

KENNINGTON



Kennington's civic war memorial is located on the junction of Ulley Road and Ball Lane Kennington near to the St Mary's Church in Church Road. The names on the memorial are divided into the 2 elements of the armed forces (of 1914) – Royal Navy first and then Army personnel which included the Royal Flying Corps. Inside the St Mary's Church there is a Roll of Honour. The bronze name plaque on the war memorial is in need of urgent restoration.

The Great War
1914 – 1919

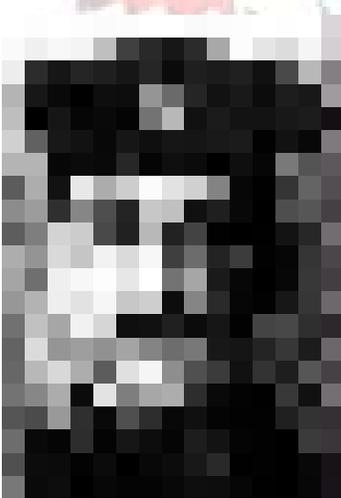
ROYAL NAVY

COULTER H.R

Boy 1st Class J/27718 Henry Robert COULTER. H.M.S “Goliath”, Royal Navy. Died Gallipoli, Turkey on the 13th May 1915 aged **only 16 years**. Son of Frederick and Frances Lucy Couler of “Forestmere”, Kennington. Henry has no known grave. His name appears on the Chatham Naval Memorial, Chatham, Kent. Panel reference 10.

The CWGC wrongly list Henry’s age as 18 years yet records his rank as a Boy 1st Class!

This ship was a “Canopus” class battleship built 25th March 1898. The Ship was sunk on 13th May by enemy torpedo attack (by the Turkish Destroyer “Mauvenet”) in the Mediterranean off Morto Bay near Gallipoli, Turkey. The ship’s captain was Captain T.L Shelford. There were 180 survivors but 570 men tragically lost their lives (including Henry).



HIGGINS A.E

Private CH/1462(S) Albert Edward HIGGINS, Chatham Division, 1st Royal Marines Battalion, Royal Marine Light Infantry (RMLI). Died 28th April 1917. Born Willesborough. Born 23rd October 1888. Step son of Charles and Sarah Burton of Vicarage Road, Kennington, Ashford, Kent. Albert has no known grave. His name appears on the Arras Memorial, Arras, France. Panel reference Bay 1.

Albert enlisted into the Royal Marines at Chatham in January 1916 and was sent straight to RM Deal, Kent on 7th February 1916 where he completed his basic training. From Deal he was sent to the Chatham Battalion, Royal Marines arriving there on 18 July 1916. He remained at Chatham until 31 December 1916 when he was posted overseas on active service.

The 1901 Kennington Census gives –

Albert	HIGGINS	12	Willesborough.
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Albert was probably killed somewhere near the village of Gavrelle in France.



HOULCROFT E

Engine Room Artificer 3rd Class M/2924 Edward HOULCROFT. His Majesty's Submarine "D5". Royal Navy. Died 3rd November 1914. Son of Mary Houlcroft of Ashford. Husband of Ethel A Houlcroft of "The Rose" Public House, Kennington. Edward has no known grave. His name appears on the Chatham Naval Memorial, Chatham, Kent. Panel reference 4.

This submarine sank after hitting a mine in the North Sea off the coast of Yarmouth. It was commanded by Lt Cdr Godfrey Herbert. She sank very quickly and only those on the bridge survived, these lucky men were eventually picked up by the drifter "Faithful". Five men were killed including Edward.

The Royal Navy built 8 of these submarines from 1910 until 1917. Three went on to be lost in action and a further one was lost accidentally. It was 162 feet in length and had a total displacement of 620 tons submerged. The engine was a 1795 horsepower diesel variant. The D.5 had a top speed of 16 knots on the surface and 10 knots submerged. It's armament was 3 torpedo tubes and 2x 12 pounder guns. The submarine had a crew of 25 officers and ratings.



KNIGHT E.G

Boy 1st Class J/27640 (note similar number to A.W Taylor's) Ernest George KNIGHT. H.M.S "Clan McNaughton". Royal Navy. Died 3rd February 1915 aged only 16 years! Son of Sam Knight of 1 Lewis Cottage, Vicarage Lane, Kennington, Ashford, Kent. Formerly Vicarage Lane, Kennington, Ashford, Kent. Ernest has no known grave. His name appears on the Chatham Memorial, Chatham, Kent. Panel reference 10.

This time the CWGC records this man's correct age – only 16 years!

The Ashford Absentee Voters List for 1918 gives –

Burton Cottage, Kennington

Company Sergeant Major 22188 William Frederick KNIGHT. Machine Gun Corps.

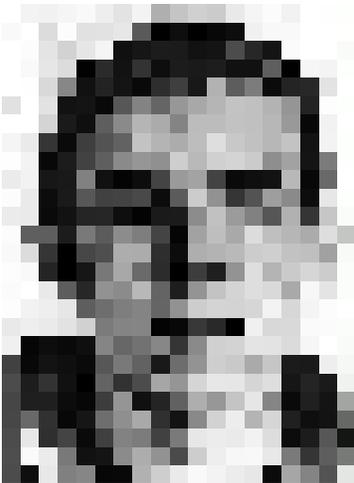
The 1901 census gives –
Vicarage Lane, Kennington

Sam	KNIGHT	36 years	Foreman Timber Yard	Newchurch
Emily		11 years		Kennington
Bessie		10 years		Kennington
Mabel		8 years		Kennington
William		6 years		Kennington
Ernest G		2 years		Kennington

Clan McNaughton

Port of Registry: Glasgow
Propulsion: Steam, triple expansion, 497 nhp, 14 knots
Launched: Wednesday, 28 June 1911
Built: 1911
Ship Type: Passenger Cargo Vessel
Tonnage: 4985 grt
Length: 429.8 feet
Breadth: 53.7 feet
Owner History:
Clan Line Steamers Ltd Glasgow
Status: Sunk After - 03/02/1915

Whilst on patrol duty as an auxiliary cruiser she was last heard of on the above date under the command of Com Robert Jeffreys. Wreckage was found in the area, presumed sunk with 20 officers and 261 ratings H.M.S. Clan McNaughton which has been missing since Feb. 3rd, and is feared to have been lost during the severe gale experienced at the time.



TAYLOR A.W

Ordinary Seaman J/27641 (note similar number to E.G Knight's) Arthur William TAYLOR. H.M.S "Natal". Royal Navy. Died 30th December 1915 aged 18 years. Born 6th August 1897 at Wye. Son of William and Alice Taylor of Vicarage Road, Kennington, Ashford, Kent. Arthur has no known grave. His name appears on the Chatham Memorial, Chatham, Kent. Panel reference 10.

Arthur was educated at Kennington Village School. He sang in the choir at St Mary's Church in Kennington. Before joining the navy he worked for Mr Headley the Grocer, and was then employed in the Ashford Railway Works as a Wagon Builder.

He enlisted in the Royal Navy at Chatham on 6th August 1915. His first ship was HMS Ganges which he served in as a Signal Boy. In 1914 he was posted to HMS Pembroke in Chatham until moving to HMS Natal on 29th September 1914. He remained with the Natal until he lost his life when it blew up.

The Ashford Absentee Voters List for 1918 gives –

The Street, Kennington

Private 56832 Percy Lewis TAYLOR. 95th Labour Company, Labour Corps.

HMS Natal was a "Warrior" class battleship built on 30th September 1905. It blew up on 30th September 1915 and eventually sank on 31st December 1915. The ship was at anchor at Cromarty (West Scotland) when she was destroyed by an internal explosion. The cause of the explosion was never conclusively proven. There were 299 survivors but sadly 404 men were killed including Arthur. The ships captain at the time of the accident was E.P.C Back.



ARMY

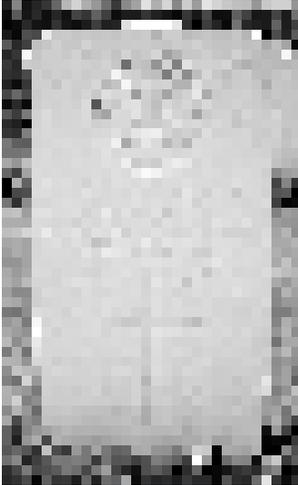


BREMER J

Lieutenant James BREMER. 8th Battalion, Royal Scots. Formerly War Office, London. Died 24th June 1917 aged 27 years. Son of A.H and Grace Bremner of 5, Cobden Crescent, Edinburgh, Scotland. Buried in the Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Poperinghe, Belgium. Grave reference XIII.A.16.

James died of wounds after being evacuated through the casualty clearing chain to a Base Hospital at Poperinghe. His body was buried nearby.





COLLINS E.A (brother)

Private G/8946 Ernest (Ernie) Archibald COLLINS. 7th Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). Died 21st / 31st August 1918 aged 28 years. Born Kennington. Enlisted Ashford. Resided Kennington. Son of Emily Collins of Vicarage Road, Kennington. Buried in the Sarralbe Military Cemetery, France. Grave reference B.7.

The Ashford Absentee Voters List for 1918 gives –

Vicarage Road, Kennington

Private 8946 Ernest Archibald COLLINS. 7th Buffs (East Kent Regiment).

Burton Road, Kennington

Private 13554 Austin George COLLINS. The Buffs (East Kent Regiment).

There is some confusion as to the correct date of Ernest's death. During late August 1918 his battalion was in constant action near Mametz Wood and Montauban. The battalion carried out numerous attacks on Bernafay Wood and at Caterpillar Valley. Ernest probably died at or near one of these locations.

COLLINS H.W (brother)

Private T/203920 Harry Wyndham COLLINS. 6th Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). Died 20th November 1917 aged 25 years. Resided Kennington. Son of Emily Collins of Vicarage Road, Kennington. Harry has no known grave. His name appears on the Cambrai War Memorial, France. Panel reference 3.

The Ashford Absentee Voters List for 1918 gives –

Vicarage Road, Kennington

Private 8946 Ernest Archibald COLLINS. 7th Buffs (East Kent Regiment).

Burton Road, Kennington

Private 13554 Austin George COLLINS. The Buffs (East Kent Regiment).

At the beginning of November 1917 the 6th battalion marched to Frevent. It then proceeded to the La Vacquerie Sector a few miles outside Cambrai. On the 16th November the battalion entrained for Peronne on the southern Somme battlefields. On the 19th it was assembling near the village of Gonnelleu four miles to the south of Ribecourt. On the 20th November 1917 the 6th battalion was in action all day at Ribecourt. Fierce hand to hand fighting took place in Lateau Wood and at Pam Pam Farm. At the end of the day 110 men had been killed or wounded.

GODDEN A

Private G/5099 Albert GODDEN. "A" Company, 8th Battalion, The Buffs, (East Kent Regiment). Died 26th September 1915 aged 29 years. Born Warehorne, Kent. Resided Kennington. Son of Albert and Mary Ann Godden of Barnfield Farm, Charing. Formerly of Raywood Farm, Charing. Albert has no known grave. His name appears on the Loos Memorial, France. Panel reference 15 to 19.

Educated at Kennington School, Kennington, Ashford, Kent. Upon leaving school Albert went to work at the Golf Links in Kennington (Sandyhurst Lane) where he eventually became the Head Groundsman. Albert died after being in France for only 3 weeks and 4 days.

The Ashford Absentee Voters List for 1918 gives –

Raywood Farm, Charing

Private 46839 Arthur Ernest GODDEN. Machine Gun Corps.

On the 25th September 1915 the 8th battalion marched into Bethune in France from Maninghem near Etaples. The next day (the day that Albert died) the battalion was at Hulluch not far from Vermelles. The battalion attacked in strength at 1100 hours. The objective was German third line reserve trenches and heavily fortified positions East of Hulluch village. The 8th Buffs attacked alongside 9th East Surrey's, 8th Queen's and the 8th West Kent's. The battalion was decimated and casualties amounted to an astonishing 24 officers and 610 men many of whom were killed. The remnants of the battalion withdrew to Mollingham the following morning.



HEAD W.J

Railway

Private 859/S William Archibald James HEAD. Royal Marine Engineers. Formerly 5th Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). Died Friday 14th March 1919 aged 23 years. Born Kennington 1896. Resided (December 1915) 1 Fielding Street, Faversham, Kent. Son of Mr William Thomas and Annie Head of The Lees, Kennington, Ashford, Kent. Formerly (1901) Faversham Road, Kennington, Ashford, Kent. Buried locally in the Ashford Cemetery, Ashford, Kent. Grave reference - 2929.

Before enlistment William was living in Faversham and was working at the Explosive Loading Ammunitions factory near Oare, Faversham. Before moving to Faversham he worked as a Coachmaker in the Ashford Railway Yards. His name appears on the Ashford (SE&CR) Railway Works Rolls of Honour.

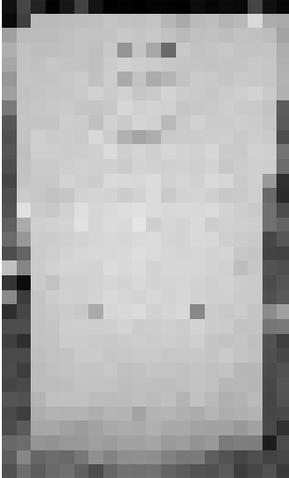
The 1901 Census gives –
Faversham Road, Kennington

William T	HEAD	47 years	Labourer	Ashford
Ann		38 years		
John		6 years		Kennington
William		5 years		Kennington

The Ashford (SE&CR) Railway Rolls of Honour lists –

HEAD A	Apprentice	KFRE
HEAD H	Writer	5 th Buffs
HEAD H	Machinist	KT. Cyclists
HEAD W	Coachmaker	5th Buffs

On the 2nd April 1916 there was a huge explosion at the Explosive Loading Company Limited factory at the Powder Mill, Upper Marshes, Faversham. Sparks from the boilerhouse set fire to some empty sacks in the TNT store (200 tons). The fire quickly spread to the main building where nearly 500 tons of T.N.T was kept. At 13.20 hours a huge explosion occurred killing 172 civilian Ammunition Workers. A number of high ranking gallantry awards were won by members of the Fire Brigade and the army including Albert Medals (some of which were later exchanged by the recipients for George Crosses). Many of the dead were buried in a large communal grave at Faversham.



