

To the glory of God and in memory of the brothers of the Ashford Branch of the Tunbridge Wells Quitable Friendly Society who fell in the Great War 1914 -1919

Arthur William BOUGHTON

Edward FERNELEY

Cecil Nelson Frederick HAMMON

Basil John HILLS

Albert MUMMERY

Charles Henry PEARSON

F.N SEXTON

Not recorded by CWGC

Claude Reginald TAPSFIELD

Henry Ernest CLEMENTS

Frederick James GORHAM

S.C HART

Not recorded by CWGC

Herbert Frederick HOSKINS

Edward Rugan MORTIMER

Cyril ROBINSON

Harry STICKELLS

James Arthur WARD

Harry WELLS VC

Victoria Cross holder!

BOUGHTON A.W

St Mary's
Post Office

Private 303161 Arthur William BOUGHTON. 8th (Ardwick) Battalion, Manchester Regiment. Formerly (179352) Royal Field Artillery (RFA). Died Sunday 31st March 1918. Born New Cross, London. Enlisted Woolwich, London. Resided Ashford. Buried in the Foncquevillers Military Cemetery, Near Arras, France. Grave reference II.D.I.

Before the outbreak of war Arthur was a Postman in Ashford. His name appears on the Ashford Post Office War Memorial which is located in the Sorting Office Tannery Lane, Ashford.

The 8th Die Hards (Middlesex Regiment) landed at Alexandria Egypt 25th September 1915 (127th Brigade, 42nd Division). Landed Gallipoli, Turkey 26th May 1915. In January 1916 it returned to Egypt having been evacuated from Gallipoli. In March 1917 it moved from Egypt to the Western Front (France, Belgium) where it remained for the remaining duration of the war.

FERNELEY E

St Mary's
Tun/Wells Equitable

Corporal G/13698 Edward FERNELEY. 6th Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). Died Thursday 3 May 1917. Born Ashford. Enlisted Ashford. Resided 7-9 Castle Street, Ashford, Kent. Son of William Honess and Ellen Ferneley of 7-9 Castle Street, Ashford, Kent. Formerly (1881) 18 Wolsley Road, Ashford, Kent. Edward has no known grave. His name appears on the Arras Memorial, Arras, France. Panel reference bay 2.

His name also appears on the (now lost) Ashford Branch War Memorial of the Tunbridge Wells Equitable Friendly Society. It used to hang in the Ashford Branch office at Regents Place, Ashford. No one knows what happened to it...

The 1881 Census gives –
18 Wolsley Road, Ashford

William Honess FERNELEY	Cabinet Maker	Thrushington, Leicester 1850
Ellen		Ashford 1852
Harriet		Faversham 1881
Harriet Anne		Faversham 1876

The 1901 census gives –
7-9 Castle Street, Ashford

William H	FERNELEY	50	Cabinet Maker	Leicester
Ellen		47		Ashford
Harriet		86		Faversham
William G		18		Ashford
Edward		16		Ashford
Susie		15		Ashford
George H		4		Ashford
Harry H		5		Ashford

The day Edward died his battalion was holding the line at Monchy. The 6th battalion's objective this day was to capture Keeling Copse. 12 officers and 25 men were killed outright, 128 men were wounded and a further 207 men were missing (the majority of whom were probably killed).

HAMMON C

Ashford Baptist Church Memorial

Gunner 115660 Cecil Nelson Frederick HAMMON. 233rd Siege Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery (RGA). Died Friday 28th September 1917 aged 29 years. Born December 1887 at Hassle Street, Brook, Ashford, Kent. Resided Willesborough Lees, Ashford. Son of Frederick and Susannah Hammon of Barbary House, 70 New Street, Ashford, Kent. Buried in the Lijssehoek Military Cemetery, Poperinghe, Belgium. Grave reference XXXV.D.20A.

Cecil's name also appears on the Baptist church war memorial, Station Road, Ashford. He obviously attended that church before the outbreak of war.

