

Helmdon's War Memorial

The Men Behind the Names



WEA Helmdon Branch
November 2016

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Preface

Helmdon's War Memorial - The Men Behind the Names

In 2014, the 100th Anniversary of the start of the 1914 -1918 Great War, a group of Helmdon residents decided to research and publish personal details of those servicemen whose names appear on the Helmdon War Memorial. Such was their enthusiasm that the work has expanded into looking at other aspects, notably the Roll of Honour of Old Boys of Helmdon School Who Served in the First World War.

First published in 2014, this 2016 update includes newly discovered facts and stories.

The most relevant, up-to-date information available has been put together and can be printed off as a booklet. It is to be hoped that it will not only add to the history of Helmdon but that it will go some way to honour the great sacrifice made by those village servicemen.

The authors apologise that some entries do not contain as much detail as others; available records are not always fruitful.

We trust that you find the project interesting and thank all those relatives and friends of the fallen and villagers who gave of their time to search their own archives for us.

If readers have further information please contact editor@helmdon.com or telephone (01295) 768251.



The History of the Helmdon War Memorial

Although not mentioning Helmdon specifically, articles in the Banbury Guardian show that communities were discussing the need for permanent war memorials in 1918, even before the hostilities had officially ceased.

The War Memorial was erected on the site of what was the Dame school which closed in 1853 but no documentation has been found to disclose who instigated the Memorial or whether it was paid for by the Parish, the County or local subscription.

A 1929 article in the Northampton Mercury, reporting the dedication of the memorial tablet in the church, states that the War Memorial was erected in January 1921 but nothing has been found in any other documents to support that date. That same 1929 article also gives a date of 1924 for when the memorial was felled in a storm but this event actually occurred in February 1925. Therefore, some caution should be exercised with the January 1921 date until further corroboration can be found. It was certainly erected after January 1920, as it bears the name of Frederick Watson who died that month and before July 1921, as evidenced by a picture postcard of the original memorial with that cancellation date, so January 1921 would certainly fit with what is known at this time.



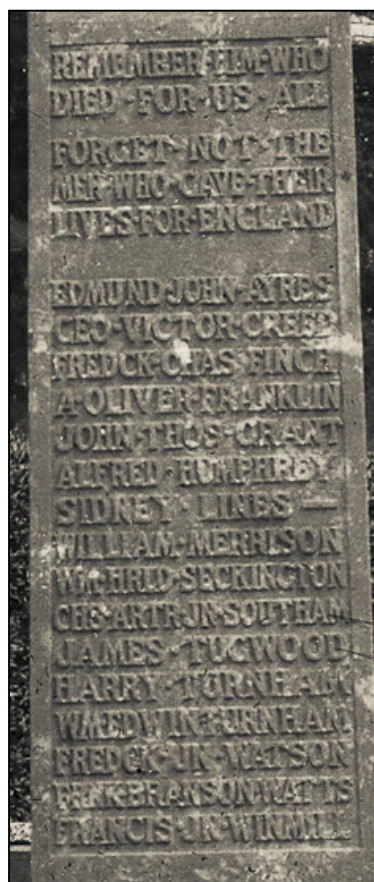
This postcard picture shows the site between the removal of the Dame School and the erection of the War Memorial and was probably taken in the early 20th Century. At the time of this photo, the central area was used to crush stone for use in repairing the roads; this explains the barren patch in the middle of the grass.

The original Memorial was dedicated by the then Lord Bishop of Leicester; a copy of the original service sheet from this Dedication Service is included as an Appendix to this document. However, this Memorial only stood until the night of Monday 9th February 1925, as reported in the Buckingham Advertiser and Free Press on Saturday 14th Feb 1925:

“During the gale of the present week, the War Memorial at Helmdon, which stood about twelve feet high and was surmounted by a Maltese Cross, was blown completely over and broken. The memorial occupied a prominent position in the centre of the village.”



The original Memorial had the names of the fallen engraved on the column.



Column details from the original Memorial.

When the broken Memorial was repaired and re-erected in December 1925, the names that had previously been engraved on the column of the original Memorial were now shown around the newly added base.



An early photo of the original Memorial showing the white picket fence; this was taken before the local roads were metalled.



This later photograph, probably taken soon after the end of World War 2, shows metalled roads surrounding the memorial and a telegraph pole erected on the far corner of the green.

Sadly, the Second World War saw a further Helmdon casualty and the name of Alfred George Humphrey was added to the Memorial.



The 1939 – 1945 plaque lists a single Helmdon casualty.

In March 1946 the Parish Council agreed to maintain the memorial and at some stage after that the picket fence and hedge were removed.

At one time the British Legion had it in their care and entered into competitions, winning the cup for the Best Kept War Memorial from 1972 – 1974.

A further separate memorial Plaque was added to the Memorial site in 2009 to commemorate the ten man crew of the USAF B17 Bomber 42-30408, the 'Sharon Belle' that crashed with the loss of all lives near Astwell Park Farm on 30th November 1943. Further details of this incident can be found by searching for "Sharon Belle" on www.helmdon.com.



This plaque commemorates the crew of the Sharon Belle and is sited next to the Helmdon War memorial.

Today the Memorial green is an open space surrounded by flower beds that are currently maintained by volunteers.