HIGHT N.D.J

Second Lieutenant Norman Dudley John HIGHT MC. 10th Battalion, Essex Regiment. Formerly 3rd Battalion, Essex Regiment. Formally (Private 184169) 89th Regiment, Canadian Expeditionary Forces (Infantry). Reported missing in action on 21st March 1918 (the first day of the German Spring Offensive of 1918) Died 24th March 1918 aged 27 years. Born 19th July 1890 at Monmouth, Wales. Son of Charles Rodney Symonds Hight and Annie Mary Hight of "Denfield", The Lees, Kennington, Ashford, Kent. Husband of Winnifred Beatrice Hight of "Homecroft", Predannock, Mullion, Cornwall. Formerly West Calgary, Canada. Buried in the Chauny Communal Cemetery British Extension, Aisne, France. Grave reference 2.F.7.

Educated at the Dover College and the Countess of Warwick's Agricultural College, Dunmow, Essex.

Norman originally enlisted in the Canadian Army at Calgary in Canada aged 25 years on the 7th January 1916. Before joining up Norman was a Rancher/Farmer. He originally enlisted as a Private soldier but was selected for a commission shortly after. Somehow, he changed over from the Canadian Army to the British Army. His records show that Norman was going to be sent to the 3rd battalion of the Dorsetshire Regiment but for some reason this was changed at the last minute to the Essex Regiment.

The Ashford Absentee Voters List for 1918 gives –

Denfield, Kennington

Norman Dudley HIGHT.

His body was found by German soldiers on 3rd July 1918 and was buried South West of Caillouel 57 miles West of the road to Bethancourt. His body was exhumed by British Authorities in 1919 and taken to the Chauny Communal Cemetery Extension.

Norman was awarded the Military Cross (MC) for courage and leadership.



JENNINGS A

Captain Alexander (Alec) J. JENNINGS. 29th Squadron, Royal Flying Corps (RFC). Formerly Royal Horse Artillery (RHA). Formerly Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. Died 7th April 1917 aged 22 years. Born 27th May 1894 at The Oaks, Westbere, Canterbury, Kent. Son of William Joseph and Clara Caroline Jennings of Kennington Hall, Kennington, Ashford, Kent. Alexander has no known grave. His name appears on the Arras Flying Services Memorial, Arras, France.

Alec had an unknown connection to Westbere near Canterbury.

Educated at Tonbridge School, Kent from 1908 until 1912 (Judd House). Whilst at Tonbridge School he served in the O.T.C and was attached to the band first as a bugler then in charge of the base drum. In 1912 Alec was promoted to Corporal. After leaving school he went to a university in Zurich Switzerland and took an engineering degree there. His name appears on the Tonbridge School Roll of Honour that was published after the war had ended.

Alec lived at Kennington Hall, Ashford, Kent with his parents when the war broke out. Alec's father was a farmer and the family owned much land in and around Kennington which was used ostensibly for growing Hops.

Alec was of independent means and a local Justice of the Peace (JP) in the Ashford Magistrates Court. On the 19th October 1914 Alec was examined for entry to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. He was accepted and went to Sandhurst as a Cadet. On 28th July 1915 Alec passed out from Sandhurst and was gazetted to the Royal Horse Artillery as a Sergeant. He moved to Gallipoli, Turkey with his battery. On the 28th October 1915 Alec was wounded at Gallipoli and was evacuated to Alexandria in Egypt. In January 1916 Alec returned to the UK. He volunteered for service in the Royal Flying Corps and on sick leave went to the private flying school at Hendon to obtain his Royal Aero Club's Certificate. At first his application to join the RFC was declined on account of his height (6 foot 2). He rejoined his RHA Battery on the Somme for a short while before finally being accepted by the RFC. Alec obtained his RFC wings on the 12th October 1916

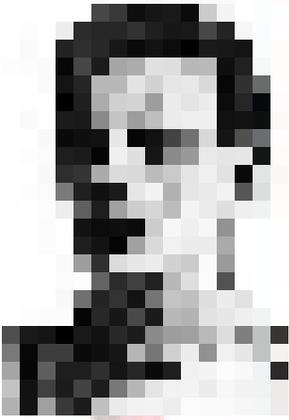
and was posted to the famous 29th Squadron. Alexander's **29 Squadron** was commanded by **Major James T.B. McCUDDEN VC,DSO,MC,MM**. Alexander was a personal friend of the famous British flying ace. They often flew with each other and Alexander's name appears on pages 48 and 49 of "Under the Guns of the Red Baron" (ISBN: 1-898697-96-5) where James mentions Alexander's name in one of his official reports.

On 7th April 1917 Alec and another officer were attacking German captive balloons some distance over the German lines when at 17.10 hours they were surprised by a German chasing squadron. The German machines attacked in force and this brought down Alec's machine. At first it was thought that Alec had landed safely and been taken prisoner but on 16th September 1917 a confidential communique was received direct from the Germans -

A German aircraft dropped a letter from the air over his squadron base. It stated that a Lieutenant A Jennings had been shot down and that the German Air Force had buried his body with full military honours. A German Officer held as a prisoner of war in Maidenhead England confirmed this story and provided the British authorities with a sworn statement confirming Alec's death. According to this statement Alec was brought down by a German fighter when he attempted to attack some captive balloons North of the River Scarpe. At the time of his death Alec was flying a Nieuport XVII one seater biplane Registration number A6692.

German records show that Alexander's plane was shot down by a Vfw L Patermann of number 4 Jasta North West of Biache.





JONES A

Private L/8391 Arthur JONES. 2nd Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). Died 24th May 1915 aged 25 years. Born Kennington. Enlisted Canterbury. Resided 4, Fleet Cottages, Kennington. Son of Walter Thomas Jones and Susannah Ann Jones of 4, Fleet Cottages, Kennington, Ashford, Kent. Arthur has no known grave. His name appears on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, Ypres, Belgium. Panel reference 12 and 14.

Arthur was educated at Kennington School. When he left school he went to work for Mr Watson the Westwell Farmer. On joining the army he went to South Africa with the 2nd Battalion The Buffs. He later moved to Hong Kong with the same battalion. He arrived in France in January 1915 and was struck down with rheumatic fever through exposure in the trenches. He recovered and was killed a few days later.

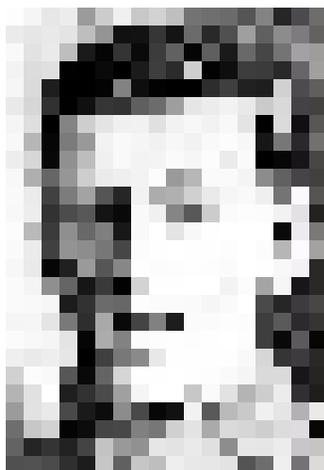
The Kentish Express states that Arthur had two brothers – F.W Jones who served in the 2nd Gloucester's and Sapper A.A Jones of the Kent Fortress Royal Engineers.

The Ashford Absentee Voters List for 1918 gives –

4, Fleet Cottages, Kennington

Sapper 540257 Albert Aylett JONES. 496th (Kent Fortress) Royal Engineers.
Private 361367 Frederick Walter JONES. 805th Labour Company, Labour Corps. (Formerly 2nd Gloucestershire Regiment).

On the 24th May 1915 the Germans attacked in strength from Wieltje to the Menin Road in Belgium. The 2nd battalion was in action all day near to the Menin Road just outside Ypres. The battalion went to rescue and reinforce personnel from the 9th Lancers who were in trouble on the Menin Road. The battalion remained in this area until the 28th May 1915 when it withdrew to Ypres.



KNIGHT A.S

Lance Corporal G/9127 Albert S KNIGHT MM. 8th Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). Died 4th August 1917 aged 23 years. Born Kennington. Enlisted Ashford. Resided Ashford. Second son of William Knight of Ball Lane, Kennington. Later of Kennington Hall, Canterbury Road, Kennington, Ashford, Kent. Buried in the Guillemont Road Cemetery, Guillemont, France. Grave reference IX.J.5.

Albert was awarded the Military Medal (MM) for bravery in the field.

Before the outbreak of war Albert was employed by Mr F Davis of Ashford (a local Timber Merchant).

The Ashford Absentee Voters List for 1918 gives –

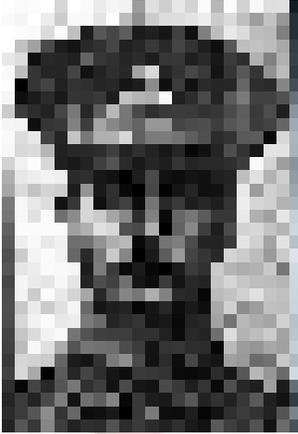
Burton Cottage, Kennington

Company Sergeant Major 22188 William Frederick KNIGHT. Machine Gun Corps.

The 1901 census gives –
Kennington Hall, Canterbury Road, Kennington

William KNIGHT	32	Bricklayer	Crundale
Jane	24		Wye
William	9		Boughton Aluph
Albert	7		Kennington
Alec	1		Kennington

On the 4th August 1917 the 8th battalion was at Morlancourt on the Somme. It is not known how Albert came to lose his life. The battalion was not in action until the 6th August when it attacked at Deville Wood. Albert may have been killed by a long range shell landing in the rear area.



MARTIN W.J

Lance Corporal G/6744 William John MARTIN. 11th Battalion, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment). Died 31st July 1917 aged 22 years. Born Willesborough. Enlisted Ashford. Only son of Mr Martin of 2, Yew Tree Villas, Kennington, Ashford, Kent. William has no known grave. His name appears on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, Ypres, Belgium. Panel reference 45 and 47.

His Commanding Officer wrote a letter to his parents stating –

“Your son was killed advancing against the enemy on July 31st. I myself was not with him at the time as I have only just taken charge of the company. But those that were, spoke very highly of him. He lost his life attempting to get one of his comrades under shelter from the bombardment that was going on. You have got this satisfaction he died bravely as so many brave men have done before him in this terrible war”.

It seems that William may have deserved a medal for bravery (MM) but this was never actually awarded.

The Ashford Absentee Voters List for 1918 gives –

Vicarage Road, Kennington

Private 11886 Henry Frederick MARTIN. Mechanical Transport, Army Service Corps.

MOORE W

Bethersden

Private 38625 William MOORE. 3rd Battalion, Essex Regiment. Died 12th November 1918. Born Bethersden. Son of Albert and Elizabeth Moore of "Mill Cottage", Bethersden. Buried nearby in the Bethersden (St Margaret) Churchyard, Bethersden, Ashford, Kent. Grave reference – North West Corner of church tower.

The Ashford 1918 Absentee Voters List gives –

Mill Cottage, Bethersden

Lance Corporal 24779 Fred MOORE. 2nd Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment).

Private 24734 Albert MOORE. 2nd Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment).

Sapper 236179 Lewis MOORE. Royal Engineers.

Wrens Nest Cottage, Bethersden

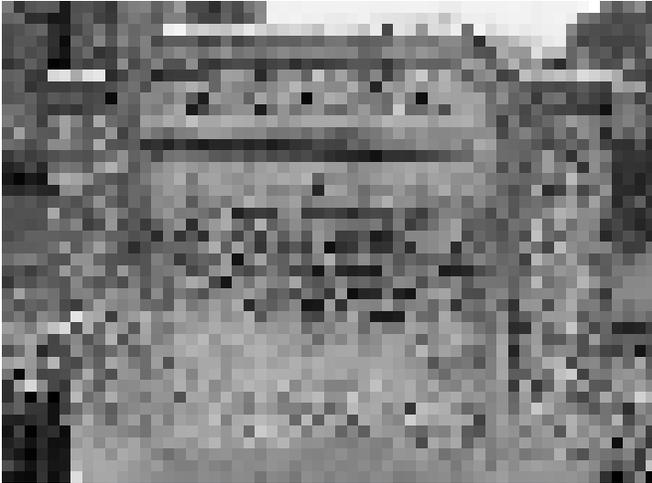
Pioneer WR/22805 Charles MOORE. Royal Engineers.

The 1901 census gives –

Tolney, Bethersden

Albert	MOORE	38	Stockman on farm	Bethersden
Elizabeth		40		Not Known
Fred		16	Carter on farm	Bethersden
Lewis		10		Bethersden
Georgina		7		Bethersden
William		4		Bethersden





MORTON E.D

Private 1391 Edgar Douglas MORTON. Waldershare Troop, 1/1st Squadron, Royal East Kent Mounted Rifles (Yeomanry) (REKMR). Died 22nd May 1915 aged 19 years. Born 7th June 1895 at South Kensington, London. Enlisted Broad Oak, Canterbury. Resided Kennington. Son of Edgar and Eleanor Jane Morton of “The Studio”, Kennington, Ashford, Kent. Buried in the North East Corner of St Mary’s Churchyard, Kennington, Ashford, Kent. The headstone was erected by his family in 1916. In 2005 the headstone was tilting badly.

Edgar’s name appears on page 261 of De Ruvigny’s Roll of Honour. His name also appears on the Norton Knatchbull School book of remembrance.

Edgar’s mother Eleanor was the daughter of Edward John Wall of Great Chesterford.

Educated at the Ashford Grammar School (September 1906 to Easter 1913). On leaving school Edgar went to work at the Canterbury Motor Works. On 7th September 1914 Edgar joined the Waldershare Troop of the REKMR. He was posted to Canterbury and billeted at the Canterbury Polo Ground during the Autumn and winter. Records show that Edgar was a good all round shot and a gifted sportsman. The 1/1st Squadron REKMR were still at Canterbury in May 1915. They remained here until September when they moved to Gallipoli Turkey.

The 1901 census gives –
Church Lane, Kennington

Edgar	MORTON	39 years	Artist/Sculp	Marylebone, London
Eleanor		41 years		Great Chesterford, Essex
Nora A		7 years		Hempstead, London
Edgar D		5 years		Hempstead, London

There is a relatively modern road in Kennington known as Studio Close located off Church Road. It is possible that this road was named after Edgar’s parents dwelling.