Cecil's father Frederick was from East Grinstead, Sussex. His mother Susannah was born locally in Brabourne abt. 1852. They had two other children -

Stuart Edmund John Hammon born June 1879 Deal
Betha Ada S Hammon born September 1882 Deal

Cecil was struck by shrapnel and was evacuated to an Advanced Dressing Station (ADS). Sadly, later on that day he died of his wounds. His battery commanding officer was Major Beverley who wrote a letter to his parents informing them that their son had been mortally wounded and that he died gloriously for his country.

The Ashford 1918 Absentee Voters List gives –

132 Gladstone Road, Willesborough

Sapper 354497 Archie HAMMON. Railway Operating Division, Royal Engineers.

Island Farm, Egerton

Private 484613 Reginald HAMMON. Labour Corps.

Daniels Water, Great Chart

Bombardier 122230 Reginald Arthur HAMMON. Royal Field Artillery.

9, The Street, Mersham

Staff Farrier 2229 William HAMMON. 1st Life Guards.

Another member of Cecil's family was also killed who came from Aldington - **Lance Corporal G/23517 Charles Francis HAMMON. 10th (Yeomanry) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). Formerly Royal East Kent Yeomanry.** Died 11th March 1918 aged 28 years.

HART S.C

Sydney Charles HART. Son of Thomas and Mary Hart of Kingsland, Egerton, Kent. – this name was referred to in the Kentish Express as being an Shadoxhurst man who lost his life in the Great War. I have found no trace of this man in official records.

His name appears on the now lost Ashford Branch War Memorial of the Tunbridge Wells Equitable Friendly Society. It used to hang in the Ashford Branch office at Regents Place, Ashford.

The Ashford 1918 Absentee Voters List gives –

Kingsland, Egerton

L.M.R.H 220626 Sydney Charles HART. Royal Air Force.

The 1901 Census gives –

Shadoxhurst

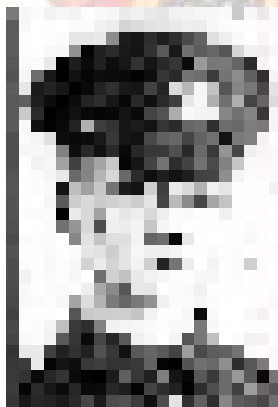
Thomas G	HART	48	Agricultural Labourer	Tenterden
Mary A		49		Woodchurch
Louisa		15		Shadoxhurst
Sydney C		8		Shadoxhurst

HILLS B.J
Christchurch
Railway
Dover Marine

Private G/28760 Basil John HILLS. 7th Battalion, Queens Own (Royal West Kent Regiment). Died Thursday 4th April 1918 aged 19 years. Born Ashford. Enlisted Canterbury. Son of Mr F. Hills of 140, New Town, Ashford, Kent. Buried in the Picquigny British Cemetery, The Somme, France. Grave reference A.II.

Before the outbreak of war Basil was employed as a Apprentice at the Ashford Railway Yards. His name appears on the Ashford (SE&CR) Railway Works Rolls of Honour.

On the 1st and 2nd April 1918 the 7th battalion was located East of Hanguard Wood near near Amiens. At 1900 hours the 2nd Bedford's carried out a minor attack on enemy trench systems covered by the 7th West Kent's. A mistake was made which resulted in the West Kent's assaulting company going forward on the offensive. The West Kent's were met by withering machine gun fire but continued forward reaching a copse and securing it. Captain MacDonald was in command of this company. On the 3rd April Lt's A.F.I Jones and Robinson were wounded. On the 4th April the company was still holding the captured copse. At 0500 hours the Germans counter-attacked in force. The nearby 7th Buffs were forced to withdraw but the 7th West Kent's managed to hold out somehow. The battalion sustained heavy casualties this day. Basil was probably mortally wounded on the 1st or 2nd April and then recovered through the medical chain to a Casualty Clearing Station (C.C.S) near Picquigny on the Somme. Basil died of his wounds before he could be evacuated onwards to a Base or General Hospital.



