, 10th/11th Highland Light Infantry

Census details (1911):

Address: 37 Wharton Street, North Skelton

Age: 17

Occupation: Pit lad underground

Status: Single

Parents' names: Thomas and Mary Ann Batterbee

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 12th April 1917

Age at death: 23

Commemorated: Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun; Grave I Q 6

George was the second son of Thomas and Mary Batterbee. In both 1901 and 1911 the family was living at 37 Wharton Street, North Skelton.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

Not searched for

Lewis William Beckley

3201 Private, 4th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 84 Margrove Park, Boosbeck
Age: 19
Occupation: Shale shifter (below ground)
Status: Single
Parents' names: Frederick and Alice Ann Beckley

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 30th May 1916
Age at death: 24
Commemorated: Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord; Grave II A 12

Lewis was the third son of Frederick and Alice Beckley. In 1901 the family was living at 43 Harker Street, Skelton. Based on the evidence of the ages of the children and their places of birth, the family had moved into the East Cleveland area, from their home in Long Handborough, Oxfordshire, sometime in 1896 or 1897.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

Not searched for



John William Bell

C/12726 Rifleman, 21st King's Royal Rifle Corps

Census details (1901):

Address: 4 Dixon Street, Skelton

Age: 8

Parents' names: Joseph and Hannah Bell

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 5th June 1916

Age at death: 23

Commemorated: Rifle House cemetery²; Grave I C 7

John William Bell was born in 1892 at South Bank near Middlesbrough. His parents were Joseph Bell and Hannah (nee Leggett). In 1911 the family was living at 4 Dixon Street, Skelton-in-Cleveland; and 18 year old John William was working as an Electric Pump Minder above ground at Skelton Old Shaft ironstone mine.

He was killed in action on 5th June 1916 and is buried in Rifle House Cemetery in grave no. I C 7.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

The unit's war diary for the date of his death gives the following information:

"1st June to 5th June 1916 – Creslow – The Bn remained in billets, finding working parties to Supplement work in the front and support lines. Held by the 15th Bn Hampshire Regt. During our period in billets, we had 20 casualties, 3 wounded while working on a Communication trench and 16 in billets in the Wood caused by Shrapnel and one in wood caused by a stray rifle bullet."



² Rifle House Cemetery is, perhaps, the author's favourite of all the cemeteries visited. It is well off the tourist trail, being located in the middle of Ploegsteerte Wood. From the road, there is a walk of one kilometre through the wood to get to the cemetery. In early spring, the birdsong accompanies you all the way. A visit to this cemetery is spiritually uplifting.

Robert Henry Bell

17295 Corporal, 10th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1901):

Address: 24 Bolckow Street, North Skelton

Age: 14

Parents' names: Robert and Eliza Bell

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 26th October 1917

Age at death: 30

Commemorated: Tyne Cot Memorial; Panel 52 to 54 and 162A

Robert Henry was named after his father, who had married Eliza Jackson in Guisborough Registration District in the first quarter of 1885.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

"FIELD [i.e. "in the field"] 26th October 1917

6 am Enemy low-flying planes action. Very heavy enemy barrage put down at "zero" of an attack by the Canadians on the left and 7th Div on the right.

9 pm Bn relieved by 1st BN LINCOLNSHIRE REGT and moved back into the ZILLEBEKE LAKE bivouac vacated on 22nd inst. Casualties: 13 O.R. killed, 1 Off. And 40 O.R. wounded"



William Bennison

202876 Private, 2nd Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 9 Park Street, Skelton
Age: 25
Occupation: Butcher's Apprentice
Status: Single
Parents' names: Thomas and Sarah Jane Bennison

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 15th April 1918
Age at death: 22
Commemorated: Ploegsteerte Memorial; Panel 6



William was the son of Thomas William Bennison (a Deputy in the local ironstone mines) and his wife, Sarah Jane (nee Taylor). He was born on the 15th June 1893 at Skelton-in-Cleveland probably in the family home at 9 Park Street, Skelton Green; and was baptised on 1st August 1893 at All Saints parish church.

In 1911, at age 15, William was working as an apprentice for a local butcher.

The photograph (opposite) almost certainly shows him wearing his Church Lads Brigade uniform. The Church Lads Brigade was an early fore-runner of the Army Cadet Force.

Killed in action on 5th April 1918, during the Battle of Hazebrouck, William has no known grave and is commemorated on Panel 6 of the Ploegsteerte Memorial.

His age in the 1911 census and his age at death from the **Commonwealth War Graves Commission** database have been re-checked and are as given above. The ten-year discrepancy in his age cannot be accounted for.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

"LE VERTANNOY 15th April 1918

The Battalion moved forward to the CANAL bank (proceeding via BERNENCHON) preliminary to making a joint attack with the WARWICKS on PACOUT WOOD. At 6pm the Battalion commenced to cross the bridge PONT LEVIS Q 32 C 7 8 to get into position to attack the wood from the WEST, the WARWICKS attacking it from the SOUTH and S.E. The operation was not a success. Officer casualties were:

KILLED – 2nd Lt HUGHES J.W., HESKET J.; DIED OF WOUNDS – 2nd Lt STOCKS T.D.; WOUNDED – CAPT J.S. BROWNING M.C, 2nd Lts N.G. CALDWELL M.C., H.G. CARD, W.H. ROY, P.G. HENDERSON and A. KING

OTHER RANKS. WOUNDED 179, MISSING 7, 32 KILLED"

Ralph Nathaniel Bewick

2nd Lieutenant, 8th Durham Light Infantry

Census details (1911):

Address: 17/19 Westgate, Guisborough
Age: 21
Occupation: School teacher
Status: Single
Parents' names: Charlton and Martha Bewick



Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 29th September 1916
Age at death: 26
Commemorated: Thiepval Memorial; Pier and Face 14A and 15C

In 1911 Nathaniel Bewick was living with his parents, Charlton and Martha Bewick, who had a drapers shop at 17-19 Westgate, Guisborough. He was enumerated as a School Teacher. Since he is known only from the **Stanghow Lane School Roll of Honour**, these two facts taken together imply that he was a member of staff. This is confirmed by entries in the School's Log Book:

"21st August 1905 – N. Bewick started work as a Pupil Teacher

18th January 1909 – Re-opened school today. Heating apparatus pipes burst during Xmas Holidays otherwise the school would have been opened on the 11th inst. N. Bewick commenced work as assistant master today.

15th November 1910 – On entering Mr Bewick's room this afternoon, I found him caning a boy. In addition to reprimand, Mr Bewick was cautioned against a repetition of the offence, which would incur a report to the managers.

30th November 1911 – Mr N Bewick left our school and the services of the N. R. Education Committee today to take up an appointment in West Australia.

20th February 1918 – School closed for Mr Bewick's Memorial Service "

Passenger lists available online via Ancestry.co.uk, allow Nathaniel's travels to and from Australia to be traced. He sailed on the White Star Line vessel "Persic" from Liverpool on 14th December 1911 bound for the Cape and Australia. He landed at Albany, Western Australia on 22nd January 1912. He returned on the Orient Line's "Orama", embarking at Fremantle, Western Australia on 28th July 1914 and arriving at London on 29th August 1914, the vessel having sailed originally from Brisbane.

Service Record details:

Not found

However, the **London Gazette**, in the edition dated 4 August 1916, on page 7862 records the following:

"Durham L.I.

The undermentioned 2nd Lts. (temp. Lts.) relinquish the temp. rank of Lt. on alteration in posting. 15th June 1916:-

R. N. Bewick, but with precedence as from 28th July 1915"

War Diary details:

Not searched for

George William Blundy

3326 Private, 4th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: The Castle, Skelton
Age: 24
Occupation: Footman
Status: Single
Parents' names: George and Eliza Blundy

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 14th February 1916
Age at death: 29
Commemorated: Railway Dugouts Burial Ground; II K 12

Born in 1887 at Harby in Nottinghamshire, the son of George Blundy and Eliza Topham, George William's link to Skelton comes from the 1911 census. This shows him resident at Skelton Castle, employed as a Footman.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

The 4th Battalion's war diary for that date reports that:

"13th – TRENCHES 37L – 48R

Save for continual sniping and a good deal of "Sausaging" on the part of the Germans and the sending of rifle grenades, things were pretty quiet all day and all night. Work of repairing trenches and C.T.s went on interruptedly.



14th - The dump was shelled at intervals during the day but everything was comparatively quiet until 3pm when the Germans began to bombard us. A barrage was fired down the cutting I.29.c.3.3 and also between VERBRANDEN MOLEN and the DUMP (sheet 28 1/4000). I.28.d.7.5 and I.29.c.2.4 on our right the shelling appeared to be slightly more heavy if possible. At 5pm the enemy exploded a mine under H.1 bombing sap but did not attempt to occupy the crater.

The bombardment continued until 8pm when it slackened slightly. It was then possible to take account of the damage done by the Germans. 13 men had been killed and 5 men badly bruised by the explosion of the mine. 37L and 38 trenches were breached in two places and the Lewis gun in 38 trench buried, but was dug out during the height of the bombardment. The edge of the crater was immediately held after the explosion and work commenced digging through to it.

37L Support and all the communication trenches were very much knocked about. Centre Trench Switch trench, 39 trench and 39.S trench were

badly knocked about and all C.T.s blocked. 39.S was completely blocked for 20 yards. 40, 41 and 41.S were blown in and all C.T.s blocked. 47 trench was breached in two places otherwise it was not bombarded.

As soon as the bombardment slackened work was immediately commenced on repair work. Two men were dug out alive from the trench near the crater and one man picked up alive after having been blown 40 yards he died soon after he had been brought in.

The 8th South Staffs reported that the Germans had occupied 33 and 34 trenches in fairly large numbers. One platoon of 5th Yorks was therefore brought from Railway Cutting also one Lewis gun to occupy the communication trench from 37L to 37L Support trench and one platoon 5th Yorks from Sunken Road dugouts to Railway Cutting. The S.Staffs reported that they were out of grenades 36 boxes were sent to them."

James William Bulmer

27/828 Private, 27th (Tyneside Irish) Northumberland Fusiliers

Census details (1911):

Address: 52 Back Lane, Skelton
Age: 32
Occupation: Blacksmith at Ironstone Mines (above ground)
Status: Single
Parents' names: Annie Bulmer (widow)

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 7th October 1916
Age at death: 38
Commemorated: Cite Bonjean Military Cemetery, Armentieres; Grave III A 23

James William Bulmer was born on 22nd May 1878, in one of the cottages at Skelton Shaft mine, the son of Joseph Bulmer and his wife, Annie. He was baptised on 30th June 1898 at All Saints parish church, Skelton-in-Cleveland; and the entry in the parish register indicates that his father was a blacksmith. In 1911 the family was living at 52 Back Lane, Skelton-in-Cleveland; and James William, age 32, was working as a Blacksmith, above ground, at a local ironstone mine.

He was killed in action on the 7th October 1916, at the age of 38, probably during the Battle of Le Transloy and is buried in Cite Bonjean Military Cemetery, Armentieres, in grave III A 23.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

Not searched for



Fred Carver

19402 Private, 8th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 7 Stanghow Road, Lingdale
Age: 22
Occupation: Filler at Ironstone Mine (below ground)
Status: Single
Parents' names: Robert and Louisa Carver

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 10th July 1916
Age at death: 26
Commemorated: Thiepval Memorial, Pier and Face 3A and 3D

This individual is known only from the *Stanghow Lane School Roll of Honour*, where he is listed as "R Carver"

The **Commonwealth War Graves Commission** database was searched for all WW1 casualties with surname "Carver" and initial "R". There were just seven matches. Three of these could be ruled out based on the home address and next of kin details in the Additional Information field. ***Soldiers Died in the Great War*** was then searched for all instances of surname "Carver". There were 67 such. This list was reviewed, paying particular attention to those with forename/initials matching "R". There were seven such individuals, but on checking their places of birth/residence/enlistment, it was possible to rule them all out. However, it was noticed that there was a Fred Carver listed with a birthplace of Boosbeck, RSO [*Railway Sorting Office*].

This individual was shown as 19402 Private Fred Carver of 8th Battalion, Yorkshire Regiment, enlisted at Richmond, resident at Lingdale, Boosbeck. The **UK Census Collection** on Ancestry.co.uk was searched for this individual. He was found in 1911, 1901 and 1891 enumerated as the son of Robert and Louisa Carver³. In 1911 the family is living at 7 Stanghow Road, Lingdale, in 1901 at 48 Scarth Street, Lingdale and in 1891 at 9 Gerrie Street, Boosbeck.

This individual is the best overall fit. He has the correct surname and the connections to the villages. The only thing lacking is a precise link to the school.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

"July 10th

The 69th.Inf.Brigade were ordered to attack and capture CONTALMAISON, with the 8th.Yorks. on the right, and the 9th.Yorks. on the left flank. The 11th.West Yorks. operating on the left of the 9th.Yorks., and protecting the flank. The Battalion advanced to the attack at 4-50 p.m. from the HORSESHOE TRENCH, and came under shrapnel fire from CONTALMAISON wood. As the Battalion further advanced and when within about 500 yds. from the village heavy machine gun and rifle fire was opened on them by the enemy from the front and left flank. On reaching TRENCH 23-41 the wire was found to be practically intact and presented a serious obstacle.

³ He was a nephew of the author's great-great grandfather, Henry Carver.

After gaining this trench, where the men were still under heavy fire, the line advanced to the assault. A second obstacle in the shape of a hedge and wire netting held the line outside the village, and 50% of the casualties occurred between the trench and the hedge. This obstacle was surmounted and the line advanced to the village firing at the enemy who were now retreating. At this point unexpected machine gun and rifle fire took the men in the rear and caused some casualties. Not more than 4 Officers and 150 men reached the village. 8 German officers and 160 men were captured exclusive of 100 wounded Germans in dug-outs. 6 Machine guns and thousands of rounds of ammunition were also taken. Immediate steps were taken to consolidate, and a line was chosen that extended from the CHATEAU through the VIEUX MANOIR to point 84. It was not the best line for defense, but was selected in view of the small number of men available. By daylight the line was dug. At 7 p.m. a small party of Germans appeared at the CUTTING but were dispersed by machine gun (their own) fire. Our right was exposed and at 9 p.m. a party of about 40 Germans were seen to be lining the Hedge N. from Point 93. They opened fire and the position was critical. Major Western made a barricade across the road at 84, and was reinforced with more men from this and 9th Battn. The enemy were kept in check and finally dislodged with the further aid of a bombing party from the 9th and a Lewis gun fire from a house. At 11 p.m. the Battalion was reinforced with 2 Coys of the 11th West Yorks and the 110th West Riding Battn. These got into touch with the units on the right and the position became satisfactory. The village was shelled all night, and during the next day, but no counter-attack was launched. Our Patrols were out all all [sic] night, and Bosche patrols in the CUTTING were fired on. 10th. Casualties:- Officers 5 Killed, 19 O.R's Killed, 6 Officers, 241 O.R's Wounded, 1 Officer, 87 O.R's Missing."

George Catron

242017 Private, 5th Seaforth Highlanders

Census details (1911):

Address: 6 East Parade, Skelton
Age: 18
Occupation: Assistant Butcher
Status: Single
Parents' names: Michael and Mary Catron

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 16th May 1917
Age at death: 23
Commemorated: Crump Trench British Cemetery, Fampoux; Special Memorial A 14

George, born in the spring of 1892, was baptised on 16th May 1892 at St.Margaret's, Brotton, the son of Michael Catron and his wife, Mary Marshall. In 1911 the family home was at 6 East Parade, Skelton; and 18-year old George was an Apprentice Butcher.

He enlisted into the Seaforths at Lincoln, originally being assigned the service no. 6278. The service no. 242017 would have been assigned to him in March 1916 when the entire Territorial Force was re-numbered. The details of his enlistment beg two questions (both unanswered):

- why did he enlist at Lincoln?
- why did he enlist into the Seaforths?

He was killed in action on 16th May 1917 at the age of 27 and is buried in Crump Trench British Cemetery. He is commemorated with a Special Memorial headstone.



Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

"ARRAS 16 May 1916 (sic)⁴

Hostile bombardment lasted until 3.30 am when enemy put down an intense barrage and attacked. At this time Bn was in process of being relieved by 6 GORDON HRS who became involved in enemy attack. At 8.30 am counter-attack began and enemy were driven back. ROEUX was again held by British troops with the exception of the eastern end. Posts were established as on 12/5/17 on the road running north & south through ROEUX. Details in separate sheet, attached. Bn relieved at dusk by 4th Seaforths.

5 Officers wounded, 97 OR wounded, 37 OR killed, 7 OR missing"

⁴ This file is hopelessly out of sequence, some months of 1917 are in with the 1916 ones, and vice versa. Also, the middle sheet of May 1917 is actually headed May 1916. This is clearly wrong because there is a reference to 12th May 1917 within the entries on that page.

H Challis

This individual is known only from his entry on the *Stanghow Lane School Roll of Honour*. His identity has proved elusive.

The *Soldiers Died in the Great War* database was searched for all entries with a surname of Challis. A total of 61 individuals were found. These were reviewed, paying particular attention to those individuals with forenames beginning H or with initial H. This resulted in just five men being selected for further investigation. These five were then searched for in the *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* database. None of them seemed to be likely candidates for “our” H Challis. The next step was to try and find a suitable “H Challis” in the 1911 census. There was a Henry Challis living at 9 East Parade, Skelton, age 22, born in Skelton, a son of Eliza Challis, age 61, a widow born at Boulby. Henry was enumerated as a Woodman for Lord Zetland. This individual has the right surname, the right forename initial and is of a good age to be in military service during 1914-1918. The only problem is that he doesn’t appear to have been a casualty of the Great War.

On the presumption that maybe he served but didn’t die, and so might have medal entitlement, a search was done in the *British Army WW1 Medal Index Cards* database on Ancestry.co.uk. Among the 417 men with surname Challis, one caught my eye: 28226 Private Henry Challis in the Yorkshire Regiment. His Medal Index Card carried the simple annotation “Dead”. When I searched for him in CWGC using his surname and number no matches were returned. When I searched using just his number, 47 matches were found but no Challis was amongst them. So I have evidence of a Henry Challis serving in the local regiment and dying whilst in service but not appearing in *Soldiers Died in the Great War* or in the *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* database.

This could be “our H Challis” or, at least, could give an indication as to how someone could appear on a memorial but not in the *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* database.

Spurred on by the possibility that documentary evidence might be out there, a search was done on both the *British Army WW1 Service Records 1914-1920* and *British Army WW1 Pensions Records 1914-1920* on Ancestry.co.uk. Although many CHALLISs were found, there were none that matched the known details of 28226 Henry Challis of the Yorkshire Regiment.

So, the situation stands thus:

- there is no good match for “Challis H” in either the *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* database or in *Soldiers Died in the Great War*
- there is an excellent match in the 1911 census that places a Henry Challis in the Skelton villages
- there is a good match in the *British Army WW1 Medal Index Cards* that places a dead Henry Challis in the Yorkshire Regiment, the 4th Battalion of which traditionally recruited from the East Cleveland area.

The possibility exists that the death of H Challis might have been a civil event. Therefore a search was made in the *Births, Marriages and Deaths Indexes* at Ancestry.co.uk. The death of a Henry Challis, age 30, was registered in Guisborough District in Jan-Mar 1919. That age at death gives a year of birth of 1889 – which matches that of the Henry found in 1911 census!

So now where do we go? Cemetery registers to find his burial date? Newspapers to find a death announcement or a report of his death? The quest continues.

Stanley Coates

201949 Private, 4th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 3 Prospect Place, Skelton
Age: 15
Occupation: Grocer's Errand Boy
Parents' names: Thomas and Mary Jane Coates

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 15th September 1916
Age at death: 20
Commemorated: Thiepval Memorial; Pier and Face 3A and 3D

Stanley Coates was born in 1896, in Halton, Yorkshire. He was the son of Thomas Coates and his wife, Mary Jane. In 1911 his father, Thomas, was a Woodman on the Skelton Castle estate.

He was killed in action on the opening day of the Battle of Flers-Courcelette. This battle is notable for being the first in which tanks were deployed.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

The battalion's war diary account of this battle, in which six men of 4th Yorks fell, gives the following account of the action during this battle:

"15th September 1916 – MARTINPUICH"

The assault took place at 06:22am. The order of attack was Z Company on the right, X Company in the centre and W Company on the left. Y Company was in reserve and carrying. Brigade order 4th East Yorks, 4th Yorks, 5th Yorks. Divisions 47th on the right, 50th Div., 15th Div. The place of assembly was S.2.b.9.5 to S.2.b.5.5.

1st objective – S.3.a.1½.8 to S.2.b.8.8

2nd objective – M.33.c.6.8 to M.33.c.1.7

Final objective – M.33.a.3.6 to M.33.c.1.7

The final objective was reached. Owing to the 47th Div being hung up in High Wood, the 149th Bde did not reach its objective and the 4th East Yorks on our right were back. Our right was in the air at the junction of PRUE TRENCH and MARTIN ALLEY. This position was held despite terrific shelling which caused heavy casualties.

16th September 1916

Holding on

17th September 1916

At 1pm B.G.C. 150th I.B. ordered 5th DLI with bombing squads from 4th & 5th Yorks to attack and occupy PRUE and STARFISH trenches as far as the CRESCENT. This was accomplished although the 5th Yorks did not appear in time"

Edward Cook

26647 Private, 10th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 26 William Street, New Skelton
Age: 19
Occupation: Ironstone Platelayer
Status: Single
Parents' names: Robert and Esther Cook

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 30th October 1916
Age at death: 24
Commemorated: Vermelles British Cemetery

Edward Cook was born at Hutton-le-hole, Yorkshire in the spring of 1891. His parents were Robert Cook and Esther Kirk.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

According to the **Commonwealth War Graves Commission**, Edward was killed in action on 30th October 1916 but the Battalion's war diary gives the date of his death as one day earlier:

"29th October 1916

In trenches 94-106. Repair work carried on. A quiet day except for a few "RUM JARS" from the enemy. 26647 Private E Cook (D) killed

30th October 1916

In trenches 94-106. A quiet day. The battalion was relieved by 1st LINCOLN Regiment in the front line, relief being completed at 12 noon. On relief the Battalion moved into the Support Line to relieve the 12th Northumberland Fusiliers which had already been vacated. Support line runs from LE ROUTOIR ALLEY along DEVON LANE – O.G.I- CHAPEL ALLEY – O.B.1 – to GORDON ALLEY. Roughly from G.18.a.8.8 to G.10.b.9.7"

This is one of only two examples found, of any of the men being named in a war diary entry.

Francis Joseph Cook

40609 Private, 1st Royal Irish Rifles

Census details (1911):

Address: Oswaldkirk, Yorkshire
Age: 26
Occupation: Beastman on Farm
Status: Single
Parents' names: Francis and Elizabeth Cook

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 16th August 1917
Age at death: 31
Commemorated: Tyne Cot Memorial, Panel 138 to 140, and 162 to 162A, and 163A

The **Parish Roll of Honour** shows "Rfn F J Cook" under "ROYAL IRISH RIFLES", whilst **North Skelton Memorial** lists "RFN F J COOK – R.I.R"

The **Commonwealth War Graves Commission** database lists him as "40609 Rifleman Francis Joseph Cook" of the Royal Irish Rifles, aged 31 at his death. He is shown as the son of Frank and Mary Cook of Harome, Nawton and the husband of Hannah Ellen Cook of Nunnington, York. **Soldiers Died in the Great War** lists him as "Formerly 28212, Yorks Regt.", birth place Hemsley [sic], residence Malton and enlistment at Saltburn. The 1911 census shows him working as a "Beastman on Farm" in the household of William Hutchinson of Oswaldkirk.

There is no documentary evidence to link him to the Skelton villages. The evidence of his **Soldiers Died in the Great War** entry is, however, highly suggestive. He enlisted at Saltburn; so was he, perhaps, working on a local farm at the time of his enlistment or call up?

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

"LILLEGATE Dugouts, YPRES

15th August 9:30pm

Battalion moved from YPRES via the Ramparts and MENIN Road to BIRR Cross Roads where guides from 2 Rifle Brigade met Companies and guided them to Assembly positions on WESTHOEK RIDGE

16th August 4.45am

The 8th Division has to attack and capture the GREEN LINE (the original objective of 31st July) The Division had two Brigades in the line, each brigade having two assaulting Battalions. In the 25th Infantry brigade the 2 R Berks attacked on the right, and the 1st Royal Irish Rifles on the left.

At 4.45am the Barrage dropped and the troops, who had massed forward to get in touch with the barrage a few minutes before ZERO, advanced.

The Battalion advanced in excellent formation and little resistance was met with as far as the HANNABEEK WOOD. Its Casualties were also slight except the Center Company who appear to have suffered somewhat severely from Machine Guns firing from their Right front. ANZAC held

up the advance for some time (said to have been 10 minutes) but it was finally taken after working round the flanks and some prisoners were procured.

The GREEN LINE was captured at about 6.20am and an attempt was made to Consolidate it, but owing to the lack of men and heavy sniping from our left rear it was found impossible. At about 7.50am the enemy were seen to be working round the right flank. The position on the left was far from satisfactory, the line therefore had to fall back to a line running from about J.2.B.45.35 to J.2.D.65.90 (HOOGE 1/10,000)

The enemy later in day brought up fresh forces in considerable strength [the left Company saw these troops arrive in motor lorries near ZONNEBEEKE. Owing to the superior numbers of the enemy, and the effect of our casualties, we were forced to withdraw during the afternoon to the BLACK LINE (front line on morning of 16th)

The Battalion suffered the following casualties:

Officers – Killed: 2Lt E. A. Mahoney (3 R I Rif), 2Lt J.E.G. Wilson (4 R W Fus)

Officers – wounded and missing: Capt. A.J. Rose (5 R I Rif), 2Lt A/Capt. A.F.J.S. Nicholson (5 R I Rif), 2Lt A/Capt. J.F. Clery (3 R M Fus), 2Lt W. Kingston (3 R M Fus), 2Lieut R.J. Ennis (1 R I Rif)

Officers – wounded: Lieut.Col. W.H.D. MacCarthy O’Leary (R Ir Fus), 2Lt A/Capt. J.K. Boyle (7 R I Rif), 2Lt C.D. Quillian (1 R I Rif)

Other Ranks: Killed – 27, W and M – 7, Wounded – 170, Missing – 63”

Herbert Cook M.M.

1828 Corporal, 4th Yorkshire Regiment



Census details (1911):

Address: 51 Park Street, Skelton
Age: 30
Occupation: Mines Platelayer
Status: Married
Wife's name: Elizabeth (age 33)
Children (if any): Ethel (age 2)

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 15th January 1917
Age at death: 36
Commemorated: Dernancourt Communal Cemetery
Extension; Grave IV G 10

Herbert Cook was a son of James Cook and his wife, Jane, and was born in Guisborough on 27th June 1880 (baptized at St. Nicholas's, Guisborough on 28th July 1880). The family home, through the period 1881-1901, was 25 Union Street, Guisborough, and Herbert was still living at home in 1901, when he was working as a Railway Porter.

On 14th August 1907, at All Saints church, Skelton, Herbert, aged 27 and now working as a Platelayer and living at 7 Mill Street, Guisborough, married Elizabeth Watson, aged 30, who was living at 38 Back Lane, Skelton. She was a sister of William Watson, another of the fallen recorded in these pages. In 1911, Herbert, now working as a platelayer, above ground, in the ironstone mines, and Elizabeth were living at 51 Park Street, Skelton, together with their 2-year old daughter, Ethel.

Ethel would go on to marry William Danby, who would lose his life during the Second World War, and who is also commemorated on the ***Skelton War Memorial***.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

Not searched for

Herbert Cook died of his wounds on 15th January 1917 at the age of 38. He is buried in grave IV G 10 at Dernancourt Communal Cemetery Extension. The previous month, his award of the Military Medal had been confirmed in the London Gazette Supplement published on 9th December 1916. He is the only casualty, commemorated on one of the memorials in the villages, who was decorated for gallantry.