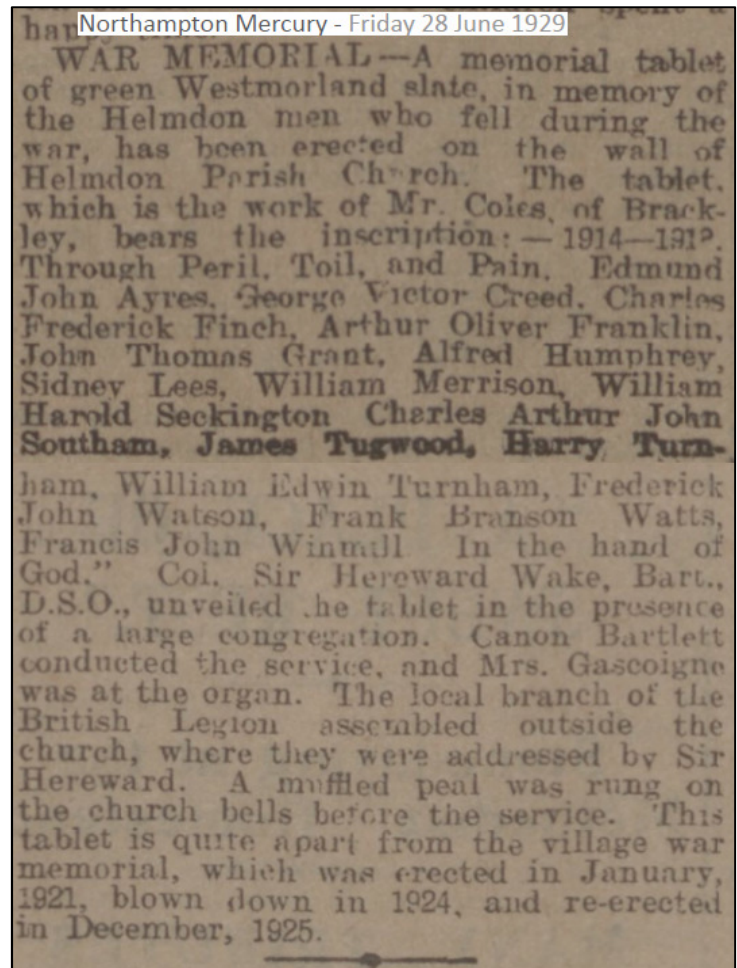
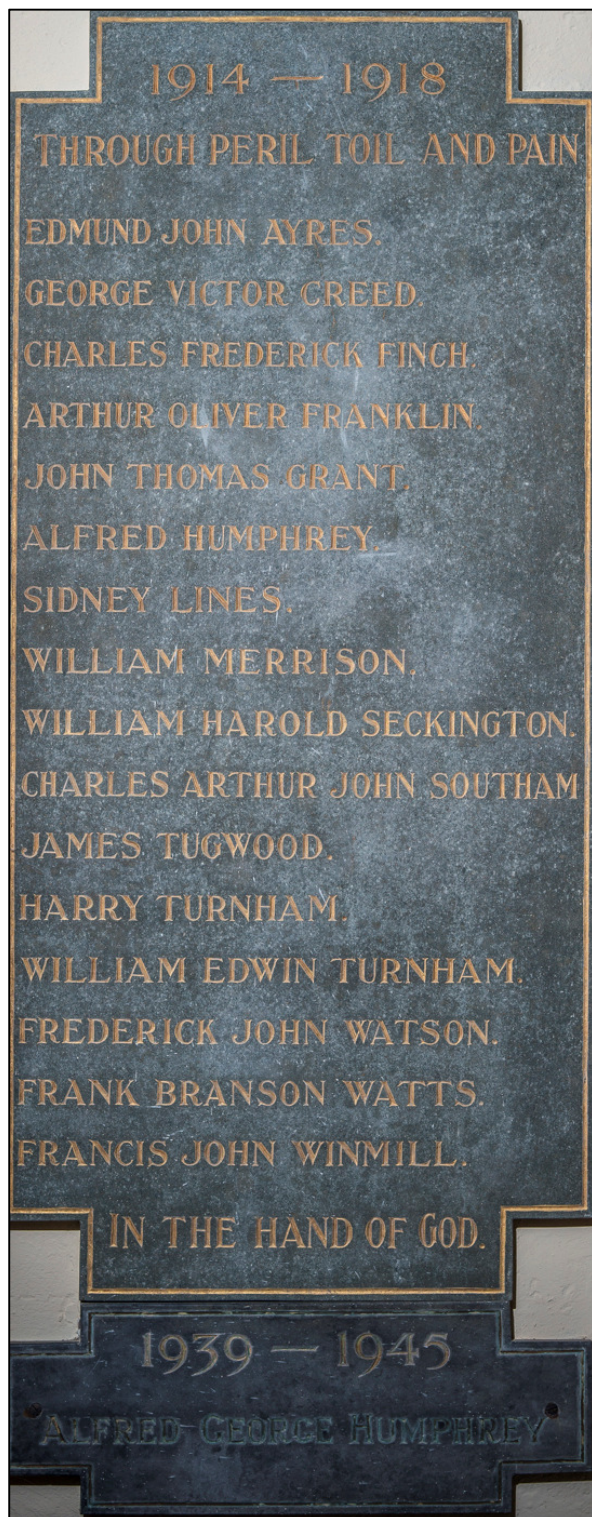


This photo shows the Memorial garden decorated for the Queen's Golden Jubilee.

The Memorials will always be held in high regard.

The Memorial Tablet in St Mary Magdalene, Helmdon.

Entering the church, the Memorial Tablet can be located to the left. First erected and unveiled in 1929, it contains the same names as on the War memorial. The unveiling of the Tablet was reported in the Northampton Mercury on Friday 28th June 1929.