Edgar contracted pneumonia and pleurisy while on active service. He died at the Canterbury V.A.D Hospital.

The headmaster of the Ashford Grammar School Mr A.S Lamprey wrote “One of the best boys I Have ever known”. His commanding officer Major Ffrench Blake wrote – “Morton was a general favourite, and we all mourn the loss of a young but keen soldier”.



REYNOLDS W.J

Private L/10261 William James REYNOLDS. 6th Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). Died 16th September 1915 aged 23 years. Born Faversham. Enlisted Sittingbourne. Resided Petham, Canterbury, Kent. Son of William John and Mary Ann Reynolds of "Swarling Manor Cottages", Petham, Canterbury, Kent. Buried in the Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, France. Grave reference II.A.36.

William's name does NOT appear on the Petham civic war memorial.

The day that William died his battalion was in the vicinity of Meteren near Bailleul which explains where he is buried. William died of wounds that he received in an earlier battle.

SHORTER C

Private 40681 Charles SHORTER. 8th Battalion, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. Formerly (31130) Northamptonshire Regiment. Died 16th August 1917. Born Great Chart. Enlisted Canterbury. Charles has no known grave. His name appears on the Tyne Cot Memorial, Zonnebeke, Belgium. Panel reference 70 to 72.

The Ashford 1918 Absentee Voters List gives –

The Lees, Kennington

Sapper 76844 John William SHORTER. Royal Engineers.

STANFORD E.W

Bombardier 82763 Edward William Bennett STANFORD. 202nd Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery (RGA). Died 24th November 1918 aged 24 years. Son of Edward W.T and Emma Stanford of 2, "Yew Tree Villas", Kennington. Buried in the Ramleh War Cemetery, Israel. Grave reference DD.10.

The Ashford 1918 Absentee Voters List gives –

2, Yew Tree Villas, Kennington

**Bombardier 82763 Edward William Bennett STANFORD. Royal Garrison Artillery.
Stoker 1st Class K/22915 Edwin Richard Thomas STANFORD. HMS Osires, Royal Navy.**



STAPLES C.H

Private 43005 Charles Henry STAPLES. 207th Company, Machine Gun Corps (MGC). Formerly (2610) The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). Died 28th or 25th September 1917 aged 19 years. Born Kennington. Enlisted Ashford. Resided Kennington. Son of Jim and Mary Staples, of "Phyllis Villas", Church Road, Kennington. Buried in the Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Poperinghe, Belgium. Grave Reference XXIII.C.17.

The Ashford 1918 Absentee Voters List gives –

Phyllis Villas, Kennington

Private 240866 William James STAPLES. 5th Buffs (East Kent Regiment).

Charles died in a Base Hospital. His body was buried in the hospital's dedicated cemetery.

STUART J.L

Captain John Lachlan STUART. 2nd Battalion, Royal Fusiliers. Formerly Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant (RQMS 3123) 16th Lancers (22 years service). Formerly Quartermaster Sergeant, Depot Canterbury, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). Died 23rd October 1918 aged 48 years. Son of Alexander and Agnes Stuart. Husband of Margaret Mary Julia Ellen Stuart of "Inversnaid", Faversham Road, Kennington, Ashford, Kent. Buried in the Cambridge City Cemetery, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire. Grave reference C.3552.

Married to Margaret M.J.E Richards on 23rd July 1903 at Hythe in Kent. John had three children – Alexander Lachlan, John Gordon and Charles Hector.

John served in the Boer Wars of 1899-1902 with the 16th Lancers and was awarded the Army Long Service Good Conduct Medal. He joined the 16th Lancers on 13th December 1889 and retired from them on 12th December 1911 after serving no less than 22 years. Upon discharge he was living at 28 Beatrice Road, Thorpe Hamlet, Norwich, Norfolk.

On the outbreak of war John was living with his wife at Myrtle Cottage, Swan Lane, Stanford, Hythe, Kent. He re-enlisted this time with the Buffs Depot in Canterbury on 21st September 1914 and was appointed as Quartermaster Sergeant Major. Shortly after this he applied for a short

service commission and was posted as Lieutenant to the 2nd Battalion, Royal Fusiliers in London. On 23rd October 1918 John was promoted to Captain.

The Ashford Absentee Voters List for 1918 gives –

Iversnaid, Kennington

Captain John Lachlan STUART. 5th Royal Fusiliers.

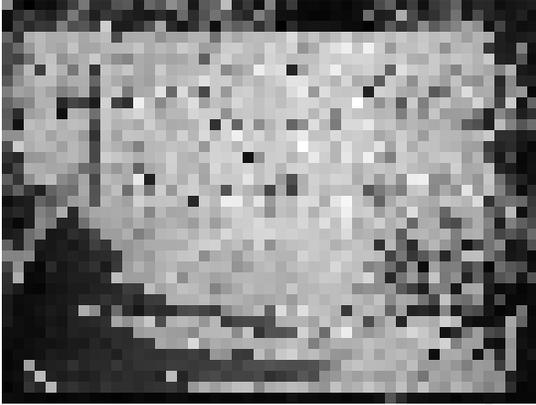


TYRELL F.W

Corporal T/1710 Frederick William TYRELL, 5th Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). Died Iraq 7th January 1916 aged 23 years. Born Herne Bay. Enlisted Ashford. Resided Kennington, Ashford, Kent. Son of Walter and Annie Tyrrell of York Villa, Kennington, Ashford, Kent. Buried in the Amara War Cemetery, Iraq. Grave reference XXXI.D.8.

Frederick's name also appears on his fathers grave in the Ashford Cemetery, Canterbury Road, Ashford –

Frederick William TYRELL Killed in Action 7th January 1916 aged 23 years
Walter Died 21st December 1927 aged 70 years (father)



VIDLER P.A (brother)

Private 2192 Percy Arthur VIDLER. Royal East Kent Yeomanry (Duke of Connaught's Own Mounted Rifles). Died Gallipoli Wednesday 8th December 1915. Born Blackmanstone 4th August 1895. Enlisted Herne, London. Son of George Vidler of "Forestmere", Kennington Lees, Ashford, Kent. Formerly "The Elms" Kennington, Ashford, Kent. Resided Ashford, Kent. Buried in the Twelve Tree Copse Cemetery, Helles, Gallipoli, Turkey. Grave reference C.385.

His father was a farmer and grazier in Kennington.

Percy was apprenticed to Messrs Lewis and Hylands, New Rents, Ashford before the outbreak of war. He had a younger brother serving in the Persian Gulf.

A letter from Lewis and Hyland's of Ashford stated –

"We have heard with extreme regret that your son has been killed. We assure you of our deepest sympathy. He was a thoughtful lad and doubtless had a successful career in front of him, and it seems hard that such high hopes should thus be cut off. Words at such times are altogether inadequate to bring the comfort you need, but you will, we feel sure, find consolation in the fact that he has made the supreme sacrifice and given his life for his country in a just and honourable cause. He has died so that others may live".

The REKMR was in the forward area of "Fusilier Bluff" when Percy was killed.

WHITE G.T

Railway
Dover Marine

Private L/7918 George Thomas WHITE. 6th Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). Died Friday 30th November 1917 aged 35 years. Born Kennington. Resided Ashford. Enlisted Ashford. Husband of Rosetta Emily Flo White of "Banzui" Canterbury Road, Kennington, Ashford, Kent. George has no known grave. His name appears on the Cambrai Memorial, Louverval, France. Panel reference 3.

Before the outbreak of war George worked as a Cell-Hand in the Ashford Railway Yards (Locomotive, Carriage and Wagon Department). His name appears on the Ashford Railway Works Rolls of Honour and also the Dover Marine (SE&CR) Civic Railway War Memorial.

The Ashford 1918 Absentee Voters List gives –

Faversham Road, Kennington

Private H/51035 Herbert Fred WHITE. Imperial Camel Corps.

On the 30th November 1917 the German's launched a massive counter attack in the vicinity of Cambrai. The 6th battalion Buffs suffered enormous losses on this day. The Buffs made a successful counter attack at Pam Pam Farm near La Vacquerie. Hand to hand fighting took place and the men fought shell hole to shell hole. It is recorded that 340 men were killed, missing or wounded. George was one of those killed.



LOST MEN

BARNES G.W

Private GSSR/1216 George William BARNES. 1st Battalion, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment). Died of rheumatic fever 21st May 1915 aged 36 years. Husband of A.M Barnes of 1, Spring Cottages, Kennington, Ashford, Kent. Buried in the Wimereux Communal Cemetery, France. Grave reference I.H.21.

George died in the Base Hospital near Calais. His body was buried in the hospital's dedicated cemetery. George's regimental number appears incorrect or partly corrupted.

BARTLETT E.S

Lance Corporal G/902 Edward Stainton BARTLETT. 6th Battalion, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment). Died Friday 8th October 1915 aged 22 years. Born Chelsea, London on 6th May 1893. Enlisted Maidstone, Kent. Resided East Farleigh, Kent. Son of W.H and Elizabeth Bartlett of Crossways, Niton, Isle of Wight, Hampshire. Formerly 2, Campden Hill Road, Kennington, Ashford, Kent. Edward has no known grave. His name appears on the Loos Memorial, Louverval, France. Panel reference 95 to 97.

Edward attended Ashford Grammar school 24th January 1905 to July 1905.

Edward was killed in the Battle of Loos.

BURKE J

Rifleman A/308 John BURKE. 7th Battalion, King's Royal Rifle Corps (KRRC). Died 10th April 1917. Born Kennington, London. Resided Ashford. John has no known grave. His name appears on the Arras Memorial, Arras, France. Panel reference Bay 7.

Soldiers Died Great War lists John's birthplace as Kennington, **London**. This may be a mistake because it lists Ashford, Kent as his place of residence.

The Ashford 1918 Absentee Voters List gives –

257, New Town, Ashford

Private Walter Francis BURKE. 5th Buffs (East Kent Regiment).



BURCHETT A.E

St Mary's
Railway
Marine

Corporal T/1367 Alfred Edward BURCHETT, H Company, 5th Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). Died of disease (Acute gastritis) Sunday 6th June 1915 aged 25 years. Born Barham near Canterbury. Enlisted 8 August 1914 at Ashford. Resided 37, Star Road, Ashford, Kent. Son of George and Mary Ann Burchett, 90 Albemarle Road, Willesborough, Ashford, Kent. Later residing 7 Wallis Road, Ashford, Kent. Husband of Edith Emily Burchett, Ball Lane, Kennington, Ashford, Kent. Later residing Goat Lees, Kennington, Ashford, Kent. Brother of Ethel May Burchett, 37 Star Road, Ashford, Kent. Alfred has no known grave. His name appears on the Kirkee 1914-1918 Memorial near Poona and Bombay, India. Panel reference -3.

Children

Alfred Edwin Burchett Born 29 May 1913 at Ball Lane, Kennington, Ashford, Kent.

It appears that Alfred's father died before 1923.

Before the outbreak of war Alfred was working in the Ashford Railway Yards as a Carriage Fitter. His name appears on the Ashford Railway Works Rolls of Honour.

Alfred died of acute gastritis at Kamptee in India. His battalion was at the time of his death at Amarah in Mesopotamia (Iraq). It follows that Alfred must have stayed in India when his battalion moved from India to Mesopotamia in 1916. Alfred left a wife and one young son both of whom continued to live in Ashford.

In memory
of

**THE MEN OF THE
1/5 BATTALION EAST KENT REGT (THE BUFFS)(T)
WHO DIED WHILE THE
BATTALION WAS STATIONED AT KAMPTEE**

NO 2181	PRIVATE JOHN WAYTE	AGED 21	19 FEB 1916
.. 1755	.. WILLIAM ANDERSON	.. 20	16 MAR ..
.. 1630	.. WILLIAM VAN CAMPBELL	.. 32	28 APRIL ..
.. 1035	L. CORP: FREDERICK GEORGE SMITH	.. 25	25 MAY ..
.. 1750	PRIVATE FREDERICK GEORGE YOUNG	.. 29	4 JUNE ..
.. 1567	.. ALFRED EDWARD BURCHETT	.. 25	8

ALSO OF

.. 704	.. CLAUD REYNALD TAPSFIELD	.. 25	1
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AT PACHMARHI

**ERECTED BY THE OFFICERS
WARRANT AND NON COMMISSIONED OFFICERS
AND MEN OF THE BATTALION.**

*Personal Journal of
Corporal Alfred Edward Burchett*





1/5th Buffs

My Voyage from Sandwich, England to Kamptee, India

At 8 am on the morning of October 29th 1914 I was put in charge of a guard over our ammunition van at Sandwich Station. At intervals of 1 ½ hours during the morning troops were entraining here to go abroad. The right half Battalion of the 5th Buffs entrained here at 12 o'clock, the left half entrained at 1.45 pm. It was with the left half that I travelled to Southampton. We stopped at Ashford Station for about 15 minutes to enable the engine to take water, leaving here at 3.18 pm. We made good progress all along the journey only stopping to change engines and take water. At 8.30 pm we were in the Docks Station of Southampton. Here we joined our right half Battalion, the 5th Royal West Kents and 3 Batteries of the Sussex Royal Field Artillery. The named regiments all boarded the same boat.

The name of the boat was R.M.S. Corsican. It belongs to the Allan Line Boat Company and is a twin-screw with one funnel. Before boarding the boat I was put in charge of 16 men to load up our baggage. This was all finished by 10.30 pm. At 11.30 pm the ship left the docks. We did not get many yards before we were stuck on a mud bank, because we were late leaving the docks the tide was fast going down. Tugs were trying to get us

off until midnight, and failing to do so we had to stay here for the night.

At 6.30 am on the 30th October we made a start on our journey across the sea - or fishpond as the sailors call it. The sun was rising as we left the harbour. It was a fine sight and would have found a place in the eye of an artist.

We left the needles and lighthouse on our left about 9.30 am, soon after this we discovered the number that was on the boat. There were 800 Buffs, 800 West Kents, 600 Artillery and 300 crew making a total of 2,500. Things on the boat up to the time of writing are all upside down. The first day of the voyage is passed and as there is nothing else to say I will go to bed.