Arthur Cooke

4093 Private, 5th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 31 Cleveland Street, Skelton
Age: 27
Occupation: Miner (below ground)
Status: Single
Parents' names: Alfred and Sarah Cooke

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 11th November 1916
Age at death: 32
Commemorated: Thiepval Memorial; Pier and Face 3A and 3D

Arthur Cooke was born on 10th January 1884 at Skelton-in-Cleveland and baptised at All Saints parish church on 24th February 1884. In the 1911 census, he was enumerated as living with his parents, Alfred Cooke and Sarah (nee Kerridge), and three of his brothers and one of his sisters, at 31 Cleveland Street. His father was a milk dealer and grocer, whilst Arthur had progressed from being a horse driver in the ironstone mines in 1901 to being a face working miner.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

The Battalion's war diary records the following for the day of his death:

"6th-11th November 1916 – Trenches in M.17 BAZENTIN-LE-GRAND

9th-10th - Relieved 5th DLI in Front Line on 9th November 1916. Relief complete 3-4am on 10th. Casualties: 3 ORs killed, 21 ORs wounded 1 OR missing

11th – Relieved by 6th Northumberland Fusiliers. Relief complete 9pm. Moved into STARFISH-PRUE trenches. Casualties: 4 ORs killed 11 ORs wounded 1 OR missing"

His brother, Robert Cooke, was also among the fallen.

Robert Cooke

4945 Private, 4th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 31 Cleveland Street, Skelton
Age: 25
Occupation: Miner (below ground)
Status: Single
Parents' names: Alfred and Sarah Cooke

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 17th September 1916
Age at death: 30
Commemorated: Thiepval Memorial; Pier and Face 3A and 3D

Robert was the younger brother of Arthur Cooke and was born on 8th October 1885 at Skelton-in-Cleveland and baptised on 3rd December 1885. In 1911 he, like Arthur, was living with his parents and siblings, and, like Arthur, was a face worker in the ironstone mines.

He was killed in action during the Battle of Flers-Courcelette, one of the battles of the Somme that year that was notable for seeing the deployment of tanks for the first time.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

The battalion's war diary account of this battle, in which six men of 4th Yorks fell, gives the following account of the action during this battle:

"15th September 1916 – MARTINPUICH"

The assault took place at 06:22am. The order of attack was Z Company on the right, X Company in the centre and W Company on the left. Y Company was in reserve and carrying. Brigade order 4th East Yorks, 4th Yorks, 5th Yorks. Divisions 47th on the right, 50th Div., 15th Div. The place of assembly was S.2.b.9.5 to S.2.b.5.5.

1st objective – S.3.a.1½.8 to S.2.b.8.8

2nd objective – M.33.c.6.8 to M.33.c.1.7

Final objective – M.33.a.3.6 to M.33.c.1.7

The final objective was reached. Owing to the 47th Div being hung up in High Wood, the 149th Bde did not reach its objective and the 4th East Yorks on our right were back. Our right was in the air at the junction of PRUE TRENCH and MARTIN ALLEY. This position was held despite terrific shelling which caused heavy casualties.

16th September 1916

Holding on

17th September 1916

At 1pm B.G.C. 150th I.B. ordered 5th DLI with bombing squads from 4th & 5th Yorks to attack and occupy PRUE and STARFISH trenches as far as the CRESCENT. This was accomplished although the 5th Yorks did not appear in time"

Edward Covell

15431 Private, 6th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 48 Park Street, Skelton
Age: 28
Occupation: (This entry is annotated "...not at home")
Status: Single
Parents' names: George and Rebecca Covell

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 7th August 1915
Age at death: 31
Commemorated: Helles Memorial; Panel 55 to 58

Edward Covell was the second son of George Covell and Rebecca Dennis. He was born in the autumn of 1883 but was not baptised until some time during 1886 at the Primitive Methodist Chapel in Skelton-in-Cleveland. In the 1901 census he is enumerated as living with his parents and siblings at 48 Park Street, Skelton-in-Cleveland and working as a Driver in the ironstone mines; but by 1911 he is living, as a boarder, with Harold Emerson and his wife, Dorothy, and is now a furnace labourer at the iron works.

He was killed in action at Suvla Bay, Gallipoli on the 7th August 1915

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

The Battalion's war diary records the following for those early August days in 1915:

"5th August 1915 - Battalion transferred by lighter from Imbros and disembarked S.E. of Nibrunesi Point on B Beach.

6th 2300 to 7th 0800 - Made an attack on Lala Baba and drove the enemy N.E. to Hill 10. Casualties 16 officers and about 250 other ranks.

7th – Took up outpost position on Hill 10

8th – Moved forward to position running between Hill 53 and Sulajik

9th 0400 – Battalion moved back to Hill 10 to reorganize

9th 1200 – Orders received to go forward to Sulajik. Battalion came under heavy rifle fire. Captain Chapman wounded and 10 other casualties. We went up into firing trench.

10th – Occupied trenches all day. 2nd Lieutenant S Morris killed. 5 other casualties."

Sidney George Craven

10989 Lance Sergeant, 6th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 1 Carrick's Yard, Skelton
Age: 25
Occupation: Painter House
Status: Single
Parents' names: Emily Craven (widow)

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 21st August 1915
Age at death: 30
Commemorated: Helles Memorial; Panel 55 to 58

Sidney George Craven was born on 14th September 1885 at Skelton-in-Cleveland. The parish register entry for his baptism on 22nd October 1885 shows that his father, John Craven, was a milk seller. The 1891 census shows that his father had already died and the family was being brought up by their mother, Emily (nee Elliot). The situation remained unchanged in 1901 when the family was living at 1 Carrick's Yard, Skelton-in-Cleveland and Sidney's occupation was given as that of a Painter's Apprentice. In 1911, still at 1 Carrick's Yard, Sidney was now a House Painter.

He was killed in action on 21st August 1915 at the age of 29 during the battle for Scimitar Hill on the Gallipoli peninsula.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

The battalion's war diary for this battle records that:

"20th August 1915

23:30 – Moved into fire trenches to south of Hill 50.

21st August 1915

15:00 – Attacked enemy's trenches. Killed Captain Currey, 2nd Lieutenant Rutherford, 2nd Lieutenant Appleyard. Wounded Major Wood, Captain White, Lieutenant Hall, 2nd Lieutenants Eadon, Whitworth and Gifford-Wood

22nd August 1915

22:00 – Moved back to beach in reserve 285 strong."

The diary extract given under Edward Covell's entry shows that the battalion landed on the Gallipoli peninsula on 5th August. At that date, it would have been close to the strength at which it embarked at Liverpool on 2nd July 1915: 30 Officers and 944 Other Ranks. In less than two and half weeks, the battalion had sustained almost 700 casualties: dead, wounded or missing.

On the **Skelton War Memorial** he appears as Y G Craven. *[It is thought that the first initial is an error of transcription, possibly on the part of the ornamental mason. In the flowing style of handwriting of those days, a capital S and a capital Y could appear very similar.]*

William James Cripps

200840 Private, 4th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 88 Margrove Park, Boosbeck
Age: 14
Occupation: Labourer below ground in ironstone mine
Parents' names: George and Mrs. G Cripps

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 13th April 1918
Age at death: 21
Commemorated: Longuenesse (St.Omer) Souvenir Cemetery; Grave V A 37

William James Cripps was born at Corsham in Wiltshire in the spring of 1897. He was the son of George Cripps and Mary Ann Harris. Mary Ann Harris died in 1904 at the age of 34. George Cripps re-married later that year to Emily Bessie Hooper. It is Bessie who is recorded as William's mother on the ***Commonwealth War Graves Commission*** database. That entry gives the family's address as 61 Boosbeck Road, Skelton Green. This was probably their post-war address as, in 1911, the family was living at 88 Margrove Park, Skelton. William, his older brother, George, and his father, George, were all working in the ironstone mines: father George as a miner, brother George as a driver, and William as a labourer – all below ground.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

Not searched for



Harry Dale

200914 Private, 4th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 24 Wharton Street, North Skelton
Age: 22
Occupation: Mines Onsetter below ground
Status: Single
Parents' names: Charles Henry and Louisa Dale

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 23rd April 1917
Age at death: 28
Commemorated: Arras Memorial, Bay 5

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

The battalion's War Diary describes, in great detail, the events of that day:

"22nd April 1917

During the night 22-23 April the Battalion assumed positions for the operations of the 23rd. W, X and Z Coys took up positions in the front line in that order from right to left: W to the south, X & Z northward of the railway.

23rd April 1917

4.15am

By 4.15am 23rd April, Y Coy was in position behind X & Z Coys. Bn HQ had moved to M.23.c.5.2 the previous night.

4.45am

The barrage (a creeping barrage) was very good, heavy & accurate. The German barrage came down very promptly (within 20 seconds) but was chiefly field guns, except for the 105 & 150mm barrage along the bed of the COJEUL and westward of WANCOURT. The battalion suffered few casualties from this barrage & during the first 3 minutes several of our men ran into our own barrage, whose pace (25 yards a minute) they found rather slow during the early stages of the attack.

Taking the attack from right to left of the battalion: W Coy met considerable opposition from rifle and M.G. fire from the enemy first line, and had to take up positions in shell holes about 50 yards away from that line.

5.00am

Not until they had established superiority of fire & a tank had come up through them were they enabled to rush the trench which they found strongly held. Many prisoners came out and the trench was full of dead and wounded Germans. It was a good trench & was not battered out of recognition.

4.45am

Meanwhile X Coy reached the enemy front trench earlier & had less opposition from the inhabitants of the trench: but they had about 30 casualties from M.G. and artillery fire before they reached the trench.

Z Coy on the north were facing N.E at zero hour: but swung round, aligned themselves with X Coy & reached the first German positions with fewer casualties and less opposition than either of the other Coys. All Coys made a rich haul of prisoners at this line.

The Battalion, by now considerably thinned but still a continuous line, then moved east to the German support trench, which did not run parallel to, but was a switch (SW to NE) of the front line. This was reached by 5.25am

5.25am

It was found to be a broad trench literally filled with dead Germans except for the occupants of two deep dugouts on X Coys front. No prisoners were taken here. By this hour our line had become very thin: no E. Yorks were observable on the right and the 44th Inf.Bde. appeared not to have progressed on the left. The Battalion however, moved forward, captured a 3 gun howitzer battery in O.19.a & proceeded to dig itself in along a line 100 to 200 yards W of the first objective.

6.05am

Enemy rifle & artillery fire had practically ceased; but M.G. fire was increasing in intensity & a particularly deadly stream of bullets was directed on to our left flank from the direction of O.14.a. Capt. HIRSCH (now the only Officer left) therefore established a defensive flank with half of Y Coy. This half Coy was dug in along a line above & parallel to the river in O.19.a. With the remainder of the Battalion (about 150 men) he decided to hold on to his, & sent back for reinforcements and S.A.A.

6.30am

A Coy of 5th DLI were sent up to reinforce & with S.A.A. The special object of this Coy was to try to extend our line on the right across the railway & if possible get in touch with the E Yorks. They finally reached our line and established themselves across the railway but found their right flank as much in the air as W Coy's had previously been.

7.15am

Capt HIRSCH (who had previously been wounded) was killed & Mr LUCKHURST of the T M Battery appears to have taken over the Battalion for a short time. His fate is now uncertain.

7.40am

The Battalion appears to have maintained itself near the first objective (Z Coy being slightly forward, W Coy swung back forming a defensive flank facing SE) for a matter of something over an hour & a half. But by 7.30am the Germans were seen massing for a counter-attack: one party were creeping down the low ground along the COJEUL: others were seen coming forward from the trenches in front of VIS-EN-ARTOIS: & a third bloc of men on our right rear, previously mistaken for E Yorks, were now observed to be Germans.

A retirement in successive phases was therefore undertaken: first to the German 2nd line, then to his first line, then to our front line. The whole was carried out under heavy MG fire and directed by not more than half a dozen junior NCOs who state that throughout the line was under control, & that with sections of riflemen constantly fought rearguard actions to cover the retirement of the rest.

8.10am

By 8.10am our men were back in our front line: they state that to their knowledge no unwounded prisoners were taken.

Casualties:

Officers – 3 killed (a), 7 wounded (b), 1 missing (believed killed)

(a) Includes 2nd Lt. WELBOURNE killed 21.4.17

(b) Includes Capt. THEAKSTON wounded 22.4.17 and 2nd Lt. MINISTER wounded 22.4.17

Other Ranks – 352 – the proportions of killed, wounded and missing is not yet ascertained with sufficient accuracy to give Nos.

6.00pm

The remnants of the Battalion under Major STEAD remained in our front line in support to the attack undertaken by 9th DLI and 5th Border Regt. Bn. HQ moved back to WANCOURT"



James Horace Young Day

71004 Bombardier, 71st Battery, 36th Brigade Royal Field Artillery

Census details (1911):

Address: 33 Boosbeck Road, Skelton
Age: 15
Occupation: Horse driver underground
Parents' names: William and Sarah Ann Day

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 30th October 1914
Age at death: 19
Commemorated: Boulogne Eastern Cemetery; Grave III A 22

James Horace Young Day was born at 33 Boosbeck Road, Skelton Green on 12th September 1895, the youngest son of William Day and his wife Sarah Ann (nee Young). He was baptised on 10th October 1895 in All Saints parish church.

Service Record details:

On 12th October 1912, at the age of 19 years and 1 month, he attested into the Royal Field Artillery on Short Service terms (6 years with the colours plus 6 years on the Reserve list). On this date he was already serving with 3rd Battalion Durham Light Infantry. His medical report at attestation describes him as being 5ft 11½in tall and weighing 156 lbs. with a fresh complexion, brown eyes and dark brown hair. On 12th October 1912 he was posted to 71st Battery, 36th Brigade Royal Field Artillery at the rank of Gunner.

On 28th November 1912 he was awarded his Certificate of Education 2nd Class. On 1st March 1914 he was appointed Acting Bombardier and this was followed by promotion to Bombardier on 5th August 1914.

On 30th October 1914, at the age of 18, he died at No.7 Stationary Hospital Boulogne (the cause of death was not stated) and he was buried in Boulogne Eastern Cemetery the same day in grave III A 22.

War Diary details:

Not searched for

By the end of the war his father had died and his mother had moved to 40 Bishophill Senior, near York.

It is an odd coincidence that James was the first casualty from the villages and his older brother, Walter Edward Day, was the last.



Walter Edward Day

30517 Company Sergeant Major, 78th Company Royal Garrison Artillery

Census details (1911):

Address: Malta, 102 Company Royal Garrison Artillery
Age: 34
Occupation: Sergeant
Status: Single

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 23rd May 1919
Age at death: 42
Commemorated: Kranji War Cemetery, Singapore; Grave 37 F 5

He was born on 8th July 1876, the first child of William Day and his wife, Sarah Ann Young and was baptised at All Saints parish church on 8th August 1876. The 1881 census shows them living at 12 Brewery Terrace, Skelton-in-Cleveland but by 1891 the family had moved to 33 Boosbeck Road, Skelton Green where they then settled.

Walter was the last casualty from the villages. His youngest brother, James, had been the first - an odd coincidence indeed.

Service Record details:

Walter Edward Day was an out-and-out career soldier who served almost 21 years with the colours.

Walter's career in the Army began on 5th October 1898 when, at the age of 22 years and 3 months, he attested into the Royal Garrison Artillery (RGA) on Short Service terms (7 years with the colours and 5 years in Reserve). His first posting was to No.2 Depot at Scarborough where, in his medical fitness report, he was described as being 5ft 6¼ ins tall, weighing 147 lbs. with a fresh complexion, grey eyes and brown hair. His distinguishing marks included a mole above the left nipple and his first upper and lower, left incisor teeth were irregular.

He was clearly intent on bettering himself, because on 21st December 1898 he was awarded his Certificate of Education 3rd Class and on 17th August 1899 this was followed by his 2nd Class Certificate. His early service saw him at various locations around the country: Devonport, Pembroke Dock and Shoeburyness. At this latter he completed the Short Course of Gunnery on 19th October 1900. One year later he was promoted to Bombardier. A posting to Woolwich followed before he was, once again, at Shoeburyness attending the Long Course of Gunnery, which he completed on 2nd December 1902. On the 7th April 1903 he was promoted to Corporal.

On 15th October 1903 his career really began to take off when he was selected for appointment as assistant Instructor in Gunnery to No.3 Company West Indian Battalion, RGA. This unit was based at Kingstown, Sierra Leone in West Africa and Walter was promoted to Sergeant with effect from 4th November, the date of his embarkation. He arrived at Kingstown on 20th November. The following year, whilst still serving in West Africa, he applied to extend his service to 12 years with the colours. He was admitted to hospital on 18th July the same year, suffering from a "mild malarial infection". This was treated with quinine and he was released back to duty on 25th July. On 24th November 1904, having completed one year's service in West Africa, he was placed on readiness to proceed to the UK by the next departing Mail Service. He was granted 4 months furlough from the date of his disembarkation in the UK and given 12 days advance of pay.

On arrival in the UK he was posted as Sergeant to No.6 Depot. There now began a period of Home service during which he found himself once more at Shoeburyness; this time on the Quick Firing Guns course, which he completed on 6th May 1908. On the 10th June 1910, whilst serving at Tynemouth, he re-engaged to serve a total of 21 years with the colours.

9th September 1910 saw him begin another spell overseas when he was posted to 102 Company at Malta - a posting which lasted some four and a half years. He was censused here, at Fort Ricatoli, in 1911, when he was one of fourteen Sergeants (plus a Smith Sergeant, a Company Quartermaster Sergeant and the Company Sergeant Major)

On 15th February 1915 he was posted, briefly, to 40 Company but on 6th March 1915 he received a promotion to Battery Sergeant Major (Warrant Office Class II) and with it a posting to 13 Company. This unit was sent to France on 23rd April 1915 to serve with the British Expeditionary Force.

Walter's service in France ended on 16th December when he returned to the UK and was posted the following day to 2 Company. This was another brief posting for, on 24th February 1916, he was promoted for the final time, to Company Sergeant Major (W.O.Class II), and posted to 14 Company.

His final posting occurred on 1st April 1916, when he was posted to 78 Company as the Company Sergeant Major. This company was serving in Singapore. He died, at the age of 42, at 2:50am on 23rd May 1919 in a Military Hospital in Singapore. The cause of death was stated as sclerosis of the brain. He was originally buried in grave 4476 in Bidadari Cemetery but the burials here were later consolidated into Kranji War Cemetery where he now lies in peace in grave 37 F 5.

War Diary details:

Not searched for

Thomas Edward Dove

KX/45 Able Bodied Seaman, Nelson Battalion, Royal Naval Division

Census details (1911):

Address: 18 Pease Street, Lingdale
Age: 24
Occupation: Blacksmith's Striker
Status: Single
Parents' names: Kate (Caroline) Dove⁵

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 23rd December 1915
Age at death: 27
Commemorated: Skelton Cemetery, Grave P F C 19

Service Record details:

His Naval Service Record shows him as being in the Durham Light Infantry on 1st September 1914. His transfer to the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve took place on 9th September 1914. He was initially rated an Ordinary Seaman but was re-rated to Able Bodied Seaman that same day. His date and place of birth is given as 26th September 1888 at Lingdale, and he is shown as living at 6 Wilson Street, Lingdale.

He was described as being 5ft 6¼in in height, with a fresh complexion, dark brown hair and blue eyes. His civilian occupation was that of a labourer.

He was placed on the Nominal Roll of "B" Company of the Nelson Battalion on 25th January 1915. This unit clearly took part in the Gallipoli campaign because his record goes on to state that he was admitted to hospital in the Dardanelles on 17th September 1915 and transferred to Mudros on the Hospital Ship "Valdavia" on the 19th, suffering from dysentery. Sometime on or about 28th September he was invalided home on board the Hospital Ship "Grampion". He was admitted to Plymouth Hospital on 11th October where, after a prolonged illness, he died at 6.25pm on 23rd December 1915. Next of kin were informed on Christmas Eve – not a great start to their Christmas!

War Diary details:

Not searched for

⁵ Kate, or Catherine, Dove was a daughter of Margaret Mason, who was a great-great grandmother of the author.

Herbert Arthur Dowey

200770 Private, 4th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 44 Park Street, Skelton
Age: 13
Occupation: School boy
Parents' names: Robert and Sarah E Dowey

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 23rd April 1917
Age at death: 19
Commemorated: Arras Memorial; Bay 5

Herbert Arthur Dowey was born on 25th May 1897 and baptised on 17th June 1897 at All Saints, Skelton-in-Cleveland. He was the fourth son of Robert Dowey and his wife, Sarah Elizabeth (nee Rennard). In the 1901 census the family was living at 19 Harker Street, Skelton Green; but by 1911 the family was at 44 Park Street, Skelton; and Herbert, age 13, was still at school.

Killed in action on 23rd April 1917 during the opening day of the Second Battle of the Scarpe, Herbert Arthur Dowey has no known grave and is commemorated on bay 5 of the Arras Memorial along with two other Skelton men: William Dowey (no relation, as far as is known) and Robert Archer.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

The battalion's War Diary describes, in great detail, the events of that day:

"22nd April 1917

During the night 22-23 April the Battalion assumed positions for the operations of the 23rd. W, X and Z Coys took up positions in the front line in that order from right to left: W to the south, X & Z northward of the railway.

23rd April 1917

4.15am

By 4.15am 23rd April, Y Coy was in position behind X & Z Coys. Bn HQ had moved to M.23.c.5.2 the previous night.

4.45am

The barrage (a creeping barrage) was very good, heavy & accurate. The German barrage came down very promptly (within 20 seconds) but was chiefly field guns, except for the 105 & 150mm barrage along the bed of the COJEUL and westward of WANCOURT. The battalion suffered few casualties from this barrage & during the first 3 minutes several of our men ran into our own barrage, whose pace (25 yards a minute) they found rather slow during the early stages of the attack.

Taking the attack from right to left of the battalion: W Coy met considerable opposition from rifle and M.G. fire from the enemy first line, and had to take up positions in shell holes about 50 yards away from that line.

5.00am

Not until they had established superiority of fire & a tank had come up through them were they enabled to rush the trench which they found strongly held. Many prisoners came out and the trench was full of dead and wounded Germans. It was a good trench & was not battered out of recognition.

4.45am

Meanwhile X Coy reached the enemy front trench earlier & had less opposition from the inhabitants of the trench: but they had about 30 casualties from M.G. and artillery fire before they reached the trench.

Z Coy on the north were facing N.E at zero hour: but swung round, aligned themselves with X Coy & reached the first German positions with fewer casualties and less opposition than either of the other Coys. All Coys made a rich haul of prisoners at this line.

The Battalion, by now considerably thinned but still a continuous line, then moved east to the German support trench, which did not run parallel to, but was a switch (SW to NE) of the front line. This was reached by 5.25am

5.25am

It was found to be a broad trench literally filled with dead Germans except for the occupants of two deep dugouts on X Coys front. No prisoners were taken here. By this hour our line had become very thin: no E. Yorks were observable on the right and the 44th Inf.Bde. appeared not to have progressed on the left. The Battalion however, moved forward, captured a 3 gun howitzer battery in O.19.a & proceeded to dig itself in along a line 100 to 200 yards W of the first objective.

6.05am

Enemy rifle & artillery fire had practically ceased; but M.G. fire was increasing in intensity & a particularly deadly stream of bullets was directed on to our left flank from the direction of O.14.a. Capt. HIRSCH (now the only Officer left) therefore established a defensive flank with half of Y Coy. This half Coy was dug in along a line above & parallel to the river in O.19.a. With the remainder of the Battalion (about 150 men) he decided to hold on to his, & sent back for reinforcements and S.A.A.

6.30am

A Coy of 5th DLI were sent up to reinforce & with S.A.A. The special object of this Coy was to try to extend our line on the right across the railway & if possible get in touch with the E Yorks. They finally reached our line and established themselves across the railway but found their right flank as much in the air as W Coy's had previously been.

7.15am

Capt HIRSCH (who had previously been wounded) was killed & Mr LUCKHURST of the T M Battery appears to have taken over the Battalion for a short time. His fate is now uncertain.

7.40am

The Battalion appears to have maintained itself near the first objective (Z Coy being slightly forward, W Coy swung back forming a defensive flank facing SE) for a matter of something over an hour & a half. But by 7.30am the Germans were seen massing for a counter-attack: one party were creeping down the low ground along the COJEUL: others were seen coming forward from the trenches in front of VIS-EN-ARTOIS: & a third bloc of men on our right rear, previously mistaken for E Yorks, were now observed to be Germans.

A retirement in successive phases was therefore undertaken: first to the German 2nd line, then to his first line, then to our front line. The whole was carried out under heavy MG fire and

directed by not more than half a dozen junior NCOs who state that throughout the line was under control, & that with sections of riflemen constantly fought rearguard actions to cover the retirement of the rest.

8.10am

By 8.10am our men were back in our front line: they state that to their knowledge no unwounded prisoners were taken.

Casualties:

Officers – 3 killed (a), 7 wounded (b), 1 missing (believed killed)

(a) Includes 2nd Lt. WELBOURNE killed 21.4.17

(b) Includes Capt. THEAKSTON wounded 22.4.17 and 2nd Lt. MINISTER wounded 22.4.17

Other Ranks – 352 – the proportions of killed, wounded and missing is not yet ascertained with sufficient accuracy to give Nos.

6.00pm

The remnants of the Battalion under Major STEAD remained in our front line in support to the attack undertaken by 9th DLI and 5th Border Regt. Bn. HQ moved back to WANCOURT"

William Dowey

200841 Private, 4th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 13 Prospect Place, Skelton

Age: 14

Occupation: At home

Parents' names: Joseph and Lena Dowey

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 23rd April 1917

Age at death: 20

Commemorated: Arras Memorial; Bay 5

William Dowey was born on 5th March 1897, quite possibly at 13 Prospect Place, Skelton-in-Cleveland which is where the family was enumerated in the 1901 and 1911 censuses. His parents were Joseph and Mary Lena (nee Parkin) and he was baptised on 1st April 1897 at All Saints parish church.

He was killed in action during the opening day of the Second Battle of the Scarpe, 23rd April 1917 at the age of 20. He has no known grave and is commemorated on bay 5 of the Arras Memorial along with two other Skelton men: Herbert Arthur Dowey (not believed to be related) and Robert Archer.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

The battalion's War Diary describes, in great detail, the events of that day:

"22nd April 1917

During the night 22-23 April the Battalion assumed positions for the operations of the 23rd. W, X and Z Coys took up positions in the front line in that order from right to left: W to the south, X & Z northward of the railway.

23rd April 1917

4.15am

By 4.15am 23rd April, Y Coy was in position behind X & Z Coys. Bn HQ had moved to M.23.c.5.2 the previous night.

4.45am

The barrage (a creeping barrage) was very good, heavy & accurate. The German barrage came down very promptly (within 20 seconds) but was chiefly field guns, except for the 105 & 150mm barrage along the bed of the COJEUL and westward of WANCOURT. The battalion suffered few casualties from this barrage & during the first 3 minutes several of our men ran into our own barrage, whose pace (25 yards a minute) they found rather slow during the early stages of the attack.

Taking the attack from right to left of the battalion: W Coy met considerable opposition from rifle and M.G. fire from the enemy first line, and had to take up positions in shell holes about 50 yards away from that line.

5.00am

Not until they had established superiority of fire & a tank had come up through them were they enabled to rush the trench which they found strongly held. Many prisoners came out and

the trench was full of dead and wounded Germans. It was a good trench & was not battered out of recognition.

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Z Coy on the north were facing N.E at zero hour: but swung round, aligned themselves with X Coy & reached the first German positions with fewer casualties and less opposition than either of the other Coys. All Coys made a rich haul of prisoners at this line.

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6.00pm

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Daniel Drury

28888 Private, 18th (Queen Mary's Own) Hussars

Census details (1911):

Address: 6 Harker Street, Skelton
Age: 21
Occupation: Ironstone Mines Horse Driver Below Ground
Status: Single
Parents' names: William and Louisa Drury

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 22nd April 1918
Age at death: 28
Commemorated: St. Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen; Grave P VII A 5B

Daniel Drury, the third son of William and Catherine Louisa Drury, was born on 18th September 1889 and baptised on 14th November 1889 at All Saints, Skelton-in-Cleveland. In both the 1901 and 1911 censuses the family was living at 6 Harker Street, Skelton Green. Daniel was working below ground in the ironstone mines, as a horse driver, in 1911.