MUMMERY A

AshfordRailway Rolls
Dover Marine

Rifleman 468024 Albert MUMMERY. 11th (Finsbury Rifles) Battalion, London Regiment. Formerly (2209) 5th Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). Died Thursday 20th September 1917 aged 18 years. Born Ashford. Resided 14 or 6 Apsley Street, Ashford, Kent. Son of Mr and Mrs Mummery of 6, Apsley Street, Ashford, Kent. Albert has no known grave. His name appears on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, Ypres, Belgium. Panel reference 54.

Before the outbreak of war Albert was working in the Ashford Railway Yards as a Wagon Painter. His name appears on the Ashford (SE&CR) Railway Rolls of Honour –

MUMMERY A

Wagon Painter

5th Buffs

MUMMERY C

Apprentice

REKMR

MUMMERY H

Fitters Asst

HCFA

His name also appears on the Dover Marine Railway tribute and on the (now lost) Tunbridge Wells Equitable Friendly Society Roll of Honour.

There is some suggestion that Albert may have in fact served in the King's Royal Rifle Corps (KRRC) not the London Regiment. Albert had 2 brothers also serving – One was in the Rifle Brigade and the other served in the Royal Navy.

The Ashford Absentee Voters List for 1918 gives -

14, Apsley Street, Ashford

Able Seaman 216099 Thomas George MUMMERY. H.M.S “Island Ascension”. Royal Navy.

Albert was killed after only 2 months service in France.

Albert's death was reported in the Kentish Express on 9th November 1918. His name also appears on Ashford's Roll of Honour inside St Mary's church. For some reason his name was left off the town's civic memorial. This situation is ridiculous, Albert was clearly born in Ashford and resided here when killed.

PEARSON C

Edgerton War Memorial

Private 3204 Charles Henry PEARSON. 6th Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment. Formerly (26953) Bedfordshire Regiment. Died Saturday 17th February 1917 age 32 years. Born Egerton. Enlisted Luton, Bedfordshire. Son of George Pearson of Week's Farm, Egerton, Ashford, Kent. Charles has no known grave. His name appears on the Thiepval Memorial, The Somme, France. Panel reference 11A and 11D.

Charles name appears on the (now lost) Tunbridge Wells Equitable Friendly Society Roll of Honour. It's location is not known but it did hang in the Ashford branch for many years.

SEXTON F.N

SEXTON F.N – No Trace

This man's name appears on the Tunbridge Wells Equitable Friendly Society War Memorial which is now lost! It used to hang in the Ashford Branch office at Regents Place, Ashford.

1928 Kentish Express Ashford Directory
17 Hardinge Road, Ashford

F.H SEXTON

TAPSFIELD C.R

St Mary's

Private T/704 Claude Reginald TAPSFIELD. 5th Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). Formerly a Bandsman in the 5th Buffs. Died appendicitis Tuesday 1st June 1915 aged 25 years. Born 5th June 1889 at Farleigh, Maidstone. Enlisted Ashford. Resided Ashford. Son of Frederick and Laura Louisa Tapsfield of 2 East Hill, Ashford, Kent. Claude has no known grave. His name appears on the Kirkee 1914-1918 Memorial, near Poona, India. Panel reference 3.

His name also appears on the (now lost) Ashford Branch War Memorial of the Tunbridge Wells Equitable Friendly Society. It used to hang in the Ashford Branch office at Regents Place, Ashford. No one knows what happened to it...

Claude's father Frederick Tapsfield served for 18 years in the Royal East Kent Mounted Rifles (REKMR). His mother Laura was the daughter of Valentine Munn (Founder member of the East Kent Volunteers) of Maidstone.

Claude's name appears on page 356 of the de Ruvigny's Roll of Honour.

Educated at the British School Ashford and the South East Agricultural College Wye. Upon leaving Wye he went to work at his fathers Newsagents and Tabacoonists in Ashford. Claude joined the territorial's in 1905 and became a bandsman (clarinet player). Claude won awards for his clarinet playing at Crystal Palace in London. Upon the outbreak of war Claude volunteered for overseas service and went to India (Pachmari) with his battalion. He became ill with appendicitis and an operation was required in order to save his life. Claude died on the operating table while this surgery was taking place.