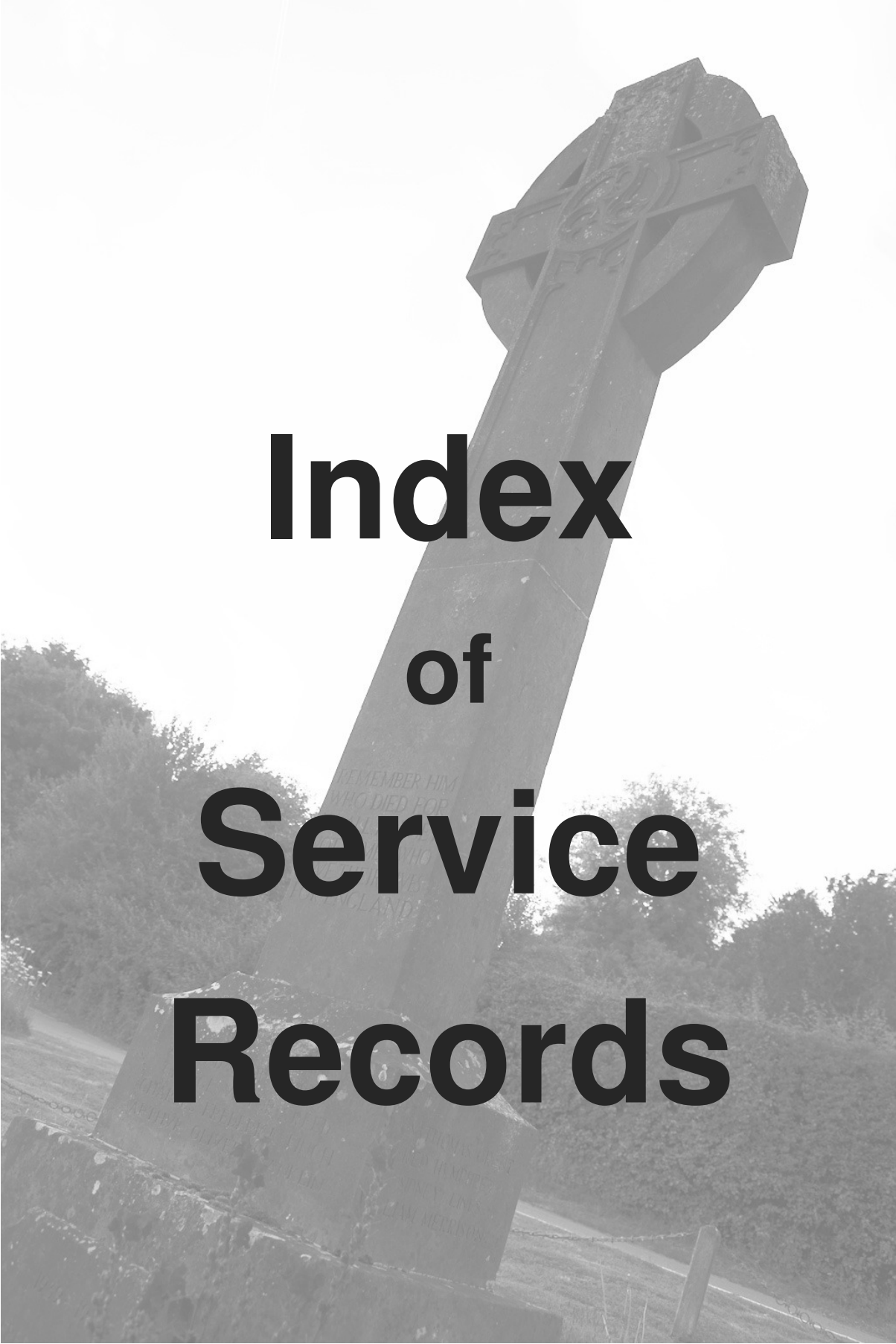


A smaller slate has been added underneath the original; this later addition carries the name of the village's Second World War casualty, Alfred George Humphrey.

The memorial tablet is flanked by the British Legion flag on one side and by a poppy wreath on the other.

A more recent brass memorial plaque has been added underneath the poppy wreath; this plaque is dedicated to the ten man crew of the B17 bomber, the 'Sharon Belle', which crashed on the outskirts of the village on 20th November 2015. Further details can be found by searching for "Sharon Belle" on www.helmdon.com





Index of Service Records

Edmund John Ayres

c.1886 – 1917



From Commonwealth War Graves Commission Records

Family name:	AYRES	Given name(s):	Edmund John
Rank:	Private	Service No.:	31018
Date of death:	16/04/1917	Age:	31
Regiment/Service:	Bedfordshire Regiment, 8 th Bn.		
Memorial:	Ref: I.N.58		
Additional information:	Nationality: United Kingdom. Casualty Type: Commonwealth War Dead. Son of Edward and Martha Ayres, of Helmdon, Brackley, Northants, husband of Harriet Helen Ayres, of Greatworth, Banbury		

From Forces War Records

Family name:	AYRES	Given name(s):	Edmund John
Date of birth:	Circa 1886	Age:	31
Resided Town:	Banbury, Northants	Nationality:	British
Date of death:	16/04/1917	Fate:	Died of wounds
Rank:	Private	Service No.:	31018
Duty Location:	France & Flanders		

Roll of Honour of Old Boys of Helmdon School Serving in the Great War

Edmund John Ayres	Private	3 rd Coy. 5 th Bat. Bedfords	Died of wounds April 15 th 1917 [sic]
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Additional Military Information

During the Great War, **The Bedfordshire Regiment** was engaged on The Western Front, Italy, Gallipoli, Egypt and Palestine. The 8th Battalion was a 'Service' battalion raised in October 1914 as a part of Lord Kitchener's K3 Army Group, specifically for the duration of the war. They served entirely on the Western Front between August 1915 and February 1918, at which time the battalion was disbanded.

Edmund Ayres is buried at the Philosophe British Cemetery, Mazingarbe. Philosophe, started in August 1915, is in the Pas de Calais, France, lying between Bethune and Lens, and it was designed by Sir Herbert Baker. There are now 1,996 Commonwealth burials of the First World War in the cemetery.



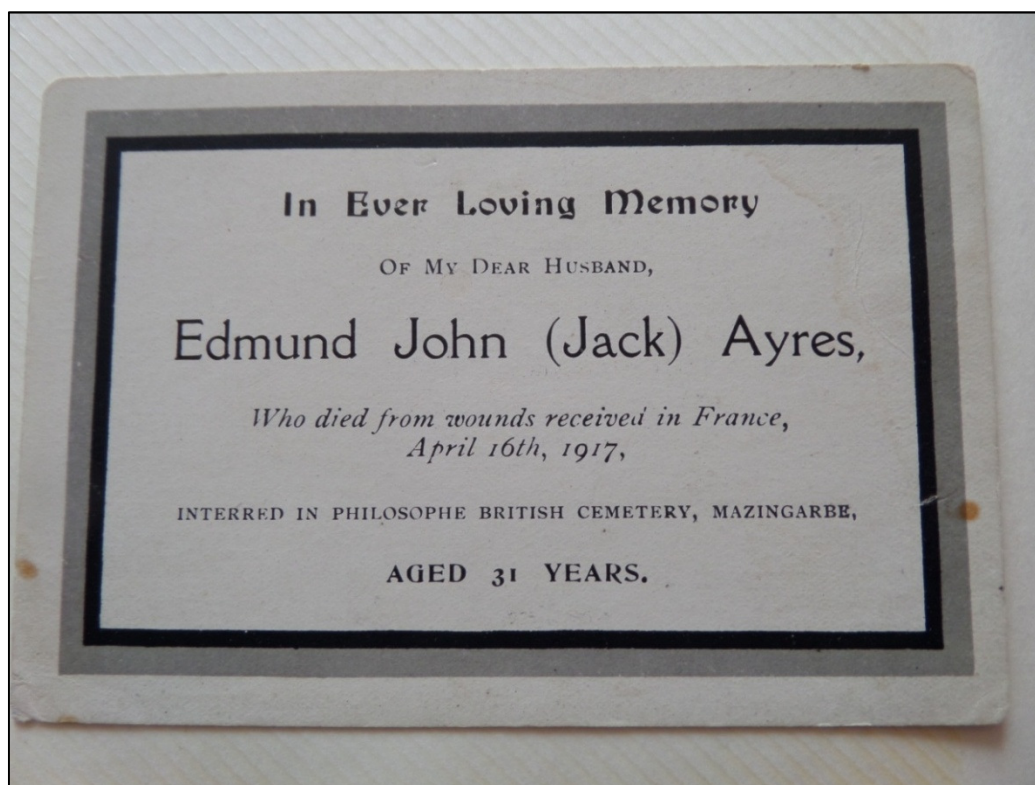
Cap badge such as would have been worn by Edmund



Philosophe British cemetery, where Edmund was buried.