We were called by the bugle at 6.00 am on the 31st day of October and the second day of our voyage. Today we saw the last of England which is called Lands End at 8.30am. This morning we received our orders for the whole voyage which were as follows - rise at 5.30 am; physical drill 6.00 am till 6.45 am; breakfast at 7.00 am; all hammocks to be stowed at 8.00 am; general parade 9.45 am till 10.45 am; dry canteen open from 11.00 am till 11.45 am and 2.00 pm till 4.30 pm. Wet or beer canteen open from 11.30 am till 1.00 pm. Dinner at 12 noon; an occasional fire alarm during different afternoons; tea at 4.00 pm. From 6.00 pm till 8.30 pm the top deck to be thrown open for sports and concerts, the best and last, all men to be in their hammocks and all lights out at 9.00 pm. No land is seen during the rest of the day. It is now bedtime so I must bid you all goodnight.

Sunday 1st November. We were called this morning at our usual time and on getting out of our hammocks we were pitched to the floor like nine-pins. This you may be sure caused a great deal of excitement as we were all undressed. We dressed as quickly as we could and went on deck and found that we were in the Bay of Biscay. We had, by this time, caught our convoy which consisted of 10 troop ships and 3 battle ships. Some of the troops were attacked with sea sickness and did not come down to breakfast. After breakfast I went on deck again to find that the majority of those on board were sick. The Officers were taken the same so all parades were cancelled. I had a nasty headache but was not sick. This was all gone and I felt quite happy by dinner time. The sea was rough all through the day making it very exciting. At meals the ship would lurch and your food would slide down the table, but this was no trouble to us as we only had to wait for the ship to lurch the opposite way and our food would come back to us. The only trouble we had during the day was standing on our feet. When the boat tipped to made us slide or run from one side to the other, but to stand in one place was more than we could do without having something to hold on to. This day has rolled slowly by and I am not sorry either that it is time to go to bed. No land at all has been seen today and as I have had enough of this for one day I will bid you all goodnight, and turn in hoping you have a quieter nights rest than I shall have because I am sleeping near the engine room and the engines sound like continuous thunder in the distance.

Monday 2nd Nov 1914. This morning we had our parades as were in orders, but there was still a few troops suffering with sea sickness. Soon after breakfast we sighted land for the first time since early on Saturday morning. It was Gibraltar. When we got closer

we could see plainly that it is a very hilly piece of country. With white buildings dotted here and there along the coast, and the different coloured soils it was a sight well worth seeing. On our right hand side we could see the coast of North Africa. The hills and soils of this country appear to be much the same as those of Gibraltar. After travelling some distance further we came in sight of the Rock of Gibraltar, but this we could not see very plainly owing to a misty rain that was falling. The battleships that were escorting us stopped at Gibraltar and left us to go on by ourselves. When we passed the rock it was getting dark, therefore, I could not see it plainly enough to describe it here, but we have all learnt from Geography that it is a large fort belonging to the British Empire. About eight o'clock this evening we were signalled to by a battle ship that we were passing. They told us to put all lights out, and travel under full steam for Malta where we should receive our next orders. Through this we all had to go to bed in the dark, and a nice job it was too, being in practically a strange place or home as we had to make it.

I awoke this morning 3rd November to find that we were travelling along the coast of Africa, but as we have already spoken about it, I think there is nothing to interest us here now, so I must wait until tomorrow before writing any more.

Today Wednesday 4th November has proved as uninteresting as yesterday with the exception of one thing, this being the first day that our Canteens opened. You may wonder why they had not been open before, but this is easily explained. Nearly everybody knows that duty has to be paid on some things that go and come across the water. It is just the same in the canteens of all ships. If they sell their refreshments within a limited number of miles from port they have to pay duty, so you can understand that it is to save the duty being paid that they keep us waiting before opening their canteens.

About 10 o'clock in the morning of Thursday 5th November we passed the island of Sicily on our left hand side. Soon afterwards we met a passenger boat and was told that it was bound for Australia. The ladies and gentlemen on board her waved and cheered us, but this could only just be heard owing to the distance between us. About 4.15, while we were having our tea, a French torpedo boat passed us. It passed quite close to us, in fact, it was close enough for us to hear them speak. I did not understand what they said, but I take it they were wishing us good luck, or something similar to that.

Now Friday 6th November we were nearly frightened out of our lives. The Royal George, one of our leading boats had been a great distance ahead of us, when all of a sudden it was seen to turn round and come back as fast as it could. Our Captain seeing this naturally did the same. It was then rumoured on our boat that a German cruiser was after us. Afterwards we found that a message had been sent to the Royal George from Malta in code, and that she did not understand it so had turned round to come back and ask us. It was, you may guess, a great relief to us when we knew the truth and found that all was well. Just before dinner we reached Malta, but did not go into the harbour as a pilot came out and gave us our orders, which were for us to proceed to Port Said if we had enough coal to carry us there; and as we had sufficient coal we steamed away on our journey. In the afternoon we passed a troop transport and escort, which consisted of nineteen troop

ships and three battle ships. It was a fine sight to see how they travelled in two lines one behind the other, and as straight as soldiers. Today has been rather exciting and was finished up with a concert in the evening on the hurricane deck.

On Saturday 7th November very early in the morning we had a rough thunder storm. It was very different from those we get on land, or more plainly speaking, those that one sees in England. Sometimes the lightening was like great sheets, and at others like huge forks cutting the skies, and lasting for several seconds. The thunder was so heavy that it was nearly deafening. The waves rose up on each side of us like mountains, and it seemed that if they were to meet we should be buried. At 5.30 am the storm was over and the sea as calm as a lake rippled by the wind. The weather was much warmer than it had been during the first part of the voyage.

Sunday 8th November. In our orders there was to be a full marching order parade once a week and this we had this morning. It came rather strange to us as we had been without it for a few days. The weather today has been very hot. At 8.30 pm we saw some lights in the distance and thought that some boats were coming towards us, but after a while we could see that it was land. We were told by one of the crew that it was Egypt, so of course we then knew we were going through the Mediterranean Sea.

At 2.00 am on Monday 9th November we were in the harbour of Port Said. As soon as it was daylight water floats were filling our tanks with fresh water for drinking purposes on the boat. After our tanks were filled, the natives, or coalies as they are called commenced to load the holds with coal. There was about 200 of them in number. They loaded 3,000 tons in 16 hours and it was all carried up planks to the ships deck in baskets on their heads. This way of coaling a ship is known as a human elevator. This is a cheap way of working as the natives only get 10d a day and a small loaf made with rice flour. They are practically naked and do not wear any foot gear. They are also known to be the lowest race of people in the world.

On Tuesday 10th November at 4 o'clock in the morning we left Port Said and continued our journey through the Suez Canal. At the entrance of the canal is the wharf where the coal barges are loaded, ready to be taken to the ships in the harbour. Next we see a big market where camels and mules are sold like cattle are sold in England. For about 10 miles along the right hand side a rail road can be seen, with a belt of tall trees on the other side which makes it look very pleasant. There are some very pretty grasses growing here and their height is from 3 to 5 feet. The other side of the canal is nearly all boggy ground, and as there is nothing of interest in this we will watch the right hand side all through. After passing the end of the railway we come to the deserts of Egypt. It is nice to see the wind carry the sand in the air. In the distance it looks like large clouds of brown smoke flying round and round like a spinning top in the air. At sunset the sand looks very pretty. It has nearly as many colours as the sun makes in the sky. The natives are working at places along the canal making it wider, and where it is wide enough a stone wall is being built. At the time of speaking it is guarded all along by British soldiers. The canal was made many years ago by a cutting from Port Said to Port Suez, joining eight small lakes together. At one time a ship would have to moor in one of these

lakes to let another pass as the cutting of the canal was not wide enough, but this is not the case now. At places it is not deep enough for big ships to float in, so their passage is marked by buoys, which are about 100 yards apart and 30 yards in width. At night some of them have red lights on which are worked by electricity from Suez. Near Port Suez it widens very much. This place was once a large lake being as near as I can guess about 7 miles wide. The passage through this is also marked by buoys. All along the canal there are native camps and wigwams, which look very comical. We dropped anchor in Port Suez Harbour at 5 o'clock in the evening. The canal is 89 miles long, and the journey through it took us 13 hours. Two of the ten boats that left England with us arrived at Suez the same evening, leaving the others somewhere behind.

Wednesday 11th November was our first day in Port Suez and from where we were situated we had a fine view of the harbour. As yet it is the largest I have ever seen. Truly speaking it is the small end of the Gulf of Suez. On the left there is a large hill or rock with smaller ones on either side of it. At sunrise this rock looks very pretty. The sand on the shore is red, the top and bottom is black, and the centre of the rock is white. One would hardly believe that such colours existed in the ground and so close together. On the opposite side we can see the buildings of the Port, consisting mostly of warehouses and fishermen's huts. About 1 ½ miles to the left of this is the town of Suez, and still farther left there is a large desert with a gas works and water condensing works on the shore. On the right we have the mouth of the canal and the Gulf of Suez. The port will hold a great number of ships. In places the water is not very deep, therefore, this is all marked off by buoys. This evening five of the ships that we left behind have arrived here so now I expect we shall have to wait for the others, being three in number. They are expected here some time tomorrow.

This morning Thursday 12 November 1914 we were informed that we could go ashore for a route march, by paying our own fares. This cost us 3d return. It cost me much more than that as will be seen later on. We had our early morning parade, breakfast and we were ready to go ashore by 7.15. It was 10 o'clock when we set foot on shore the first time for fourteen days. We landed on the east side of the Port. Most of the houses here were small and had the appearance of fishermen's homes with their tubs and boxes outside. The large houses were very nice and a credit to the builders. One sees pretty houses in England, but they do not compare with these in Port Suez. There is a small railway station here, with only one set of rails. The carriages are very different from those of England. They are small, and have no windows. In place of windows they have shutters, something like venetian blinds. These can be drawn down to guard you from the sun and rain. After having looked round here we started along the road to the town of Suez. The railway runs next to the road. It is not guarded like the railways of England with hedges, fences, or walls, but has only a small barbed wire fence about eighteen inches high between it and the road. On the other side there is nothing whatever. When entering the town we came to some very large and most extraordinary buildings. They were all flat roofed and mostly white. When it rained their appearance was spoilt, as their beauty is only whitewash. Most of the bazaars here are very dirty. The cleanest are those of the confectioners. Their cakes and pastry look much the same as ours at home but are far different in taste. They will not serve an English person in the Post Office so when

one wants stamps one has to ask an Egyptian to get them. Most of the names over the bazaars are written in English with the Egyptian writing under it. Bazaar is their name for shops. There are a few white people living in Suez. I think myself that Suez is a very unhealthy place. The streets and people alike have a very horrid smell. Most of the natives are covered with vermin or as we call it in England - are lousy. They go about nearly nude and are not very particular what they do. It is not safe for one to go out alone at night time. If one did one would be lucky to get back with a whole skin or even at all. We finished our march and got aboard the boat again at 2.30 pm.

On Friday 13th November we had our usual parades. We were told that we were leaving Suez to continue our journey at midnight, but in the evening we were disappointed with the news that fever had broken out on board and we were ordered to stand by for a time.

I was Battalion orderly corporal on Saturday 14th November. My duty started at 5.30 in the morning. At six o'clock I had to see that bread, butter, tea, sugar and milk were drawn from the stores for the troops breakfasts. At 7.30 I went to the Galley (cookhouses) to see that the mess orderlies got their boiling water to wet the tea with, and the porridge for breakfast. At 9 am I went round with the orderly sergeant to see that the decks were all cleared of hammocks and properly cleaned. I had to go with the Officers at 10 am while they inspected the troops. At 11.30 am my Company Officer sent for me. He warned me, to my surprise, that four sergeants had charged me with three different offences. I was tried by a Battalion Court Martial at 2.30 pm. They could not agree so I was ordered to be tried by a Brigade Court Martial. My officer afterwards told me that my charges were not at all serious and that I should get off. This gave me more heart during the time that I was waiting for my trial, which I had two days afterwards.

Early in the morning of Monday 16th November some transport ships came into the harbour of Port Suez. They continued to come in nearly all day. We counted 53 of them, and 5 or 6 battleships to escort and guard them. At 11 o'clock this morning my trial commenced. It lasted until 2.30 pm. I wanted my officer to stand for me but the court would not allow him to. I had 14 witnesses and won two charges easily. At first the court could not agree on the other charge, but afterwards they found me guilty. They closed the court but did not give out my sentence. This was enough for me, I knew then what to expect having seen such cases before. The men in the company questioned me and I told them all that had happened. They all cried shame on the sergeants because they know that my charges were false. I expect I was in their way or knew too much for them, so this was the way they tried to get rid of me. But shortly we shall know whether they have succeeded or not.

At 12 noon on Tuesday 17th November all the corporals and lance corporals in the Battalion were paraded on the hurricane deck. My charges were out and the sentence given, which was as I had been expecting (reduced to the ranks). The NCOs all sympathised with me so of course this made me a little less down hearted. They all knew that I was not to be blamed for my loss after they heard my charges because there was sufficient proof in them that they were planned out by the sergeants.

I paraded early on Wednesday 18th November for physical drill. Afterwards my Officer asked to see me in his bunk. On going there he told me that he was sorry and promised that he would get them back for me as soon as he could. I told him all about it and he could see as well as the others that it was not my own fault. This made me more cheerful than I had been as I knew him to be a man that would keep his word. Now let us turn to the voyage. At 8.30 this morning we left Port Suez after staying there for seven days. Going through the Gulf of Suez which is very narrow there are some fine views of the hills on both sides. On the left the country looks like the painted scenery of a theatre. The hills are all sizes and many different colours. They are very ragged. This is the gift of their splendour. This, on our left is the coast of Arabia. The hills on the right hand side do not appear to be nearly so pretty as those on the other coast. This is because the sun shines from behind them and does not light up their colours. It makes them look black or dark grey. This is the coast of Somaliland. It gives no interest here and as it is getting dark I must leave this until tomorrow.

We entered the Red Sea very early this morning Thursday 19th November. A few miles inland on our right hand we could just see the top of Mount Sinai. It is known to be one of the highest mountains in Somaliland. Its history can be found in the churches scriptures. After travelling a few miles farther we lose practically all sight of land. We saw a little occasionally, but not plain enough to be of any interest to us.