His commanding officer Captain F Muckley wrote – "Tapsfield was not only a clever musician and good soldier, but was so well liked by every one of us for his cheerful good fellowship. He was attended to his grave by every man of the 5th Buffs stationed at Pachmari and buried with military honours".

Obviously Claude's grave was later lost which would explain why his name appears on the Kirkee 1914 – 1918 Memorial in India.

The 1901 Census gives –

2, East Hill, Ashford

Frederick	TAPSFIELD	43	East Farleigh, Maidstone
Laura		38	Maidstone
Bernard		14	Linton, Maidstone
Claude Reginald		11	Maidstone
Doris		6	Maidstone

CLEMENTS H.E

St Mary's

Private G/11182 Henry Ernest CLEMENTS. 6th Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). Died Friday 5th April 1918. Born West Peckham, Maidstone, Kent. Enlisted Ashford. Resided Ashford. Buried in the Senlis Communal Cemetery Extension, Senlis-le-Sec, The Somme, Northern France. Grave reference I.A.5

His name also appears on the now lost Ashford Branch War Memorial of the Tunbridge Wells Equitable Friendly Society. It used to hang in the Ashford Branch office at Regents Place, Ashford. No one knows what happened to it.

The Ashford Absentee Voters List for 1918 gives -

Newtown Post Office, Ashford

Private 240255 Charles CLEMENTS. 5th Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment)
Private 240227 John Victor CLEMENTS. 5th Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment)
Private 361808 Richard William CLEMENTS. 800th Company, Labour Corps
Rifleman 61553 William James CLEMENTS. 51st Battalion, King's Royal Rifle Corps.

The day Henry was killed his battalion was in action at Henencourt in France. The battalion was in an area that was heavily shelled all day. The Buffs were ordered to move forward towards Amiens. The battalion now became embroiled in what is now known as the Battle of The Ancre. The Buffs assisted by the Queen's moved into trenches at Dernancourt and here a bitterly cold night was spent. It appears that Henry was killed in action near to Dernancourt on the Somme battlefield.

GORHAM F.J

St Mary's
Ashford Railway
Ashford Baptist
Dover Marine

Corporal G/19203 Frederick James GORHAM. 6th Battalion, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment). Formerly Kent Cyclist Battalion. Formerly C Company, West Kent Yeomanry. Died Saturday 24th August 1918. Born Appledore. Enlisted Ashford. Husband of Grace Gorham of 19 East Street, Ashford, Kent. Son of James and Eliza J Gorham of Christchurch Road, Ashford, Kent. Buried in the Meaulte Military Cemetery, Meaulte, near Albert, Somme, France. Grave reference - F.32.

Soldiers Died 1914-1918 gives Frederick's date of death as 24th March 1918.

Frederick's name appears on his fathers grave in the old Ashford Cemetery, Canterbury Road, Ashford. His father James died 9th February 1941 aged 86. His mother Eliza died 13th January 1920 aged 63 years. Frederick's name appears on the Ashford Baptist Church war memorial which incorrectly lists his unit as the Kent Cyclist Battalion. In fact Frederick did serve in the Kent Cyclist Battalion before the outbreak of war.

Before the outbreak of war Frederick was working as a Machinist in the Ashford (SE&CR) Railway Yards. His name appears on the Ashford Railway Works Rolls of Honour. In his spare time Frederick served in the territorial force (Kent Cyclist Battalion). In August 1914 Frederick transferred from the Kent Cyclist Battalion to the West Kent Yeomanry. On 17th January 1917 Frederick was drafted into the 6th West Kent's. Frederick served in Italy before going to the Western Front where he met his death. He left a widow and 1 small child.

The Ashford 1918 Absentee Voters List gives –

19, East Street, Ashford

Frederick GORHAM. 6th Royal West Kent Regiment.