He died of his wounds on 22nd April 1918

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

Not searched for

Frank Dunn

2423 Private, 5th West Yorkshire (Prince of Wales's Own) Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: Riffa Farm, Pool, Leeds
Age: 16
Occupation: Cowman on Farm
Status: Single

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 3rd September 1916
Age at death: 21
Commemorated: Thiepval Memorial; Pier and Face 2A, 2C and 2D

There is an element of doubt as to whether he was Frank Dunn or Fred Dunn. ***Soldiers Died in the Great War*** gives the name of Frank Dunn in association with the service number 2423 and the West Yorkshire regiment. But the ***Medal Index Card*** of 2423 Private Dunn of the West Yorks, shows him as Fred Dunn.

Frank Dunn was born in 1894 at North Skelton, the son of Frederick Dunn and his wife, Alma. He had an older brother, Frederick! In 1901 the family was living in 26 Richard Street, North Skelton and father Frederick was a widower. Whichever brother it was who served and died, at around the date of his death, the family was living at 23 Charlotte Street, New Skelton.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

The battalion war diary gives the following account of the day's activities when he was killed:

"3rd Between 2 and 4 am 1/6th and 1/8th West Yorks Regt got into parallels for assault of German front and support lines. About 4 am 'A' and 'B' Coys moved into assembly trenches at Gordon Castle and 'C' Coy holding British front line put out 8 posts in front of front parallel to cover assembly of troops. About 5am 'C' Coy moved to dugouts at Gordon Castle. At 5.10 am assaulting Battns attacked German lines, but attack failed. 'C' Coy were ordered to take up position in ROSS Street about 6.30 am. B Coy moved up to assist in holding British front line about 7.15 am. At 8.10 am Battn ordered to relieve front parallel and prepare to assault German front line. At 8.40 last message cancelled, one Coy 'A' to be placed at disposal of 2/8th West York Regt. H.Q. at Gordon Castle heavily shelled during the day also front line and communication trenches. At 3.45 pm Battn ordered to form up to attack German front line immediately South of the Ancre. B & D Coys combined and 'C' Coy 1/7th West Yorks to take the German front line, 'A' & 'C' Coys to take German support line. All coys formed up in Old British front line. At 6.30 pm this attack was cancelled."

Simpson Dunn

4/9636 Lance Corporal, 12th Durham Light Infantry

Census details (1911):

Address: Woodvale, 23 Rookwood Road, Nunthorpe
Age: 17
Occupation: Clerk in iron & Steel Works
Status: Single
Parents: David S Dunn (deceased) and Catherine R Dunn

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 7th October 1916
Age at death: 22
Commemorated: Thiepval Memorial; Pier and Face 14 A and 15 C

This individual was, originally, known only from the Stanghow Lane School Roll of Honour, which showed him as "S Dunn".

In an attempt to identify him, the ***Commonwealth War Graves Commission*** database was searched for any WW1 casualty with a surname of Dunn and a forename that matched an initial of S. There were 27 individuals in the list of results. It was possible, immediately, to reject five individuals on the grounds of nationality: 3 Canadians, 1 Australian and 1 South African. The remaining 22 names were each reviewed, initially concentrating on those with ages given, and therefore, with additional information about next of kin. Every single one of those with additional information could be eliminated based on place of residence of the next of kin. Those still on the list of possibles were then looked up in ***Soldiers Died in the Great War*** and any with Birthplaces, Residences or Places of Enlistment outside the local area were eliminated.

At the end of this process of elimination there were just three individuals remaining as possibles: 23/1438 Private Samuel Dunn, age unknown, of the Northumberland Fusiliers; Lieutenant Samuel William Dunn, age 42, Royal Navy; 4/9636 Lance Corporal Simpson Dunn, age unknown, of the Durham Light Infantry. In respect of those three, the following observations were made: Lieutenant Dunn's age stands against him being a former pupil (but he may have been a schoolteacher); Simpson Dunn was born in Bradford and enlisted at Middlesbrough (at least he has a local-ish connection); Samuel Dunn was born at West Cornforth, Cumberland and enlisted at Sunderland (those places make him an unlikely candidate).

If the final choice, which looked like it was Simpson Dunn, was going to be confirmed, it would have to be on the basis of his Service record having survived. And it had! It showed his next of kin as Mrs. Catherine R Dunn, Woodvale, 23 Rookwood Road, Nunthorpe, Middlesbrough. A search of the UK Census Collection for Simpson Dunn found the family living at the above address in 1911. His mother was a widow and his older brother and sister were both born in Skelton-in-Cleveland. So there is a definite connection with the villages.

In 1891 the family was living at 89 Boosbeck Road, Skelton. Simpson's father, David, was a Doctor of Medicine & Surgeon. By 1901 David had died and the family, now headed by his widow Catherine, were living at 1 John Street, New Skelton.

Service Record details:

Simpson Dunn attested into 4th Battalion DLI on 30th August 1914 at Middlesbrough. He was 21 years old and gave his occupation as Electrician. He was part way through serving his apprenticeship at Cargo

Fleet Iron Works, the five year term expiring in 1917. The notes from his Medical Examination recorded that he was 5ft 8¾ in tall, weighed 121 lbs and had a chest measurement of 33in.

A summary of his service is as follows:

Theatre	From	To
Home	30.8.1914	23.8.1915
Exp.Fce.	24.8.1915	23.11.1915
Home	24.11.1915	19.1.1916
Exp.Fce.	20.1.1916	12.3.1916
Home	13.3.1916	31.5.1916
Exp.Fce.	1.6.1916	7.10.1916

Such frequent moves between Home and Overseas service seems unusual, but his Service Record helps to explain why.

On 10th May 1915 he forfeited one day's pay owing to "Overstaying his pass". On 25th May he was punished for the same offence, this time he forfeited three day's pay. For the same offence again, overnight on 21st-22nd June, he lost two more day's pay. He is noted as being "Absent 11 days" from the 7th to the 17th August 1915. The punishment cannot be made out clearly.

He arrived in France on the 24th August 1915. On the 16th October 1915 he was admitted to 18 Field Ambulance suffering from Scabies. He rejoined his battalion on the 21st. Within a matter of days he was admitted to 13 General Hospital, Boulogne suffering from bronchitis. This was sufficiently severe to warrant him being transferred to England on board the Hospital Ship "Cambria" on 23rd November 1915.

On the 18th January 1916 he was posted from the 4th DLI to the 14th DLI and on 29th January he embarked a second time for France. Within a couple of months he was back under medical care, being admitted to 15 Casualty Clearing Station on the 6th March. He was passed to 16 Field Ambulance on the 8th March and immediately transferred to 20 General Hospital suffering from something that looks like *Carniers*. Whatever it was that ailed him, he was transferred to England on the SS St.Patrick.

At Seaham Harbour on the 29th May 1916 he was on report for, once again, "overstaying his pass". This time he had been under orders for embarkation on active service from 9am to 5pm. By now he was back with the 4th Battalion and he embarked at Folkestone on 31st May. However, he was not destined to rejoin the 4th. On 1st June 1916 he was posted to the 12th DLI, joining his battalion on 10th June.

Once again he found himself in need of medical attention when, on the 3rd August, he was admitted to 70 Field Ambulance with a Sprained ankle. Whilst being treated, on the 4th he was appointed an unpaid Lance Corporal. He was discharged back to his unit on the 9th August. The following month, for "stating a falsehood to his platoon commander", he was punished with 8 days CB [confined to barracks].

With a disciplinary and health record like his, perhaps the Army might have been glad that he was killed in action on the 7th October 1916.

The rest of the Service Record file documents the correspondence with his mother. She was sent his personal effects on 21st March 1917. On the 16th December 1919 she acknowledged receipt of his British War Medal. His 1914-15 Star arrived on the 24th April 1920 and his Victory Medal on the 4th June 1921. His Memorial Scroll had been received sometime in 1921 (the date is very indistinct).

War Diary details:

"OG 1 & 2 – 7/10/16

Battalion in OG 1 & 2. At 1.45.pm the Battalion attacked the SUNKEN ROAD SE of LE SARS. At 1.0PM Sec Lieut W H Lockett O/C C Co took his Coy forward and occupied the TANGLE. At 1.45pm A Co and C co attacked with D and B Cos in support. [A change of handwriting at this point] Owing to heavy MG fire A Co were held up. Meanwhile C Coy assisted with 2 platoons of D Coy under 2/Lt W T Hunt reached SUNKEN ROAD. They were then supported by the remaining 2 platoons of D Coy under 2/Lt W L Hughes who consolidated the position and succeed in inflicting severe casualties on the enemy who were attempting to escape across the road on the right. B Coy (2/Lt Harris) then came up and advanced about 450 yards beyond SUNKEN Rd & consolidated. They linked up with SUNKEN RD by a chain of Strong Points. Our new positions were heavily shelled by the enemy throughout the night. Casualties – Officers – Killed: 2/Lt W H Lockett, Wounded: 2/Lts W H Lowes, A T Hunt, A E Hales, Wallace, Hugall, Leggatt; Missing: 2/Lt Telfers, NCOs and men killed 31, wounded 86. We took about 70 prisoners."



William Elsworth

201878 Private, 4th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 32 Green Road, Skelton
Age: 29
Occupation: Mines Horse Driver underground
Status: Single
Parents' names: George and Emily Elsworth

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 1st November 1917
Age at death: 38
Commemorated: Dozinghem Military Cemetery; Grave XII D 17

William Elsworth was born in 1882 at Ryhill near Wakefield, the son of George Elsworth and Emily (nee Finch). In 1901 the family was living at 32 Green Road, Skelton-in-Cleveland and would seem to have settled there, being still resident there when the CWGC were in contact with them in respect of William's headstone. However, the births of the other children, as recorded in 1901, show that this family moved around from Yorkshire to Lancashire and back again. In 1911 William, age 29, was working as a horse driver, underground, in the ironstone mines.

He died of his wounds on 1st November 1917, probably during the Second Battle of Passchendaele.

His age in the 1911 census and his age at death from the ***Commonwealth War Graves Commission*** database have been re-checked and are as are given above. The three year discrepancy in his age cannot be accounted for.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

Not searched for



Joseph William Forster

15653 Private, 5th Cheshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 73 Prospect Street, Huddersfield
Age: 28
Occupation: Jeweller's Shop Assistant
Status: Married
Wife's name: Esther (age 26)
Children (if any): none

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 8th September 1916
Age at death: 33
Commemorated: Thiepval Memorial; Pier and Face 3C and 4A

Joseph William Forster was born in the winter of 1883, the son of Ralph Wright Forster and Sarah Ellen Chapman. In 1901 the family was living at 3 Park Street, Skelton-in-Cleveland and 18 year old Joseph was an apprentice jeweller and watchmaker. Joseph married Esther Kipling in the winter of 1909, in the Huddersfield Registration District. In the 1911 census, he was shown as having been married for two years. He and his wife, Esther, were living at 73 Prospect Street, Huddersfield; and he was employed as a Jeweller's Shop Assistant. The ***Commonwealth War Graves Commission*** database shows that, after the war, his widow, Esther, was living at 5 Forbes Street, Hall Street, Stockport, Cheshire.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

The War Diary makes only this terse statement:

"CONTOUR WOOD

*8/9/1916 Sec.Lieuts. SMITH W.F. and SPICER R.S. with 4 O.R. rejoined for 56th Divisional School
5 O.R. Killed, 13 O.R. wounded, 2 O.R. died of wounds, 2 O.R. missing"*

He seems to have had several service numbers during his brief military service. His Medal Index Card lists him under 4223 as well as 15653; whilst his entry in ***Soldiers Died in the Great War*** shows him as 244253.

Wilfred Arthur Forster

14537 Lance Corporal, 14th Durham Light Infantry

Census details (1911):

Address: 3 Park Street, Skelton
Age: 19
Occupation: Railway Clerk
Status: Single
Parents' names: Ralph Wright and Sarah Ellen Forster

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 23rd November 1915
Age at death: 24
Commemorated: Boulogne Eastern Cemetery; Grave VIII C 59



Wilfred Arthur Forster was born on 17th May 1891, the third son of Ralph Wright Forster and Sarah Ellen Chapman. He was baptised at All Saints, Skelton-in-Cleveland on 11th June 1891. In the census of that year the family had been living at 21 Millbank Street, Skelton-in-Cleveland but by 1901 they had moved to 3 Park Street where they were still living in 1911. At this time, Wilfred was working for the North Eastern Railway Company as a railway clerk.

On 17th September 1914, Wilfred, then aged 23 and still working as a railway clerk, married Edith Adelaide Scuffham, a sister of Robert Edward Scuffham and Bernard Samuel Scuffham, who was a witness to the marriage.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

Wilfred died of his wounds on 23rd November 1915 at the age of 23. It is difficult to know precisely when he received his wounds but the following extract from the Battalion's war diary covers the period 15th -24th November:

"15th Nov 1915 – TRENCHES 81-84 – At 08:30am the battalion was relieved in trenches 81-84 by the 9th KOYLI and at 11:00am marched into billets in ARMENTIERS under very heavy shelling from the enemy.

18th Nov 1915 – ARMENTIERS – At 01:30 an enemy shell exploded against the Orderly Room at RUE DE NATIONALE causing 6 casualties all wounded.

18th-24th Nov 1915 – ARMENTIERS – During this period the town was daily shelled most of the shells came from a S.E. direction. On the 18th approximately 250 hostile shells fell into the town between 11:00am and 2:30pm. Damage was done to property but little loss of life.

Advantage was taken of this period of rest to reclothe and re-equip the battalion. Rifles were inspected by the Armourers. Numerous working parties were found for work in the trenches and elsewhere. An enemy shrapnel shell burst over one working party while in the trenches with the result 2 men were wounded (1 seriously)"

It is likely that the one man seriously wounded was Wilfred.

Wright Freeman

8234 Lance Corporal, 6th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 46 Cunningham Street, Newport, Middlesbrough
Age: 37
Occupation: Iron Worker
Status: Married
Wife's name: Elizabeth (age 37)
Children (if any): Robert William (age 10)
Florence Theresa (age 6)
Wright Freeman (age 4)
Lilian Annie (age 2)
Walter Regenal (sic) (age "under 1")

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 10th August 1915
Age at death: 42
Commemorated: Helles Memorial; Panel 55 to 58

Wright Freeman was born in the spring of 1873 at Market Rasen, Lincolnshire. His parents were William Freeman and Theresa Hodson, and in 1881 the family was living at Wyberton, Lincolnshire.

In 1911 he, his wife, and their four children were living at 46 Cunningham Street, Newport, Middlesbrough. His entry in ***Soldiers Died in the Great War*** revealed that, when he enlisted at Richmond, he gave his residence as Skelton-in-Cleveland. His is a fascinating story.

Service Record details:

On 20th January 1891, at age 18 years, he attested into the Lincolnshire Regiment, under service number 2675, on Short Service terms (7 years with the colours, five years in reserve). He gave his place of birth as Cottingham, near Hull, stated that he had previously served with 3rd East Yorkshire Regiment. His physical description was noted as: height 5ft 5½in, weight 129lbs, chest 34in expanded, of fair complexion with blue eyes and brown hair. His distinguishing marks were noted as two moles on the centre of his back 1½ins apart. His religion was stated as Wesleyan.

His service record then goes on to list the following events:

- 24th April 1891 – Transferred to 1st Battalion –Rank Private
- 14th December 1892 – Transferred to 2nd Battalion
- 3rd April 1894 – Granted G.C. Pay 1^d
- 19th April 1895 – Transferred to 1st Battalion
- 20th January 1897 – Granted G.C. Pay 2^d
- 1st June 1898 – “Elected to come under Regulations governing issue of Messing allowance in accordance with provisions of para:5 Army Order 60 of 1898” He countersigned this entry.
- 1st November 1898 – Transferred to Section A Reserve under A.O. 7 20.10.98
- 1st November 1899 – Reverted on completing his term of engagement in Sect.A
- 15th December 1899 – Recalled to Army Service under Special Army Order 16th Nov 1899
- 23rd December 1900 – In confinement awaiting trial. Tried by F.G.C.M. for “when on active service committing a civil offence, that is to say, stealing”, and sentenced to imprisonment with hard labour in prison. Forfeits 1^d G.C.Pay.
- 22nd June 1901 – Released

- Following his release from prison, he moved north into Weardale, County Durham and, later that summer, married Elizabeth Webster

His service record has two more dated entries:

- 1st February 1902 – Transferred to Section B of A Reserve
- 19th January 1903 – Discharged with a £5 War Gratuity

He was awarded the South African Medal with Clasps for Paardeberg and Cape Colony (the two engagements of the Boer War in which he must have taken part).

His service was summarized thus:

Country	From	To	Years	Days
Home	20 Jan 91	13 Dec 92	1	328
Straits Settlements	14 Dec 92	18-4-95	2	126
Malta	19.4.95	2.2.97	1	290
Egypt	3.2.97	28.10.98	1	268
Home	29.10.98	3.1.00	1	67
S.Africa	4.1.00	13.6.01	1	161
Home	14.6.01	19.1.03	1	220

He took part in the following campaigns:

- Nile Expedition 98 including:
 - the Battle of Atbara 8.4.98
 - the Battle of Khartoum (better known now as the Battle of Omdurman)
- South African (better known as the Boer War)

He died of his wounds on 10th August 1915 at Suvla Bay, Gallipoli at the age of 42. He is commemorated on the Helles Memorial, Gallipoli.

War Diary details:

The battalion's war diary gives the following account for the dates leading up to his death:

"5th August 1915 - Battalion transferred by lighter from Imbros and disembarked S.E. of Nibrunesi Point on B Beach.

6th 2300 to 7th 0800 - Made an attack on Lala Baba and drove the enemy N.E. to Hill 10. Casualties 16 officers and about 250 other ranks.

7th – Took up outpost position on Hill 10

8th – Moved forward to position running between Hill 53 and Sulajik

9th 0400 – Battalion moved back to Hill 10 to reorganize

9th 1200 – Orders received to go forward to Sulajik. Battalion came under heavy rifle fire. Captain Chapman wounded and 10 other casualties. We went up into firing trench.

10th – Occupied trenches all day. 2nd Lieutenant S Morris killed. 5 other casualties."

Robert Ernest Garbutt

21544 Private, 9th West Yorkshire (Prince of Wales's Own) Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 9 Park Terrace, Brotton
Age: 20
Occupation: Driver –Horse, Ironstone mines
Status: Single

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 13th June 1917
Age at death: 27
Commemorated: Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial; Panel 56

Robert Ernest Garbutt was the illegitimate son of Hannah Garbutt and was born on 14th June 1890 at Lingdale. In the 1891 census Robert and his mother were living at 84 & 86 High Street Lingdale with his grandmother, also called Hannah, who was a widow. By 1901 his mother had married James Beadnall and the family were living at 61 Errington Street, Brotton. On 11th October 1915, Robert, aged 25 and a Private in the 13th West Yorks based at Rugeley, Staffordshire, married Sarah Jane Froud, aged 21 from 9 Vaughan Street, North Skelton. This is the address recorded on the CWGC database.

Robert was killed in action on 13th June 1917 and has no known grave. He is commemorated on the Menin Gate at Ypres.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

At the time of his death, the battalion was operating in the vicinity of Bailleul and the battalion war diary gives the following account of events at that time:

"12th June 1917 – 'B' Coy was moved up into O.28.c.6.3 to O.34.a.8.5. These posts as well as our front system, especially 'B' Coys H.Qrs and 'D' Coys H.Qrs at DESPAGNE FARM were shelled by H.E. throughout the day. Casualties 1 Officer wounded. 4 O.Rs killed. 8 O.Rs wounded.

13th – Enemy Artillery still very active during the night. 2/LTs W.T.PHIPPS & J.L.HOULT Joined. Increased Aerial activity is also noticeable during the day. 10 O.Rs (reinforcements) Joined the Battalion.

14th – Some shelling during the day, more active towards night. 4 O.Rs killed. 4 O.Rs wounded. Orders received that Battalion will be relieved tomorrow night."

Thomas William Gill

2720 Private, 4th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: Post Office, North Skelton
Age: 18
Occupation: Mines Yard Labourer
Status: Single

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 2nd May 1915
Age at death: 22
Commemorated: Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, Panel 33

The ***Skelton Parish Roll of Honour*** shows him as "Pte. T Gill" under "4th YORKS". ***North Skelton Memorial*** shows him as "PTE T GILL 4TH YORKS"

The ***Commonwealth War Graves Commission*** database reveals only the one individual with the surname "Gill", initial "T" and serving in the Yorkshire Regiment – 2720 Private Thomas William Gill. His ***Soldiers Died in the Great War*** entry gives his birthplace as Thirsk, his enlistment as Northallerton and his residence as Skelton-in-Cleveland.

Extensive searches in the censuses for an appropriate Thomas Gill have found only one likely individual. In 1911, there is a Thomas Gill living in the household of William Young at the Post Office, North Skelton. In the absence of any better information, the Thomas Gill who is living with the Youngs at North Skelton in 1911 is accepted as being the Thomas William Gill who died on 2nd May 1915 in the Ypres salient.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

The battalion's war diary gives the following account of the events of this period:

"28th April – 3rd May – TRENCHES ASTRIDE FORTUIN ROAD

The night of 28th we relieved the 5th Yorks in trenches, ½ Bn. Being attached to K.S.L.I and 2 Coys to London Rifle Bde. We remained here till May 3rd when the line was straightened. During this time we had our first touch of gas on May 1st and also were attacked on May 2nd. Our casualties were: Capt. N.W.STEAD, Lts. A.R.WELSH, C.SPROXTON, J.K.STEAD, NORMAN CONSTANTINE wounded. Lt. EDWARD WILLIAMS gassed. 34 killed among whom was Coy. Sgt. Major Preston. 74 wounded among whom was Coy.Sgt. Major Wilkinson.

On the night of the 3rd we returned to C. Camp.

Perhaps the best thing done during this time was done by MAJOR H.L. de LEGH who got 15 wounded men out of a burning cellar under heavy shell fire. The names for mention in despatches of the following were sent in:

MAJOR H.L. de LEGH

CAPT. W.W.CONSTANTINE

CAPT. T.H.HUTCHINSON

LIEUT. W.P. ORDE-POWLETT

Regtl. Sgt. Major P.D. Denham

Coy. Sgt. Major J.F. Myers
Pte. E. Broadley (Stretcher bearer)
Pte. J.H. Royle
Pte. J. Hood”



Thomas Robinson Glover

R/20547 Rifleman, 8th King's Royal Rifle Corps

Census details (1911):

Address: 68 High Street, Moorsholm

Age: 16

Status: Single

Parents' names: Thomas Glover (widower)

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 15th September 1916

Age at death: 21

Commemorated: Thiepval Memorial; Pier and Face 13A and 13B

Although appearing on the **Skelton War Memorial** as F Glover, Thomas Robinson Glover is believed to be the correct individual. **Soldiers Died in the Great War** shows his place of residence as Boosbeck. His initial on the Memorial is thought to be a transcription error. F and T, in the handwriting style of that era, could appear very similar.

Thomas Robinson Glover was born in the autumn of 1894 in the village of Westerdale, Yorkshire. He was a son of Thomas Glover and Hannah Shaw and in the 1901 census the family was living at 23 Graham Street, Liverton, Yorkshire. In 1911, he is living, with his widower father and younger sister, at 68 High Street, Moorsholm.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

He was killed in action on the opening day of the Battle of Flers-Courcelette. The battalion's war diary gives a detailed account of the events of that day:

"DELVILLE WOOD

About 02:00am Bn. H.Q. was moved from Longueval Alley to a temporary shelter in GREEN STREET. This movement took some considerable time owing to the number of troops using the communication trenches and paths in DELVILLE WOOD. GREEN St was a trench about 150 yards outside DELVILLE WOOD.

GREEN STREET & SWITCH TRENCH

The following account of the operations of the 8th Bn King's Royal Rifle Corps on September 15th was written by Major L Frewer and sent to H.Q. 41st Inf.Bde. secret memorandum no. FB2 dated 22nd Sept.1916.

"The objective was a portion of SWITCH TRENCH allotted to the Battalion, distant from our trenches some 1,200 yards. An intermediate trench, TEA SUPPORT, some 500 yards from our line, was the German advanced line, and would have to be accounted for in the advance on SWITCH TRENCH. The Battalion was drawn up for the attack on a front of two companies, with two companies in support constituting the second wave. The order was as follows:

B Coy in NEW TRENCH in front of BROWN STREET with its overlapping COCOA LANE and in touch with the 41st Division on its immediate left.

C Coy in NEW TRENCH on the right of B Coy connecting up with the 8th Bn Rifle Brigade on its immediate right

*A Coy in BROWN STREET covering B Coy
D Coy in BROWN STREET covering C Coy
Lewis Gun teams at the disposal of O.C. Companies
Battalion Bombing Squads as follows:*

No.1 Squad attached to B Coy for the purpose of clearing COCOA LANE as the attack advanced and for keeping touch with the 41st Division.

No.2 Squad attached to C Coy for the purpose of connecting with 8th Bn Rifle Brigade and also protecting right flank on the right of SWITCH TRENCH

Nos.3&4 Squads, these were attached to A & D Coys respectively for clearing up any part of the attack which might be held up, and were kept central during the attack until required

Zero hour was to be at 6:20am

By 5:30am hot OXO and rum had been issued to all the men.

At 5:30am a minor attack began, for the purpose of clearing HOP ALLEY and ALE ALLEY. 2 "Tanks" were used on this job to aid the attacking troops. As far as could be seen from my Battalion headquarters, the enemy had evacuated these trenches. No fighting was observed and only one round was heard to be fired from the "Tanks". At about 6:00am our heavy artillery began a very heavy bombardment on TEA SUPPORT and SWITCH TRENCHES. The effect on SWITCH TRENCH was excellent, that on TEA SUPPORT was not visible owing to that trench being in a hollow.

(At 5:00am a 4.5 Howitzer Battery of ours began a gas shell bombardment of my Battalion headquarters and the surrounding country. Urgent messages to Brigade Headquarters stopped it but not until two Orderlies had been asphyxiated and the whole of Battalion Headquarters very sick from the gas. Fortunately they did not reach our troops in the front trenches)

At 6:20am the Companies got out of our trenches and formed up for the attack. The 7th K.R.R.C at the same moment emerged from the edge of DELVILLE WOOD.

Our "barrage" began at 6:20am and the Companies advanced under cover of it.

At a point about 150 yards from the start of the attack small outposts of the enemy were met in shell holes: these were easily driven in or mopped up. Lieutenant DOMVILLE commanding A Coy was badly wounded by a bomb at this point.

On reaching TEA SUPPORT considerable resistance was made, and the first line doubled over to assault the trench. Unfortunately we had some casualties here by the men going forward into the barrage, but this was probably better than the effects of a machine gun, which was traversing the line and fairly hot rifle fire.

Judging by results afterwards, and the information of several reliable witnesses in the attack, fully 150 of the enemy were accounted for here including two strong bombing posts and the machine gun referred to. I, personally, saw the gun and team lying dead there as went forward ten minutes later, and a considerable number of dead lying about.

The M.O. who searched this trench later in the day for wounded cases, came upon bunches of the enemy dead lying five and six deep in places.

At about 6:30am the enemy awoke to the fact that we were attacking and put up a double barrage. A heavy one on the front edge of DELVILLE WOOD, a second, and lighter one, on BROWN STREET. We had no difficulty in picking our way through the second one and the heavy one was fortunately behind us.

SWITCH TRENCH

The first wave continued on up the hill, from TEA SUPPORT, followed by the second wave some 50 yards distant. After the first wave had passed, a small party of the enemy which had hidden in a shell hole got up behind them and opened fire. One of our bombing squads in the second wave promptly rushed this party and exterminated them. No more resistance was offered until the crest of the hill was reached, there the enemy were scattered about in shell holes and offered some resistance, and our men were again caught in our barrage while counteracting this resistance.

On reaching the crest I found that the greater part of the battalion was in the act of digging in on the near edge of this crest, some 60 yards from SWITCH TRENCH. After reconnoitering and, with difficulty, discovering SWITCH TRENCH (so obliterated was it) I moved the battalion forward and began consolidating the position.