On Friday 20th November we saw no land at all. The time here is about two hours fast to the time of Greenwich. There are a few sharks to be seen in this part of the Red Sea, and also a large number of flying fish. These rise about a foot in the air and shine like silver. This morning we had a little life. One of the gun boats that were accompanying us had some practise at shooting. The target was drawn through the water by one of our transport ships. It was rather exciting to see the water spirit in the air where the bullets struck. At first we wondered what it was because we could not hear the gun fired. If the climate had been cold instead of being hot one would have taken it for whales blowing the water into the air which they sometimes do. This lasted nearly all the morning, but there was nothing else of interest during the day.

All we saw on Saturday 21st November was a few rocks, which looked as if the council people had shot down two or three cart loads of dirt.

Early this morning Sunday 22nd November we passed a number of rocks on our left hand side. It was hardly daybreak, therefore, we could not see them very plainly. They are named the Twelve Apostles. At different times during the day we had sight of land on both sides of us, but nothing of interest. These were still the coasts of Arabia and Somaliland. These extend to the end of the Red Sea. About nine o'clock in the evening we saw a lighthouse in the distance, a little to our right.

This we thought was our next stopping place, but when we awoke early in the morning on Monday 23rd November we found that we had passed and left it behind about the same distance it was in front of us the evening previously. This was plain proof that we had been travelling very slowly. We found that the lighthouse was on an island called Perim

Isle. This is the entrance of the strait of Bab-el-Mandeb. We could see land on our left hand side. It was very rocky and would have made a nice picture for an artist. About 10.30 am we saw some cliffs in front of us. These leaned over and appeared to meet at the tops looking like a great stone arch over a gateway. When we got close to them we found they were a long distance apart. On account of its gate like appearance and the hot climate, it is known to the sailors as the Gates of Hell. Those who have been there will think the name quite suitable. This is the entrance to the Port of Aden. Aden is the hottest port belonging to the British Empire. At 11.30 this morning we anchored here to take more drinking water on board. It was my wish that we did not stay here long as it was far too hot for me. Natives came round us in rowing boats loaded with all sorts of articles for sale. Cigarettes were sold at 6d per 100, cigars 4/- per 100, and tobacco 1/- per quarter lb tins. This stuff in general was very good and cost about one quarter the price it would have done in England. Myself, I bought 1 tin of tobacco, 200 cigarettes and 1 large tin of pineapple and 1 dozen matches for 2s6d. Some of the natives are not bad looking. We saw one with ginger hair. This caused some excitement, because one would ask the other if he had seen a ginger-black-man. The rocks here look something like slate, and are of a very hard and rough substance. Most of them are surrounded by water when the tide is high.. There are some red huts on the largest of them. I think they must be the homes of some of the native fishermen. They look as though they are made of galvanised iron painted red, but no doubt the walls are made of mud baked by the sun. As the climate is so hot here the natives go about more naked than those in Egypt. They seem to be a better race of people than the others. Most of them can speak broken English well enough for us to understand them and are a lot cleaner.

On Tuesday morning 24th November we awoke to find ourselves still anchored in Aden harbour. We expected to get a view of the town, but was disappointed to find that it was too far off for us to see it plainly. The harbour is a very large one, much larger in fact than that of Port Suez. We stayed just in the entrance of the harbour. This place is called the Gulf of Aden. This morning one of the natives was allowed to come on board and sell his articles. After he had sold them some of us got into conversation with him. He could speak English very well. All the drinking water of Aden, he told us is condensed from the sea. We asked him the reason for this and he told us that as long as he could remember he had not seen any rain there. He said that he was 42 years old, and could very well remember the place for over thirty years, so that is certain proof that it has not rained in Aden for all that time.

About 7 o'clock on Wednesday morning 25th November 17 troopships came into Aden harbour. They were loaded with troops from New Zealand. All the ships were painted the same colour as our battleships, which is grey. They were all numbered in large white figures. Some of the New Zealand soldiers came past us in small rowing boats on their way to the shore. We asked them where they were going to. They laughed and said "It is a straight road to Berlin, and we shall be there soon after Christmas if all goes well". We all wished them good luck and success through the war.

During the early morning of Thursday 26th November the New Zealand ships left here, but we are still at a standstill, much to our discomfort. This is making most of us

dissatisfied, and we were all fed up with being on the boat so long. We were shifted this morning a little closer to the shore. Close to where we were there is a station or fort where some of our British soldiers are sent. It looks to be a very lonely place as it is a good distance from the town, and is nothing else but a huge rock. The sides of this rock are nearly perpendicular. On the top there is wireless station. This is know to be the highest station in the World. The rock is something like that of Gibraltar. It is completely undermined with guns and none of them can be seen from the sea. In the rock there are tunnels and railways, which are used for carrying the shells to the guns. The guns are loaded by small cranes, and fired from the station by electricity. On the other side of the rock there is another troop station. Every three months the troops change places with each other. This is done so that each company might do its share of work, because on the fort the work is very heavy. At noon today we left Port Aden, and had to go round the Fort to continue our journey. This gave us a good view of it. In places a little green stuff could be seen growing. It looked something like English heather. The rock is of many colours and is full of holes or small caves, which may be where the guns are placed. If it is so, they are so well covered, that you cannot see them through glasses. On the right there is another fort. If one knew what guns would look like under cover if they looked at this fort through glasses they would be able to see where its guns are placed. At the end of this there is a lighthouse, but I do not know the name of it. After passing this the land gradually faces away and by four o'clock had been left out of sight altogether. We had some boxing on board that evening. Some of the men were very good at it. There was one on the boat that none would box with. He was known as 'Long Slen' on account of his height and long arms. Just before dark we had some blindfold boxing. It was fine sport to see them try to strike one another and miss. The weight of their blow took them off their feet and of course they wondered where they were when they got up. They did not know which way to turn, so went where they thought their opponent was. In doing this a spectator would very often get a punch from one of them.

On Friday 27th November we had a boxing competition for prizes given by the Officers. It started at 1.45 pm and was over by teatime. The winners had orders to box the final contest next day. There was some very good bouts, but nobody would box with 'Long Slen' who I spoke about a short time ago. He was open for the heavy weight. Since leaving Aden we have seen no land at all and were doing about 18 knots an hour. The weather was much cooler though a south east wind was blowing.

No land was seen on Saturday 28th November. We were travelling through the Arabian Sea. At about 1.30 pm the final boxing contest took place. After it was over the prizes were given away. They amounted to about fifteen pounds. As no one would take on 'Long Slen' the heavy weight prize was given to him. It was a good sum very easily earned.

I was put on guard at 8.00 Sunday morning 29th November. This was the last time while we were on the boat. For a one day guard it took nearly a whole company, so each company had to take its turn. We did the usual time, two hours on and four off for 24 hours.

I came off guard on Monday morning 30th November at 8 o'clock. We had our usual parade at 10 am, with many more afterwards to get in readiness for landing. During the evening two of our men had a fight over a hammock. It ended with their trying to use entrenching shafts and bayonets, which are very dangerous. Another man and myself rushed in and stopped them. In doing so I had my right foot nearly crippled and a piece knocked off the back of my left hand. This made me wish that I had left them alone. Some of the men wanted us to report them, but as they left off fighting when told to so no more notice was taken of it. It would have made very serious trouble for them had the officers heard anything about it.

At 5.30 in the morning of Tuesday 1st December we had a compulsory bathing parade. This was through a few of the men being too lazy to bath themselves which had been reported. We had breakfast at 6 o'clock and at 7 o'clock our hammocks were inspected. All those that were missing had to be paid for. At 8 o'clock we had a general inspection (full marching order), this finished all parades for the day. We arrived at Bombay at 12.30 pm but could not go into the harbour. While anchored outside the harbour everything was got in readiness for landing. From there we had a good view of the harbour and its surroundings. On the right the country is rather hilly and covered with tall trees. These greatly resembled feather dusters. The harbour was in front of us. It is a nice place surrounded by a wall built on Except at the entrance. There are a number of docks joining it. These have all got gates at their entrances. The houses about here are very large and are mostly white in colour. From the boat they looked like a number of English picture theatres built close together. It can be seen by the tall chimney stacks that there are many factories around the harbour.

On Wednesday 2nd December at 6.30 in the morning we were towed into the dock by a small steam tug. As soon as we were moored natives commenced unloading the ship. During the morning we were only allowed to land a few at a time for business. But after dinner we landed as we liked and were allowed out until 9 o'clock in the evening. We had a look round some parts of Bombay. There are no shops here they are all bazaars. It was strange to see grass growing in front of us. One bazaar we saw was the strangest that I have seen, and I had never heard of anything like it. It was a place with the word 'midwife' written over the top. Arranged in a row there were four or five wire cages, with a young black baby in each, without the slightest clothes on at all. Of course, we thought they were there for sale, but on making enquiries we were told that a certain caste of natives sent their best babies to this place for show. If these are their best I only hope I never have the privilege of seeing one of their worst, because they are nearly all head and have not got the best of faces. There is a very large market here where goods are very cheap. Nearly anything can be bought here. Fruit is also very cheap. You can get 16 bananas for 2d. On my way back to the ship to tea I went along the wharf. Some ships were here being loaded with coal. Native women as well as the men were carrying coal on their heads. They seemed to work just as easy too, and do as much. Now on the wharf is the Royal Army Temperance Association. We visited this place to find that it consisted of a coffee bar, and several stalls where all kinds of articles could be bought. The manager was an Englishman. He told us that he had arranged a concert for us at 6.30 that evening. It was here that we changed our money for Indian money. We went back

to the boat to tea, afterwards going to the RATA concert. It was not a very good turnout as we had to supply nearly all the singers. While here we fell in with an Indian soldier, of the Ghurkha regiment. He told us that his regiment was leaving Bombay for the front on 10th December, and was going in some of the boats that brought us out here. We all had to be on board by 9.30 pm. At 11.30 pm we marched off the boat to the station, a distance of nearly half a mile. Arriving at the station we were all served out with one pint of tea and one blanket each. We then boarded the train and left Bombay about 12.15 am. After walking about during the day we were a bit tired so we made arrangements for sleeping directly the train had started and were very soon in dreamland.

We awoke on Thursday morning 3rd December to find ourselves very stiff and sore through the huddled up way we had been sleeping in the carriages, if sleep it could be called for we were awakened many times during the night by the sudden jars and sharpness of the curves in the railroad. We were travelling through the plains and farming districts of India. It was a fine sight to see how the different products of vegetation grow. There is a large number of tobacco plantations or fields all along the line. The tobacco plants are not unlike English cauliflower in appearance. They grow about the same height, but without a white head, and the leaves are the same shape, but a little darker in colour. Bananas, oranges, pineapples and dates can also be seen growing in gardens and plantations. The bananas look very pretty as they grow in large clusters of between two and three hundred on a stalk. They are not yellow as you buy them in England, but green. They turn yellow after they have been picked. Some of them are yellow, but these are only what are kept for sale in this country. Oranges grow on large trees similar to apples in England. They also are picked when green. Pineapples grow about the same as wurzels with the exception of the leaves. These are the same as wide rushes or flag leaves. Dates grow like plums and look nearly as such before being preserved and packed in boxes. They have an eye on one and practically the same as those that are found on oranges. At intervals along the line cotton factories can be seen. These are where the seeds are separated from the raw cotton. Cotton is grown in fields like farmers grow peas in England. It first blooms with a flower something like the English orange blossom. When this falls off it leaves a bud like a large lily bud. After a time this bud bursts and the cotton comes out like pieces of sheep's wool that are found in brambles. In this the seeds are found. No matter how long it is left it will never drop from the bud. It is a good thing that it does not drop, because it all has to be picked and is therefore kept clean. We stopped twice on our journey during the day first for breakfast at 9.30 am, and for dinner at 3.00 pm. Our tea was issued to us at dinner time.

We arrived at Nagpur at 5.00 am on Friday 4th December. It was here we had our breakfast. It was A Company that was left at this station that they might go to fort Situbaldi which is in Nagpur. Each company has to take its turn of a fortnight at this fort. The rest of us went on our journey and arrived at Kamptee at 7.30 am after a train ride of two nights and one day. We unloaded our baggage from the train and put it on the oxen vans, or garkis as they are called. After a march of 3 ½ miles we arrived on the camp. It was then ten o'clock. We were shown our bungalows and taken to the RATA rooms for dinner by companies. During the rest of the day we were kept very busy drawing our beds and kit, and getting our places a bit straight and clean. The climate here is very hot.

This being one of the hottest stations in India. At present it is winter and about half as hot again as an English summer.

On Saturday 5th December one of the Batteries of Artillery that came over on the boat with us arrived at this camp to be stationed here. We were left his day with nothing to do except to find our way about the camp. It covers an area of about 1 ½ square miles. It is a pretty place but very lonely, the only sport we got was provided amongst ourselves such as football, cricket and a few other games. Close to the camp there is a small bazaar. It is called the Gora Bazaar. This consists only of two streets with about fifty shops or bazaars. Nearly anything can be bought here. The cheapness depends on how you beat them down in price, because they ask you for about twice as much as the article is worth. The natives here are not a very civilized party. They have a post office of their own. Close to this bazaar there is a fair sized place called the Mall. It is here that Europeans live. The Mall is a nice place, each road being lined on both sides by very large trees. At the entrances of most of the houses or bungalows large bamboo plants are growing. These are very pretty. They have no trunks, but each cane grows straight from the root. In one plant there is roughly speaking about four hundred canes. They take up space at the bottom of about eight feet in diameter, and spread out at the top like a huge feather duster. All over India there is a bird known as the Kitehawk. This bird is a little larger than the English Crow. It measures on the average three feet across the wings, and its feathers are black and white. It picks pieces of food off the ground with its claws as it flies and eats while in the air. If a piece of meat is thrown into the air these birds will catch it before it falls to the ground on most occasions. They are very cunning and will take food from your hands if it is not covered up. They will sit by you at meals and wait for a favourable opportunity to pounce on your plate. If this happens you loose half your food and have the rest splashed in your lap. This very often means changing your clothes. There is another thing of the air in this country known as the Flying Fox. Its body is about fifteen inches long and covered with brown fur. The head is just like that of the fox, and about the same size as a six week old rabbit. Its mouth, teeth and eyes are like those of the fox. On the fore-part of its body it has two short legs. Each leg has three claws something like a chicken. The wings consist of three ribs with a skin stretched over them like an umbrella. There is one claw on the first and second rib of each wing. On the back ribs there are two claws. These with the two legs are used for walking. It measures about four feet across the tips of the wings and are supposed to be good to eat.