Grave inscription reads "31018 PRIVATE, E. J. A YRES, BEDFODSHIRE REGIMENT, 16TH APRIL 1917, AGE 31



Memorial card in the possession of Edmund's great niece Lynda Fellowes

1901 Census

Address	Name	Status	M, S or W	Sex	Age	Birth Year	Occupation	Birthplace
Church Street, Helmdon	Edmund J Ayres	Head	M	M	40		Platelayer (Railway)	Northamptonshire, Helmdon
	Martha Ayres	Wife	M	F	37			Northamptonshire, Helmdon
	Edmund J	Son	S	M	16		Platelayer	Northamptonshire, Helmdon
	Gertrude A.	Daughter	S	F	12			Northamptonshire, Helmdon
	Olive H	Daughter	S	F	4			Northamptonshire, Helmdon

Additional Family Information

According to the Electoral Roll of 1898 the family were living in Helmdon in a dwelling house in Chapel Road (now Wappenham Road). In the 1911 census Edmund's father, also Edmund John, previously a platelayer on the railway, was a waggoner on a farm.

Our soldier Edmund was almost certainly at Helmdon School but he was born before 1886 and presumed to have been in a previous school attendance register than the one existing in the Record office. He married Harriet Helen Isham (born 1887 in Greatworth, Banbury) in 1908. She was the daughter of Jonas Isham of Marston St Lawrence and Fanny (nee Meadows) of Kings Sutton. In 1911 they were living in Westhorpe, Greatworth, Banbury.

In Memory of

Private

Edmund John Ayres

31018, 8th Bn., Bedfordshire Regiment who died on 16 April 1917 Age 31

Son of Edward and Martha Ayres, of Helmdon, Brackley, Northants; husband of Harriett Helen Ayres, of Greatworth, Banbury.

Remembered with Honour

Philosophe British Cemetery, Mazingarbe



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Victor George Creed

c.1881 – 1917



From Commonwealth War Graves Commission Records

Family name:	CREED	Given name:	Victor George
Date of birth:	c. 1881	Date of death:	08 November 1917
Place of death:		Age at death:	25
Last known place of residence:			
Last known occupation:			

From Forces War Records

Number:	295215	Regiment:	12th (West Somerset Yeomanry)
Rank:	Private	Battalion:	Somerset Light Infantry
Theatre:	Egypt	Date Enlisted:	
Type of Casualty:	Died of wounds	Place Enlisted:	East Pennard, Somerset
Memorial:	Beersheba War Cemetery		

Additional Military Information

The War Medals Roll (Som. Light Infantry) lists his previous units as "W. Som: Yeo Pte 1146 from 2(b) & 4(b)" and "12th Som: L.I. from 4(b)".

1911 Census			
Father's name:	George Henry CREED	Mother's name:	Elizabeth CREED
Occupation:	Dairy Manager	Occupation:	
Date of birth:		Date of birth:	
Siblings:	Alexander John CREED	Date of birth:	c. 1895
Siblings:	Ernest Frederick CREED	Date of birth:	c. 1897
Siblings:	Edward CREED	Date of birth:	c. 1899
Siblings:	Arthur? CREED	Date of birth:	c. 1901
Siblings:	Priscilla CREED	Date of birth:	c. 1902
Spouse:		Date of birth:	
Children:		Date of birth:	
Children:		Date of birth:	

Additional Family Information
Son of George and Elizabeth Creed, of Sulgrave, Banbury, Oxon. Victor and his siblings were born in Queen Camel, Somerset Living at Stuchbury, Banbury, Oxon. In 1911 Genealogical information suggests he may have been known as "Tom".

In Memory of

Private

Victor George Creed

295215, 12th (West Somerset Yeomanry) Bn., Somerset Light Infantry who died on 08 November 1917 Age

25

Son of George and Elizabeth Creed, of Sulgrave, Banbury, Oxon.

Remembered with Honour

Beersheba War Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Charles Frederick Finch

c.1880 – 1916



From Commonwealth War Graves Commission Records

Family name:	FINCH	Given name:	Charles Frederick
Date of birth:	c. 1880	Date of death:	09 October 1916
Place of death:	France & Flanders	Age at death:	c. 36
Last known place of residence:			
Last known occupation:	Carter, farm labourer		

From Forces War Records

Number:	18313	Regiment:	Northamptonshire Regiment
Rank:	Private	Battalion:	7th Battalion
Theatre:	Western European Theatre	Date Enlisted:	
Type of Casualty:	Killed in action	Place Enlisted:	Northampton
Memorial:	Villers Station Cemetery, Villers-Au-Bois		

Additional Military Information

None found.

1911 Census			
Father's name:	John FINCH	Mother's name:	Anne
Occupation:	Carter	Occupation:	
Date of birth:		Date of birth:	
Siblings:		Date of birth:	
Spouse:	Florence Mary Elizabeth BROCK	Date of birth:	c. 1880 (Steeple Aston)
Children:	Frederick Arthur FINCH	Date of birth:	c. 1901 (Helmdon)
Children:	Florence Lilian FINCH	Date of birth:	c. 1903
Children:	Harold Leslie FINCH	Date of birth:	c. 1905 (d. 1968)

Additional Family Information
Husband of F. N. E. Finch, of Preston Capes, Byfield, Northants. Born in Helmdon. After the war, in 1921, Charles's wife Florence went on to marry William E Burt who was listed on the 1911 census as a lodger living with Charles and Florence.

Images & Photographs


In Memory of

Private

C F Finch

18313, 7th Bn., Northamptonshire Regiment who died on 09 October 1916

Husband of F. N. E. Finch, of Preston Capes, Byfield, Northants.

Remembered with Honour

Villers Station Cemetery, Villers-Au-Bois



**Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission**

Arthur Oliver Franklin

c.1881 – 1917



From Commonwealth War Graves Commission Records

Family name:	FRANKLIN	Given name:	Arthur Oliver
Date of birth:	c. 1881	Date of death:	1 August 1917
Place of death:	France & Flanders	Age at death:	c. 36
Last known place of residence:	Northend, Warwickshire		
Last known occupation:	Cowman		

From Forces War Records

Number:	10670	Regiment:	Machine Gun Corps
Rank:	Private	Battalion:	Infantry
Theatre:	Western Europe	Date Enlisted:	
Type of Casualty:	Killed in action	Place Enlisted:	Warwick
Memorial:	Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial		

Additional Military Information

Formerly 15456, R. Warwicks Regt.