We soon got into touch with the 8th Bn Rifle Brigade and they informed me soon after that they had established touch with the GUARDS on their right. I was unable to get into touch on my left as, although I discovered the C.O. of the battalion on my left, he informed me that his battalion had gone off into the blue, and he could find no one. We, therefore, established a strong post, with our left flank drawn back, taking up about 150 yards of ground to the left of our objective, in order to watch the valley north of FLERS. Here we established a Lewis gun, and later, two machine guns on their arrival at our trench.

By 7:15am we were fairly established and consolidated, but were much hampered by enemy sniping us from somewhere in front. A thin line of skirmishers sent out in front very soon put an end to this, and judging by the amount of dead lying there, must have accounted for some 50 of the enemy in various shell holes, besides sending back a few prisoners.

Hostile machine guns from opposite (I should say that part of SWITCH TRENCH occupied by the GUARDS division) continued to give trouble and enfilade us for a further hour.

In conclusion I should say that the "TANKS", except for the clearing up of HOP and ALE ALLEY, were no good to us at all. Owing to the "Barrage" being timed slow to allow the "tanks" to come up, I should, personally, call them a hindrance. I think our casualties would have been far less with a quicker lifting "barrage" as the difficulty of holding back troops keen for the assault is immense. No "tanks" crossed SWITCH TRENCH for fully 1½ hours after our assault.

The "barrage" was decidedly sketchy.

I can positively state that the "barrage" put up for us was almost an impossibility to follow accurately owing to the variety of the bursts, some falling too short and some going too far. There was no line that one could say positively that the "barrage" was on at any time.

The heavy bombardment of SWITCH TRENCH was a marvel of modern artillery, practically no part of the trench being untouched, and in parts being completely obliterated.

The wire cutting was excellent. I did not see one bit of wire longer than a foot anywhere.

The behaviour of all ranks was quite beyond any praise."

(Signed: L Frewen, Major, Commanding 8th Bn King's Royal Rifle Corps)

Throughout the day SWITCH TRENCH was shelled with 5.9's and 4.2's. Captain Bowen, O.C. B Coy, Lieut. BOUDILLON, O.C. C Coy, Lieut DOMVILLE, O.C. A Coy, 2/Lt LISTER, 2/Lt Cawthorne, 2/Lt Clarke, 2/Lt Chambers, 2/Lt Perry, 2/Lt Grundy, 2/Lt Saunders were all wounded on the 15th inst. 2/Lt Cooke, commanding D Coy, went through the whole show and did excellent work consolidating SWITCH TRENCH, also Captain J W Lesley who took command of B Coy. In the evening 2/Lt Hill, 2/Lt Lee and 2/Lt Mackinlay came up to SWITCH trench, 2/Lt POPE came up also and took on the work of adjutant again. Sgt Flocks, the bombing sergeant was killed,

a great loss to the battalion. Our casualties were 11 officers and 320 O.R, 98 of whom were missing. Sgt LEATHER, the mess sergeant and Rfn COMER, the commanding officer's servant did splendid work all day."

The following year Sergeant LEATHER was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal. The citation for this reads:

"1692 Sjt. L. O. Leather, K.R.R.C.

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. He was attached to Headquarters, and after the advance had begun went out and carried in wounded under heavy fire. He also controlled a party of prisoners in the same work. Throughout the day he displayed the greatest gallantry and untiring devotion."

William Edward Godsmark
3109 Private, 4th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 5 Moorcock Row, Lingdale
Age: 16
Occupation: Rope Lad underground
Status: Single
Parents' names: Simeon and Martha Godsmark

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 17th September 1916
Age at death: 22
Commemorated: Thiepval Memorial, Pier and Face 3A and 3D

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

The battalion's war diary account of the battle in which he died, and in which five other men of 4th Yorks fell, reads as follows:

"15th September 1916 – MARTINPUICH"

The assault took place at 06:22am. The order of attack was Z Company on the right, X Company in the centre and W Company on the left. Y Company was in reserve and carrying. Brigade order 4th East Yorks, 4th Yorks, 5th Yorks. Divisions 47th on the right, 50th Div., 15th Div. The place of assembly was S.2.b.9.5 to S.2.b.5.5.

1st objective – S.3.a.1½.8 to S.2.b.8.8

2nd objective – M.33.c.6.8 to M.33.c.1.7

Final objective – M.33.a.3.6 to M.33.c.1.7

The final objective was reached. Owing to the 47th Div being hung up in High Wood, the 149th Bde did not reach its objective and the 4th East Yorks on our right were back. Our right was in the air at the junction of PRUE TRENCH and MARTIN ALLEY. This position was held despite terrific shelling which caused heavy casualties.

16th September 1916

Holding on

17th September 1916

At 1pm B.G.C. 150th I.B. ordered 5th DLI with bombing squads from 4th & 5th Yorks to attack and occupy PRUE and STARFISH trenches as far as the CRESCENT. This was accomplished although the 5th Yorks did not appear in time"

Frederick Richard Goodall

C/12031 Rifleman, 12th King's Royal Rifle Corps

Census details (1911):

Address: Bank Street, Mirfield, Yorkshire
Age: 22
Occupation: Land Surveyor Clerk
Status: Single
Parents' names: (both deceased)

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 23rd August 1917
Age at death: 27
Commemorated: Etaples Military Cemetery Grave XXII Q 9A

Frederick Richard Goodall was born, the son of Dick Goodall and his wife Elizabeth Hall, in 1889 at Mirfield, Yorkshire. The family was living at 6 Providence Terrace at the time of the 1891 census. By 1901, Frederick was living at Bracken Hill, Mirfield, in a household headed by his older brother Ernest H Goodall; and in 1911 he was still living in Mirfield, at Bank Street, in the household of another older brother, Tom.

At first glance, he has no connection to Skelton. However, in the Skelton Estate Cash Book covering the period from January 1913 to 30th June 1920, he appears in the 1913 entries, drawing a salary of £6 in January, rising to £7.10s in November of that year. In the entry dated 8th January 1915, he receives £8.6s.8d salary with a note alongside the entry that reads (Enlisted).

Service Record details:

On 16th September 1915 he attested under Short Service terms (For the duration of the war) into 21st (Service) battalion, King's Royal Rifles at Richmond, Yorkshire. His medical report described him as aged 26 years and 6 months, height 5ft 8ins, weight 121 lbs and noted a minor defect: a slight hammer toe on his right foot.

It is not known when he was posted to France but on 23rd November 1916 he was admitted to 139 Field Ambulance suffering from nephritis. On the same day he was transferred through no.2 Casualty Clearing Station to no.41 Divisional Rest Station. Five days later he was admitted to No.2 Australian General Hospital, which at that time was located near Wimereux, with a note to the effect that he was to be transferred to England from Boulogne via Hospital Ship "St.Denis".

From 30th November 1916 to 25th January 1917 he received treatment at "...General [Hospital] ...TESTER for Nephritis. The initial medical report noted "...slight oedema of the legs, dyspnoea and headache, albumenuria" By 2nd January 1917 his medical record noted: "...no symptoms of nephritis, no albumenuria..."; but by 9th February 1917 he was being treated at the hospital at the Command Depot, Sutton Coldfield for nephritis and tachycardia. On 2nd June 1917 he was placed in Cat.A3 by the Senior Medical Officer and on 6th July was transferred back to his battalion.

On 16th August 1917 he was wounded and the following day was transferred to 44 Casualty Clearing Station. On the 23rd August 1917, at the age of 27, he died of his wounds, which were described as being to his jaw, abdomen, a punctured chest and fractured ribs. He was buried in grave XII Q 9A at the Etaples Military Cemetery.

War Diary details:

"16th Aug 1917 – LANGEMARKE – 04:45am – ZERO HOUR – The barrage which was terrific at this moment, lifted at Zero+5 and the Oxfords were busy mopping up AU BON GITE, with the 6th K.S.L.I. on our right and the 12th Kings Liverpools on our left, we advanced to the BLUE LINE, about 3/400 yards short of LANGEMARKE. During this advance and a 20 minutes halt on the BLUE LINE, we were subject to very heavy machine gun fire and suffered many casualties to both Officers and men, including the C.O. Lt.Col.R.U.H.Prioleau, M.C. (Wounded) Capt. T.Lycett, our Adjutant, was then in command and noticing a Concrete Blockhouse on our left which was holding up the advance of the 61st Brigade, and also causing heavy casualties with M.G.Fire to our own men, he ordered Sergt.Cooper, who was in Command of a Platoon of "A" Coy (Lieut.E.D.Brown having been killed) to go for it. Sergt.Cooper with four men, got to within 100 yards of the Blockhouse, through a perfect hail of Bullets and tried to silence the guns with Rifle fire. Finding this of no avail, he dashed at the Blockhouse, captured it with 45 prisoners and seven machine guns, a most gallant deed for which he has been recommended for the V.C. At this point, in addition to the casualties already mentioned, we had lost A/Capt.A.D.Thornton-Smith D.S.O (Killed) Lieut.T.A.Carnegie (Killed), 2/Lieut.S.M.Pollard (Wounded, afterwards died of wounds) and Capt.G.L.F.Taylor of "A" Coy (wounded). This left Capt.T.Dove, M.C. in Command of "B" (left Coy) with 2/Lieut.W.F.Munsey – Lieut.A.L.Jones in command of "D" (Centre Coy) with 2/Lieut.J.H.Molyneux and 2/Lieut.W.H.Taylor – and 2/Lieut.A.M.Ewart in command of "A" (Right Coy). "C" Coy were in support with 2/Lieut.A.N.Cranswick in command. Casualties in the ranks were about 100.

05:45am – Barrage started to creep forward

06:00am – Battalion continued its advance in Artillery formation to the GREEN Line just on the East side of LANGEMARKE and here deployed, previous to advancing to the Final objective (the RED LINE). The deployment was carried out satisfactorily and touch was obtained with 6th K.S.L.I on right and 12th Kings Liverpools on left.

07:15am – Barrage became intense

07:20am – Barrage lifted and we advanced to the attack, the distance to go being 4/500 yards, over very boggy and shell-holed ground. During this advance we came under very heavy M.G.Fire which caused many casualties and also encountered more Concrete Blockhouses from which we got some prisoners and our moppers-up did good execution. Capt.T.Lycett, captured a Bosche Officer from whom he was able to obtain good information.

07:50am – The Battn. was going well and in spite of much opposition on the Left Coy Front, reached the Final Objective at 7:50am. A few more prisoners were captured but on the whole the Bosche ran, and our Lewis Guns and rifle fire accounted for many of them, the Kings Liverpools on the left and the Shropshire's on our right had also reached their objectives and touch being intact, consolidation was started and the men worked well.

LANGEMARKE-GHELUVELT line – 12;30pm – Message was received from Capt.T.Dove (Left Coy) saying he could see the enemy massing for a Counter-attack. Fire was brought to bear on them with good effect and the Brigade were informed of the situation. Orders were issued that our positions were to be kept at all costs.

4:10pm – Counter-attack was launched and the S.O.S was sent at 4:15pm. Our guns responded immediately but the enemy were in very superior numbers. The weight of the counter-attack seemed to be directed specially against the 12th Kings Liverpools on our left, and after a gallant fight, they were forced to give ground. This let the enemy in on our left and our advance posts

had been driven in. The enemy bombed up our trench and our left Company "B" was practically wiped out – Capt. T. Dove, M.C. was killed, 2/Lt. W.F. Munsey severely wounded and a few men were taken prisoners. A defensive flank was thrown back and touch again established with the 12th Kings Liverpools. Ammunition was nearly all expended and great difficulty was experienced in getting more up. Consolidation was continued during the night."

Peter Gosling

39264 Lance Corporal, 9th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 27 High Princes Street, Bishop Auckland
Age: 19
Occupation: Assistant Onsetter below ground
Status: Single
Parents' names: Mary Gosling (widow)

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 20th September 1917
Age at death: 25
Commemorated: Tyne Cot Memorial, Panel 52 to 54 and 162A

In 1901 Peter was enumerated, along with his parents Edward and Mary, and two older brothers, living at 25 Richard Street, North Skelton. In 1911 he and his widowed mother were enumerated as visitors in the household of R Watson at the address above in Bishop Auckland.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

"19th to 24th September 1917

Engaged in operations in the neighbourhood of INVERNESS COPSE as per Appendix "A" attached"

"Appendix "A"

Short account of the action of the 9th Yorkshire Regiment. in the neighbourhood of INVERNESS COPSE September the 19th to 25th 1917.

The Bn. Left MICMAC CAMP at 1.10p.m. on 18th inst and proceeded to RAILWAY DUGOUTS. Headquarters, "A" and "B" Coy's remained here for the night of 18th/19th while "C" and "D" Coy's after having been issued with Battle Stores proceeded at 5.30p.m. to SANCTUARY WOOD where they dug themselves in. During the night of 18th/19th these latter Coys were heavily shelled with H.E. and Gas Shells and lost 12 casualties.

At 1 p.m. on the 19th inst H.Q. moved up to CLAPHAM JUNCTION under the MENIN ROAD and "A" and "B" Coys moved up to the vicinity of STIRLING CASTLE and SANCTUARY WOOD.

At 9.30 p.m. Coys commenced to move into their assembly positions ready for attack and all these positions were completed by 2 a.m. on the 20th inst.

At Zero (5.30 a.m. on 20th) "A" and "D" left their assembly positions and advanced towards INVERNESS COPSE closely followed by "B" and "C" Coys. The morning was dark and there was a considerable mist. This combined with the dense clouds of smoke caused by our Artillery barrage rendered the question of keeping direction extremely difficult.

In spite of this and in spite of the fact that the ground over which they were advancing was pitted with shell holes and strewn with broken tree trunks and barbed wire very little loss of direction occurred until the Bn. had advance [sic] about 150 to 200 yards into the Copse. Here according to arrangement a halt was called for about three quarters of an hour, troops taking

advantage of shell holes and natural cover. Even in this early stage instance of fighting occurred, individual Germans who had not been mopped bombing our men from the rear where the enemy also fired a green S.O.S. Very Light.

During this pause [sic] troops were reorganized and the direction checked with the aid of compasses, while the men were in the best of spirits in spite of the heavy [sic] artillery and machine gun fire, sat in shell holes smoking German cigars calmly waiting for the advance.

At Zero plus 1 hour 2 minutes Coys commenced to move forward and it was while advancing from this position to the RED LINE that some of the heaviest fighting occurred. Numerous small parties of Germans remained in the wood in dugouts and shell holes, and many of these put up a strong resistance attacking our men with bombs and causing many casualties by machine gun and rifle fire.

All these parties were however successfully mopped up, at least 60 Germans being killed in the Copse. By this time however the Bn. had suffered considerable casualties both from the Germans in the Wood, from machine gun fire from the Strong Point beyond, and from a hostile artillery barrage.

Before reaching the RED LINE 8 out of 16 Coy Officers had already become casualties, including 2 of the Coy Commanders. In spite of this however, the men formed up well under the barrage ready to go forward to the assault at Zero plus 1 hour 28 minutes according to programme.

While "A" and "D" Coys were thus engaged in mopping up these positions, "B" and "C" Coys passed through them and advanced towards the BLUE LINE. Each of these Coys had at this time only one Officer left and one of these had already been shot through the helmet and wounded in the hand. In spite of this, and notwithstanding the heavy losses, they had suffered earlier in the day both in N.C.Os and men, so thoroughly did each man know the task which [sic] had been allotted to him, that formations and direction still continued to be well maintained and each Section made independently for its own Objective on the BLUE LINE, captured it, and commenced to consolidate it.

Although this work of consolidation was much hampered by the fire of enemy machine guns and snipers, the ground was soft and all men worked intensively so that by the time the barrage moved forward to the GREEN LINE every man had provided himself with good cover. While this consolidation was in progress an excellent opportunity presented itself on our left front where a large number of the enemy were observed to be retiring over the Ridge. Lewis gun and rifle fire was immediately brought to bear on these and it is thought a number of casualties were inflicted upon the enemy.

In the meanwhile Bn.H.Q. had moved up to an advanced position in the German Aid Post just South of the MENIN Road at 9.15 a.m.

Throughout the remainder of the day the positions occupied were improved and consolidated and stores brought up, so that when a heavy barrage was opened by the enemy during the afternoon and evening in conjunction with the counter-attacks of the TOWER HAMLETS RIDGE very few casualties occurred.

On the morning of the 21st it was found advisable to thin out the posts in the vicinity of the REUTELBEEK where the ground was very marshy, and to transfer these men to better positions on the right of the BLUE LINE. Our positions were shelled by the enemy throughout the day but with particular intensity during the afternoon and evening. On the afternoon of the 22nd as a result of the heavy casualties inflicted on other Battalions of the Brigade the 9th Yorkshire Regt. was called upon to take over a portion of the GREEN LINE. "B" and "C" Coys took over the

positions previously occupied by "A" and "D" Coys. "A" Coy took over the portion of the line North of the REUTELBEEK Road from the Australians. "D" Coy took over the portion of the line South of the REUTELBEEK from the 8th Yorkshire Regt. Battalion Headquarters moved to dugout just South of the TOWER.

On the night of 23/24th "A" Coy were relieved by the 8th Yorks and Lancs Regt and moved to JACKDAW CRATERS.

On the night of 24/25th Bn.H.Q. and "C" Coy were relieved by Bn.H.Q. and "C" of the 2/5th Bn. Worcester Regt. "D" and "B" Coys were relieved by 2 Coys of the 4th Bn. King's Liverpool Regt. The Bn., on relief being completed at 8.20p.m. on the 24th inst, moved to Camp Area No.1 near DICKEBUSH.

*26/9/17 (signed) R.S.HART Lieut.Colonel
Commanding 9th.Bn. Yorkshire Regiment"*



Francis Hanson

Steward, S.S.Goathland, Merchant Navy

Census details (1891):

Address: 11 Vaughan Street, North Skelton
Age: 16
Occupation: Farm Labourer
Status: Single
Parents' names: John W and Sarah E Hanson

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 4th July 1917
Age at death: 42
Commemorated: Tower Hill Memorial, London

On the basis that Francis, who was living with his parents in both 1881 and 1891 censuses, cannot be found in the 1901 census, it is presumed that he started his Merchant Navy career sometime between 1891 and 1901. What can be said with certainty is that, in the summer of 1904, he married Emily Simpson. In the 1911 census, Emily, together with her son George, aged 5, was living with George and Mary Ann Webster, at Broom Hill, Staithes where she was enumerated as George's niece.

The ship on which Francis was serving was the S.S. Goathland (3044 registered tons), built by Tyne Iron Shipbuilding Co. Ltd., Newcastle in 1906 and owned at the time of her loss by Headlam & Rowland, of Whitby. On July 4th, 1917, she was on a voyage from St. Nazaire to the Gulf of Mexico in ballast, when she was torpedoed and sunk 6.3 miles SSE of Pointe du Skeul, Belle Île Island, by the German submarine, U-84, commanded by Walter Roehr.

Researches have revealed one point of interest about the Tyne Iron Shipbuilding Co. Ltd. The first 25 ships built by this company were all, without exception, lost at sea or wrecked. Of the first 50 ships built, only 3 would see a full life of service and make it to the breakers yard.

The German submarine U-84 had been built by Friedrich Krupp Germaniawerft AG at Kiel between 25th October 1915, when her keel was laid down, and 22nd July 1916, when she was launched. She was commissioned into service on 7th October 1916 under her Commander, Walter Roehr and was assigned to IV Flotilla. Under Roehr's command she carried out 8 patrols between 3rd December 1916 and 26th January 1918, sinking 28 ships (83,127 tons), damaging 7 (42,149 tons) and capturing two as prizes (3462 tons). Her career came to an end when she was rammed, depth charged and sunk in St. George's Channel at position 51° 53' N 05° 44' W with the loss of all hands.



James Harding

27089 Private, 18th Durham Light Infantry

Census details (1911):

Address: 25 Dixon Street, Skelton
Age: 25
Occupation: Miner
Status: Single
Parents' names: Francis and Mary Harding

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 3rd May 1917
Age at death: 31
Commemorated: Arras Memorial; Bay 8

James Harding was born in the autumn of 1885, the second son of Frank Harding and his wife, Mary Elizabeth Atterton, of 25 Dixon Street, Skelton-in-Cleveland. His younger brother, William, was also among the fallen.

Service Record details:

On 18th May 1915, James attested into the Durham Light Infantry at Darlington, The report from his medical examination associated with his enlistment (also dated 18th May but which took place at Newcastle) describes him as being 29 years 7 months old, of height 5ft 7 ins and weighing 137 lbs.

On the 14th July 1915 he was posted to 16th DLI and on 30th December of that year was posted again, this time to 13th DLI. He made a will on 2nd January 1916, leaving everything to his mother.

He was wounded on 18th July 1916 and entered the casualty handling system, being received by 104 Field Ambulance and transferred to 45 Casualty Clearing Station. His wound was described as "Sh: forearm". The following day he was transferred again, this time to 25 A.T. On 26th July 1916 he was transferred from 35 I.I.D to Base E 20 G H at Etaples and was posted back to 18th DLI on 30th July 1916, arriving there on 2nd August.

On 26th September 1916 he was admitted into 98 Field Ambulance with a wound to his right arm. On 4th October, in respect of the same injury, he was admitted into 11 C.R.C (or possibly C.R.S) and 13 days later was sent to the Casualty Clearing Station; and a week later was sent back to duty.

He was awarded 10 days Field Punishment No.1 and forfeited 1 day's pay "for absence" on 26th December 1916.

War Diary details:

Killed in action on 3rd May 1917, he has no known grave and is commemorated on bay 5 of the Arras Memorial. The battalion's war diary gives only this terse statement for that date:

"3rd May 1917 – "Gavrelle" – The battalion in trenches immediately west of GAVRELLE in support to 15th, 16th and 18th West Yorks who were attacking on a wide front. (See Appendix). 92nd Brigade on left, 9th Division on right"

William Harding

R/39505 Rifleman, 12th King's Royal Rifle Corps

Census details (1911):

Address: Middle Farm, West Coatham, Redcar
Age: 17
Occupation: Horseman on Farm
Status: Single

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 16th August 1917
Age at death: 23
Commemorated: Tyne Cot Memorial; Panel 115 to 119, and 162A and 163A

Service Record details:

Not found

Soldiers Died in the Great War shows this William Harding as born in Skelton-in-Cleveland. He was, in fact, born in the summer of 1893, the brother of James Harding. His parents were Frank Harding and Mary Elizabeth Atterton of 25 Dixon Street, Skelton.

War Diary details:

"16th Aug 1917 – LANGEMARKE – 04:45am – ZERO HOUR – The barrage which was terrific at this moment, lifted at Zero+5 and the Oxfords were busy mopping up AU BON GITE, with the 6th K.S.L.I. on our right and the 12th Kings Liverpools on our left, we advanced to the BLUE LINE, about 3/400 yards short of LANGEMARKE. During this advance and a 20 minutes halt on the BLUE LINE, we were subject to very heavy machine gun fire and suffered many casualties to both Officers and men, including the C.O. Lt.Col.R.U.H.Prioleau, M.C. (Wounded) Capt. T.Lycett, our Adjutant, was then in command and noticing a Concrete Blockhouse on our left which was holding up the advance of the 61st Brigade, and also causing heavy casualties with M.G.Fire to our own men, he ordered Sergt.Cooper, who was in Command of a Platoon of "A" Coy (Lieut.E.D.Brown having been killed) to go for it. Sergt.Cooper with four men, got to within 100 yards of the Blockhouse, through a perfect hail of Bullets and tried to silence the guns with Rifle fire. Finding this of no avail, he dashed at the Blockhouse, captured it with 45 prisoners and seven machine guns, a most gallant deed for which he has been recommended for the V.C. At this point, in addition to the casualties already mentioned, we had lost A/Capt.A.D.Thornton-Smith D.S.O (Killed) Lieut.T.A.Carnegie (Killed), 2/Lieut.S.M.Pollard (Wounded, afterwards died of wounds) and Capt.G.L.F.Taylor of "A" Coy (wounded). This left Capt.T.Dove, M.C. in Command of "B" (left Coy) with 2/Lieut.W.F.Munsey – Lieut.A.L.Jones in command of "D" (Centre Coy) with 2/Lieut.J.H.Molyneux and 2/Lieut.W.H.Taylor – and 2/Lieut.A.M.Ewart in command of "A" (Right Coy). "C" Coy were in support with 2/Lieut.A.N.Cranswick in command. Casualties in the ranks were about 100.

05:45am – Barrage started to creep forward

06:00am – Battalion continued its advance in Artillery formation to the GREEN Line just on the East side of LANGEMARKE and here deployed, previous to advancing to the Final objective (the RED LINE). The deployment was carried out satisfactorily and touch was obtained with 6th K.S.L.I on right and 12th Kings Liverpools on left.

07:15am – Barrage became intense

07:20am – Barrage lifted and we advanced to the attack, the distance to go being 4/500 yards, over very boggy and shell-holed ground. During this advance we came under very heavy M.G.Fire which caused many casualties and also encountered more Concrete Blockhouses from which we got some prisoners and our moppers-up did good execution. Capt.T.Lycett, captured a Bosche Officer from whom he was able to obtain good information.

07:50am – The Battn. was going well and in spite of much opposition on the Left Coy Front, reached the Final Objective at 7:50am. A few more prisoners were captured but on the whole the Bosche ran, and our Lewis Guns and rifle fire accounted for many of them, the Kings Liverpools on the left and the Shropshire's on our right had also reached their objectives and touch being intact, consolidation was started and the men worked well.

LANGEMARKE-GHELUVELT line – 12;30pm – Message was received from Capt.T.Dove (Left Coy) saying he could see the enemy massing for a Counter-attack. Fire was brought to bear on them with good effect and the Brigade were informed of the situation. Orders were issued that our positions were to be kept at all costs.

4:10pm – Counter-attack was launched and the S.O.S was sent at 4:15pm. Our guns responded immediately but the enemy were in very superior numbers. The weight of the counter-attack seemed to be directed specially against the 12th Kings Liverpools on our left, and after a gallant fight, they were forced to give ground. This let the enemy in on our left and our advance posts had been driven in. The enemy bombed up our trench and our left Company "B" was practically wiped out – Capt.T.Dove, M.C. was killed, 2/Lt.W.F.Munsey severely wounded and a few men were taken prisoners. A defensive flank was thrown back and touch again established with the 12th Kings Liverpools. Ammunition was nearly all expended and great difficulty was experienced in getting more up. Consolidation was continued during the night."

John William Hardwick

3099 Private, 4th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 4 Thomas Street, New Skelton
Age: 28
Occupation: House Painter and Decorator
Status: Single
Parents' names: Jane Hardwick (widow)

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 27th September 1916
Age at death: 33
Commemorated: Dernancourt Communal Cemetery Extension; Grave III B 23

John William Hardwick was born in the winter of 1883 in Rosedale, Yorkshire, the son of George Hardwick and Jane Johnson. In the 1891 and 1901 censuses the family were living at 4 Thomas Street, New Skelton. By 1911, George has died and John William, age 28, is working as a house painter and decorator.

He died, age 33, of his wounds on 27th September 1916; wounds that he probably received during the battle of Flers-Courcelette.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

Not searched for



Frank Harker

27360 Private, 14th Royal Warwickshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 9 Bolckow Street, North Skelton
Age: 26
Occupation: Ironstone Miner
Status: Single
Parents' names: Robert and Hannah Harker

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 27th September 1918
Age at death: 33
Commemorated: Fifteen Ravine British Cemetery, Villers-Plouich, Grave IV C 8

Frank and his family were first found in the 1891 census, living at 2 Charlotte Street, New Skelton. Ten years later Frank, aged 17, was now a Driver working in the ironstone mines and the family was living at 9 Bolckow Street, North Skelton.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

"METZ Trenches 27 September 1918

This operation is in conjunction large operations to the North. Attack is made by 1 R West Kent on right, 15 R Wark on left. 14 R Wark passing through 15 R Wark to second objective. 2 KOSBs in support. (See attached account marked "H"). Zero hour 7.52am.