Having forgotten the living we had on the boat I will describe it now. For breakfast we had bread and butter and porridge. The bread was not often very good and always tasted sour. The butter was so salty that very few of us could eat it, and the porridge was always made with scarcely any sugar in. Our dinner was fairly good. It consisted of roast or boiler meat and most times with two vegetables and pickles twice a week. For seconds we had boiled rice and raisons, the exception of Wednesdays and Sundays when we had plum duff. Bread and salt butter we had for tea with jam every four days. That is the living we had on the boat.

Now we will turn again to Kamptee. On the farther side of the Gora Bazaar from the

camp there is a large river. At present it is nearly dry, but when the monsoons are on it gets filled with water which is then about eighty feet deep. The river is nearly a quarter of a mile wide, and its banks in most places are nearly perpendicular. We are not allowed on the other side of this because it is the natives' property and they would very quickly row with us. The natives have many castes. Some have red and some white lines painted on their foreheads. These are the Mohammedans. The colours represent their different religions. The Indian caste wear a little tuft of long hair on the crowns of their heads. These are the people we have for our servants in the camp. When a native dies in this caste they cover the body with white cloth and burn it, afterwards burying the bones. All those that attend the funeral get drunk on wine. This wine they call firewater. They dance around the body and have a band of drums and tin cans, and sing songs if singing it can be called. My story I think need not explain our drills as they will not be of interest to you.

On 14th December we had new potatoes for dinner. For two or three days before Christmas we were busy getting our food ready and decorating our bungalows. We had chicken, roast beef and vegetables for dinner on Christmas Day with pudding afterwards. The Officers gave us cigars and drinks, and we had a concert in the afternoon. We had a good tea, and were afterwards given oranges, nuts, and bananas. In the evening we had a concert which lasted until twelve o'clock, then we toasted the King and went to bed. A photo was taken of the room at dinnertime, am sending one home as soon as I can get one.

On Saturday 23rd January I had notice to get packed up and ready to leave Kamptee by six o'clock the next evening. I did not know where I had got to go until it was time to start. There were four men of each company being 32 all told. We were sent to a place called Pachmarhi. It is the Indian School of Musketry, and is a five hundred miles journey from Kamptee, but as the crow flies it is only about one hundred and eighty seven miles, and is far up in the hills. The train left Kamptee at 7.30 pm and arrived at Gondia at 10.50 pm. It was here we had our first change. We had to wait here until 1.15 am. While waiting we went into the refreshment bar. It was the dearest place I have ever been into. We had to pay 4d for bottles of lemonade, and 8d for small bottles of Bass, one very thin meat sandwich cost 3 ½d and bread and butter cost 3d for two very small pieces. We were told that this was the same all over India. Our breakfast was served out to us at a station named Ass where we stopped at 8.45 am for half an hour. We then travelled to Jubbulpore and had dinner at 3.30 pm. Having to stop there for a time we had a run round the town in a ghari. It is a very large place, and the streets are very narrow. It is not altogether clean except in the European quarter. There are temples everywhere. Their stonework is all carved and kept pure white. The station is a very large one, and is covered like some of our London stations. We left Jubbulpore at 9.45 pm and arrived at Pimperly at 3.50 am. This being the end of our railway journey we had to load our baggage on gharries which were drawn by oxen. We had breakfast in the station yard and started on our journey by foot at 5.30 am. The rest camp was found after marching 14 miles a place called Maktuli. It is a small place consisting of about six houses, one shop, and a post office. All troops stop here when doing this journey. We had dinner and tea here and left at 4.30 pm after a rest of five and a half hours. We

marched another eleven miles, nine of them being all up hill, and slept in the forest for the night after completing 25 miles. We had breakfast here and finished the journey by ten o'clock which totalled 32 miles, 13 of them being all up hill. The journey was a very interesting one going through the hills by train and through the forests by road. Monkeys could be seen in hundreds all along the road, some small and others as tall as any man. We tried to catch a small one but they were too sharp for us. They could easily jump thirty feet from one tree to another. On arriving at Pachmarhi we were taken off to our bungalows, given our dinner and left to unpack our kits and rest for the day.

The next morning Wednesday 27th January we were each given our work. Mine with two others was target making for the ranges. We were shown round on this day ready to start work on the next day Thursday. The bazaar lays east of the camp. It is not a very large one, and the natives are a good deal better than those of Kamptee. They do not ask too much for their articles but have one price like the shop keepers in England. They are a very independent lot and do not care whether they sell to you or not, but they are clean and take after the English in most of their habits. On the west side of the camp there is a European village. The Europeans come and live here during the Summer to escape the heat of the plains. There is a shop here where all English goods can be bought. It is kept by two English ladies. They say they have travelled all over the world and as one of them lost her husband here this would be her last place. It is a very nice place, the roads and cottages being nearly the same as those of a pretty English village. They have a church here where all the Europeans go. We always go to this church on Sunday evenings as it is the nearest one to our camp. On the other side of this village there is a large rock. In this rock there is a number of caves that are about the same size as a room of an ordinary cottage. Their walls are all carved into different figures and gods. They were once the homes of some natives, but we are told that when the Europeans came there to live they all cleared out. At the bottom of this rock there is a large waterfall known as the Bee Falls. The water comes out and rushes from the bottom of the rock down a huge valley. The depth of this valley is about 1,600 feet and the width about 900 feet. On the sides trees and shrubs are growing. This makes the place very pretty. The water rushing down the side sounds like thunder. If a large rock is pushed over the side it sounds when reaching the bottom like a cannon being fired. The echoes and re-echoes can be heard for fully three minutes. On a large flat or plain two miles to the left of this rock there is a European garden. It covers an area of one and a half square miles. The climate here is similar to that of the English summer. Everything that is grown here in the way of fruit and vegetables is English. The high class are the only people that buy it, because it is too dear for the likes of us. At times we had a little luxury and this meant nearly emptying our pockets each time.

On the 8th February I had my first piece of English Xmas pudding and cake. This was sent from England to one of my mates. The camp is a fair size place with two dozen bungalows. Each bungalow is divided into four rooms. There are ten men's beds and boxes in each of them. They are not close together like those of Kamptee, but about one hundred yards apart. The whole camp is covered by trees. These of course keep the bungalows nice and cool during the summer months. The climate here on the hills in the winter is rather fresh and wet like the spring in England. In the daytime the sun shines

very warm. The people of this country are very peculiar. The men wear earrings and their dress consists of a turban, shirt and a cloth something like a large table cloth with coloured edges. The turbans are about a foot in width and about seven yards long. They are twisted up and worn on the head. Some of them are silk and some are ordinary cloth and of many different colours. The large cloth is worn round the waist and twisted up between the legs so that one corner hangs round each leg. The shirts are worn outside like English ladies night attire. The women are the most curious looking beings I have ever seen. They wear earrings that weigh about two ounces. They have large rings on their fingers and toes, and some of all shapes through their noses. They have to lift them up while they are eating because some of them are large enough to cover their mouths. Their dress is similar to that of the men. They wear a cloth round their waist like the men. They wear another cloth round their shoulders. One corner is pulled up over the head and greatly resembles a large shawl. A bodice is worn something like a mans sleeve waistcoat. I forgot to mention that they wear large silver bracelets round their wrists and ankles, and a large number of beads round their necks. The way they do their washing is very funny. They take it to the river, make it wet and beat it on a rock like an English woman beating door-mats. It is then laid out on the bank to dry. It is washed very clean though strange to say, they do not use soap. When they wash themselves they get into the river fully dressed. Afterwards they change their clothes on the bank and wash those that they take off. They take no notice of anybody, so you may be sure we see some fine sights at times. The chickeroos (children) mostly run about naked until they are four or five years old. This is not a very nice thing for Europeans to see but of course in this country we have to get used to it. At certain times of the year the natives have festivals which are called "Ramsammes". They have bands which consist of one string fiddles, bells and drums which are called tom-toms. These are put into a cloth and tied round their waist, there being always two put together.

From 3rd to 6th March there was a "ramsammee" at Pachmarhi where I was stationed. Several of us went down each night to see it. The first thing we came to was one of these bands with children singing native songs. Their tunes seemed to us to be nearly all one note and the same words seemed to be sung all through the song. At times they would stop singing and dance. Their dances are very peculiar and mostly done with their arms. We left here and went further into the bazaar where a bigger "Ramsammee" was being carried on. Here there was more life than at the other place, but never the less their bands and singing make an awful row. They were throwing red powder about, and squirting coloured water over each other. The drink, a sort of wine which makes them light-headed. This wine is very hot and burns your mouth like mustard. It is the first of three nights of the Ramsammee and is supposed to be fairly quiet, but the first time of seeing this they made us think they were mad. The second night proved worse than the first. It was raining in torrents but being interested in the Ramsammee it did not keep us at home. We went to the bazaar to find that the bands were all indoors. This rather disappointed us until a native soldier pointed a crowd out to us further along the road and told us to go there and have a look at (something we could not understand). We went to find that the natives were all drunk and fighting like fiends. As soon as one pair was stopped another started. Some used their fists while others used sticks. It was rare sport to watch them until those that had been stopped made a fresh start. They were not satisfied with fists

and sticks but drew their knives. Some of us had revolvers in our pockets so of course we were not very timid and stayed to see this fight out. It had not been going on long before others chimed in to help their mates. There being so many of them fighting it was quite enough for us, we cleared out while we had got a whole skin to go with. The third night is the last and best of all. They build a big bonfire and place their caste flag on the top. By the way the flag falls off the fire they tell what luck their caste is going to have. After this they have another battle with coloured powder and water. They then do a kind of a war dance round the fire with shouting and whooping which is deafening. After this a concert is given by the best looking women of their tribe. They sing and dance while the band plays making a noise like school boys playing with old tin cans and Jews harps. Then comes another shower of powder and water. They afterwards go to their temple and offer their prayers to their Gods in a manner which is most peculiar to us. Another sing-song and dance follows this with a shower of powder and water. They go again inside the temple and sprinkle their gods with red powder. This is the end of the Ramsammee except that they keep their sing-song up all through the night. On this day they wear their best clothes and all their jewellery. The women are covered in rings, bracelets and have rings through their noses. One we noticed in particular had fifteen rings in each ear and four through her nose, while her arms and ankles were covered with bracelets and her fingers and toes were covered with rings. Round her neck there was several strings of curious beads, and her hair was covered with brass chains. The women have a coloured plate stuck in the centre of their foreheads with wax. This is know as their caste plate. The men show their caste by the way they have their hair cut and by marks which are tattooed on their foreheads. A Hindu has his hair cut short except for a small pigtail which is left on the crown of his head. They shave nearly all over their bodies. The Mohammedans are known by their beards which are always cut short and the other castes are known by their tattoo marks.

I have explained this country and my voyage as well as I can in writing so the rest must wait until I get home when I shall be able to make fireside tales that will, I dare say interest you. I must say here that I had my first piece of English Xmas cake and duff in this country on 8th February. I have no more to say now so must draw this brief summary to a close with my kindest regards and best wishes to all at home.

I am,

Yours sincerely

A E Burchett

NOTE: Sadly Alfred never returned home to England for fireside tales. He died on 15 June 1915 in Kirkee, India.

CARTER R.H

Private G/2478 Richard Henry CARTER. "D" Company, 1st Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). Died 25th September 1916 aged 32 years. Born Kennington, Ashford. Enlisted Womenswold, Kent. Resided Womenswold. Son of Mr. W. J. and Jane Carter, late of Lower Cooling, Adesham, Kent. Richard has no known grave. His name appears on the Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France. Panel reference – 5D.

Listed incorrectly on Soldiers Died Great War as born KEANINGTON. Enlisted WHYMNSWOLD. Resided WHYMNSWOLD.

Richard's name appears on the Marden civic war memorial.

The Ashford 1918 Absentee Voters List gives –

East Mountain Cottages, Kennington

Private G/87561 Edward James CARTER. 10th Middlesex Regiment.

COLLINS S

Rifleman 54204 Stanley COLLINS. 2nd Battalion, Royal Irish Rifles (RIR). Formerly (TR/9/25465) 45th Territorial Battalion. Died 30th July 1918 aged 19 years. Enlisted London. Son of Frederick and Susannah Collins of "Orchard Cottage", Kennington, Ashford, Kent. Buried in the Bertenacre Military Cemetery, France. Grave reference I.B.9.

The Ashford Absentee Voters List for 1918 gives –

Vicarage Road, Kennington

Private 8946 Ernest Archibald COLLINS. 7th Buffs (East Kent Regiment).

Burton Road, Kennington

Private 13554 Austin George COLLINS. The Buffs (East Kent Regiment).

COOPER P

Gunner 208420 Percy COOPER. "C" Battery, 102nd Brigade, Royal Field Artillery (RFA). Died Tuesday 28th August 1917 aged 35 years. Born Boughton Lees. Enlisted Ashford. Resided Ashford. Son of Thomas and Jane Cooper of "Fair Bank", Smeeth, Ashford, Kent. Husband of Grace Munk Cooper of 2 East View, Brabourne, Ashford, Kent. Formerly of Kennington Lees, Ashford, Kent. Buried in the Track "X" Cemetery, Ypres, Belgium. Grave reference B.21.

Percy was a Butcher by trade and carried on business in a shop at Kennington before the outbreak of war.

The Ashford Absentee Voters List for 1918 gives –

Water Farm House, Brabourne

Sapper 203070 Thomas George COOPER. Royal Engineers (6th Buffs).
Private 265214 William COOPER. Kent Composite Battalion.