The 1901 census gives –
High Street, Appledore

James	GORHAM	46	Carter	Ivychurch
Eliza J		46		Orlestone
Caroline		24	Dressmaker	Orlestone
Frederick J		16	Bricklayer	Appledore
Christina M		7		Appledore

The day that Cpl Gorham died his battalion was engaged in heavy fighting near Becourt Wood close to Albert on the Somme battlefield. The 6th battalion sustained heavy casualties this day from heavy German machine gun fire. It seems likely that Cpl Gorham was killed during this action. It is recorded that Frederick was twice previously wounded before being killed.



HOSKINS H.F

Railway
Marine

Able Seaman 202829 Herbert Frederick HOSKINS. HMS "Royal Arthur". Royal Fleet Reserve (R.F.R). Died 20th January 1915 aged 31 years. Herbert died at 23 Christchurch Road, Ashford, Kent. The given cause of death was heart disease. Brother of Caroline May Wilkins of 23, Christchurch Road, Ashford, Kent. Herbert normally resided at 66 Lower Denmark Road, Ashford, Kent. Buried locally 23rd January 1915 in the old Ashford Cemetery, Canterbury Road, Ashford, Kent. Grave reference - 7004. There is a Mabel Harriet Pilbeam buried in the same burial plot. Mabel was buried here on 2nd February 1966 aged 79 years. She is probably Herbert's sister (or a wife).

Herbert's grave is a disgrace. It is literally falling apart! Not much of a tribute to a man who lost his life in the service of his country...

Herbert's death is not officially recorded as a casualty of war. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission have missed his name off their roll of honour!

Before the outbreak of war Herbert was employed as a Carriage Cleaner at the Ashford Railway Yards. His name appears on the Ashford (SE&CR) Railway Works Rolls of Honour. His death certificate confirms this and also states Herbert was a former sailor. The Kentish Express gives the information that at some stage Herbert was the licensee of the Wheatsheaf Public House, Lower Denmark Road, Ashford.

Death Certificate reference – West Ashford/ASH28/171.

The Ashford Absentee Voters List for 1918 gives –

51, Beaver Road, Ashford

Driver 234110 Frank HOSKINS. Royal Field Artillery (RFA).

The 1901 census gives –
23, Christchurch Road, Ashford

Charles HOSKINS	57	Labourer	Baddeley, Hampshire
Mary	54		Bungay, Suffolk
Arthur	23	Carpenter Joiner	Stepney, London
Catherine	21		Stepney, London
George	19	Hawker	Stepney, London
Frank	12		Stepney, London

Herbert joined the Royal Navy in 1899 for 12 years service. He served on the following ships during this period – St Vincent (1899), Argincourt (1900), Galatea (1900), Empress of India (1900/01), Caesar (1901/02), Wildfire (1903/04), Northampton (1904), Hawke (1904/05). Herbert left the navy on expiry of his service engagement in January 1912. On the outbreak of war in August 1914 Herbert answered the call of his country and rejoined the navy. He was immediately posted to HMS Royal Arthur on the 2nd August 1914 and remained with this ship until 26th November 1914. On the 27th November 1914 he returned to HMS Pembroke in Chatham (Royal Naval Hospital) and was subsequently invalided on 21st December 1914.

Herbert died only 1 month later of heart disease. His death was therefore attributable. 7% of men who were awarded war disablement pensions were as a consequence of heart problems. The case for Herbert is extremely strong taking into account he died only 1 month after being invalided.



MORTIMER E.R

Lance Corporal CH/495/S Edward Rugan MORTIMER. Deal Battalion, Royal Marines Light Infantry (RMLI). Formerly E Company, Chatham Battalion RMLI. Died Gallipoli, Turkey Tuesday 13th July 1915 aged 29 years. Born Ashford 24th January 1886. Son of Mr R. Mortimer and Mary Mortimer of “Mill Cottage”, Regents Place, Ashford, Kent. Edward has no known grave. His name appears on the Helles Memorial, Gallipoli, Turkey. Panel reference 2 to 7.