Battn gained objective but was bombed out of the greater part by enemy & lost many men owing to Bn on right (15 R WARK) not gaining their objective. Casualties were heavy: 3 coy commdrs of the attacking coys: Capt HUGHES A coy, Lieut JONES C coy, Capt IZON D coy being killed, Lieut SHEARD, 2 Lts BLAYDON – LAZENBY – CRIPPS wounded

About 190 casualties to O.R. "B" coy (2 Lt RICHARDSON) did good work in driving back enemy bombers (OOs attached marked I)"

John William Harris

3833 Private, 4th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 41 Scarth Street, Lingdale
Age: 33
Occupation: Face Miner below ground
Status: Single

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 14th July 1916
Age at death: 38
Commemorated: Skelton Cemetery; Grave H H U 49

John William Harris was born in the summer of 1873, the son of Charles Harris and his wife, Sophia Smith. His parents were from the Rutland/Northamptonshire area but in 1891 the family was living at 8 Groundhill Cottages, Skelton. John William, his younger brother Webster, and his father Charles, all worked in the ironstone mines.

He died on 14th July 1916, his death being registered in Guisborough District. He was buried on 18th July 1916, in grave H H 49 in unconsecrated ground, in Skelton-in-Cleveland Cemetery. The cemetery's burial register describes him as age 42 and a Miner. This age makes him one of the oldest casualties from the village.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

Not searched for



Jack Hart

220841 Driver, "A" Battery, 76th Brigade Royal Field Artillery

Census details (1911):

Address: High Scales Farm, Gilling West

Age: 14

Occupation: School

Parents' names: John and Ann Hart

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 23rd April 1917

Age at death: 20

Commemorated: Arras Memorial; Bay 1

Service Record details:

Not found

Jack Hart was born on 21st March 1897 at 1 Hope Street, Stockton-on-Tees, County Durham; the son of John Hart and Anne Ayre. In 1901 the family was living in Hope Street, Stockton-on-Tees where John Hart, the father, was working as a Gas Works Foreman. In 1911 Jack, his older brother Thomas, and his parents, were living at High Scales, Gilling West, near Richmond, Yorkshire. And therein may lie the clue as to Jack's connection to Skelton. Gilling West was part of the Skelton and Gilling estate.

His military service began in the Army Service Corps, where he was a Driver with the service number T4/086181. He subsequently transferred to the Royal Field Artillery as a Driver under the service number noted at the top of this entry. Jack was killed in action on 23rd April 1917 during the Second Battle of the Scarpe and is commemorated on the Arras Memorial.

War Diary details:

The Brigade's diary gives the following account for the day of his death:

"CITE-DE-CAUMONT 4.20am

Barrage put down as ordered, owing to the unsuccessful operations Btys continued firing throughout the day. Bty positions were given away.

Enemy shelled B & D Bty positions heavily with 5.9" and 8" guns doing a considerable amount of damage. Many casualties.

Many casualties occurred through the men taking cover in cellars which were blown in"

Robert Henry Husband

28415 Private, 7th East Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 21 Harker Street
Age: 15
Occupation: Assisting in business
Parents' names: John and Mary Jane Husband

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 24th April 1917
Age at death: 21
Commemorated: Arras Memorial; Bay 4 and 5

Robert Henry Husband was born, Robert Henry Brown, in the summer of 1896 at Skelton-in-Cleveland, the son of Mary J Brown. Mary would seem to have been widowed shortly after his birth since, in the summer of 1897, she was married to John Husband at Guisborough Register Office. Young Robert Henry grew up known as Robert Henry Husband. This practice of a young child assuming his step-father's surname was common practice. It must have saved the child a lot of awkward questions! Since he appears on the ***Skelton War Memorial*** as H HUSBAND, it seems likely that he was known by his middle name. This is born out in the censuses. In 1901, enumerated as Robert H Husband, he was living with the family at 21 & 23 Harker Street, Skelton Green. In 1911, and now enumerated as Henry, age 15, he is helping his father run his coal dealer business; the family still living at 21 Harker Street.

Service Record details:

Henry attested, under his full name of Robert Henry Husband, for the duration of the war, on 10th December 1915, and was transferred to Army Reserve the following day. On the 8th February 1916, he was mobilized and posted to the Cavalry Depot at Scarborough. The report from his medical examination, which took place the next day, described him as being 19 years and 2 days old, height 5ft 7½ ins and weighing 141lbs. His only defect was a left thumb which was crushed 1 week ago "and is still tender". On 16th February 1916 he was posted to 11th Reserve Cavalry Regiment.

Later that year, on 8th September, he was disciplined at Tidworth for being Absent Off Pass from midnight 6th September 1916 to 10pm 7th September 1916. He was Admonished and forfeited 1 day's pay.

On 30th November 1916 he was transferred to 6th East Yorkshire and embarked to join the B.E.F, arriving at his regiment on 13th December 1916. The following day he was transferred once more to 7th East Yorkshire.

His service record notes that on 10th April 1917 he was transferred from 52 Field Ambulance to 53 Field Ambulance and on the 13th of that month was transferred from 53 Field Ambulance back to duty. Clearly he had been a casualty but no details are given.

War Diary details:

He was killed in action on 24th April 1917 and is commemorated on the Arras Memorial. The battalion war diary gives the following account of the events of 24th April 1917 in the Arras area:

"24th 1.20 a.m. The attack made by 6th DORSET REGT and 10th W.YORK R. having failed on account of very heavy machine gun & rifle the Bn. was ordered at 1.20 am. to occupy the front line system as follows:- Right flank: Road in I.28.c. 'A' Coy. Centre 'C' Coy. Left 'B' Coy as far as stop in BAYONET TRENCH. A new trench was taped out by the Signal Officer from a point S of

the stop in BAYONET TRENCH to a point E of LONE COPSE H.30.d.5.0. and 1 Coy R.E. and 2 Coys Pioneers were detailed to dig it. 'D' Coy provided a covering party, and occupied the trench before day-break, and finished the consolidation. The Bn. in trench with NORTHUMBERLAND FUSILIERS on the right and 7th YORK on the left.

11.20 a.m. Orders issued to O.C. 'B' Coy to make a strong and determined bombing attack up BAYONET TRENCH, with object the capture of BAYONET and RIFLE trenches. The attack was ordered to take place as soon after 1 p.m. as possible, with the cooperation of the Stokes' Mortars of the 51st Bde. T.M.B. Bombing attack failed owing to heavy artillery, rifle and machine gun fire. The enemy had filled in part of BAYONET TRENCH with earth, so that our men had to go over the open. Further up the trench the enemy had filled it in with barbed wire, with a M.G. at the other end. His snipers continuously sniped the bombing squads when they showed themselves. During this operation Capt. H.W. Brooke, O.C. B Coy was mortally wounded.

4 p.m. Our artillery was requested to fire on BAYONET TRENCH from junction with RIFLE trench. 5.30 p.m. One N.C.O. & 11 men were detailed to report to 53rd Field Ambulance at 9 p.m. at FEUCHY for stretcher bearing duties."



Herbert Jackson

2640 Lance Corporal, 4th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 20 Park Street, Skelton
Age: 16
Occupation: Apprentice to Joiner
Status: Single
Parents' names: John Jackson (widower)

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 17th September 1916
Age at death: 21
Commemorated: Thiepval Memorial; Pier and Face 3A and 3D

Herbert Jackson was born on 14th January 1895, the son of John Jackson and Sarah Annie Forster of 20 Park Street, Skelton-in-Cleveland. He was killed in action during the Battle of Flers-Courcelette.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

The battalion's war diary account of this battle, in which six men of 4th Yorks fell, reads as follows:

"15th September 1916 – MARTINPUICH"

The assault took place at 06:22am. The order of attack was Z Company on the right, X Company in the centre and W Company on the left. Y Company was in reserve and carrying. Brigade order 4th East Yorks, 4th Yorks, 5th Yorks. Divisions 47th on the right, 50th Div., 15th Div. The place of assembly was S.2.b.9.5 to S.2.b.5.5.

1st objective – S.3.a.1½.8 to S.2.b.8.8

2nd objective – M.33.c.6.8 to M.33.c.1.7

Final objective – M.33.a.3.6 to M.33.c.1.7

The final objective was reached. Owing to the 47th Div being hung up in High Wood, the 149th Bde did not reach its objective and the 4th East Yorks on our right were back. Our right was in the air at the junction of PRUE TRENCH and MARTIN ALLEY. This position was held despite terrific shelling which caused heavy casualties.

16th September 1916

Holding on

17th September 1916

At 1pm B.G.C. 150th I.B. ordered 5th DLI with bombing squads from 4th & 5th Yorks to attack and occupy PRUE and STARFISH trenches as far as the CRESCENT. This was accomplished although the 5th Yorks did not appear in time"

His cousins Joseph William Forster and Wilfred Arthur Forster are also among the fallen.

Isaac Jacques

2719 Private, 4th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 37 Richard Street, North Skelton
Age: 23
Occupation: Labouring on Pit Head
Status: Single
Parents' names: Baldwin and Sarah Jacques

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 2nd May 1915
Age at death: 26
Commemorated: Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, Panel 33

Isaac Jacques (or Isac Jakes as he appears in the 1911 census) was a son of Baldwin and Sarah Jacques. The family lived at 37 Richard Street, North Skelton in 1911 and 1901, having previously lived at 44 Wharton Street, North Skelton in 1891.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

The battalion's war diary gives the following account of the events of this period:

"28th April – 3rd May – TRENCHES ASTRIDE FORTUIN ROAD

The night of 28th we relieved the 5th Yorks in trenches, ½ Bn. Being attached to K.S.L.I and 2 Coys to London Rifle Bde. We remained here till May 3rd when the line was straightened. During this time we had our first touch of gas on May 1st and also were attacked on May 2nd. Our casualties were: Capt. N.W.STEAD, Lts. A.R.WELSH, C.SPROXTON, J.K.STEAD, NORMAN CONSTANTINE wounded. Lt. EDWARD WILLIAMS gassed. 34 killed among whom was Coy. Sgt. Major Preston. 74 wounded among whom was Coy.Sgt. Major Wilkinson.

On the night of the 3rd we returned to C. Camp.

Perhaps the best thing done during this time was done by MAJOR H.L. de LEGH who got 15 wounded men out of a burning cellar under heavy shell fire. The names for mention in despatches of the following were sent in:

MAJOR H.L. de LEGH

CAPT. W.W.CONSTANTINE

CAPT. T.H.HUTCHINSON

LIEUT. W.P. ORDE-POWLETT

Regtl. Sgt. Major P.D. Denham

Coy. Sgt. Major J.F.Myers

Pte. E. Broadley (Stretchers bearer)

Pte. J.H. Royle

Pte. J. Hood"

David Edward Jarvis

35888 Private, 2nd/4th Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 27 Richard Street, North Skelton
Age: 24
Occupation: Hawker
Status: Single
Parents' names: Thomas and Mary Ellen

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 29th September 1918
Age at death: 31
Commemorated: Grand Ravine British Cemetery, Havrincourt, Grave C 28

Service Record details:

David Edward Jarvis attested "for the duration" on 22nd January 1916 at Saltburn, giving his home address as 2 Child Street, Brotton and his occupation as Hawker. His medical report describes him thus: apparent age 27 years 3 months, declared age 29 years 7 months, height 5ft 7¼in, weight 135lbs, chest 36in. He was already married, to Alice Slater, in a ceremony that had been performed on 8th April 1914 (possibly at Guisborough Register Office)

Following his attestation, he was placed on Reserve on 23rd January 1916. It wasn't until 6th May 1918 that he was mobilized, being posted to 3rd battalion Yorkshire Regiment on 9th May. On the 15th May he embarked to join the B.E.F in France, destined for the 2nd battalion Yorkshire Regiment. But, on arrival in France on 16th September, he was immediately transferred to the 2/4th battalion West Riding Regiment. He was killed in action just 16 days later.

Alice was not going to be allowed to forget her sad loss. Over the next three years the authorities would be in regular contact with her. On 2nd January 1919 she acknowledge receipt of "One Disc" as an item of returned personal effects. This was followed by a "Leather case" on 23rd June. In between times, she would have been informed that she was being awarded a war widow's pension of 20/5d per week. Also on 23rd June, she was asked to confirm details of the surviving family members, in readiness to receive the Memorial Scroll "to be sent in accordance with the King's instructions". She advise a change of home address to 6 Foster Street, Brotton.

She received the Memorial Scroll on 10th December 1920. Her emotions can only be guessed at when she saw that the authorities had got his name wrong: David Earnest instead of David Edward. She was asked to return the original and a replacement was received on 21st January 1921. On 3rd February she received her late husband's British Medal and on 25th April, his Victory Medal.

War Diary details:

"Beaumontz – Sept. 27/18

"The Battn moved forward to take part in an attack on MARLOING. See Appendix II"

Appendix II comprised a two page handwritten account of "The Operations in front of MARCOING" from which the following extract is pertinent to the death of David Edward Jarvis:

"On September 29th the 5th Bn Duke of Wellington's Regt. having secured the crossing of the canal, the Battalion was ordered to move forward and attack the trench system RUMILLY

TRENCH and RUMILLY SUPPORT and then move forward to the road running from MASNIERES to CAMBRAI, with an alternate objective of RUMILLY VILLAGE.

A few hours before the attack was to take place it was found that the 5th Bn Duke of Wellington's Regt. had been driven back, and the barrage that had been arranged had to be supplemented with an additional barrage of 3½ minutes on MARCOING SWITCH and 3½ minutes on MARCOING SUPPORT, and the jumping off position changed from MARCOING SUPPORT to a position behind the Canal (L.23.a and b)

At 7 am the Battalion was in the assembly position.

The battalion was attacking on a two Company frontage with three Platoons in front and one in support.

At 7.23am the barrage came down on MARCOING SWITCH. The morning being foggy, the leading company had taken advantage of the mist to cross the Canal over two small foot bridges, and moved forward to the embankment west of the railway sidings (L.9.b and c)

The rear companies following.

The attack went forward with the barrage until it reached MARCOING SUPPORT where the barrage halted for fifteen minutes, 300 yards in front of this position. The barrage then went forward at a rate of 100 yards in 3 minutes, and the attack met with no serious opposition until it was nearing RUMILLY TRENCH, when machine gun fire became very heavy. However, the attack pressed on and the first prisoners were taken in RUMILLY TRENCH. After a little while the resistance was overcome and the attack pressed forward to RUMILLY SUPPORT. On our right flank very severe resistance was met with from Trench Mortars and machine guns, but eventually this position was reached and the Trench Mortars and machine guns captured. On our left no serious opposition was met with until RUMILLY SUPPORT had been crossed and then the advance was held up by machine gun and rifle fire from FLET FARM and the vicinity of M^T SUR L'OEUVRE

The 2nd Division had not advanced beyond MARCOING SWITCH and the left flank of the Battalion was exposed.

Two Platoons were sent forward to deal with this opposition and captured three machine guns but were still unable to advance.

The right of the Battalion by this time had pushed forward to the MASNIERES-CAMBRAI road, and a patrol entered the southern end of the village.

At 1.30pm a counter attack of considerable force developed and drove the flanks back to the line of RUMILLY SUPPORT. This trench was not a continuous line, but a series of posts connected up by shallow trenches.

During the counter attack the enemy managed to establish himself between the right and left companies and also cut off a platoon of "C" Company.

The position of the enemy in RUMILLY SUPPORT was from G.14.d.2.4 to G.14.d.0.5. Then one platoon of "C" Company held from this point to G.14.c.8.6. The enemy again held from this point to G.14.c.6.7. and down the communication trench running north through G.14.a

The enemy had brought forward several machine guns, and an attempt to bomb him out proved unsuccessful. A second attempt was made by one of the right companies but that also failed.

After dark an officer's patrol was sent out to gain touch with the two companies on the right and this was successful, but it was found impossible to communicate with them by daylight.

An Officer's patrol went out on the night of 29th/30th to try and gain touch with the platoon of "C" Coy which had become detached, and it was not until after the advance that the body of this Officer, and some of the platoon, was discovered.

On September 30th the 2/4th Hampshire Regt. made a gallant attempt to drive the enemy from the trench, but this met only with partial success.

The position remained much the same throughout the day."

Thomas Johnson

478 Sergeant, 4th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 10 Boosbeck Road, Skelton
Age: 39
Occupation: Platelayer Mines below ground
Status: Married
Wife's name: Bessie S (age 43)
Children (if any): none

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 24th May 1915
Age at death: 43
Commemorated: Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial; Panel 33

His mature age would have made him an ideal candidate to be an NCO, especially if he had served with the Territorial Force prior to the war. He may even have been an ex-Regular with Boer War experience. He was killed in action just over a month after his unit first landed in France.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

The war diary extract gives good indication as to the chaos of the aftermath of battle:

"24th

...stuck to our trenches but at great cost. Lt. H.W. CUMMINS and 2nd Lt. E.F. HUTCHINSON were killed. Capt. W.W. CONSTANTINE, Capt. A. GRAHAM and Lt. C.C. JERVELUND were gassed and taken to hospital and when, on the 25th, the Bn. or what was left of it got back to huts, the casualties of N.C.O's and men stood at:

30 killed

70 wounded

98 missing or wounded

These latter were almost all accounted for in different Hospitals either wounded or gassed where all ranks did well.

Perhaps special mention may be made of Capt. LEATHER, Capt. G.H. BOWES-WILSON, Lt. McLAREN and his machine gun and Capt. B.H. CHARLTON who was acting adjutant. Coy. Sgt. Major Myers again distinguished himself. Coy. Sgt. Major Bainbridge was splendid. Ptes Perry and Ekins also deserve mention

One man got into the Machine Gun emplacement of the Hussar Regt. Where he found only the officer. Working the gun with him, he stayed until he, the man, was killed. During the day Major H.G. SCOTT drove round and round in the Commandeered Ambulance car picking up wounded and gassed men who were straggling back to dressing stations. At night the remainder of the garrison of our trenches were relieved and straggled back."

Henry Paul Laing-Taylor

3183 Private, 4th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 62 Harker Street, Skelton
Age: 16
Occupation: Rope Lad Ironstone Mines below ground
Status: Single
Parents' names: Mary Taylor (widow)

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 31st October 1916
Age at death: 20
Commemorated: Dernancourt Communal Cemetery Extension; Grave IV B 39

Henry Paul Laing-Taylor was born on 21st April 1895 at Skelton-in-Cleveland, the son of George David Laing-Taylor, a Miner, and his wife, Mary (nee Hunham). He was baptised on 16th May 1895 at All Saints. In 1901 and 1911 the family is enumerated at 62 Harker Street, Skelton Green, although, by 1911, Mary has become a widow.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

Not searched for



John Robert Leckenby

33400 Private, 4th York and Lancaster Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 22 Trout Hall Lane, Skelton
Age: 17
Occupation: School Teacher
Status: Single
Parents' names: Mary Leckenby (widow)

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 9th October 1917
Age at death: 23
Commemorated: Tyne Cot Memorial; Panel 125 to 128

John Robert Leckenby (the spelling variant Leckonby also occurs) was born in the spring of 1893, the son of Aaron Watson Leckenby and his wife Mary Palmer. In 1901 the family was living in Nunthorpe Station Cottages where Aaron was working as a Signaller on the Railway. In 1911 the family, now headed by Mary, who has been widowed, was living at 22 Trout Hall Lane, Skelton Green; and young John Robert, aged 17, was a School Teacher working for the County Council.

He would seem to have spent some time in the Yorkshire Regiment (where his service number was 45596) but, when killed in action on 9th October 1917, at the age of 24, he was serving with the York & Lancs. He has no known grave and is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

The war diary gives the following account:

"S. West of PASSCHENDAELE

4.45pm on 8th

Battalion fell in to march to the assembly position which was being reconnoitered and taped out by 2/Lt Jackson and the scouts. Owing to the heavy rain which almost continuously during the march and to the bad shape of the track, the assembly position was not reached until 4 am and by this time the men were very weary.

9th [starts with a list of all the officers present with the battalion]

5.20am ZERO hour. A report on the attack and criticisms on the arrangements is attached"

"REPORT ON THE ATTACK ON 9TH OCTOBER 1917

After a march of 11 hours, the battalion reached its assembly point at 4 a.m., and I was satisfied at 4-45 a.m. that all were in their correct position. The men were very tired and it was only with difficulty that they were roused before Zero Hour.

When the advance began it was found that the RAVEBEEK stream was a very serious obstacle. The ground was much cut up and very wet for a breadth of about 30 yards on either side of the stream. In many places the water was waist deep. Only about 50 men of my right company (C) succeeded in crossing the stream, the remainder continued to advance up the left bank. "B" Company in rear of "C" who were to take the second objective came under very heavy Machine Gun fire from WATERFIELDS and LAARPWERK and were unable to reach the stream.

On the left the Machine Gun fire was not so heavy and "A" and "B" Companies crossed the stream by the GRAVENSTAFEL road and deployed on the far side. "A" Company reached its objective and dug in about on the line D.10.c.30.70-42.45. "D" Company attempted to leap frog through "A" Company but were held up by Machine Gun fire and could not proceed. Meanwhile the party of "C" Company who were across the stream had been reduced by Machine Gun fire to about 10 strong and they with a few stragglers of 50th Division formed posts on the line 42.45-35.10. This part of the line was subsequently reinforced by a Company of the 4th K.O.Y.L.I. who were sent up to support us.

My Headquarters was established about 30 yards North West of MARSH BOTTOM.

At about 5 p.m. 200 of the enemy were seen to be forming up for Counter Attack in front of my left Company. Rifle and Lewis Gun fire was opened and the S.O.S. signal put up and the Counter Attack did not develop.

At 4 a.m. on the 10th information was received that Air reports showed our troops to be in SNIPE HALL and at D.10.c.80.95 and I was ordered to mop up the ground up to these points, to assist in which operation a barrage was to be put down at 4-45 a.m. The notice given was so short that it was impossible to organize this attack, but strong patrols were sent forward and they reported that no trace of our men could be found.

During the day the enemy shelled the RAVEBEEK valley and the GRAVENSTAFEL ridge heavily, but left the position which was being consolidated comparatively quiet.

The fact that the attack was held up at the first objective by Machine Gun fire was, I consider, largely due to the irregularity and weakness of our Field Gun barrage. No single German was found killed by shell fire, though many rifles were found. There was no curtain of fire at all and it was impossible to see where the edge of the barrage was intended to be. A number of shells fell very short.

My companies advanced in front of our barrage only to find large numbers of the enemy waiting for them outside the Pill Boxes. "A" Company started to consolidate 30 yards in front of the line on which the Smoke barrage afterwards went down.

If the concentration of shelling became somewhat heavier the enemy took shelter in his Pill Boxes, but for the most part he did not appear to be worried by the barrage.

During the whole of the 9th, the enemy sniping was very thorough and accurate, and I had a large number of casualties particularly among the runners and Stretcher Bearers. On the night 9th/10th the JAGERS opposed to us were relieved and the sniping on the 10th was not so effective. Every effort was made to keep down this sniping by our own rifle fire and a number of the enemy were hit."

Harry Leeks

3313 Corporal, 1st/4th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 12 Vaughan Street, North Skelton
Age: 15
Occupation: Rapping Lad down Ironstone Mines
Parents' names: William Walter and Emma Jane Leeks

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 11th January 1917
Age at death: 21
Commemorated: Warlencourt British Cemetery; Grave VII C 14

In the 1901 census Harry, age 5, was living with his parents and siblings at 57 Wharton Street, North Skelton.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

"BAZENTIN LE PETIT 7/1/17 – 11/1/17

Night 7/8 Jan^y moved to FLERS RESERVE in relief of 7 N.F's. Flers Reserve very wet: a series of gun positions connected by trenches into a miniature Hampton Court maze. Several thousand rounds left as a legacy by battery which previously occupied position. A quiet four days. Then we moved to left front-line subsection in relief of 5 DLI (almost coincident with right Bn position when Divn was in here previously) with Bn HQ HEXHAM ROAD. Front line is series of isolated posts, old close support not held. Dispositions - two half coys in outposts: half left coy in deep dugouts, half right coy Hexham Road, one coy EAUCOURT-L'ABBAYE, one coy Bazentin railhead under caves. 4 pristine caves in [something or other] this town & there was one case of trench foot. Work done in wiring support, improving revetting advanced posts. Patrol reported no Bosche posts found, no Bosche wire. Bn walked into barrage on night 11/12 at Hexham Road"

William Powell Lines

248005 Private, 5th Durham Light Infantry

Census details (1911):

Address: 11 Upper Princess Street, South Bank
Age: 26
Occupation: Assisting in business
Status: Single

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 14th August 1917
Age at death: 32
Commemorated: Wancourt British Cemetery; Grave I A 34

William Powell Lines was baptised on 13th November 1884, the son of William Lines and his wife, Annie Metcalf, at the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Skelton-in-Cleveland. His birth was not registered until the first quarter of 1885. In 1901 the family was living at 41 Park Street, where his father was enumerated as a Grocer and was declared as being blind. By 1911, William was living with his brother, John James Lines, a Grocer and Fruiterer, at 11 Upper Princess Street, South Bank, and was assisting in the business.

He was killed in action at the age of 31 on 14th August 1917 during the second Battle of Passchendaele.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

The battalion's war diary gives only this terse entry for the date of his death:

*"NEUVILLE VITTASSE 5th-20th In trenches. 5th Bn.
Relieved in front line by 9th DLI"*

His **Medal Index Card** lists his service number also as 8/4436. This may indicate that he also served at some point with the 8th DLI as well as the 5th DLI.



John William Longstaff

21062 Private, 12th Yorkshire Regiment or Bombardier, Royal Field Artillery

There is great uncertainty over the correctness of the identification of this man.

The ***Skelton War Memorial*** has the name inscribed as J LONGSTAFF but, in keeping with all the other men, gives no regimental details. The ***Skelton Parish Roll of Honour*** lists him as J LONGSTAFF and places him in the Royal Field Artillery (RFA) as a Bombardier. However, researches on the ***Commonwealth War Grave Commission*** database found only two Longstaffs associated with the RFA: George and Arthur. There was a John Longstaff in the Royal Garrison Artillery, but he was from Bourne, in Lincolnshire.

The ***Commonwealth War Grave Commission*** database gave a total of nineteen Longstaffs with a forename initial of J. Each of these was cross-checked with ***Soldiers Died in the Great War*** to try and make a connection with Skelton. Not one of them had a birthplace of Skelton, or anywhere in the East Cleveland area. The nearest was 21062 John William Longstaff of the Yorkshire regiment, whose birthplace in ***Soldiers Died in the Great War*** was given as Middlesbrough.

It has proved impossible to connect any Longstaff with both the RFA and with the East Cleveland area.

Thus, if the initial and surname on the Memorial are correct, then 21062 John William Longstaff is the only possibility. The 1901 Census shows a family of Longstaffs living at 16 Dixon Street, Skelton-in-Cleveland. They have a son, John W, aged 11 and born at Norton, County Durham. This age is consistent with that of 21062 Private John William Longstaff of 12th Yorks, who died aged 26 on 9th August 1916 and who is buried in Lillers Communal cemetery in grave V C 24.

Service Record details:

Not searched for

War Diary details:

Not searched for

Albert Lonsdale

203064 Private, 4th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: High Hedgeley Farm, Eglington, Alnwick
Age: 17
Occupation: Gardner
Status: Single

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 27th May 1918
Age at death: 25
Commemorated: La Ville-aux-Bois British Cemetery; Grave I I 8

Albert Lonsdale was born in the summer of 1893, at Walker, Northumberland, the son of Matthew Gowland Lonsdale and his wife, Elizabeth Porter. Analysis of the 1891 and 1901 census entries for the Lonsdale family leads to the conclusion that Albert was orphaned at a young age. In 1901 he was enumerated as an inmate of the Union Workhouse at Elswick, Northumberland. In 1911 he was living as a boarder, in the household of Thomas Redpath at Eglington, near Alnwick, Northumberland, and was working as a gardener.