1911 Census			
Father's name:		Mother's name:	
Occupation:		Occupation:	
Date of birth:		Date of birth:	
Siblings:		Date of birth:	
Spouse:	Maud Franklin	Date of birth:	c. 1880
Children:	Flossie Voilet [sic]	Date of birth:	c. 1903
Children:	Freddie ? Vincent	Date of birth:	c. 1907

Additional Family Information

Arthur Oliver and his children were all born in Helmdon. Maud was born in Wolverton, Bucks. In 1911 they were at Home Farm Cottages, Delapre.

Like William Seckington, Arthur Oliver Franklin is included on two village Memorials; in Franklin's case that of Helmdon and also that at Burton Dassett (located in the village of Northend, part of the Burton Dassett parish.)

<http://www.roll-of-honour.com/Warwickshire/BurtonDassett.html>

Images & Photographs

CAMERON J. A.	OSBORNE T.	PERCEY H.
CONNELL J.	RYAN C. F.	FIELD W.
DARLINGTON G.	SAMUELS J. M.	FLANNERY L.
EDWARDS J.	SIMMONS G.	FLEMING W.
ELLISON G. T.	SMITH A.	FORREST J.
FORDHAM W. H.	SMITH T. C.	FORREST S.
		FORSYTH W.
		FOWLER F. W.
		FRANKLIN A. O.
		FREEMAN W. E.
		FROST H.
		FULBROOK F. G.
		GARFINKLE L.
		GEE G. H.
		GIFFORD F. W.
		GIFFORD J. T.
		GILLIES D. B.
		GOFFE A. C.
		GOODACRE H. J.
		GOSLING A.
		GRACE R. F.
		GRAY J.
		GREENER J. W.
		GREENHALGH T.
		GREENWOOD L.
		GREGORY A. E.
		GROZIER A. F.
		HADLEY W.

The Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial showing FRANKLIN A.O.

In Memory of

Private

Arthur Oliver Franklin

10670, 164th Coy., Machine Gun Corps (Infantry) who died on 01 August 1917

Remembered with Honour

Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

John Thomas GRANT

c.1891 – 1915



From Commonwealth War Graves Commission Records			
Family name:	GRANT	Given name(s):	John Thomas
Rank:	Guardsman	Service No.:	19397
Date of death:	23/10/1915	Age:	24
Regiment/Service:	2 nd Bn. Grenadier Guards		
Memorial:	Vermelles British Cemetery		
Additional information:	Parents :William & Ellen GRANT of Helmdon		

From Forces War Records			
Family name:	GRANT	Given name(s):	John Thomas
Date of birth:	c1891 Witney Oxon	Age: 24	
Resided Town:	Helmdon	Nationality:	British
Date of death:	23/10/1915	Fate:	Died of wounds
Rank:	Private - Grenadier Guards	Service No.:	19397
Duty Location:	Flanders		

Roll of Honour of Old Boys of Helmdon School Serving in the Great War			
John Grant	Private	Grenadier Guards	Died of wounds 25 October 1917 [sic]

Additional Military Information
None found

1911 Census								
Address	Name	Status	M, S or W	Sex	Age	Birth Year	Occupation	Birthplace
Helmdon, Brackley	William Grant	Head	M	M	55	1856	Ex Police Constable Pensioner	Warmington, Warwickshire
	Ellen Grant	Wife	M	F	56	1855		Oxford, Oxfordshire
	John Thomas Grant	Son	S	M	20	1891	Gentlemen Servant Domestic	Blackthorn, Oxfordshire
	Lilian Gwendoline Walker	Boarder	S	F	19	1892	Elementary School Teacher	Roade, Northamptonshire

Additional Family Information
None found

Images & photographs
 The Memorial at Vermelles reads "19397 GUARDSMAN, J.T. GRANT, GRENADIER GUARDS, 23RD OCTOBER 1915, PEACE PERFECT PEACE WITH LOVED ONES FAR AWAY"

In Memory of

Guardisman

John Thomas Grant

19397, 2nd Bn., Grenadier Guards who died on 23 October 1915 Age 24

Son of William and Ellen Grant, of Helmdon, Brackley, Northants.

Remembered with Honour
Vermelles British Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Alfred Humphrey

c.1893 – 1918



From Commonwealth War Graves Commission Records

Family name:	HUMPHREY	Given name:	Alfred
Rank:	Private	Service No.:	27420
Date of death:	22.03.1918	Age:	25
Regiment/Service:	Northamptonshire Regiment; 6 th Bn		
Memorial:	The Pozieres Memorial		
Additional information:	Son of Benjamin & Hannah Humphrey		

From Forces War Records

Family name:	HUMPHREY	Given name(s):	Alfred
Date of birth:	c. 1893	Age:	25
Resided Town:	Helmdon	Nationality:	British
Date of death:	22.03.1918	Fate:	Killed in Action
Rank:	Private	Service No.:	27420
Duty Location:	Somme		

Roll of Honour of Old Boys of Helmdon School Serving in the Great War			
Alfred Humphrey	Private 27420	G Company 3 rd Northants	Missing