The 1901 census gives –

Fair View, Smeeth

Thomas	COOPER	49	Poultry Dealer	London
Jane		51		Letchcombe, Berkshire
Frank		22	Poultry Dealer	West Hougham, Kent

CRIPPS A.C

Private 38497 Alfred Christopher CRIPPS. 3rd Battalion, New Zealand Rifle Brigade. (ANZACS). Died 21st June aged 39 years of age. Brother of Mrs Gibbs of 137 Godinton Road, Ashford, Kent. Son of Samuel Ephraim Cripps of Kennington, Ashford, Kent. Alfred has no known grave. His name appears on the Messines Ridge New Zealand Memorial, Belgium.

Alfred went to New Zealand in 1900 and returned to England with his battalion in October 1916. He moved to France shortly after and lost his life.

CURTIS W.F

Private L10030 William Frederick CURTIS. 1st Battalion, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment). Died 25th February 1915 aged 22 years. Born Kennington. Enlisted Maidstone. Resided Hollingbourne, Maidstone, Kent. Brother of Mr. S. G. Curtis, of 96, Milton St., Maidstone. Buried St Sever Cemetery, Rouen, France. Grave reference – A.4.19.

William's name appears on the Hollingbourne civic war memorial.

During the First World War, Commonwealth camps and hospitals were stationed on the southern outskirts of Rouen. A base supply depot and the 3rd Echelon of General Headquarters were also established in the city. Almost all of the hospitals at Rouen remained there for practically the whole of the war. They included eight general, five stationary, one British Red Cross, one labour hospital, and No. 2 Convalescent Depot. A number of the dead from these hospitals were buried in other cemeteries, but the great majority were taken to the city cemetery of St. Sever. In September 1916, it was found necessary to begin an extension. St. Sever Cemetery contains 3,082 Commonwealth burials of the First World War. There is also 1 French burial and 1 non war service burial here. The Commonwealth plots were designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield.

DENNETT T.S

Corporal G/81120 Thomas Sutton DENNETT. 17th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers. Formerly (3252) Royal East Kent Mounted Rifles (Yeomanry). Died 28th or 29th November 1917 aged 19 years. Born Kennington. Enlisted Folkestone. Resided Folkestone. Son of Thomas Sutton Dennett and Charlotte Dennett of Shakespeare House, West Hougham, Dover, Kent. Buried in the Hermies Hill British Cemetery, France. Grave reference I.A.1.

FOSTER C.E

Private 15097 Charles Edward FOSTER. 1st Battalion, Royal Munster Fusiliers. Formerly (2590) The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). Died 22nd March 1918 aged 26 years. Enlisted Ashford. Resided Ashford. Second son of Mr Foster of Ball Lane, Kennington, Ashford, Kent. Husband of Mrs Fowler of 15 Providence Place, Ashford, Kent. Charles has no known grave. His name appears on the Pozieres Memorial, France. Panel reference 78 and 79.

Educated at the National School, Ashford. Before the outbreak of war Charles was employed in the SE&CR Works at Ashford. Previous to this he worked for 8 years with Messrs Mackeson Limited in Ashford. Charles enlisted into the Buffs in October 1915 but was transferred into the Munster Fusiliers. A short while before Charles was killed he was being nursed in the UK with trench fever. He returned to the frontline in December 1917.

The Ashford Absentee Voters List for 1918 gives –

Post Office, Kennington

Private G/62770 Thomas William FOSTER. 7th Royal Fusiliers.

FOSTER W.H

Private T/240550 William Henry FOSTER. 5th Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). Died 30th January 1917. Resided Kennington. Enlisted Ashford. Buried Amara War Cemetery, Amara, Iraq. Grave reference XXI.J.10.

This mans name appears on the Roll of Honour in St Mary's Church, Ashford.
The Ashford Absentee Voters List for 1918 gives –

Post Office, Kennington

Private G/62770 Thomas William FOSTER. 7th Royal Fusiliers.

The day that William died his battalion was in the vicinity of Kut, Iraq. A number of men were killed when the battalion attempted to consolidate its line.

GANLY P

Corporal 9025 Peter GANLY. 1st Battalion, Lancashire Fusiliers. Died Gallipoli, Turkey 28th June 1915. Born Grantham. Enlisted Grantham, Lincolnshire. Son of Mary A.E Ganly of Bockhanger Lodge, Kennington, Ashford, Kent. Peter has no known grave. His name appears on the Helles Memorial, Turkey. Panel reference 58 to 72 and 218 to 219.

The day that Peter lost his life his battalion was in the vicinity of Y Ravine. The battalion attacked enemy positions at Gully Ravine. Leading companies met heavy machine gun fire and lost touch with the other company's. The attack was a failure. On the 29th June the battalion withdrew to Eski Line having suffered enormous casualties – 166 men killed and 25 wounded.

GREENLAND C.S.W

Lieutenant Charles Stirling Walter GREENLAND. 2nd Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment. Formerly Officer Training Corps (O.T.C) St Lawrence College, Ramsgate. Died Sunday 9th May 1915 aged 23 years. Born Kennington, Ashford on 22nd July 1892. Son of The Reverend Charles Albert and Lucy Constance Greenland of Scaynes Hill, Haywards Heath, Sussex, Formerly of Ashford. Later residing Hawks Hill, Caterham, Surrey. Buried in the Bedford House Cemetery, Ypres, Belgium. Grave reference Enclosure 4, XI.C.4.

Educated at Ashford Grammar School and St Lawrence College, Ramsgate.

His father was a vicar and lived for some time at The Chaplains House, Caterham, Surrey. Charles had a brother – Sub Lieutenant G.S Greenland who served on H.M.S Natal.

The day that Charles died his battalion was in action at Sanctuary Wood. The battalion held frontline trenches and came under extremely heavy shelling. The enemy attacked from Stirling Castle and poured through the battalion's lines. It is recorded that the 2nd battalion killed 350 enemy soldiers and that trenches were littered with dead soldiers. After dark the battalion (or what was left of it) withdrew to Hellfire Corner.

HAYNES A.J

Gunner 9162 Arthur James HAYNES. "A" Battery, 71st Brigade, Royal Field Artillery (RFA). Died Friday 16th April 1915 aged 45 years. Born Wye. Enlisted Ashford. Resided Kennington. Son of John and Katherine Mary Haynes of Swinford, Leicestershire. Husband of Amy Mary Haynes of Wye, Kent. Buried in Bulford Church Cemetery, Wiltshire. Grave reference 4.I.9.

In 1918 71st Brigade RFA was a regular army unit attached to the 15th Division.

JENKINS A.L

Lieutenant Arthur Lewis JENKINS. A Home Defence Squadron, Royal Flying Corps (RFC). Formerly 4th Battalion, Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry (DCLI). Killed whilst flying on 31st December 1917 aged 25 years. Son of Sir John Lewis Jenkins KCSI, ICS, and Lady Jenkins of Ulley Farm, Ulley Road, Kennington, Ashford, Kent. Buried in the Richmond Cemetery, Surrey. Grave reference M.1497.

Arthur is now a well known Great War poet. His book of poems "Folorn Adventurer's" was published in 1916 by Sidgwick and Jackson. The forward in his book was by Frank Fletcher. The eldest son of Sir John Lewis Jenkins, K.C.S.I, I.C.S, Arthur had hoped to enter the Indian Civil Service like his father. Educated at Balliol with a classical scholarship, Arthur volunteered for service in the DCLI as a Lieutenant in December 1914. He served in India for a year and then went to Aden in charge of a machine gun section. In 1915 Arthur moved with his battalion to Palestine. In January 1917 Arthur was commissioned into the Royal Flying Corps and went to Egypt to learn how to fly. He returned to England and while serving in a home defence squadron was killed in a tragic flying accident. Many of his poems can still be found in a book called "Remembrance" (Soldier Poets who have fallen in the war) by A. St. John Adcock now re-published by the Naval and Military Press (NMP). Pages 201-207.

Happy Warriors (a tribute to his friends who fell in Palestine 1915)

Surely they sleep content, our valient dead,
Fallen untimely in the savage of strife:
They have but followed whither duty led,
To find a fuller life.

Who, then, are we to grudge the bitter price
Of this our land inviolate through the years,
Or mar the splendour of their sacrifice
That is too high for tears...

God grant we fail not at the test – that when
We take, mayhap, our places in the fray,
Come life, come death, we quit ourselves like men,
The peers of such as they.

LARKIN A

Private 42584 Arthur LARKIN. 5th Battalion, York and Lancaster Regiment. Died 15th December 1917. Born Kennington. Enlisted Wath-On-Dearne, Yorkshire. Buried in the Aeroplane Cemetery, Ypres, Belgium. Grave reference II.A.28.

From October 1914 to the summer of 1918, Ypres (now Ieper) was the centre of a salient held by Commonwealth (and for some months also by French) forces. The site of the cemetery was in No Man's Land before 31 July 1917 when the 15th (Scottish) Division, with the 55th (West Lancashire) Division on their left, took nearby Verlorenhoek and Frezenberg. The cemetery was begun the following month (under the name of the New Cemetery, Frezenberg) by the 15th and the 16th (Irish) Divisions, but by October it had acquired its present name from the wreck of an aeroplane which lay near the present position of the Cross of Sacrifice. It was used by fighting units until March 1918, and again, after a period of occupation by the Germans, in September 1918. Plots II to VIII, and part of Plot I, were formed after the Armistice when graves were brought in from small burial grounds and the surrounding battlefields. The only considerable burial grounds concentrated into Aeroplane Cemetery were the following: BEDFORD HOUSE CEMETERY (ENCLOSURE No. 5), ZILLEBEKE, a little East of the Ypres-Wytschaete Road. This enclosure, which was separate from the others now forming Bedford House Cemetery, contained the graves of 14 men of the 1st Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry and six of the 1st Devons who fell in April, 1915. LOCK 8 CEMETERY, VOORMEZEELE, in a field about 200 metres North of Lock 8 on the Ypres-Comines Canal. It contained the graves of 19 soldiers from the United Kingdom and two from Australia and two German prisoners, who fell in July-September, 1917. There are now 1,105 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in this cemetery. 636 of the burials are unidentified but special memorials commemorate eight casualties known or believed to be buried among them. The cemetery was designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield.

LEVY A.G

Second Lieutenant Alwyne Gordon LEVY. 42nd Training Squadron, Royal Air Force (RAF) Wye. Died in a Flying Accident at Kennington 25th April 1918. Buried Willesden (St Mary's) Jewish Cemetery, Willesden, London.

Alwyne was killed in a flying accident whilst stationed at the nearby Wye aerodrome, Bramble Lane, Wye. On Thursday 25th April 1918 Alwyne was piloting a Sopwith Pup machine on a training mission from Wye Aerodrome. His machine was involved in a mid air collision with another machine (Avro Trainer) from Wye being piloted by **Lieutenant Cyril WHELAN**. The Avro had a observer on board - **Lieutenant Edmund MARRABLE**. Both machines came down near the Golden Ball Public House. All three officers were killed outright. All officers involved in this flying accident appear here as Ashford men. It seems inconcievable that none were included on any local war memorial...

After the accident Alwyne's body was returned to his parents somewhere in London and they buried him in the Willesden Jewish Cemetery.

LUSTED A.P

Lance Corporal L/7772 Arthur Percy LUSTED. 1st Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). Died 20th June 1915. Born Kennington. Enlisted Ashford. Resided Ashford. Son of William and Pricilla Lusted. Husband of Olive E. Lusted of "Rose Cottage", Shadoxhurst, Ashford. Buried in the Potijze Chateau Wood Cemetery. Grave reference B.4.

The day that Arthur died his battalion was in the vicinity of Poperinghe. It was not in action. It seems probable that Arthur died of wounds received on a nearby battlefield.





MARRABLE E

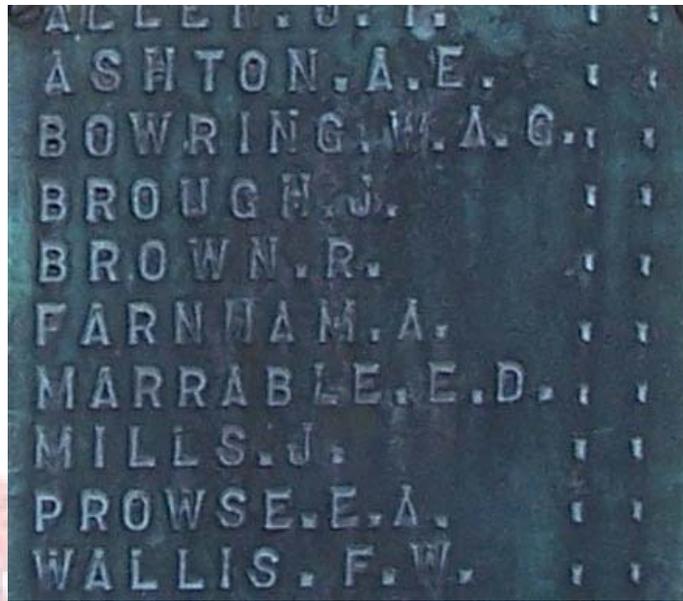
Lieutenant Edmund MARRABLE. 42nd Training Squadron, Royal Air Force. Formerly Royal Field Artillery (RFA). Died Flying Accident near Golden Ball Public House Thursday 25th April 1918 aged 25 years. Son of Douglas and Laura Maria Marrable. Buried locally in the St Mary's Churchyard, Kennington, Ashford, Kent.

Commemorated on the Dorchester, Dorset civic war memorial. His father Douglas was a solicitor in Dorchester who came from Scotland. His mother Laura Maria came from Australia.

Edmund's CWGC headstone records his unit as the Royal Artillery. In fact when killed he was serving as an Observer in the Royal Flying Corps (RFC).

Edmund was killed in a flying accident whilst stationed at the nearby Wye aerodrome, Bramble Lane, Wye. On 25th April 1918 Edmund was the passenger in a Avro Trainer flown by **Lieutenant Cyril WHELAN**. The machine was involved in a mid air collision with another machine (Sopwith Pup) being flown by **Second Lieutenant Alwyne Gordon LEVY**. Both machines came down near the Golden Ball Public House, Kennington. All three officers were killed outright. Edmund was buried close by to where his machine fell out the sky. The other two officers bodies were returned to their parents and both were buried in London. All officers involved in this flying accident appear here as Ashford men. It seems inconcievable that none were included on any local war memorial.