He commenced his employment, as a gardener in the Castle Flower Gardens, at Skelton Castle, on 23rd February 1914, being remunerated 8^s/5½^d for his rail ticket from Burley to Saltburn and a Cab from there to the Castle. He ceased his employment on 29th August 1914: the Wages Book stating that he "left – enlisted". The parish magazine for September 1914, in an item listing the men who have joined up, gave his home address as Castle Gardens, Skelton-in-Cleveland.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

"26th-27th May 1918 – CRAONNE-BEAURIEUX-MAIZY Battalion took up a support position round CRAONNELLE and LA HUTTE. Enemy bombardment started about 1am

27th May

Heavy gas shelling as far back as MAIZY. The enemy broke through on our left and pushed on towards BEAURIEUX arriving there about 10am. The enemy also came through on our right using tanks over the flat country to the east of CRAONNE. This party also pushed on towards BEAURIEUX and surrounded the Brigade in the line. The enemy then pushed on towards MAIZY. All troops in MAIZY and the few who had got out of BEAURIEUX then made a stand on the hills to the south of the village. At about 11:15am these troops were withdrawn from this position. The next position was held at GLENNES and later a line on the hill north of FISMES."

Both the **Soldiers Died in the Great War** database and the **Commonwealth War Graves Commission** database have entries for 203064 Private Albert Lonsdale of 4th Battalion, Yorkshire Regiment. However, his date of death is given as 27th May 1918 by the **Commonwealth War Graves Commission** and as 23rd August 1918 by **Soldiers Died in the Great War**.

The only **Medal Index Card** for an Albert Lonsdale in the Yorkshire Regiment, gives his service number as 7654 and shows him having entered overseas service on 14th July 1915 in the Balkans campaign. This is the date associated with the 6th Battalion's entry into the Balkan theatre of war. It

is interesting that the parish magazine entry of September 1914 associated A Lonsdale with 6th Yorks.

There is no **Medal Index Card** for an Albert Lonsdale with service no. 203064.



William Edwin Mills

R/1773 Able Seaman, Hood Battalion, Royal Naval Division

Census details (1911):

Address: Poultry House, Skelton
Age: 16
Occupation: Clerk (Water Works)
Status: Single
Parents' names: Peter and Mary Mills

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 30th December 1917
Age at death: 23
Commemorated: Thiepval Memorial; Pier and Face 1A

William Edwin Mills was born on 30th May 1894. According to the 1901 census, his place of birth was Coundon, County Durham. He was baptised at Bishop Auckland Presbyterian Church on 17th July 1894, the son of Peter Mills and his wife Mary. This baptism entry gives his place of birth as Ropemoor, Windlestone and shows his father's occupation as Keeper. In 1911, William Edwin and his parents were living at Poultry House, Skelton. William was a clerk with the local water works company and his father, Peter, was a gamekeeper.

On 6th June 1917, at age 23, and working as a cashier and living at Poultry House, Skelton, he married Ethel Beatrice Emmerson, age 24, from Holly Bush Farm, Skelton, at All Saints church, Skelton. As well as these two addresses, 7 North Terrace is also associated, by the CWGC on their record of him, with Mrs Ethel Symonds. Presumably this is William's widow now re-married.

Service Record details:

William Edwin's service record has survived and it gives the following information: he was mobilized into the Army Reserve on 14th June 1917 and transferred to Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve for assignment to the Royal Naval Division (RND). On 16th June 1917 he joined 3rd Reserve Battalion at Bradford. On 12th October 1917 he was transferred to the Hood Battalion, RND with the British Expeditionary Force. He left the Base Depot on 23rd October to join his battalion, arriving on 13th November 1917 from 18th Corps Reinforcement Camp.

On 20th December 1917 his next of kin was changed to: Wife – E B Mills, Holly Bush Farm, Skelton-in-Cleveland

War Diary details:

Not searched for

He was killed in action, aged 23, on 30th December 1917 and is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial. This presents a slight problem. The Thiepval Memorial's full title is "The Thiepval Memorial to the missing of the Somme". On 30th December 1917, the Hood Battalion was engaged in the Action of Welch Ridge in the Cambrai area. This is not regarded as part of the Somme battlefield. So, if William was killed on 30th December 1917 with the Hood Battalion at Welch Ridge, why is he commemorated on a memorial to the fallen on the Somme battlefield?

Alvin Harker-Mohun

13227 Private, Machine Gun Corps (Infantry)

also

119261 Royal Highland (Black Watch)

Census details (1911):

Address: 9 Boosbeck Road, Skelton

Age: 29

Occupation: Grocer's Assistant

Status: Single

Parents' names: George and Isabel Harker-Mohun

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 2nd July 1916

Age at death: 34

Commemorated: Dantzig Alley British Cemetery, Mametz; Grave V W 1



Alvin Harker Mohun was born during the summer of 1882 at Brotton, Yorkshire, the eldest son of George Harker-Mohun and Isobel Stubbs. In 1891 the family was living at 30 Dixon Street, Skelton-in-Cleveland, whilst in 1901 and 1911 they were at 9 Boosbeck Road, Skelton Green. In 1901, 18 year old Alvin is shown as a Grocer's Assistant, a job he still fulfilled in 1911.

In 1911, every member of the family is consistently enumerated as a Harker-Mohun. Should he, therefore, be more properly referred to as Alvin Harker-Mohun (i.e. with a hyphenated surname like Henry Paul Laing-Taylor)?

He was killed in action on the second day of the Battles of the Somme (2nd July 1916) at the age of 33 and is buried in grave V W 1 in Dantzig Alley British Cemetery, Mametz.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

Not searched for

Frank Morgan

42062 Private, 1st/4th East Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 10 Bolckow Street, North Skelton
Age: 18
Occupation: Shop Assistant
Status: Single

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 22nd September 1918
Age at death: 27
Commemorated: Glageon Communal Cemetery Extension; Grave I J 7

In 1901, 8-year old Frank was living with his parents, Charles and Bessie, and their other children at 6 Vaughan Street, North Skelton. In 1911 he is living in the household of his uncle, Richard Morgan.

His age in the 1911 census and his age at death from the ***Commonwealth War Graves Commission*** database have been re-checked and are as given above. The two year discrepancy in his age cannot be accounted for.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

Not searched for

Charles Henry Mott

39255 Private, 9th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 30 William Street, North Skelton

Age: 13

Occupation: School

Parents' names: John and Ada Mott

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 15th October 1917

Age at death: 20

Commemorated: Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery; Grave XXI H 16

In 1901 the Mott family were living at 30 William Street, North Skelton. Charles's father, John, was enumerated as a Run Rider in the ironstone mines.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

Not searched for

Henry Naisbitt

29500 Private, 9th Loyal North Lancashire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 19 William Street, North Skelton
Age: 10

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 27th May 1918
Age at death: 18
Commemorated: Soissons Memorial

He is known only from the **Stanghow Lane School Roll of Honour**, where he is listed as "H Naisbitt". **Soldiers Died in the Great War** was searched for surname "Naisbitt". There were just ten hits returned. One of these was "29500 Private Henry Naisbitt" of the 9th Battalion, Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, who was born at Skelton Green. He was shown as resident at Eston and having enlisted at Middlesbrough. The **Commonwealth War Graves Commission** database confirmed his name, rank, number and unit details.

The **UK Census Collection** was searched for Henry Naisbitt. 130 matches were returned but only one had a place of birth in the East Cleveland villages. That was Henry Naisbitt, age 10, living at 19 William Street, North Skelton. However, the age is incorrect in this entry. Henry's birth was registered in the October-December quarter of 1899. So he would have been one year old in 1901 and therefore eleven years old in 1911

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

"MUSCOURT 27/5/18

Arrived at camp at MUSCOURT at about 4.0am

9.0am – 1 Platoon per coy ordered to proceed to a line along Canal Bank, N.E. of MAIZY, to form a nucleus of defence for that place.

12.00 noon – Remainder of Battn ordered to reinforce at once, line already taken up. Total going into action: 12 Officers, 496 other ranks.

Capt W.T. Loudon M.C. – wounded, Lieut. A Sumner – wounded, Capt. P.R. Shields M.C. – wounded and missing, 2nd Lieut. A.E. Downing – w & missing, Major O.S. Danby-Griffith M.C. – killed, 2nd Lieut. J.B.M Lightbody – wounded

Major Lloyd 105th R.E's assumed command of Battn."

Benjamin Nunn

3405 Corporal, 4th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 18 William Street, North Skelton
Age: 15
Occupation: Labouring, Ironstone Mines underground
Parents' names: Robert Thomas and Jane Nunn

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 25th September 1916
Age at death: 21
Commemorated: St. Sever Cemetery, Rouen; Grave B 23 62

In 1901, five year old Benjamin was enumerated as the son of a Rolleyman working below ground in the ironstone mines. The family were living at 18 William Street, North Skelton.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

Not searched for

John William Parker

SS/111447 Stoker 1st Class, HMS Queen Mary

Census details (1911):

Address: 40 Wharton Street, North Skelton
Age: 21
Occupation: Horsekeeper underground in Ironstone Mines
Status: Single

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 31st May 1916
Age at death: 26
Commemorated: Portsmouth Naval Memorial; Panel 19

In 1901 John W Parker was enumerated living at 21 William Street, North Skelton with his father, Joseph, and mother, Annie, and his brothers and sisters. In 1911 he was living in the household of George Allemby and was enumerated as a Boarder.

Service Record details:

SS111447 Stoker 1st Class John William Parker was born on 13th May 1890 at Middlesbrough. He enlisted into the Royal Navy on 16th October 1911, signing up for 5 years in the colours and 7 years on Reserve. He was described as being 5ft 5½in in height, with a 38in chest, brown hair, hazel eyes and a fresh complexion. He had various tattoo marks including: a Flag, a woman's head, horseshoe & horse's head, crossed hands and heart.

From 16th October 1911 to 4th November 1911 he was posted to HMS Victory II, a shore station, rated as a Stoker 2nd Class. This would probably have been for his basic training. From 5th November 1911 to 8th March 1912 he was posted to HMS Renown, which at that time was the Training Ship for Stokers. Another spell at HMS Victory II followed, from 9th March to 14th May, before he found himself once again on board ship, serving on the London-class battleship, HMS Venerable, from 15th May to 27th November. During this posting, on 24th October 1912, he was promoted to Stoker 1st Class. Next came another shore posting to HMS Victory from 28th November 1912 to 3rd September 1913.

His final posting, on 4th September 1913, was to the newly commissioned battlecruiser HMS Queen Mary. This means that he would have been involved in the naval battle at Heligoland Bight on 28th August 1914. He would have missed the battle at Dogger Bank because his ship was refitting at that time.

On 31st May 1916, during the battle of Jutland, HMS Queen Mary was hit by three 12-inch shells. One of these struck near the two forward turrets and, almost immediately, their magazines exploded in a massive explosion. She sank after just 38 minutes of battle with the loss of 1266 men.

Edward Bertie Pawsey

11278 Private, 2nd Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: Gilling West, Richmond
Age: 17
Occupation: Garden Labourer
Status: Single
Parents' names: William and Lucy A Pawsey

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 30 September 1918
Age at death: 25
Commemorated: Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun; Grave VII A 89

Edward Bertie Pawsey was born in the spring of 1893, the first son of William Pawsey and Lucy Anne Aungiers of Gilling West, Yorkshire. In the 1901 census the family are living at Archway House, Gilling West, Richmond, Yorkshire and William is enumerated as an Estate Bailiff. The "Estate" would presumably have been Skelton and Gilling Estate. The family was still at Gilling in 1911, when Edward was employed as a garden labourer. On 6th October 1912, Bertie started his employment as a gardener in the Kitchen Gardens at Skelton Castle, being remunerated 3s/11d travelling expenses. His employment ended on 27th August 1914 when he left to enlist. Some sources give his home address as Castle Gardens, Skelton-in-Cleveland. His employment no doubt arose from his father's position as an Estate Bailiff.

He was the last casualty from the village of Skelton before the Armistice was declared.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

The battalion's war diary records that they had a relatively quiet time during the first three weeks of September 1918 with several mentions of: salvage work, inspections, training, bathing, refitting, divine services, etc. until:

"25th - 5pm - Moved to BUISSY Switch Line in reserve to Canadians

26th – In positions preparatory to attack the following morning

27th – 5am – The Battle began about this time, the Canadians advancing rapidly. The Battalion moved forward from BUISSY Switch Line about 10am and crossed the Canal der Nord (near BARALLE) about 1pm. The Canadians having reached their objective, the Battalion commenced to attack EPINOY about 3pm, companies moving forward in columns of platoons. D Coy in reserve. By 6pm we had obtained a footing in the village (see report below). Ref. Map.51.b.S.E. The Battalion left shelters in V.11 at 9.40am and proceeded to BARALLE by platoons at 200 yards distance. At BARALLE news was received that the 34th Infantry Brigade had been checked in crossing the canal by a German machine gun post at about W.21.a.3.7. The Battalion halted in squares W.13.a and .c under 12.10pm.

The canal was crossed at W.21.a.0.6 by 1pm and at 2pm the Battalion was formed up in the Assembly Positions with Battalion Headquarters at W.18.c.5.9. Shortly after 2pm a Canadian soldier, who was wounded, stated that the enemy was counter-attacking heavily. He also said that the Blue Line had not been taken by the Canadians. The latter was confirmed by a report

from an Officer sent forward for liaison purposes to the Canadians, and subsequently proved to be incorrect.

To meet the supposed counter attack, the two leading companies took up a defensive position on ridge at W.18.a and d. and it was whilst in this position that, at 2.40pm a message arrived from Bde HQ ordering the attack for 2.20pm. The Brigadier General Commanding 32nd Infantry Brigade and an Officer of the Artillery arrived at 2.50pm and a barrage was arranged which was to be timed by the progress of the Infantry and to lift off Sunken Road X.3.c-X.2.a at 4.20pm (Ref.Map Sheet 51.b.S). At 3.10pm the leading troops of the Battalion crossed a line SE and NW through W.18 central and advanced to the attack on EPINOY. Up to X.8.b the advance was very uneventful and no artillery fire or opposition was encountered, but beyond this point the advance was difficult as our own barrage was uncertain and the troops had to go much slower than was originally intended. At about 6.15pm the village had been entered, except for the SE outskirts between R.34.d.5.5 and R.35.c.0.0 which was defended by two or three machine guns about R.34.d.6.2. "A" (the Right) Company suffered rather heavily from enfilade fire whilst entering the village before these guns were silenced and teams captured. Captain W.O.HALL was seriously wounded and Lieut. A.L.VICK killed by the fire of these guns. Lieut. A.NEWBURY was the only other Officer casualty during the attack, he being wounded. By 7.15pm the village of EPINOY was entirely in our hands and posts were established in the vicinity of the Brown Line. A line of resistance was established from R.35.c.2.2 parallel to and West of road to R.35.a.0.0 and thence to R.28.c.4.7. "A" Company, in order to keep touch with the Canadians on our Right went rather wide and their Right rested about X.5.b.2.5. The night 27th/28th passed quietly.

The approximate number of prisoners taken by the Battalion is 100 including a Battalion Commander, 5 field guns and a number of machine guns not yet counted. Our casualties were:

Killed: Lieut. A.O.VICK and 7 O.R.

Wounded: Captain W.O.HALL, Lieut. A.NEWBURY, 46 O.R.

Missing: 5 O.R.

Total: 3 Officers, 58 O.R.

28th – Small patrols were pushed forward and positions consolidated

29th – The Battalion moved forward to the attack on two occasions but was forced to withdraw to original positions owing to heavy gas shelling and machine gun fire. On this day the battalion sustained the following casualties:

Killed: 2nd Lieut. J.STEMBRIDGE, 2nd Lieut. B.S.APPLEYARD, 18 Other Ranks

Wounded: 2nd Lieut. C.F.COX (Gas), 102 Other Ranks

Missing: 7 Other Ranks

To Hospital N.Y.D.Nerves – 2nd Lieut. W.A.STEWART, 2nd Lieut. A.GRANT

Total: 5 Officers, 127 Other Ranks

Total casualties 27th to 29th – 8 Officers, 185 Other Ranks

Captain H.E.B.WHITE, M.C., RAMC, the Medical Officer was also wounded on this day, his place being filled by Captain PHELAN, M.R.C, US

In the evening Battalion moved into Brigade Reserve at W.16.d.90.45 with the exception of one company (B) which remained in the line with 9th Bn. West Yorkshire Regiment.

30th – In bivouacs – Nothing to report – W.16.90.65"

William George Pawsey

66706 Private, 6th Northumberland Fusiliers

Census details (1911):

Address: 106 High Street, Skelton

Age: 11

Occupation: School

Parents' names: Thomas and Ann Elizabeth Pawsey

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 11th April 1918

Age at death: 18

Commemorated: Ploegsteerte Memorial; Panel 2

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

Not searched for

William George Pawsey was born on 6th August 1899 at 2 West Terrace, Skelton-in-Cleveland, the first son (third child) of Thomas Pawsey and his wife, Annie Elizabeth C Carter. The parish register entry for his baptism on 31st August 1899 shows his father's occupation as Housepainter. In 1911, the family was living at 106 High Street, Skelton, and young William was still at school. His father, Thomas, was shown as a "House Painter On Estate".

William George Pawsey died on 11th April 1918 at the age of 18. He has no known grave and is commemorated on the Ploegsteerte Memorial.



George Robert Pulford

31318 Private, 8th East Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 17 Park Street, Skelton
Age: 14
Occupation: Mines Labourer below ground
Parents' names: Robert James and Jane Ann Pulford

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 3rd May 1917
Age at death: 21
Commemorated: Arras Memorial; Bay 4 and 5

George Robert Pulford was born in the summer of 1896 at Wenhaston, Suffolk, the first son of Robert J Pulford and his wife Jane Ann Welburn. The 1901 census shows the family living at 12 Yeoman Street, Skelton-in-Cleveland. By 1911, the family had moved to 17 Park Street, Skelton, and George, at age 14, is working as a mines labourer, below ground in the ironstone mines.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

He was killed in action during the Third Battle of the Scarpe. The battalion's war diary gives the following account of the events of that day:

"MONCHY – THE BATTLE

3rd – At 3-45am the attack started. Enemy was very quick with his barrage. 2nd Lt Knee was killed before the start. The attack was not successful, but posts were established, in part of the 8th Bde sector. The battalion had many casualties. Our good Padre, Capt C.W.Mitchell was mortally wounded during the afternoon while attending to our wounded under terrible shell fire. Other officers killed were 2nd Lts Dalton, Cox, McIntyre, 2nd Lt Price died of wounds, 2nd Lts le Breton, Edwards were wounded, 2nd Lt Bibby is missing. Total casualties 35 killed, 161 wounded, 39 missing."

His **Medal Index Card** shows him also having served in the Yorkshire Regiment under the service number 24511.

William Gibson Rimington

405559 Air mechanic Class 2, Royal Flying Corps

Census details (1911):

Address: 40 St.Albans, Whitefield Road, Everton, Liverpool
Age: 46
Occupation: Joiner
Status: Married
Wife's name: Elizabeth (age 43)
Children (if any): Richard James (age 16)
Minnie Nora (age 14)
William Patrick (age 9)
Laura Agnes (age 6)

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 16th December 1917
Age at death: 54
Commemorated: Skelton Cemetery; Grave L A U 2

In 1901 William was living at 47 Rydal Street, Everton, Liverpool together with his wife, 3 children and both his father-in-law and a brother-in-law. He was enumerated as a Joiner & Carpenter. This would be an ideal trade to take, later, into the Royal Flying Corps as an Air Mechanic. No doubt he would spend his time patching up damage to the wood and canvas aircraft of those days.

Service Record details:

Not searched for

War Diary details:

Not searched for



Arthur Henry Rising

4454 Private, 4th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 59 High Street, Skelton
Age: 17
Occupation: Domestic Gardener
Status: Single
Parents' names: William Georg and Alice Maria Rising

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 18th June 1916
Age at death: 22
Commemorated: Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord; Grave II E 225

Arthur Henry Rising was born in the spring of 1894 at Norwich, Norfolk, a son of William George Rising and his wife, Alice Maria Chippington. The family was living at 66 Harker Street, Skelton Green at the time of the 1901 census, and at 59 High Street, Skelton in 1911, when Arthur Henry was a domestic gardener; but by the time of Arthur Henry's death his parents were living at 14 Manless Terrace, Skelton Green.

A puzzle: his parents were married on 5th June 1881 at All Saints Parish Church, Skelton-in-Cleveland but he and all his siblings are shown as born in Norwich in the 1901 census entry; and in 1911 only his older sister, Clara Alice, was shown as being born in Skelton, all the other siblings were again shown as being born in Norwich. Why did this family return to Norwich and then come back to Skelton?

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

Not searched for



Charles Henry Rodgers

11155 Corporal, 6th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 25 Wilson Street, Lingdale
Age: 22
Occupation: Pony driver in mines
Status: Single

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 29th September 1916
Age at death: 27
Commemorated: Regina Trench Cemetery, Grandcourt; Grave IX L 26

He is known only from the **Stanghow Lane School Roll of Honour**, which shows him as "C Rodgers"

The investigation into his identity started by searching **Soldiers Died in the Great War** for surname "Rodgers". This produced a hit list of 225 matches. The second entry on the second page was that of, 11155 Corporal Charles Henry Rodgers of 6th Battalion, Yorkshire Regiment. He was born at Skinningrove, enlisted at Richmond and is shown as residing at Boosbeck. This is the only Rodgers that matches the forename initial "C" and that has any kind of East Cleveland connection. The **Commonwealth War Graves Commission** database and his **Medal Index Card** both confirm the regiment, rank and number; the **Commonwealth War Graves Commission** database confirms his battalion.

The **UK Census Collection** was searched and he was found in 1911 living in the household of his cousin, Henry Johns, at 25 Wilson Street, Lingdale. He was also living with Henry at that address in 1901. In 1891, however, he is living with his mother and father at 9 Cross Row, Boosbeck.

There is very clear evidence placing Charles Henry Rodgers, born Skinningrove, in the East Cleveland villages but no direct evidence of the link to Stanghow Lane school. It seems not unlikely that, at some stage during his schooling, he could have been a pupil there, and so have qualified to appear on the school's **Roll of Honour**.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

"29th

Orders received that an attack would be made on (a) R 21 c 97 – 99 (b) 21 c 18 – 88 – 58 – 87. ½ troops in STUFF REDOUBT were to assault northern face of STUFF REDOUBT. The attack was carried out and positions captured. These could not be held owing to no bombs or ammunition being sent up."

Allan Horatio Rooks⁶

10705 Lance Corporal, 6th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 8 Thomas Street, New Skelton
Age: 18
Occupation: Apprentice Grocer
Status: Single
Parents' names: William and Mary Ann Rooks

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 14th September 1916
Age at death: 23
Commemorated: Lonsdale Cemetery, Authuille; Special Memorial A2

Allan Horatio Rooks was born on 23rd January 1893 at Skelton-in-Cleveland, the youngest son of William Rooks and his wife, Mary Ann Brown of 8 Thomas Street, New Skelton, Yorkshire. He was baptised exactly one month later, on 23rd February 1893 at All Saints, Skelton-in-Cleveland. His father, William, was a Quarryman.

Allan had four older brothers: Edward, William, Thomas and James; three of them: William, Thomas and James also served during the Great War. The 1911 census shows Allan still living at home, working as an apprentice grocer.

Service Record details:

Not found

Allan was killed in action during the opening engagements of the Battle of Flers-Courcelette.



War Diary details:

The battalion's war diary gives the following information about that day:

"14th – The morning was very quiet: 32 reinforcements from Base Depot.

12noon – A further detailed order for the proposed attack in the afternoon was received.

5.30pm – Companies and Battalion Headquarters were in their respective Battle positions.

6.30pm – Artillery put barrage on TURK STREET

6.33pm – Front attacking wave of "D" Company left Assembly trench 78-68 and assaulted enemy trench 91-69. The enemy trench had been untouched by our Artillery, and the attacking force was met by heavy rifle and grenade fire. Part of the attacking force was reached the objective. One platoon West Yorkshire Regt. Was sent up to reinforce at 91. At about midnight, trench 91-69 was gained by bombing down. A bombing block was established at about 70 yards from 91 Post. The enemy made 3 violent bombing attacks which were successively repulsed.

Casualties in nights operation: Lt. Col. FORSYTH, DSO & 2nd Lt. C E HURST killed, Capt. J K EARLE & 2nd Lt. T T SHIPMAN wounded and 2nd Lt MACFARLANE wounded & missing. 130 Other ranks casualties."

⁶ His grandmother, Ann Thompson Mason, who married Thomas Rooks, was a great-great-great-grandmother of the author - via her daughter, Margaret Mason.

There are a couple of minor uncertainties surrounding Allan:

- The ***Commonwealth War Graves Commission*** database gives his rank as Lance Corporal but his ***Medal Index Card*** states Private. Note that the photograph above shows him in Sergeant's uniform but this is believed to have been taken when he was a member of the local Church Lads Brigade (a forerunner of the Army Cadet Force).
- ***Soldiers Died in the Great War*** gives his battalion as 7th Yorkshire Regiment. All other sources, including his nephew, Owen Rooks, place him firmly, and only, with 6th Yorks.



James Rooks

25468 Private, 5th (Reserve) Grenadier Guards

Census details (1911):

Address: 8 Thomas Street, New Skelton
Age: 21
Occupation: Apprentice House Painter
Status: Single
Parents' names: William and Mary Ann Rooks

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 25th April 1919
Age at death: 29
Commemorated: Skelton Cemetery; Grave D 28 A

James Rooks was born in December 1889 at Skelton-in-Cleveland, the fourth son of William Rooks and his wife, Mary Ann Brown. In 1911 the family was living at 8 Thomas Street, New Skelton, Yorkshire, and James was working as an apprentice house painter.

Service Record details:

James attested into the Army on 22nd January 1916 at Saltburn and was assigned to 5th (Reserve) Battalion of the Grenadier Guards. His mobilization occurred on 8th February 1916 and the following day he joined up at Caterham. He gained his Certificate of Education 2nd Class on the 1st March. His Service Record then gives no further information until 29th May 1917 when he embarked at Southampton, having been posted to 4th Battalion. He eventually joined his battalion on 7th July 1917.



On 21st August 1917 he arrived at Harfleur "From Front – Class. T.B." and on 24th August was re-classified "P.U - Flat Feet". He was sent back to England and transferred to 5th (Reserve) Battalion. His health must have continued to deteriorate because, on 28th December 1917, he was admitted to Queen Alexandra Barrack Hospital, Millbank, London, S.W. A medical report from Queen Alexandra Military Hospital dated 3rd April 1918 diagnosed him as suffering from Fibroid Phthitis.

On 24th April he was awarded a Disablement Pension (which would expire on 5th November 1918) and on 7th May was discharged as "No longer physically fit for War Service". On 6th November his pension was renewed (expiring on 5th August 1919).

It is impossible to know how the strains of service and subsequent ill-health preyed on this young man's mind, nor is it possible to know how he was treated by family and friends when he came back home; but for James it was all too much, and he took his own life, on 25th April 1919. He was buried in grave D 28 A in Skelton Cemetery.

And there his story came to an end for almost 90 years. However, in 2007, after a long campaign by his living relatives, the **Commonwealth War Graves Commission** finally accepted that James's death had come about as a direct consequence of his war-time service and that his grave should be taken

into their care. His details were added to their database and a ***Commonwealth War Graves Commission*** headstone was prepared. This was placed on his grave in the late summer of 2008 and on 15th October 2008 a small gathering of relatives and family friends met at the graveside for a short service of dedication conducted by the Reverend Graham Pacey, Rector of All Saints, Skelton-in-Cleveland.

James's name was also added to the names on the ***Skelton War Memorial***, alongside that of his brother Allan.

War Diary details:

Not searched for



Harry Rudd

204041 Private, 13th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: Snow Close Farm, Ripon
Age: 17
Occupation: Farm Servant
Status: Single

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 21 November 1918
Age at death: 24
Commemorated: Skelton Cemetery; Grave H G U 49



Harry Rudd was born in the winter of 1894 at Lanmoth, Yorkshire, the second son of John William Rudd and his wife Emma Chaplain. In 1911 he was working for Thomas William Walker, of Snow Close farm, Ripon, as a farm servant. At the time of his death, the family home was 23 Harker Street, Skelton Green.

He died of his wounds on 21st November 1918, at the age of 24 and was buried on 24th November 1918, in grave H 49G in unconsecrated ground in Skelton Cemetery. The cemetery's burial register describes him as being age 24, with no occupation given, and his place of death is stated as Skelton.