Additional Military Information
None Found

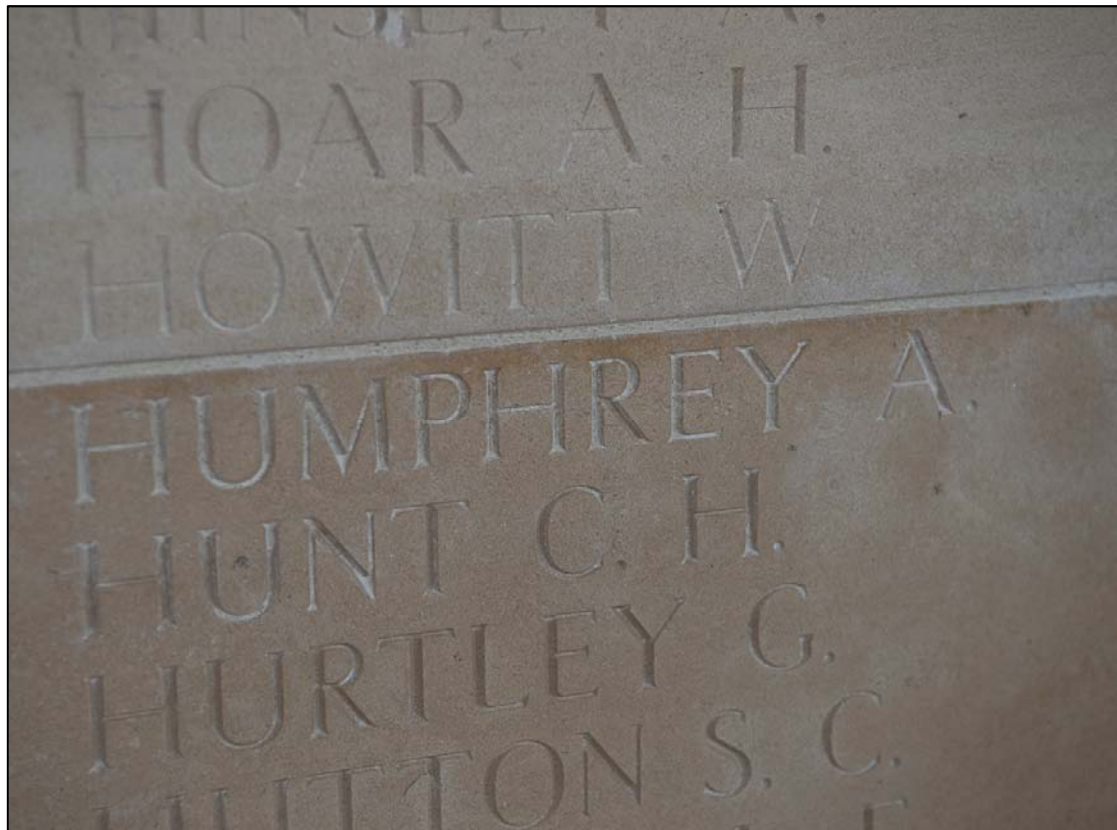
1911 Census						
Address	Name	Relation to head of family	Sex	Age	Occupation	Birthplace
Chapel Street Helmdon	Benjamin Humphrey	Head	M	61	Butcher	Helmdon
	Hannah Humphrey	Wife	F	55		
	Annie Elizabeth Humphrey	Daughter	F	29	Worker	Helmdon
	Clara Humphrey	Daughter	F	24	Worker	Helmdon
	Martha Alice Humphrey	Daughter	F	18	Worker	Helmdon
	Alfred Humphrey	Son	F	16	Worker	Helmdon
	Beatrice Humphrey	Daughter	F	14	Worker	Helmdon

Additional Family Information
Great Uncle of Douglas and Mervin Humphrey, Celia Terrey, Julia Wilkins (nee Terrey), Jane Beyts (nee Humphrey) and Michael and John Elkington.

Images & photographs



The Pozieres Memorial



Close up of inscription "HUMPHREY A."

In Memory of

Private

Alfred Humphrey

27420, 6th Bn., Northamptonshire Regiment who died on 22 March 1918 Age 25

Son of Benjamin and Halmah Humphrey, of Helmdon, Brackley, Northants.

Remembered with Honour

Pozieres Memorial



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Sydney Ernest Lines

c.1893 – 1918



From Commonwealth War Graves Commission Records

Family name:	LINES	Given name(s):	Sydney Ernest
Rank:	Private	Service No.:	153721
Date of death:	05 April 1918	Age:	
Regiment/Service:	Royal Horse Artillery, "U" Bty.		
Memorial:	Panel 7 to 10. Pozieres memorial		
Additional information:			

From Forces War Records

Family name:	Lines	Given name(s):	Sydney Ernest
Date of birth:		Age:	
Resided Town:	Helmdon, Northampton	Nationality:	British
Date of death:	05 April 1918	Fate:	Killed in Action
Rank:	Gunner	Service No.:	153721
Duty Location:	France and Flanders		

Roll of Honour of Old Boys of Helmdon School Serving in the Great War

Not listed.

Additional Military Information

None found

1911 Census

Address	Name	Status	M, S or W	Sex	Age	Birth Year	Occupation	Birthplace
Helmdon, Brackley	Mark Sydney Gulliver	Head	M	M	37	1874	Baker	Napton, Warwickshire
	Margaret Helen Marie Gulliver	Wife	M	F	35	1876		Grimsbury, Oxfordshire
	Louisa Gulliver	Daughter	S	M	13	1898		Helmdon, Northants
	Beatrice Gulliver	Daughter	S	M	10	1901		Helmdon, Northants
	Gladys Gulliver	Daughter	S	M	7	1904		Helmdon, Northants
	Mary Gulliver	Daughter	S	M	5	1906		Helmdon, Northants
	Sydney Lines	Nephew	S	M	18	1893	Baker	Napton, Warwickshire

Additional Family Information

None found

Images & photographs

Panel on Pozieres Memorial



In Memory of

Gunner

Sydney Ernest Lines

153721, "U" Bty., Royal Horse Artillery who died on 05 April 1918

Remembered with Honour

Pozieres Memorial



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

William Merrison

1897 - 1916



From Commonwealth War Graves Commission Records			
Family name:	Merrison	Given name(s):	William
Rank:	Private	Service No.:	15900
Date of death:	4/11/1916	Age:	19
Regiment/Service:	100 th Machine Gun Corp ,C Section,33 Division		
Memorial:	Buried Grove Town Cemetery ,Meaulte		

From Forces War Records			
Family name:	Merrison	Given name(s):	William
Date of birth:		Age:	
Resided Town:	Helmdon	Nationality:	British
Date of death:	04 November 1916	Fate:	Died of wounds
Rank:	Private	Service No.:	15900
Duty Location:	France and Flanders		

Roll of Honour of Old Boys of Helmdon School Serving in the Great War			
William Merrison	Pte	19035	Died of wounds 15.11.16 [sic]

Additional Military Information

Formerly 19035, Oxf. And Bucks L.I.

Pte Merrison would have been trained at Belton House near Grantham. Many events took place there in 2015 to celebrate the centenary of the formation of the Machine Gun Corps.

1901 Census

Address	Name	Status	M,S or W	Sex	Age	Occupation	Born
44 Church Street	Herbert W. Merrison	Head	M	M	37	Foreman – Railway Platelayer	Norfolk, West Derham
	Beatrice Merrison Ayres	Wife	M	F	34		Norfolk, Wisbeck
	Ruth E. Merrison	Daughter	S	F	10		Norfolk, West Derham
	Lilly Merrison	Daughter	S	F	9		Norfolk, West Derham
	William Merrison	Son	S	M	4		Derby, Stoveley

Additional Family Information

Parents: Herbert W and Beatrice Merrison, both born in Norfolk.