His name also appears on the (now lost) Ashford Branch War Memorial of the Tunbridge Wells Equitable Friendly Society. It used to hang in the Ashford Branch office at Regents Place, Ashford. No one knows what happened to it...

Before the outbreak of war Edward was apprenticed to Messrs Lee & Son of Ashford as a Painter and Decorator. His apprenticeship ended on 24th May 1903. He then worked as a Builder and then for a short while as an Undertaker in Ashford. Edward was a well known local footballer and played for the Ashford Town and Invicta football clubs.

Edward Enlisted at Chatham on 10th November 1914. Upon enlistment Edward was transferred to "E" Company, Chatham Battalion (RMLI). At some stage later on he was posted to the Deal Battalion.

ROBINSON C

Christchurch
Baptist
A.G.S

Rifleman 394606 Cyril ROBINSON. 9th (Queen Victoria's Rifles) Battalion, London Regiment. Died 26/27th September 1917. Born Ashford. Enlisted London. Resided Corringham. Resided (1901) 122 Beaver Road, Ashford, Kent. Cyril has no known grave. His name appears on the Tyne Cot Memorial, Zonnebeke, Belgium. Panel reference 151.

There is some confusion as to Cyril's correct date of death. He was probably killed in action in a night attack and no one quite knew which day he was killed.

Educated at the British School in Ashford and later the Ashford Grammar School from 20th September 1907 to 1912. Whilst at the Ashford Grammar School Cyril was a very keen cricketer and played for the cricket team in 1911. His name appears in the School Book of Remembrance.

Upon leaving education Cyril trained as a foundry worker in Ashford and immediately before the outbreak of war was working as a foundry foreman.

The 9th London Regiment was formed at Davies Street, Berkeley Square, London 4th August 1914 (3rd London Brigade, 1st London Division). August 1914 to Bullswater, Pirbright, Surrey. September 1914 to Crowborough, Sussex. Landed France November 1914 (13th Brigade, 5th Division). On 10th February 1916 moved to 169th Brigade, 56th Division in the Hallencourt area. On 1st February 1918 moved to 175th Brigade, 58th Division where it absorbed the 2/9th battalion. The battalion stayed on the Western Front for the duration of the war although it was attached to quite a few different Brigades and Divisions.



STICKELLS H.W (brother)

Railway
Dover Marine

Private G/9125 Harry William STICKELLS. 1st Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). Died Friday 15th September 1916 aged 23 years. Born Ruckinge in 1899. Enlisted Ashford. Resided Sevington. Son of Harry Robert and Harriet Stickells of 98 Church Road/ 2 May Cottages, Sevington, Ashford. Formerly Waterbrook Cottage, Sevington. Harry has no known grave. His name appears on the Thiepval Memorial, The Somme, France. Panel reference 5D.

Harry's name appears on the Mersham Wesleyan Chapel War Memorial Plaque located in what is now a private residence in Frith Road, Aldington. Apparently, the location of the former chapel comes under the administrative parish of Mersham.

Prior to the war Harry worked for the South Eastern and Chatham Railway Company in the Ashford Railway Works. His name appears on the Ashford Railway Works Rolls of Honour and the Dover Marine Railway War Memorial.

The Ashford Absentee Voters List for 1918 gives –
Waterbrook Cottage, Sevington, Ashford

Private 2007712 Percy Arthur STICKELLS. 4th Reserve Battalion, Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment).

The day that Harry was killed his battalion the 1st Buffs was in action all day. The battalion was between Morval and Le Sars holding frontline trenches on the Thiepval Ridge. The objective that day was the Quadrilateral a heavily fortified enemy redoubt on the edge of Bouteaux Wood. The Buffs went forward with the Bedford's but the attack was bought to a standstill by extremely heavy machine gun fire. On the 16th September the battalion withdrew to trenches running south east of Guillemont.