It is quite remarkable that Edmund's name was not placed on the Kennington War Memorial. His headstone is a stones throw from it! Even if Edmund was not strictly speaking a local man at the time of his death, he certainly is now having remained in the area for over 80 years...



Dorchester War Memorial

PATTERSON H.C

Lieutenant Hugh Cecil PATTERSON. 48 Squadron, Royal Flying Corps (RFC). Formerly 4th Battalion, Bedfordshire Regiment. Died 30th April 1917. Son of Mary E Patterson of Spearpoint, Kennington, Ashford, Kent. Buried in the Warlincourt Halte British Cemetery, France. Grave reference IX.F.15.

No reference found in RFC Communiques or in various reference books listing RFC casualties on a day to day basis.

PAGE P

Private L/8590 Percy PAGE. 1st Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). Died Wednesday 7th June 1916. Born Kennington. Enlisted Canterbury. Resided Westwell. Buried in the Essex Farm Cemetery, Leper, Belgium. Grave reference II.U.11.

The Ashford 1918 Absentee Voters List gives –

Leacon, Westwell

Private 34440 Albert William PAGE. Army Service Corps.

Britain Farm, Westwell

Henry PAGE. Royal Garrison Artillery.

The 1901 census gives –
....ingfield, Westwell

Samuel	PAGE	65	General Labourer	Westwell
Jane		60		Challock
Harry		25		Westwell
Ellen		23		Westwell

The day that Percy died his battalion was in trenches at La Briques. For the whole of June the 1st battalion alternated between trenches here and billets at Poperinghe. There is nothing of particular importance in the war diary for this period. Perhaps Percy was killed by a long range shell.

PARSONS G.F (Brother of F.N PARSONS VC)

Lieutenant Commander Guy Fowell PARSONS. HMS Nigella, Royal Navy (RN). Died 6th March 1919 aged 37 years. Son of Doctor Parsons of Dover, Kent. Brother of H.B Parsons of Eastwell, Ashford, Kent. Brother of Lieutenant Commander G.C Parsons of Stone House, Kennington, Ashford, Kent. Guy has no known grave. His name appears on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial, Portsmouth, Hampshire. Panel reference 31.

Guy's death was widely reported in the Kentish Express. He was a very well known international Rugby player. Guy had a brother (Raymond S PARSONS) who was killed in Gallipoli and another brother who was awarded the VICTORIA CROSS (VC) in the Boer War!

Lieutenant Francis Newton PARSONS VC. 1st Battalion, Essex Regiment. Killed in action 11th March 1900 during the Battle of Driefontein (Boer War). Awarded the VC for going to the aid of Private Ferguson. Born Dover 23rd March 1875. Buried Dreifontein Cemetery, South Africa.

Educated King's College, Cambridge and later the Royal Naval College Greenwich, London (HMS Britannia). Later posted to HMS Excellent at Portsmouth. Guy retired from the navy in 1908 but was re-mobilised upon the outbreak of war. In 1915 Guy served aboard HMS Revenge (later renamed HMS Redoubtable). In 1916 Guy was sent to HMS Toronto in Italy. In 1917 Guy was in command of HMS Shipjack a minelayer.

Guy was killed returning to his ship HMS Nigella in the dockyard at Portsmouth during pitch darkness. He accidentally fell down steps (25ft) fracturing his skull. He died of his injuries that same day. His body was buried at sea by his shipmates on HMS Nigella.

PARSONS R.S (Brother of F.N PARSONS VC)

Lieutenant Commander Raymond S PARSONS. Hood Battalion, Royal Naval Division (RND). Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve. Died 7th June 1915. Son of Doctor Charles Parsons of 13, Park Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Brother of Mr H.B Parsons of Manor House, Boughton Aluph, Ashford, Kent. Raymond has no known grave. His name appears on the Helles Memorial, Gallipoli, Turkey. Panel reference 1 and 2.

The Ashford 1918 Absentee Voters List gives –

Stone House, Goat Lees, Kennington

Lieutenant Godfrey Crail PARSONS. HMS Attentive III, Royal Navy.

Raymond entered into the Royal Navy as a cadet in July 1894. In December 1903 he was promoted to Lieutenant. In 1911 he was further promoted to Lt Cdr. He resided in Boughton Aluph with his brother for over 2 years before the outbreak of war.

POOLE J

Private L/8360 John POOLE. 2nd Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). Died 26th May 1915. Born Kennington. Enlisted Canterbury. Resided Ramsgate. John has no known grave. His name appears on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, Ypres, Belgium. Panel reference 14 and 14.

The day that John died his battalion was holding the line just outside Ypres on the Menin Road. The 9th Lancers got into difficulty and the 2nd battalion were sent to assist them. It appears that John lost his life here.

SWIFT B

Private L/7545 Albert Henry (Bert) SWIFT. 6th Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). Died 18th March 1916 aged 30 years. Born Kennington, Ashford. Enlisted Canterbury. Resided West Cottage, Snave, Romney Marsh. Son of George and Clara Swift of "Nest Cottage", Snave, Hamstreet, Kent. Bert has no known grave. His name appears on the Loos Memorial, France. Panel reference 15 to 19.

Bert's name is not on the Hamstreet or Snave civic war memorial's.

The Ashford 1918 Absentee Voters List gives –

West Cottage, Snave

Lance Corporal 2889 Harry SWIFT. 1st Buffs (East Kent Regiment).

VIDLER J.A (brother)

Private T/1746 John Alfred VIDLER. 5th Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). Died Friday 7th January 1916. Born Newchurch, Kent on 8th March 1897. Enlisted Ashford. Resided Kennington, Ashford. Son of George Vidler of "Forestmere", Kennington Lees, Ashford, Kent. Buried in the Amara War Cemetery, Iraq. Grave reference XXXI.D.9.

It is unclear why John's name was not placed on the Kennington War Memorial when his brothers name was.

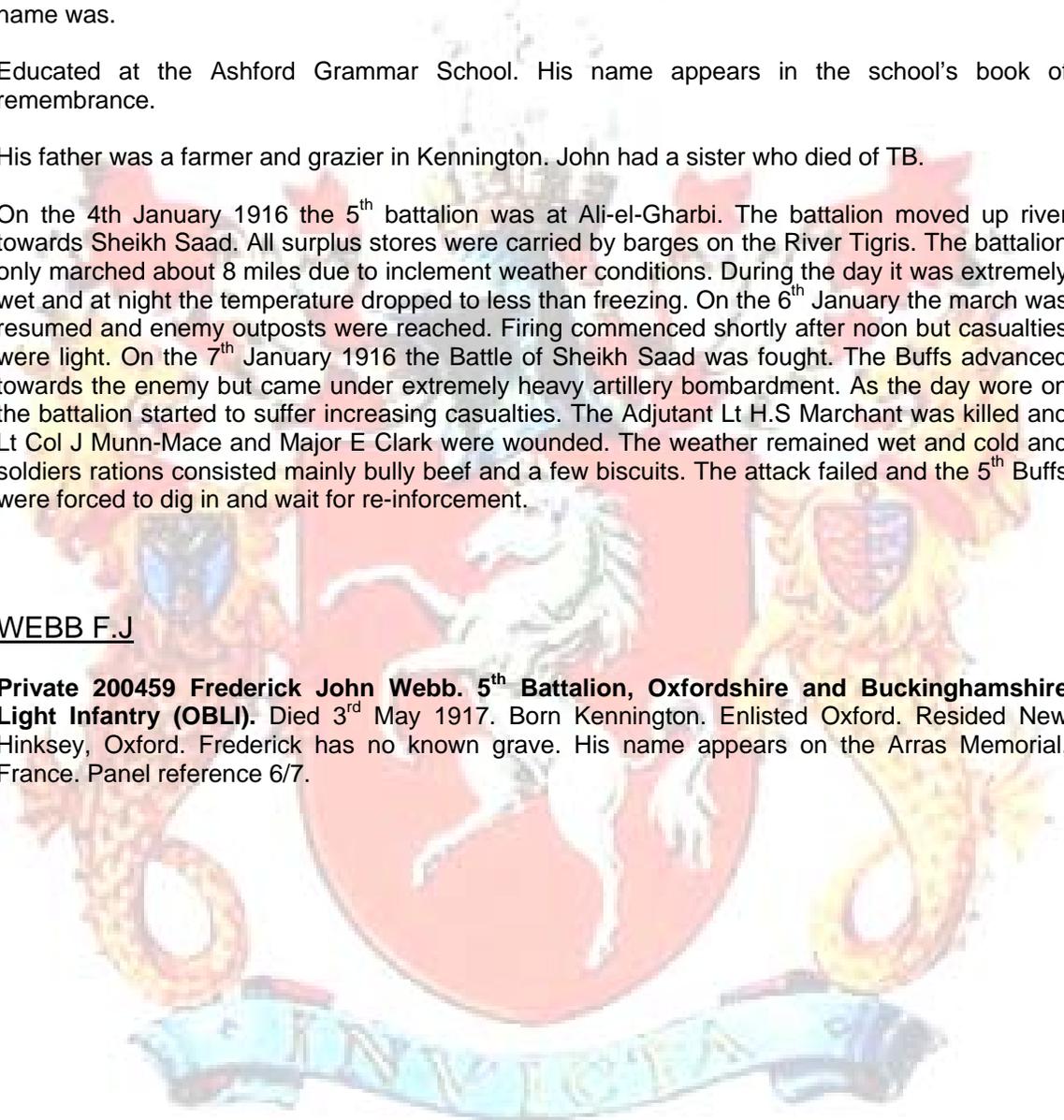
Educated at the Ashford Grammar School. His name appears in the school's book of remembrance.

His father was a farmer and grazier in Kennington. John had a sister who died of TB.

On the 4th January 1916 the 5th battalion was at Ali-el-Gharbi. The battalion moved up river towards Sheikh Saad. All surplus stores were carried by barges on the River Tigris. The battalion only marched about 8 miles due to inclement weather conditions. During the day it was extremely wet and at night the temperature dropped to less than freezing. On the 6th January the march was resumed and enemy outposts were reached. Firing commenced shortly after noon but casualties were light. On the 7th January 1916 the Battle of Sheikh Saad was fought. The Buffs advanced towards the enemy but came under extremely heavy artillery bombardment. As the day wore on the battalion started to suffer increasing casualties. The Adjutant Lt H.S Marchant was killed and Lt Col J Munn-Mace and Major E Clark were wounded. The weather remained wet and cold and soldiers rations consisted mainly bully beef and a few biscuits. The attack failed and the 5th Buffs were forced to dig in and wait for re-inforcement.

WEBB F.J

Private 200459 Frederick John Webb. 5th Battalion, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry (OBLI). Died 3rd May 1917. Born Kennington. Enlisted Oxford. Resided New Hinksey, Oxford. Frederick has no known grave. His name appears on the Arras Memorial, France. Panel reference 6/7.





Funeral of the Lieut. Cyril Whelan killed while flying from Wye on 25th April 1918.
(Mrs E. Hawke)

WHELAN C

Lieutenant Cyril WHELAN. 42nd Training Squadron, Royal Air Force (RAF). Wye Aerodrome. Formerly Royal Flying Corps (RFC). Died Flying Accident Kennington Thursday 25th April 1918 aged 19 years. Son of Albert Whelan (very famous Australian entertainer of the 1900's) of 221 Brixton Hill, Brixton, London. Buried Kensal Green Roman Catholic Cemetery, Kensal Green, London. Grave reference 1.1952.

Cyril was killed in a flying accident whilst stationed at the nearby Wye aerodrome, Bramble Lane, Wye. On Thursday 25th April 1918 Cyril was piloting an Avro Trainer machine on a training mission from Wye Aerodrome. His machine was involved in a mid air collision with another machine (Sopwith Pup) from Wye being piloted by **Second Lieutenant Alwyne Gordon LEVY**. The Avro being piloted by Cyril had an observer on board - **Lieutenant Edmund MARRABLE**. Both machines came down near the Golden Ball Public House. All three officers were killed outright. All officers involved in this flying accident appear here as Ashford men. It seems inconceivable that none were included on any local war memorial...

After the accident Cyril's body was returned to his parents in Brixton London and they buried him in Kensal Green Cemetery. The authorities provided a full military funeral.

Wye aerodrome was situated to the east of Bramble Lane on land owned by Mr Dockery of Boughton Corner Farm, and was first used by aircraft of the 6th Home Defence Wing in April 1916 in association with other airfields at Dover, Shoreham and Gosport. The Wye aerodrome was described in an official publication as having an area of 7,000 yards x 600 yards. The runway was moderately flat and three hangers were constructed to house aircraft. Further outbuildings were made in 1916 including a guard room, canteen, repair shed, motor transport shed and hatted accommodation for personnel.

After Armistice Day (11th November 1918) the aerodrome was run down as many squadrons were reduced to a Cadre.



WHITEWICK / WHIGHTWICK / WIGHTWICK R.J (brother)

G/8650 Richard J WHIGHTWICK. 9th Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). Died of Phthisis (T.B) 2nd May 1917 aged 19 years. Resided Mead Villas, Burton Road, Kennington, Ashford, Kent. Son of John and Annie Whitewick of Marsh Road, Ruckinge, Ashford, Kent. Buried locally in the Ruckinge (St Mary Magdelene) Churchyard, Ruckinge, Ashford, Kent.

Enlisted 13 November 1915. Posted to 9th Buffs 23 November 1915 (Canterbury). Discharged unfit for further military service 5 May 1916. Total army service – 175 days.

Address on discharge - Mead Villas, Burton Road, Kennington, Ashford, Kent.

There seems some confusion as to the spelling of Richard's surname.

The Ashford Absentee Voters List for 1918 gives –

Marsh Cottages, Ruckinge

Seaman Thomas Henry WIGHTWICK. H.L.R.F.A Reliance.
Private 7645 William WHIGHTWICK. 10th Queen's (R. West Surrey Regiment).

Richard contracted T.B whilst a serving soldier and training with the 9th Buffs in the Citadel at Dover. His body was recovered to Ruckinge where his family buried him locally.