This doesn't square with his death registration, which occurred in the Warrington Registration District. This suggests that he may have been a patient in the Lord Derby War Hospital at the time of his death.

Harry's older brother, John William Rudd, was also among the fallen.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

Not searched for

John William Rudd

17720 Private, 6th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: Paradise Farm, Kirkby Knowle, Thirsk
Age: 20
Occupation: Horseman on Farm
Status: Single

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 28th September 1916
Age at death: 26
Commemorated: Arras Memorial; Bay 5

John William Rudd was born in the spring of 1890 at Spaldington, Yorkshire, the first son of John William Rudd and his wife, Emma Chaplain. In 1911, he was working as a horseman, for James Dunn Wilkinson, at Paradise farm, Kirkby Knowle, Thirsk.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

He was killed in action during the Battle of Thiepval (part of the Battles of the Somme). The battalion's war diary gives the following account of that day's events:

"27th September 1916

11.30am – Orders received to move into support of 34th Brigade in RATION and SULPHUR trenches.

12.10pm – First Coy – C Coy – moved off, other Coys following at 5 minute intervals

1.30pm – Orders received for Battalion to attack at 3pm objective R.21.c.5.8 – 55 (STUFF REDOUBT) C.18 – 45 – R.20.d.91. Battalion moved to QUARRY thence C & B Coys to assembly trench R.33.b.5.9 – R.33.a.7.7

2.55pm – C & B Coys advanced in artillery formation to ZOLLERN TRENCH. A Coy moved up in support to Assembly trench.

3.00pm – Message received that attack postponed. C & B Coys were stopped in ZOLLERN TRENCH

4.06pm – C & B Coys assaulted and took trench 91-45 afterwards gaining with WEST YORKSHIRES 45-18. WEST YORKSHIRES attacked on our right but failed to gain objective. A Coy moved to ZOLLERN TRENCH and D Coy to Assembly trench.

9.15pm – Disposition:

B Coy – d.91 – C.34

C Coy – C.34 – C.45

Part of C & WEST YORK C.45 – C.18

2 Platoons of A with C Coy

2 Platoons of A in ZOLLERN TRENCH

11.20pm – D Coy moved up to ZOLLERN & 1 platoon A to 91 – 45

Casualties amongst officers: 2nd Lt A H B SHIPLEY killed, 2nd Lt A O VICK, 2nd Lt C E SOWERY and Capt K HUTCHENCE wounded, 2nd Lt W A BOOT and 2nd Lt G A RICHARDSON missing.

28th – 12.30am – Report received that we had twice got to 87 but could not hold it owing to heavy shell and machine gun fire. At dawn attack made on 38 but failed.

5am – 1 Coy 8th WEST RIDING REGT sent to ZOLLERN and D Coy to STUFF REDOUBT. Orders received that an attack would be made at 6pm. Task allotted to troops in STUFF REDOUBT was to bomb round enemy flanks. Attack was postponed but message did not get to STUFF REDOUBT. Troops there attacked at 7.42pm and gained 38 and 87 but could not hold it owing to lack of ammunition and bombs.

28pm – Message received that Germans would probably make a strong attack. This did not come off.”

His younger brother, Harry Rudd, was also among the fallen.



Bernard Samuel Scuffham

34775 Corporal, 10th King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry

Census details (1911):

Address: 49 Harker Street

Age: 14

Occupation: Datal worker below ground in Ironstone Mine

Status: Single

Parents' names: Samuel and Eliza Scuffham

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 8th June 1917

Age at death: 20

Commemorated: Henin Communal Cemetery Extension; Grave II B 3

Bernard Samuel Scuffham was born on 28th January 1897, the third son of Samuel Scuffham and his wife, Eliza Day of 49 Harker Street, Skelton Green. He was baptised on 4th March 1897 at All Saints, Skelton-in-Cleveland and the parish register entry shows that his father, like so many others in the village, was an ironstone miner. In 1911, at age 14, Bernard was employed as a "datal worker below ground" in the ironstone mines. That meant he was on a pay rate per day, rather than on a rate per ton of stone, as would be the face workers.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

He was killed in action during the Actions on the Hindenburg Line. The battalion's war diary gives the following account of the events of 8th June 1917:

"Battalion moved into Front Line relieving 15th Batt. Durham Light Infantry. In carrying out this relief the Battalion suffered casualties – 2 O.R. killed and 6 O.R. wounded, by the intense activity of hostile artillery owing to a raid being carried out on the right. It is thought that these casualties might have been avoided had the Battalion been notified of the intended raid.

Casualties

Other ranks. K.2. W.6."

His **Medal Index Card** shows that he also served as 5311 Acting Corporal in the Yorkshire Regiment. His brother, Robert Edward Scuffham, and his cousin, Joseph Wright Scuffham, were also among the fallen. His sister, Edith Adelaide Scuffham, married Wilfred Arthur Forster, another of the fallen.



Joseph Wright Scuffham

5310 Private, 4th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 50 Harker Street, Skelton

Age: 15

Parents' names: Joseph and Annie Scuffham

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 15th July 1916

Age at death: 20

Commemorated: Kemmel Chateau Military Cemetery; Grave L 36

Joseph Wright Scuffham was born on 15th March 1896, a son of Joseph Scuffham and his wife, Annie Eliza Swales of 50 Harker Street, Skelton Green. He was baptised in All Saints, Skelton-in-Cleveland on 9th April 1896. Although aged 15 in 1911, Joseph is not shown as having any occupation in the census that year.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

The battalion's war diary gives this terse account of the activities on the day of his death:

"15th July 1916 – Trenches G1-J3 in KEMMEL CHATEAU area

Major Guy who had been Brigade Major to the Brigade since 1912 left today to be a General Staff Officer 2 to a Division. Visited by Brigadier General PRICE in the morning. Casualties: Other Ranks: 2 killed, 5 wounded. The whole line was subjected to a severe bombardment by Trench Mortars"



His two cousins, Bernard Samuel Scuffham and Robert Edward Scuffham were also among the fallen. His sister, Natalie Ferrol Scuffham married Charles Fawcett, the oldest brother of the author's grandmother, Hannah Mary Appleton (nee Fawcett).

Robert Edward Scuffham

Steward, S.S. Goodanew, Merchant Navy

Census details (1911):

Address: 45 Back Phoenix Street, Newsham, Blyth
Age: 26
Occupation: Stoneworker in Coalmine
Status: Married
Wife's name: Mary Ann (nee Maddison) (age 21)

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 17th April 1917
Age at death: 32
Commemorated: Tower Hill Memorial, London

Robert Edward Scuffham was born in the winter of 1884 at Marske-by-sea, Yorkshire, the second son of Samuel Scuffham and his wife, Eliza Day. He was baptised on 12th March 1884 at St.Mark's, Marske-by-sea. In the autumn of 1910 he married Mary Ann Maddison, the marriage being registered in the Tynemouth Registration District. It may have taken place in Blyth as Mary's address is given as 18 Crofton Street, Blyth, Northumberland in the ***Commonwealth War Graves Commission*** database. Where-ever it took place, less than a year after, in 1911, Robert and Mary were living at 45 Back Phoenix Street, Newsham, Blyth, Northumberland.

He was lost at sea, at the age of 32, on 17th April 1917 when the S.S. Charles Goodanew was sunk, either by mine or torpedo, 3½ miles ENE of Rattray Head, Scotland. He is commemorated on the memorial for merchant seamen, at Tower Hill, London.

The S.S. Charles Goodanew was a coastal steamer of 791 gross registered tons and had been built by W Harkess & Son Ltd of Middlesbrough. She was originally named "Levenwood" and was completed in July 1911. She had a length of 195ft, a beam of 30ft and was powered by a 3-cylinder engine, built by Blair & Co of Stockton-on-Tees, which was located aft. In 1915 her ownership passed to the Plymouth Mutual Co-operative Industrial Society Limited and she entered Admiralty service as a supply vessel.

On the fateful voyage she was en route from Aberdeen to the Grand Fleet's home anchorage at Scapa Flow in the Orkneys. The "kill" was claimed by the German U-boat UC-45 under the command of Kapitanleutnant Hubert Aust, so presumably this craft had laid the mine or fired the torpedo. The Royal Navy's H.M.S. Sagitta, en route from Portsmouth to Buster Voe after a re-fit, stopped to render assistance. Despite this, 13 lives were lost when the S.S. Charles Goodanew sank.

UC-45 was a type UC II U-boat built by Vulkan at Hamburg. She was ordered on the 20th November 1915, launched on the 20th October 1916 and commissioned on the 18th November 1916. Hubert Aust was her first Captain. She was later commanded by Hans Soergel and Werner Ackermann. Under these three captains, she made a total of ten patrols between 10th February 1917 and 17th September 1917 as part of I Flotilla. During these patrols she claimed 12 ships sunk. She sank with the loss of all 35 crew on 17th September 1917 in the North Sea in position 54.09N, 07.35E after a diving accident. She was subsequently raised on 11th April 1918 by the salvage vessel "Oberelbe". By 24th October 1918 she was back in service. She was surrendered on 24th November 1918 and broken up at Preston 1919-20.

Robert's brother, Bernard Samuel Scuffham, and cousin, Joseph Wright Scuffham, are also among the fallen. His sister, Edith Adelaide Scuffham, married Wilfred Arthur Forster who is also commemorated on the ***Skelton War Memorial***.



Frank Ernest Scurrah

20388 Gunner, 41st Battery, 42nd Brigade, Royal Field Artillery

Census details (1911):

Address: 52 Beaumont Road, North Ormesby

Age: 14

Occupation: Apprentice Fitter

Parents' names: Charles and Charlotte Scurrah

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 17th April 1918

Age at death: 21

Commemorated: Pernes British Cemetery; Grave I C 32

The only evidence linking Frank to the East Cleveland villages comes from the ***Commonwealth War Graves Commission*** database, which gives his parents as Charles and Charlotte Scurrah of North Skelton. The 1911 census places the family at 52 Beaumont Road, North Ormesby.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

Not searched for

George William Seaman

220435 Private, 10th East Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 43 Carney Street, Boosbeck
Age: 17
Occupation: Horse Driver below ground
Status: Single
Parents' names: James and Elizabeth Alice Seaman

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 12th April 1918
Age at death: 24
Commemorated: Ploegsteerte Memorial; Panel 4

George William Seaman was born on 25th November 1893 at Skelton-in-Cleveland, a son of James Seaman and his wife, Elizabeth Alice Wiffen. He was baptised at All Saints, Skelton-in-Cleveland on 21st December 1893. In 1901 and 1911, the family was living at 43 Carney Street, Boosbeck, and by 1911, George William Seaman was working as a horse driver, below ground, in the ironstone mines.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

The battalion's war diary for the period surrounding the date of his death states:

*"11th}
12th} Report on operations attached
13th}"*

The attached report reads:

*"REPORT ON OPERATIONS 11th, 12th and 13th April 1918 around MERRIS
Ref Map 36A and 27*

11th At about 11 a.m. on the 11th April 1918 this Battalion received orders to move from bivouacs about HAUTEMAISON to support the 50th Division and to take up a line from L 4 central to F 28 b 2.8. The 11th Bn. E.York.R. were on our left and the 11th Bn. E.Lanc.R. on our right. This Battalion was taken up and entrenched [sic] with three Coys in the front line and one in support in F 28 c.

In the evening orders were received from Colonel Rickman to move the support Coy to occupy the line held by the 11th Bn. E.Lanc.R. and this was done.

At about 11 p.m. orders were received to readjust the line with the left of the Battalion resting on the road junction at PONT WEMEUIL F 23 a 50 and the right remaining at L 4 central. The Support Company resumed its original position.

The night was quiet.

12th The 40th Division withdrew through us at about 7 a.m. At about 7.30 a.m. hostile shelling began, accompanied by rifle and M.G. fire, especially from the direction of DOULIEU. There was much hostile aerial activity and at least 6 enemy balloons were up, some of them very close. Enemy movement in strength was observed along the roads in L 6 A and C and in

front of the left Company. Artillery support was asked for. At 9 a.m. the fire had become intense on the right. Enemy troops had got into the houses east of DOULIEU and a field gun from somewhere on the road in L 5 c was blowing in the posts on the right. All the Officers except one of the right Company and a large number of O.Ranks were killed and wounded and touch with the Battalion on our right (2nd Royal Fusiliers) was lost. At the same time information was received that the 93rd Brigade on our left were retiring. At about 10 a.m. orders were received from Col. Rickman to withdraw and take up a position from the road junction F 14 c 3 4 to the railway at F 8 c central. The withdrawal was extremely difficult owing to the deep dykes and hedges, the simultaneous retirement of troops on our flanks, and heavy hostile shelling and M.G.fire. It was covered by the support Company. Shortly after reaching Haute Maison and getting some of the Battalion into position I met the Brigadier and received orders to alter the line and hold a position from Haute Maison to road junction in F 21 a 77 linking up with 11th Bn.E.York.R. on our left and 11th Bn.E.Lanc.R. on our right. This position was taken up and touch obtained on our right but the 11th Bn.E.York.R. did not appear and our left was in the air. The enemy began to work around our left and I received orders from Col. Rickman to swing our left and to hold the line from Haute Maison to the railway in F 8 d central. This move was carried out successfully, great help being received from 3 M.Guns of the 29th Division. Just as this position had been taken up orders were received from the Brigade to prolong our left along the railway and join up with the composite Battalion at about F 8 d 8.5. This move was attempted but the enemy were met instead of the composite battalion so I withdrew the left to its original position. After this, working in conjunction with the 11th Bn.E.Lanc.R., we withdrew by successive retirements to E 12 b 42 under orders from Col. Rickman to extend the line north of the railway, the left of the 11th Bn. E.Lanc.R. being at the point mentioned. On reaching this place I met an Officer of the Brigade who pointed out where the composite battalion were digging in. A position was then taken up from the railway to link up with the composite battalion, and consolidated.

The night was quiet.

13th During the whole day at intervals there was considerable enemy shelling of our positions and towards evening a certain amount of M.G.fire and sniping. No hostile attack in force was attempted though about 200 of the enemy attempted to attack the right Company in the afternoon. They were dispersed. In the morning the Battalion on our right was heavily attacked and our right Company assisted them with M.G. and rifle fire. About 4 a.m. on the 14th the Battalion withdrew through the First Australian Division. This move was carried out quietly and without interference.

REMARKS

The original withdrawal on the morning of the 12th was very difficult. The enemy were able to get close up under cover of the houses, hedges, etc. on our right, without interference, owing to the absence of artillery support, and all our movements were visible to the enemy aircraft which were in large numbers. The right Company suffered very heavily indeed and stood a very severe bombardment both by artillery, rifle and M.G.fire. Orders as to the positions on which to withdraw and the routes to be taken in case it became necessary had been issued by Col. Rickman on the night of the 11th and communicated to O.C. Companies. When orders for withdrawal however, were issued it was found very difficult to keep to these routes. The enemy's advance was very rapid and along the whole front, the Division on our right were

retiring at the same moment by the same roads, and the Brigade on our left had withdrawn. The country was intersected by deep and broad dykes and not a few men were drowned attempting to cross them. These facts forced certain parties of [sic] the proper route and they did not rejoin until after we had got to our final position. They then rejoined from the details. On taking up the position near Haute Maison I was informed that the 11th Battalion was on my left. This was not the case and from then my left was in the air. The situation was difficult as observation was practically impossible owing to the close nature of the country. Patrols were sent out to the left and posts established along the railway embankment to protect the flank. Close touch was kept practically the whole time with the 11th Bn.E.Lancs.R. on our right and no withdrawal was made except to conform to orders received from Colonel Rickman.

T. A. HEADLAM

Lieut.Colonel.

Commanding 10th Bn. E.York. R."

Thomas Herbert Sellars

11025 Private, 7th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 19 Gerrie Street, Boosbeck
Age: 20
Occupation: Horse Driver under ground
Status: Single

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 17th February 1917
Age at death: 25
Commemorated: Grove Town Cemetery, Meaulte; Grave IV B 12

Thomas Herbert Sellars was born in the spring of 1890 at Pickering, Yorkshire, a son of Robert Sellars and his wife, Lucy Elizabeth Abram. In 1911, Thomas was living, as a boarder, with Harold Pickering and his family, at 19 Gerrie Street, Boosbeck. This census showed him as born in Pickering; the CWGC database describes him as "native of Pickering".

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

Not searched for



John Skipper

10602 Sergeant, 9th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details:

No local connection found

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 9th October 1916

Age at death: 27

Commemorated: Dernancourt Communal Cemetery Extension; Grave III F 31

The **Skelton Parish Roll of Honour** shows "Sgt J W Skipper" under "9th YORKS REGT". The **North Skelton Memorial** shows "SGT J W SKIPPER – 9TH YORKS". The **Commonwealth War Graves Commission** database was searched and returned, as the only match: 10602 Sergeant J W Skipper of the 9th Battalion, Yorkshire Regiment, who died aged 27 on 9th October 1916. The Additional Information field on this record stated that he was the "Eldest son of John and Mary Skipper, of Massingham, King's Lynn, Norfolk; husband of Minnie E. Wooding (formerly Skipper), of Castle Ashby, Northampton". There is no indication of a connection to the Skelton villages.

Soldiers Died in the Great War was searched and added the following details: 10602 Sergeant John Willie Skipper, born in King's Lynn, Norfolk, resident in Northampton and enlisted at Middlesbrough [which begs the question: what was he doing in this part of the world?]

The UK Census Collection was searched for First name = John, Surname = Skipper, Birthplace = Norfolk, England, Birth year = 1889 +/- 2. He was found in 1891, 1901 and 1911 censuses. In all three years, he was residing in Norfolk. There is no evidence of any connection with the Skelton villages.

The known facts and the **Commonwealth War Graves Commission** information have an excellent correlation. Matching **Soldiers Died in the Great War** and census entries have been found that fit well with the foregoing. However, none of these sources gives good evidence of a connection with the Skelton villages.

The only other fact, possibly having absolutely no bearing on this matter, is that Skippers were, for a time in later years, licensees of the "Wharton Arms" in Skelton. Could there be a family connection?

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

Not searched for

Robert Speechley

4282 Private, 1st/4th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 12 William Street, North Skelton
Age: 16
Occupation: Rope Changer in Ironstone Mine
Status: Single
Parents' names: Rimes and Eola Speechley

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 10th August 1916
Age at death: 22
Commemorated: Quarry Cemetery, Montauban; Grave II H 5

In 1901 the Robert's family was living at 12 William Street, North Skelton where his father, Rimes, was a milk seller.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

The entry in the War Diary of the 4th Yorks for 10th August 1916 reads as follows:

"FLETRE 10/8/16

Day spent in cleaning and packing up. Marched at night to BAILLEUL for entrainment. During the day men were discharged from Field Ambulances on account of the move of the Ambulances & were sent back to the unit in a totally unfit condition for marching. Also T.U. men were sent back. These men had all to be transferred to Bailleul under any arrangements that the Battalion could make. The Transport & Z Coy left early & the remainder of the Battalion followed. On arrival, the train supplied was found to be totally inadequate to carry the personnel of the Battalion comfortably, the accommodation provided being for a Battalion at about three quarter strength."

That does not read like a day on which any member of the Battalion would be "killed in action". Furthermore, Bailleul is in the Flanders area, whilst Montauban (or Montauban-de-Picardie to give it its full modern name) is in the Somme area. Something here does not add up!

Further research, guided by experts on the GREATWAR@rootsweb.com mailing list, revealed that there are three more men of the Yorkshire Regiment buried alongside Robert, in graves II H 6, 7 and 8. All three of these men died on the same day as Robert, 10th August 1916, and all three of them were in 7th Battalion. It is "a pound to a penny" that Robert was also in 7th Battalion. This Battalion was part of 50th Brigade in 17th (Northern) Division, which was involved in the Battle of Delville Wood from 15th July to 3rd September 1916.

The War Diary of the 7th Battalion offers the following:

"POMMIERS REDOUBT – 5/8/16 – 9/8/16

Uneventful. Training continued.

9/8/16 – Relieved West Yorkshire Regt in old German 2nd line between DELVILLE WOOD and HIGH WOOD

10/8/16 – Working party of 300 digging communication trench.

11/8/16 – Continued digging and consolidating

12/8/16 – Relieved by 7th Batt. Rifle Brigade at 6.A.M. Battalion returned to BELLVUE FARM Camp. Casualties from 4/8/ to 12/8/16: 6 killed & 11 wounded”

So, we know where four of those six men, that were killed, found their final resting place.

Walter Swainston

33670 Driver, 2nd Section, 9th Division Ammunition Column, Royal Field Artillery

Census details (1911):

Address: 21 Richard Street
Age: 25
Occupation: Driver in Ironstone Mines
Status: Single
Parents' names: George and Mary Swainston

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 18th May 1917
Age at death: 31
Commemorated: Anzin-St.Auban British Cemetery; Grave II C 8

The **Skelton Parish Roll of Honour** shows "Dvr W Swainston" under "R.F.A.", the **North Skelton Memorial** shows "DR W SWAINSTON – R.F.A", whilst the **Stanghow Lane School Roll of Honour** shows "W Swainston"

The **Commonwealth War Graves Commission** database lists him as: 33670 Driver W Swainston in the Royal Field Artillery. There is no evidence of a connection with the Skelton villages

Soldiers Died in the Great War lists him as 33670 Driver Walter Swainston, born in Cleveland and enlisted at Richmond. There is no evidence of a connection with the Skelton villages (but at least we're in the right area!)

The **UK Census Collection** was searched for Firstname = Walter, Surname = Swainston. There were 10 matches in 1911, five in 1901 and three in 1891. Of the 10 in 1911, two were living in Skelton-in-Cleveland:

- Walter aged 25, son of George and Mary Swainston, living with his parents and siblings at 21 Richard Street, North Skelton
- Walter aged 15, son of Alfred and Mary Alice Swainston, living with his parents and siblings at 1 Hobdale Terrace, Skelton-in-Cleveland

Which of these two is it? A long shot was tried. Did a Service record survive? One did!

- George Walter Swainston of 1 Hobdale Terrace, Skelton-in-Cleveland. On reading the first few pages of his record sheets it became apparent that he had been taken prisoner of war in 1917 and had survived the war.

This wasn't the right man. It had to be Walter Swainston, age 25, from Richard Street, North Skelton.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

"ANZIN – 18/5/17

Two drivers killed and one wounded transporting ammunition to battery position"

Albert Tate

22/1035 Private, 22nd Durham Light Infantry

Census details (1901):

Address: 139 High Street, Skelton

Age: 13

Parents' names: Alonzo and Margaret Tate

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 30th July 1916

Age at death: 29

Commemorated: Cambrin Churchyard Extension; Grave P 10)

Albert Tate was born on 27th July 1887, a son of Alonzo Tate and his wife, Margaret Ann Carter. He was baptised on 11th August 1887 at All Saints, Skelton-in-Cleveland. In 1901 the family was living at 139 High Street, Skelton-in-Cleveland and his father, Alonzo, was enumerated as a Horseman on Farm. That would have been Home Farm.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

The battalion's war diary gives this brief account of the circumstances of Albert's death.

"29th Jul 1916 – 'Annequin' - Nothing of interest to record. Working parties continued as usual. At night the enemy was particularly active and the "Stand to" messages were received at 10:00pm and 02:30am but were both subsequently cancelled at 11:45pm and 03:06am respectively. During this night one of our parties working in a mine were caught by an enemy raiding party who put a mobile charge into the mine with the result that a Corporal and two men were killed and one man is missing believed to have been taken prisoner."



Daniel Eli B Taylor

3803 Private, 4th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 6 Prospect Place, Skelton
Age: 33
Occupation: Miner in Face
Status: Married
Wife's name: Eliza (age 27)
Children (if any): Daniel (age 4)
John Robert (age 2 months)

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 17th September 1916
Age at death: 39
Commemorated: Thiepval Memorial; Pier and Face 3A and 3D

Daniel Taylor was born in the spring of 1879 the fourth child (first son) of George Taylor and his wife, Sarah Waller, at Marske-by-sea, Yorkshire (possibly at 14 Dale Street, New Marske which was the family home in 1881). He was baptised on 8th November 1879 at St.Mark's, Marske-by-sea. In 1891 the family were living at 22 Park Street, Skelton-in-Cleveland and Daniel now had four younger siblings. Ten years later the family, now minus George who has died, were living at 15 Charlotte Street, New Skelton and Daniel was enumerated as an Ironstone Miner and appeared to be the main wage earner in the household.

In the summer of 1905, Daniel married Eliza Wilson at Guisborough Register Office. In 1911, he and Eliza were boarding with John Robert Robinson, of 6 Prospect Place, Skelton. With them were their children: Daniel, age 4 and John Robert, age 2 months. This address, 6 Prospect Place, is the one noted in his entry in the **Commonwealth War Graves Commission** database.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

The battalion's war diary account for the day of his death, a battle in which six men of 4th Yorks fell, follows:

"15th September 1916 – MARTINPUICH"

The assault took place at 06:22am. The order of attack was Z Company on the right, X Company in the centre and W Company on the left. Y Company was in reserve and carrying. Brigade order 4th East Yorks, 4th Yorks, 5th Yorks. Divisions 47th on the right, 50th Div., 15th Div. The place of assembly was S.2.b.9.5 to S.2.b.5.5.

1st objective – S.3.a.1½.8 to S.2.b.8.8

2nd objective – M.33.c.6.8 to M.33.c.1.7

Final objective – M.33.a.3.6 to M.33.c.1.7

The final objective was reached. Owing to the 47th Div being hung up in High Wood, the 149th Bde did not reach its objective and the 4th East Yorks on our right were back. Our right was in the air at the junction of PRUE TRENCH and MARTIN ALLEY. This position was held despite terrific shelling which caused heavy casualties.

16th September 1916

Holding on

17th September 1916

At 1pm B.G.C. 150th I.B. ordered 5th DLI with bombing squads from 4th & 5th Yorks to attack and occupy PRUE and STARFISH trenches as far as the CRESCENT. This was accomplished although the 5th Yorks did not appear in time"



Charles Thornton

18/1306 Private, 18th Durham Light Infantry

Census details (1911):

Address: 22 Yeoman Street, Skelton
Age: 16
Occupation: Gardener Domestic
Status: Single
Parents' names: John William and Sarah Elizabeth

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 1st July 1916
Age at death: 21
Commemorated: Serre Road Cemetery No.1; Grave I E 36

Charles Thornton was born in the spring of 1895, at Skelton-in-Cleveland, the eldest son of John William Thornton, an ironstone miner, and his wife, Sarah Elizabeth (nee Taylor). The family resided at 22 Yeoman Street, Skelton at the time of both the 1901 and 1911 censuses. In the latter, Charles was shown as a domestic gardener.

He was killed in action on 1st July 1916, during the Battle of Albert, on the opening day of the Battles of the Somme.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

The battalion's war diary gives this terse account of those opening days of the battles on the Somme:

"1st July 1916 – "Front Line" – Beginning of Battle of Somme. Objectives of 18 DLI – line running S.E. of Serre.

4th July 1916 – "Front Line" – Battalion relived by Worcester Regiment and moved to Louvencourt."



Aaron Thorpe

200301 Private, 4th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 34 Park Street, Skelton

Age: 15

Occupation: Ironstone Mine Worker

Parents' names: Henry and Jane Ann Thorpe

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 1st September 1918

Age at death: 23

Commemorated: Berlin South-Western Cemetery; Grave XII B 7

Aaron Thorpe was born in 1895 in Newcastle-upon-Tyne; the son of Henry Thorpe and Jane Ann Lumsden. In 1911, the family lived at 34 Park Street, Skelton-in-Cleveland, and Aaron was employed as an ironstone mine worker.