William wrote a letter home dtd Sept 24 1916 (it is faded and worn) – a few extracts

“Dear Mother & Father, just a few lines to answer your letter... a letter from Lily and she told me she was... in a day or two... Dears you musnt say anything to... about Charlie... Sorry to hear the potatoes are bad give my land to Dad and tell him better luck next time... From your loving son Will – Shant (sic) be long before we are at home ...”.

He finished the letter in the censor approved fashion: Pte W Merrison 15-9 – 00 mgc 100th – C Section – 33 Division B E Force France.

Images & photographs



The Memorial at Grove Town Cemetery, Meaulte

In Memory of

Private

William Merrison

15900, 100th Coy., Machine Gun Corps who died on 04 November 1916 Age 19

Son of Herbert William and Beatrice Merrison, of Helmdon, Brackley, Northampton.

Remembered with Honour

Grove Town Cemetery, Meaulte



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

William Harold Seckington

1883 – 1918



From Commonwealth War Graves Commission Records

Family name:	SECKINGTON	Given name(s):	William Harold
Rank:	Private	Service No.:	G/7031
Date of death:	13/08/1918	Age:	
Regiment/Service:	The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment) 11 Bn.		
Memorial:	Esquelbecq Military War Cemetery		
Additional information:	Grave reference: 11.F.17		

From Forces War Records

Family name:	SECKINGTON	Given name(s):	William Harold
Date of birth:		Age:	
Resided Town:	Southam, Warwickshire	Nationality:	British
Date of death:	13/08/1918	Fate:	Died of wounds
Rank:	Private	Service No.:	G/7031
Duty Location:	France & Flanders		

Additional Military Information

The Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey), the 2nd of Foot, was England's oldest infantry Regiment formed in 1661. It had 28 battalions and was awarded 74 Battle Honours and 4 Victoria Crosses, losing 8,000 men during the Great War conflict.

Among the battles fought by William Harold Seckington's 11th battalion were The Advances in Flanders, The Battle of Ypres and The Battle of Ootegham. William died of wounds on the 13th August 1918; on 1st November 1918 the 11th battalion ended the war at west of Nederbrakel, Belgium.

William was buried in the Esquelbecq military cemetery (grave reference: II.F/17). Esquelbecq is a village near the Belgian frontier, 24 kilometres north of Hazebrouck and the same distance south of Dunkirk. The Military Cemetery is about one kilometre west of the village. The cemetery was opened in April 1918 during the early stages of the German offensive in Flanders, when the 2nd Canadian and 3rd Australian Casualty Clearing Stations came to Esquelbecq. It was closed in September 1918.



William had the British War Medal 1914 – 18 (two sides shown)



and the Allied Victor Medal (two sides shown)

Both medals now in the possession of his grandson, Derek Pasquire.



William's Death Penny, now in the possession of his grandson. Derek Pasquire.



Esquelbecq military cemetery, where William was buried.

1891 Census

Address	Name	Status	M, S or W	Sex	Age	Birth Year	Occupation	Birthplace
Helmdon	Jesse Seckington	Head	M	M	32	1859	Farm Labourer	Helmdon, Northamptonshire
	Elizabeth Seckington	Wife	M	F	30	1861		Helmdon, Northamptonshire
	Frederick Seckington	Son	S	M	8	1883	Scholar	Helmdon, Northamptonshire
	Harold Seckington	Son	S	M	7	1884	Scholar	Helmdon, Northamptonshire
	Rosetta Seckington	Daughter	S	F	5	1886	Scholar	Helmdon, Northamptonshire
	Mabel Seckington	Daughter	S	F	1	1890		Helmdon, Northamptonshire

Additional Family Information



William Harold Seckington

William Harold Seckington's grandfather was Eli Seckington (1827 – 1879), a Helmdon labourer, who was married to Ann Parish (1832 – 1903), described as a servant and later as lacemaker.

They had eleven children and their fourth child and first son was Jessie Arthur Seckington of Helmdon (1858 -1936), farm labourer and "thrashing engine driver". Jessie was married to Elizabeth Holloway (1861 – 1923) and they were our William Harold Seckington's parents. They

lived first in Church Street but by 1911 they were in Station Road.

William Harold (1883 – 1918), their second son, was born in Helmdon. Described variously as a farm worker, railway porter, grocer's porter/carrier, and cement worker, he married Edna Merle Pym from Southam, Warwickshire, in 1913, and here, in 1915, his only daughter, Mabel, was born. Southam is also the place where he was living when he joined up.

Both Jesse and Harry were recorded as being customers at the bakehouse (now The Old Bakehouse) in Church Street, and as a little girl, Mabel (or Mabs as she was called) remembered visiting her granny and grandfather at a house somewhere opposite the Old School House, in Station Road, and she recalled taking meat on a Sunday to the bakehouse, to be cooked in the bakehouse oven.

He was sometimes called Harold or Harry.

Born in 1883 he almost certainly went to Helmdon School and is therefore presumed to be in a previous register to the one in the Record Office which begins in 1894.

William Harold Seckington is on the Helmdon war memorial in that name, and also on the Southam war memorial as of William Seckington.

In Memory of

Private

W H Seckington

G/7031, 11th Bn., The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment) who died on 13 August 1918

Remembered with Honour

Esquelbecq Military Cemetery



**Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission**

Charles Arthur John Southam

1895 - 1916



From Commonwealth War Graves Commission Records			
Family name:	SOUTHAM	Given name(s):	Charles Arthur John
Rank:	Private	Service No.:	20335
Date of death:	07 July 1916	Age:	20
Regiment/Service:	Northamptonshire Regiment 2 nd Battalion		
Memorial:	Thiepval Memorial		

From Forces War Records			
Family name:	SOUTHAM	Given name(s):	Charles Arthur John
Date of birth:	1896	Age:	20
Resided Town:	Helmdon	Nationality:	British
Date of death:	7 th July 1916	Fate:	Wounded and Missing
Rank:	Private	Service No.:	20335
Duty Location:	France		

Roll of Honour of Old Boys of Helmdon School Serving in the Great War

Charles Southam	Private	3 rd Btn Northamptonshire Regiment	Missing
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Additional Military Information

Enlisted 9th August 1915
 Awarded the British War Medal, the Victory Medal and the Mons Star
 Member of the Old Contemptibles