WARD J.A

St Mary's
Marine

Private G/67751 James Arthur WARD. London Regiment. Formerly 2/4th Battalion, London Regiment. Died Friday 26th October 1917 aged 20 years. Son of Harry and Ellen Ward of 256 Beaver Road, Ashford, Kent. James has no known grave. His name appears on the Tyne Cot Memorial, Zonnebeke, Belgium. Panel reference 28 to 30 and 162 to 163A.

His name also appears on the (now lost) Ashford Branch War Memorial of the Tunbridge Wells Equitable Friendly Society. It used to hang in the Ashford Branch office at Regents Place, Ashford. No one knows what happened to it...

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission list his unit as the 2/4th Battalion, London Regiment. This couldn't possibly be so because the 2/4th London's had been disbanded months previous! When he was killed he was most probably serving in another (undisclosed) London Regiment.

His name appears on the Ashford Roll of Honour inside the St Mary's church but not on the war memorial in Church Road which is surprising.

Before the outbreak of war James was working in the Ashford Railway Yards. His name appears on the Dover Marine War Memorial but does NOT appear on the Ashford Railway Works rolls of honour.

The 2/4th London Regiment was formed London September 1914. December 1914 to Maidstone, Kent with 2/1st London Brigade. On 31st December 1914 to Malta. On August 1915 it moved to Alexandria, Egypt. On 15th October 1915 the battalion landed at Helles, Gallipoli, Turkey (2nd Brigade, Royal Naval Division (RND)). On 21st January 1916 the battalion was back in Egypt (53rd Division). On 24th April 1916 the battalion sailed to France. By June 1916 in France, the battalion had ceased to exist (disbanded).



Harry Wells

Sergeant L/8088 Harry WELLS, VC. 2nd Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment. Died Saturday 25th September 1915 aged 27 years. Born 19th September 1888 at "Hole Cottage", Millbank, near Herne Bay in Kent (a street there is named after Harry). From 1911 to 1913 he was a Police Constable in Ashford. In December 1913 Harry left the Police Force and worked for a short while as a barman at the Beaver Inn, Beaver Road, Ashford, Kent. Buried in the Dud Corner Cemetery, Loos, France. Grave reference V.E.2.

His name also appears on the (now lost) Ashford Branch War Memorial of the Tunbridge Wells Equitable Friendly Society. It used to hang in the Ashford Branch office at Regents Place, Ashford. No one knows what happened to it...

Harry's name also appears on the Christchurch (South Ashford) War Memorial.

Harry left school and became a farm hand working at Ridgeway Farm, Herne Bay. Whilst working on the farm Harry lost two fingers on his right hand in an accident with a haymaking machine. He later worked for a Mrs Wootton at Herne Mill. Wells was a tall youth, over 6 feet tall and at the age of 16 joined the Army in 1904. He served in the Royal Sussex Regiment for 7 years. Harry left the Army in 1911 and in November of that year became a Police Constable in the Ashford Division. He resigned from the Police Force on 31st December 1913. Upon leaving the police he worked for a short while at the Beaver Inn, Beaver Road, South Ashford as a barman. When the war came Harry was immediately recalled to the Colours and rejoined his former regiment. Harry

rose through the ranks quickly not entirely surprising given his experience and the circumstance of war.

Harry was in fact a native of Herne Bay NOT Ashford. His name appears on the Herne Bay civic war memorial. His Victoria Cross was presented to his mother at Buckingham Palace on the 27th November 1916. His medals are held by the Royal Sussex Regiment Museum.

Victoria Cross Citation



Battle of Loos 1915

London Gazette extract no 29371 dated 16th November 1915

*“For the most conspicuous bravery near **Le Routoire Farm** on the 25th September 1915, when his platoon officer had been killed, he took command and led his men forward to within fifteen yards of the German wire. Nearly half the platoon were killed or wounded, and the remainder were much shaken, but with the utmost coolness and bravery, Sergeant Wells rallied them and led them forward. Finally, when very few were left, he stood up and urged them forward once more, but while doing this was killed. He gave a magnificent example of courage and determination”.*

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