He died in Germany, a prisoner of war, on 1st September 1918.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

Not searched for

Richard Matthew Thorpe

200952 Private, 4th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 61 Wharton Street, North Skelton

Age: 13

Parents' names: Richard and Emma Elizabeth Thorpe

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 8th June 1918

Age at death: 20

Commemorated: Chambieres French National Cemetery, Metx; Labry Communal Cemetery German Extension, Memorial 5

It is to be hoped that Richard Thorpe's attitude to military authority and discipline was different to his conduct as a schoolboy at Stanghow Lane School. The school's Log Book records the following:

- 21st July 1911 – Richard Thorpe, a boy of bad conduct and poor home influence, left school this morning at play-time in consequence of being punished for defiance of teacher.
- 24th July 1911 – Punished R Thorpe for offence of Friday.
- 21st November 1911 – Richard Thorpe was punished this morning for scaling the schoolyard wall yesterday afternoon. He left the premises at recreation time this morning. He has committed both offences more than once before.
- 22nd November 1911 – Rich^d Thorpe returned bearing note from his mother, she threatens much if the boy is punished. He was punished.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

Not searched for



J Todd

703 Rifleman, 2nd South African Rifles

Census details (1911):

Address: 64 Stranton Street, Thornaby-on-Tees
Age: 28
Occupation: Grocer's Assistant
Status: Married
Wife's name: Lizzy (age 30)
Children: George Ronald (age 6 months)

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 20th January 1917
Age at death: 34
Commemorated: Dar es Salaam War Cemetery; Grave 5 E 5

How did a chap with an apparent connection to the Skelton villages come to be fighting with a South African unit in East Africa?

From the censuses it was possible to identify a J Todd with connections to the villages. In 1891 there is a Jacob Todd and his family living at 1 Wharton Street, North Skelton. Amongst the children is John, aged 8. In 1901 the same family is now living at 3 Bolckow Street and John is enumerated as a Grocer's Assistant. The same family is still living there in 1911 but John is no longer at home. He is now living in Thornaby, is married and is working as a Grocery Assistant for Stockton Co-op Society.

However, whether or not the John Todd that has been found in the censuses is the same man as "PTE J TODD, 2nd S.A.RIFLES" off the memorial, the question remains: how did he end up serving in East Africa for a South African unit?

Service Record details:

Not searched for

War Diary details:

Not searched for

Stanley Videan

C/12682 Sergeant, 21st King's Royal Rifle Corps

Census details (1911):

Address: 78 High Street, Skelton

Age:

19

Occupation: Chemist's Assistant

Status: Single

Parents' names: Martin J and Sarah A Videan

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 20th June 1916

Age at death: 24

Commemorated: Berks Cemetery Extension; Grave I A 8



Stanley Videan was born on 24th January 1892 at Skelton-in-Cleveland, the son of Martin John Videan and his wife, Sarah Annie (nee Massey). Stanley's baptism took place on 25th February 1892, at All Saints parish church.

Martin, who was the Secretary to the local Co-operative Society, and Sarah Annie lived at 78 High Street, Skelton. In 1911, Stanley was working as a chemist's assistant.

Service Record details:

Stanley had his medical examination at "Ardmore", Skelton-in-Cleveland, on 15th November 1915. His medical notes record that he was: height 5ft 7in, weight 147lbs, chest 37½in, physical development – good. It was noted that "Sight is not good"

On 22nd November 1915, he attested under "Short Service (For the Duration)" terms at Saltburn. His age was 23 years 10 months and he gave his occupation as Mines Clerk. The following day he joined his unit at Helmsley. He was appointed a paid Lance Corporal on a date that can't quite be made out and then, on 18th February 1916 was appointed a paid Acting Corporal. On the 13th of the following month, he was appointed a paid Lance Sergeant.

His battalion embarked for France on 5th May 1916, and on 13th May Stanley was promoted to Sergeant. He was killed in action on 20th June 1916.

War Diary details:

The battalion's war diary gives the following account of events on 19th and 20th June:

"19th June 1916 – PLOEGSTEERT WOOD – The 32nd Bn ROYAL FUSILIERS discharged 100 smoke bombs and lit 50 PAYNE's smoke candles between 5:00pm and 5:04pm T.123. The enemy's line opposite was bombarded with shrapnel from 5:02pm to 5:04pm. Enemy's artillery retaliated from 5:10pm to 5:30pm, shelling PALK VILLA, our support and reserve lines and forming a barrage at HUNTER's AVENUE. No one was hit, but a short piece of rail was torn up on North British Rly in front of EEL PIE FORT.

20th June 1916 – PLOEGSTEERT WOOD – Smoke operations repeated – by 10th Bn QUEENS – T/108/110 from 6:00pm to 6:04pm, our artillery commencing bombardment of enemy's front line at 6:02pm. The enemy's retaliation was insignificant."

George Vinter

27904 Private, 3rd Grenadier Guards

Census details (1911):

Address: 8 Harker Street, Skelton

Age: 13

Occupation: School

Parents' names: George and Mary Annie

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 27th November 1917

Age at death: 19

Commemorated: Cambrai Memorial, Louverval; Panel 2

George Vinter was born in the spring of 1898 at Guisborough; the son of George Vinter and his wife Mary. In 1911, the family was living at 8 Harker Street, Skelton, and young George was still at school.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

The battalion's war diary gives only this short statement for the date of his death:

"The battalion went into action at 6.20am. Detailed account of the battle is separate. At night were relieved by 1st Bn SG and Bn moved to LA JUSTICE"

Unfortunately the separate account was not located.



J T Walker

1217 Private, 4th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details:

Unable to establish a sufficient number of accurate details to allow a meaningful search to be made

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 6th October 1915

Age at death: not known

Commemorated: Chapelle-D'Armentieres New Military Cemetery; Grave A 1

The ***North Skelton Memorial*** shows "PTE J T WALKER – 4th YORKS".

The ***Commonwealth War Graves Commission*** database was searched for Surname = Walker, Initial = J, War = First World War, Regiment = Yorkshire Regiment. This gave 10 matches, of which four were candidates for further research. Each was looked up in ***Soldiers Died in the Great War*** but none showed any connection with the East Cleveland area. The ***Commonwealth War Graves Commission*** database was searched a second time but now using Initial = T in place of Initial J. This gave four more matches, all of which were looked up in ***Soldiers Died in the Great War***. This resulted in one being identified as a possible good match: 1217 Private T Walker of 4th Battalion, who was born and resident in Thirsk but enlisted in Skelton. His ***Medal Index Card*** was located. This showed that he entered France & Flanders on 18th April 1915.⁷

The ***UK Census Collection*** was searched for First name = Thomas, Surname = Walker, Birthplace = Yorkshire, England, Lived in = Yorkshire, England. This gave 175 matches in 1911, 160 matches in 1901 and 111 matches in 1891. It was not possible to isolate any one of these entries as being the right individual.

It has not been possible to establish a confirmed link to the Skelton villages for any of the men researched. 1217 Private Thomas Walker of 4th Yorks, enlisting in Skelton is the "best fit" candidate.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

"6/10/15 ARMENTIERES – Trenches 71, 72, 73

Pte Gowton killed & Pte Walker killed. 4 men were wounded, 3 men admitted to Hospl, 1 man discharged from Hospl. Lt SPROXTON admitted to Hospl"

This is one of the few instances of any of the men being named in a War Diary entry.

⁷ That means he went out with the same contingent as Fred Appleton, the author's grandfather

Parker Walker

38178 Private, 9th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 2 Wood's Yard, Skelton
Age: 25
Occupation: Ironstone Miner
Status: Single
Parents' names: John and Eliza Walker

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 19th April 1917
Age at death: 31
Commemorated: Railway Dugouts Burial Ground; Grave VII F 21

Parker Walker was the son of John Walker and Eliza Morgan, and was born on 1st November 1885 at Skelton-in-Cleveland, possibly at 3 East Terrace, Skelton. He was baptized on 25th November 1885 at All Saints church, Skelton. In 1911, when the family was living at 2 Wood's Yard, Skelton, Parker Walker was working as an ironstone miner, below ground.⁸

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

The battalion's war diary gives the following account of the events on the day of his death:

"14th August 1917 – RAILWAY DUGOUTS

18th August – TRENCHES

Left Sector of Right Brigade. Two Companies in front line ST.PETER's STREET - THE GAP. One company in HALIFAX STREET, one company in MAPLE STREET. Supposed enemy sap at I.30.c.2.8½ found to be a loop line from the German front line on the night of 19th/20th. Small raid planned for the night of 21st/22nd but raid was not successful owing to the Bangalore Torpedo failing to explode. Casualties 1 OR killed 1 OR died of wounds and 4 OR wounded. Relieved by 8th York & Lancs"



As a result of these researches, it is now possible to assign a name to that "1 OR killed" – it was Parker Walker.

⁸ His name also appears on the Roll of Honour for the parish of Brotton and on Carlin How War Memorial.

William Dyson Wallis

4898 Private, 10th (Prince of Wales's Own Royal) Hussars

Census details:

No evidence of any local connection.

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 11th February 1915

Age at death: 30

Commemorated: Poperinghe Old Military Cemetery; Grave II O 49

He is listed on **North Skelton Memorial** as "PTE W D WALLIS – 10th HUSSARS" and on the **Skelton Parish Roll of Honour** as "Tpr W D Wallis" under "HUSSARS". The **Commonwealth War Graves Commission** database listed only the one matching entry:

- 4898 Private William Dyson Wallis in 10th (Prince of Wales's Own Royal) Hussars

Attempts to find him in **Soldiers Died in the Great War** failed until the alternative spelling Wallace was tried when the same man was found. This same spelling was the one which found him in the **Medal Index Card** database. The discovery of his **Soldiers Died in the Great War** entry simply revealed a new problem. His place of enlistment was given as Beverley, his place of residence as Hull and his birth place as Howden. That all fits well with him having a connection to Skelton: the one near Howden! So just what is/was his connection to North Skelton?

It was felt that the most likely source of that link would come from the censuses. A search of the UK Census Collection on Ancestry.co.uk for a William Wallis, born 1884 +/-2 in Yorkshire returned 9 matches in 1911, 8 in 1901 and 11 in 1891. [N.B. The birth year was calculated from his age at death, 30 years, as given by **Commonwealth War Graves Commission** entry. The place of birth, Yorkshire, was derived from the **Soldiers Died in the Great War** information.] In 1911, William Wallis, age 27, born in Howden (the only one so described), is living with his in-laws at Springfield House, River Head, Driffeld. He is an Electric Telegraph Lineman for the railway. In 1901, William D Wallis, age 16, a Dock Labourer, born at Howden, is living with his parents and siblings at 1 William Terrace, South Parade, Holy Trinity, Hull. In 1891, William D Wallis, age 6, is a patient in Hull Royal Infirmary.

There is nothing in the censuses to connect the only William D Wallis who served in the Hussars, and who was born at Howden, with North Skelton. The link to the villages remains unexplained.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

Not searched for

William Watson

201062 Private, 4th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 38 Park Road, Skelton
Age: 22
Occupation: Stower in Mines
Status: Single
Parents' names: George and Elizabeth Watson

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 15th September 1916
Age at death: 27
Commemorated: Thiepval Memorial; Pier and Face 3A and 3D

William Watson was born in 1889 and baptized in the Primitive Methodist Chapel, Skelton on 16th April 1889. His parents were George Watson and Elizabeth Ann Smith who had married in the summer of 1872 in County Durham. In 1911, the family was living at 38 Park Road, Skelton, and father, George, was a Mines Manager. William was a "Stower in Mines, Underground"

William died during the Battle of Flers-Courcelette, a battle notable for seeing the first deployment of tanks.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

The battalion's war diary gives the following account of the action during this battle:

"15th September 1916 – MARTINPUICH"

The assault took place at 06:22am. The order of attack was Z Company on the right, X Company in the centre and W Company on the left. Y Company was in reserve and carrying. Brigade order 4th East Yorks, 4th Yorks, 5th Yorks. Divisions 47th on the right, 50th Div., 15th Div. The place of assembly was S.2.b.9.5 to S.2.b.5.5.

1st objective – S.3.a.1½.8 to S.2.b.8.8

2nd objective – M.33.c.6.8 to M.33.c.1.7

Final objective – M.33.a.3.6 to M.33.c.1.7

The final objective was reached. Owing to the 47th Div being hung up in High Wood, the 149th Bde did not reach its objective and the 4th East Yorks on our right were back. Our right was in the air at the junction of PRUE TRENCH and MARTIN ALLEY. This position was held despite terrific shelling which caused heavy casualties.

16th September 1916

Holding on

17th September 1916

At 1pm B.G.C. 150th I.B. ordered 5th DLI with bombing squads from 4th & 5th Yorks to attack and occupy PRUE and STARFISH trenches as far as the CRESCENT. This was accomplished although the 5th Yorks did not appear in time"

George Webster

K/586 Stoker 1st Class, HMS Black Prince, Royal Navy

Census details (1901):

Address: 24 Green Road, Skelton
Age: 13
Occupation: Domestic
Parents' names: James and Annie Webster

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 31st May 1916
Age at death: 28
Commemorated: Portsmouth Naval Memorial; Panel 20

George Webster was born on 3rd May 1888, at North Skelton, the son of James Webster and Annie Brown. He was not baptized until 5th February 1891, at All Saints, Skelton.

Service Record details:

George joined the Navy on 7th April 1908, signing on for 12 years. He was posted to the following establishments during his naval service:

Establishment	Type	From	To
HMS Nelson	Shore	7 th April 1908	27 th November 1908
HMS Grafton	Ship	28 th November 1908	12 th March 1909
HMS Vernon	Shore	13 th March 1909	30 th September 1909
HMS Cochrane	Ship	1 st October 1909	3 rd April 1911
HMS Victory II	Shore	4 th April 1911	31 st July 1911
HMS Naiad	Ship	1 st August 1911	30 th March 1912
HMS Victory II	Shore	31 st March 1912	17 th April 1912
HMS Spartiate	Ship	18 th April 1912	24 th May 1912
HMS Minotaur	Ship	25 th May 1912	15 th September 1915
HMS Black Prince	Ship	16 th September 1915	31 st May 1916

His initial rank was Stoker 2nd Class. He was promoted to Stoker 1st Class with effect from 1st June 1909 whilst at HMS Vernon. He wasn't entirely an exemplary seaman, as he spent 14 days "In Cells" at the start of February 1915 whilst serving on HMS Minotaur. He perished on board HMS Black Prince at the Battle of Jutland and is commemorated on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial.

The following notes on the ships listed above are taken from Conway's "All the World's Fighting Ships 1906-1921":

HMS Grafton – an *Edgar* class large cruiser – launched 30th January 1892, served as tender to *HMS Excellent* from 1905-1913, sold for breaking up 1st July 1920.

HMS Cochrane – a *Warrior* class large cruiser – launched 20th May 1905, transferred to 2nd Cruiser Squadron in 1909, escorted Royal Yacht *Medina* 1911-1912, wrecked 14th November 1918.

HMS Naiad – an *Apollo* class light cruiser – launched 29th September 1890, converted to Minelayer 1907, sold 1922.

HMS Spartiate – a *Diadem* class large cruiser – launched 27th October 1898, was with the 3rd Fleet at Portsmouth 1912-1913, sold for breaking up July 1932.

HMS Minotaur – a *Minotaur* class large cruiser – launched 6th June 1906, was the Flagship, China Station 1910-1914. After the outbreak of war she escorted Australian troop convoys in November 1914. Became flagship at Cape of Good Hope but returned home in December 1914 for refit. She

joined 2nd Cruiser Squadron early in 1916 and was present at Jutland, sold for breaking up 12th April 1920.

HMS Black Prince – a *Duke of Edinburgh* class large cruiser – launched 14th June 1904, sunk by enemy gunfire 31st May 1916. She was part of 1st Cruiser Squadron of the Grand Fleet.

The following account of the sinking of HMS Black Prince is taken from "Jutland" by Capt. Donald MacIntyre, published in 1957:

*"The cruiser **Black Prince** which, at the first meeting of the two main fleets had followed her flagship, **Defence**, into action and been roughly handled at the time that **Defence** had been blown up and **Warrior** disabled, had been left behind by the Grand Fleet's turn to the southward after deployment. For some reason which will never be known, she was still at this time far astern of and out of touch with the British fleet; but when a line of battleships was dimly seen ahead, it was no doubt thought that they were the British squadrons. Course was altered to close them. At a bare half-mile range, the German recognition signal flashed out. The horrified Captain Bonham, swung his ship away in a desperate effort to escape, but it was too late*

*In the battleship **Thuringen** the same deadly efficient night action procedure that had been displayed at the head of the line went into play. Brilliantly lit by half-a-dozen searchlights, the **Black Prince** was raked from stern to stem by a tornado of shells and lay a helpless wreck before she could even fire a shot in reply. As she drifted down the German line, ship after ship opened up on her, **Thuringen**, **Ostfriesland**, **Nassau** and, finally, as the fleet flagship **Friedrich der Grosse**, added her quota, the **Black Prince** met the same end as the **Defence**, blowing up with a tremendous explosion, vanishing with all hands."*

Joseph Pickering Wilks

115618 Gunner, "B" Battery, 94th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery

Census details (1911):

Address: 35 Wharton Street, North Skelton
Age: 14
Occupation: Coal leader
Parents' names: Joseph Pickering and Margaret Wilks

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 25th April 1918
Age at death: 22
Commemorated: Westoutre British Cemetery; Grave G 7

In 1901 the Wilks family were living at 12 Shakespeare Road, South Shields where Joseph the father was enumerated as a Coal Worker below ground.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

"H.Q. at R.20.c Sheet 27

*Moved overnight 23/24 to positions S.W. of BERTHEN and covered the same front as before
[north of BAILLEUL] - wagon lines near GODWEARSVELDE."*

Horace Willow

2722 Private, 4th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1901):

Address: 24 Yeoman Street, Skelton

Age: 14

Occupation: Jeweller's Errand Boy

Parents' names: Alfred and Annie Willow

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 16th September 1916

Age at death: 29

Commemorated: Caterpillar Valley Cemetery, Longueval; Grave VII H 30

Horace Willow was born in 1887, at 24 Yeoman Street, Skelton, the son of Alfred Willow, a Londoner, and his wife, Annie, who was from Kent.

He died during the Battle of Flers-Courcelette, a battle notable for seeing the first ever deployment of tanks

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

The battalion's war diary account of this battle, in which six men of 4th Yorks fell, follows:

"15th September 1916 – MARTINPUICH"

The assault took place at 06:22am. The order of attack was Z Company on the right, X Company in the centre and W Company on the left. Y Company was in reserve and carrying. Brigade order 4th East Yorks, 4th Yorks, 5th Yorks. Divisions 47th on the right, 50th Div., 15th Div. The place of assembly was S.2.b.9.5 to S.2.b.5.5.

1st objective – S.3.a.1½.8 to S.2.b.8.8

2nd objective – M.33.c.6.8 to M.33.c.1.7

Final objective – M.33.a.3.6 to M.33.c.1.7

The final objective was reached. Owing to the 47th Div being hung up in High Wood, the 149th Bde did not reach its objective and the 4th East Yorks on our right were back. Our right was in the air at the junction of PRUE TRENCH and MARTIN ALLEY. This position was held despite terrific shelling which caused heavy casualties.

16th September 1916

Holding on

17th September 1916

At 1pm B.G.C. 150th I.B. ordered 5th DLI with bombing squads from 4th & 5th Yorks to attack and occupy PRUE and STARFISH trenches as far as the CRESCENT. This was accomplished although the 5th Yorks did not appear in time"



Thomas Wilson

20471 Private, 6th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 3 Ground Hill, Skelton
Age: 31
Occupation: Miner - Filler
Status: Married
Wife's name: Sarah Elizabeth (age 29)
Children (if any): John Thomas (age 3)
William George (age 11months)

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 21st November 1918
Age at death: 29
Commemorated: Skelton Cemetery; Grave Q F C 15

He is known only from his grave in Skelton Cemetery, which has a ***Commonwealth War Grave Commission*** headstone. He does not appear on either ***Roll of Honour*** nor does he appear on either Memorial

The ***Commonwealth War Grave Commission*** database gives his details as: 20471 Private T Wilson of 6th Battalion, Yorkshire Regiment, who died on 21st November 1918. ***Soldiers Died in the Great War*** lists him as: 20471 Private Thomas Wilson of 7th Battalion, Yorkshire Regiment, who was born at Hutton Rudby, resident in Skelton-in-Cleveland and enlisted at Richmond, Yorks. His ***Medal Index Card*** gave the additional information that he had earned his medal entitlement by virtue of his entry into the Balkan theatre on 21st November 1915 [*This suggests that he was in a batch of reinforcements for the 6th Yorks, which had first landed at Suvla Bay in August 1915*]

The ***UK Census Collection*** was searched for First name = Thomas, Surname = Wilson, Birthplace = Hutton*, Birth year = 1890 +/- 10. There were 199 matches in 1911, of which one seemed to be a close fit: Thomas Wilson, age 31, born Ingleby Cross, living at 3 Ground Hill, Skelton

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

Not searched for

Albert Edgar Winfield

53650 Private, 10th West Yorkshire (Prince of Wales' Own) Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 18 Boosbeck Road, Skelton
Age: 12
Occupation: School
Parents' names: William Winfield (widower)

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 20th September 1918
Age at death: 19
Commemorated: Gauche Wood Cemetery, Villers-Guislain; Grave 22

There is a slight uncertainty surrounding the identity of Albert Edgar Winfield. On the ***Skelton Parish Roll of Honour*** he is listed under M.T.Coy, presumably an abbreviation of Motor Transport Company. But there are only seven Winfield's listed on the ***Commonwealth War Graves Commission*** database, and none of them in association with this unit. One of the seven is A E Winfield, the son of William and Hannah Winfield of 18 Boosbeck Road, Skelton-in-Cleveland. This would seem to be the correct individual; he served in the West Yorkshire Regiment and is the one documented here.

Albert Edgar Winfield was born on 16th March 1899, at Skelton, the son of William and Hannah Winfield, both of whom were from Oxfordshire. He was baptized on 20th April 1899 at All Saints, Skelton. In 1911, the Winfield family was living at 18 Boosbeck Road, and young Albert was still at school. This would almost certainly have been Stanghow Lane School. In the Log Book from that school, in an entry dated 19th September 1913, it is recorded that he won a scholarship to Guisborough Grammar School.⁹ Two years later, on 30th August 1915, he commenced employment as a Pupil Teacher. He spent his final day at school on 17th April 1917, the Log Book recording that: "...he is called up for military service tomorrow".

Service Record details:

On 18th April 1917, Albert enlisted, possibly at Saltburn (his service papers are badly fire-damaged and both incomplete and difficult to decipher). His occupation was given as Pupil Teacher. The next day, at Richmond, he had his medical examination, the report of which showed his physical characteristics as: height 5ft 1¾in, weight 107 lbs, chest 31½in. His physical development was noted as: "Fair for age". It was also noted that he was "much under chest standard but with ... training should develop". This view was clearly shared by the officer-commanding the Yorkshire Regiment's Depot at Richmond because he signed off Albert's documents the next day. At age 18 years 1 month, Albert went off to join 6th Training Reserve Battalion.

On 27th July 1917, whilst still with this unit, at Rugeley Camp, he was appointed unpaid Lance Corporal. But on 6th April 1918, having been transferred to 53rd (Y.S.) Bn W.Yorks. Regt. at Brocton camp he "Reverts to Perm Rank Private" and was transferred to B.E.F. France.

On 10th April 1918, Albert joined his battalion "in the field". He was killed in action on 20th September 1918.

⁹ His name is inscribed on the Guisborough Grammar Scholl Roll of Honour.

War Diary details:

The battalion's account of activities that day is as follows:

"Bn H.Q. at X.76.4.9 (ref. Map 57CSE)

At dawn a patrol of 'A' Company pushed up and occupied a further 120 yards of LANCASHIRE TRENCH in X2 (Ref Map 57CSE).

Intermittent shelling during the day.

At dusk enemy attacked up LANCASHIRE TRENCH and made a frontal attack on it under cover of a heavy barrage. Attack was broken up by Artillery, Lewis Gun and Rifle fire but the enemy succeeded in retaking 50 yards of LANCASHIRE TRENCH (mentioned above). Lt. (T.F.) S.G. ISHERWOOD died of wounds."

Thomas Wood

386 Private, 4th Yorkshire Regiment

Census details (1911):

Address: 137 High Street, Skelton
Age: 21
Occupation: House Painter
Status: Single
Parents' names: Thomas and Dorothy Wood

Death and commemoration details:

Date of death: 3rd May 1915
Age at death: 25
Commemorated: Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial; Panel 33

Thomas Wood was born in the autumn of 1889 at Newburgh, in Yorkshire. He was the son of Thomas Wood and Christiana Dorothy Akers. The family home in Skelton was at 137 High Street. In 1911, Thomas was a House Painter for the Skelton Estate. He had started his employment on the Estate on 18th September 1903 as a general labourer. His first appearance in the Wages Book as a painter occurs one year later, on 16th September 1904. He then appears in every entry until that for the period 24th July 1914-6th August 1914; which is annotated "At camp from 27 Jul 1914, Embodied 4 Aug 1914". (That camp would be the annual camp of the 4th Yorkshires, which took place at Deganwy, north Wales, that summer). The Wages Book entry for the period 30 Apr 1915-13 May 1915 carries the annotation: "T Wood shot by sniper whilst on lookout – Monday 3rd May". From the next entry until that for the period commencing 20 Jul 1916, there is an entry "Mrs. Wood (T Wood killed 3rd May) Temporary allowance 2 weeks at 10/- per week".

Thomas's death was the first among the Territorials from Skelton, and occurred just over two weeks after landing in France.

Service Record details:

Not found

War Diary details:

The battalion's war diary gives the following account of the events of this period:

"28th April – 3rd May – TRENCHES ASTRIDE FORTUIN ROAD

The night of 28th we relieved the 5th Yorks in trenches, ½ Bn. Being attached to K.S.L.I and 2 Coys to London Rifle Bde. We remained here till May 3rd when the line was straightened. During this time we had our first touch of gas on May 1st and also were attacked on May 2nd. Our casualties were: Capt. N.W.STEAD, Lts. A.R.WELSH, C.SPROXTON, J.K.STEAD, NORMAN CONSTANTINE wounded. Lt. EDWARD WILLIAMS gassed. 34 killed among whom was Coy. Sgt. Major Preston. 74 wounded among whom was Coy.Sgt. Major Wilkinson.

On the night of the 3rd we returned to C. Camp.

Perhaps the best thing done during this time was done by MAJOR H.L. de LEGH who got 15 wounded men out of a burning cellar under heavy shell fire. The names for mention in despatches of the following were sent in:

MAJOR H.L. de LEGH

CAPT. W.W.CONSTANTINE

CAPT. T.H.HUTCHINSON

LIEUT. W.P. ORDE-POWLETT
Regtl. Sgt. Major P.D. Denham
Coy. Sgt. Major J.F. Myers
Pte. E. Broadley (Stretcher bearer)
Pte. J.H. Royle
Pte. J. Hood"



Sources consulted

All Internet URLs quoted below were correct and active at the time of publication.

Memorials

- War Memorial - Skelton-in-Cleveland
- War Memorial - North Skelton
- Roll of Honour - All Saints Parish Church, Skelton-in-Cleveland
- Roll of Honour – Stanghow Lane School (now displayed in North Skelton Village Hall)

Casualty Records

- Commonwealth War Graves Commission (via www.cwgc.org.uk)

Military Records

- Soldiers Died in the Great War (via www.ancestry.co.uk)
- WW1 Medal Index Cards (via www.ancestry.co.uk)
- WW1 Unit War Diaries (held at various archives and regimental museums)
- British Army WW1 Service Records (via www.ancestry.co.uk)
- British Army WW1 Pensions Records (via www.ancestry.co.uk)
- UK, Military Campaign Medal and Award Rolls, 1793-1949 (via www.ancestry.co.uk)

Civil records

- 1881, 1891, 1901 and 1911 UK Censuses (via www.ancestry.co.uk)
- Births, Marriages and Deaths Indexes (via www.ancestry.co.uk)
- Parish Registers (held at various county archives and record offices)

Other sources

- Parish Magazine, All Saints, Skelton-in-Cleveland (September to December 1914 editions)
- “For King and Country” (www.communicate.co.uk/ne/forkingcountry/)
- “Skelton-in-Cleveland in History” (<http://homepage.ntlworld.com/bandl.danby/Index.html>)
- “The Long, Long Trail” (www.1914-1918.net)