1911 Census

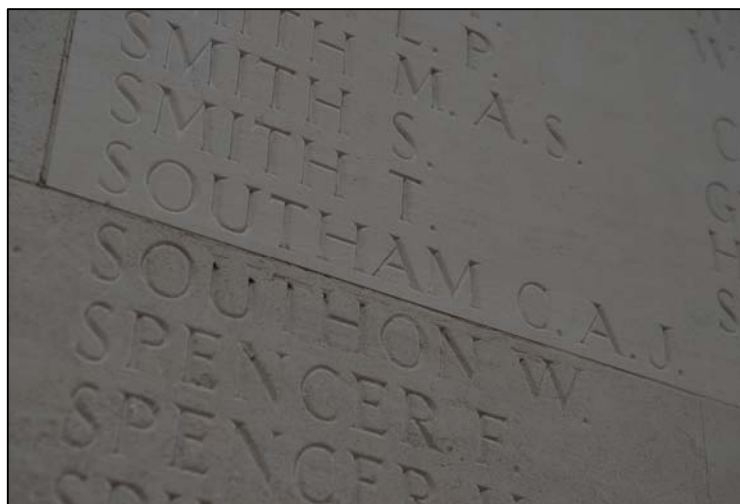
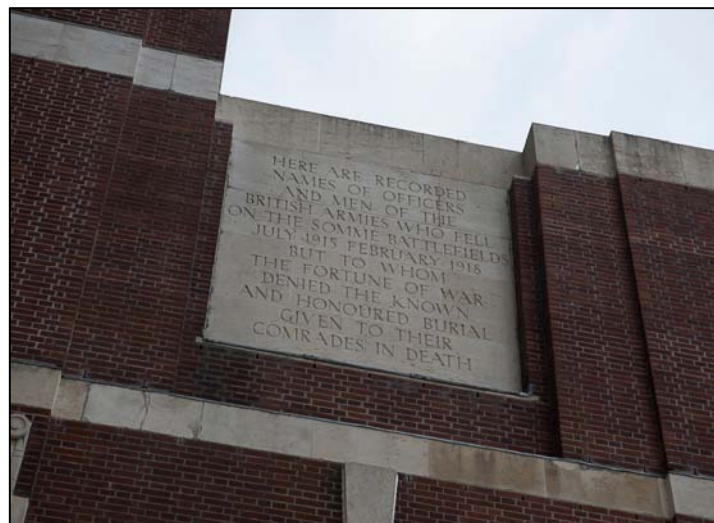
Address	Name	Relation to head of family	Sex	Age	Occupation	Birthplace
Church Rd, Helmdon	John Southam	Head	M	48	Railway platelayer	Helmdon
	Maria Southam	Wife	F	45		Bloxham, Oxon
	Alfred Southam	Son	M	19	Railway porter	Helmdon
	Lilian May Southam	Daughter	F	18	Worker	Helmdon
	Charles Arthur John Southam	Son	M	15	Agricultural labourer	Helmdon

Additional Family Information

He went to Helmdon school. The school register lists his date of birth as 19th June, 1895. He was at the school from 27.06.1905 – 05.06.1908 (admission no. 776). In 1916 his family were living in The Square, Helmdon

Images & photographs - Thiepval Memorial





Newspaper articles etc

Banbury Guardian, August 17th 1916 - "The following men of the Northamptonshire Regiment have been woundedPrivate C.A.J.Southam (Helmdon)"

In Memory of

Private

Charles Arthur John Southam

20335, 2nd Bn., Northamptonshire Regiment who died on 07 July 1916

Remembered with Honour

Thiepval Memorial



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

James Tugwood

1899 – 1918



From Commonwealth War Graves Commission Records

Family name:	TUGWOOD	Given name(s):	James
Rank:	Cadet	Service No.:	181919
Date of death:	08 November 1918	Age:	18
Regiment/Service:	Royal Air Force		
Memorial:	Helmdon (St Mary Magdalene) Churchyard		
Additional information:	Son of Frederick and Mary Ann Tugwood.		

From Forces War Records

Family name:	TUGWOOD	Given name(s):	James
Date of birth:	Circa 1900	Age:	18
Resided Town:		Nationality:	British
Date of death:	08 November 1918	Fate:	
Rank:	Cadet	Service No.:	181919

Roll of Honour of Old Boys of Helmdon School Serving in the Great War

Not listed.

Additional Military Information

James was in the No. 2 School of Observers

1911 Census

Address	Name	Status	M, S or W	Sex	Age	Birth Year	Occupation	Birthplace
Radstone, Brackley	Frederick Tugwood	Head	M	M	37	1864	Cowman on Farm	Biddlesden, Bucks
	Mary Ann Tugwood	Wife	M	F	45	1856		Ramsden, Oxfordshire
	Albert Tugwood	Son	S	M	12	1899	School	Whitfield, Northants
	James Tugwood	Son	S	M	11	1900	School	Radstone, Northants

Additional Family Information

James' date of birth is thought to be 15th December 1899, his mother's maiden name was Mary Ann Panting.

Images & photographs



The memorial headstone in Helmdon Churchyard.

In Memory of

Cadet

James Tugwood

181919, No. 2 School of Observers, Royal Air Force who died on 08 November 1918 Age 18

Son of Frederick and Mary Ann Tugwood.

Remembered with Honour

Helmdon (St. Mary Magdalene) Churchyard



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Harry Turnham

1894 - 1918



From Commonwealth War Graves Commission Records

Family name:	TURNHAM	Given name(s):	Harry
Rank:	Private	Service No.:	203423
Date of death:	05.07.1918	Age:	23
Regiment/Service:	Northamptonshire Regiment 6Btn		
Memorial:	Pernois British Cemetery		

From Forces War Records

Family name:	TURNHAM	Given name(s):	Harry
Date of birth:	03.08.1894	Age:	23
Resided Town:	Helmdon	Nationality:	British
Date of death:	05 July 1918	Fate:	Died of wounds
Rank:	Private	Service No.:	203423
Duty Location:	France		

Roll of Honour of Old Boys of Helmdon School Serving in the Great War

Harry Turnham	Private	6 th Bt Northamptonshire Regiment	Died of wounds 5 July 1918
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1901 Census

Address	Name	Relation to head of family	Sex	Age	Occupation	Birthplace
Falcutt	Thomas Turnham	Head	M	39	Farmer	Stone, Bucks
	Sarah Turnham	Wife	F	44		Thornborough, Bucks
	Walter Turnham	Son	M			Thornborough
	Florence A Turnham	Daughter	F			Thornborough
	Harvy*	Son	M	6		Thornborough
	William Edwin Humphrey	Son	M	11 mths		Helmdon

Additional Family Information

He went to Helmdon School. The register lists his date of birth as 3rd August 1894. He was at the school from 16.10.1899 – 02.08.1907 (admission no. 807).

Brother of William Edwin Turnham, also on War Memorial, and who also died in 1918.

*Harry, shown as “Harvy” on 1901 census, does not appear on any of the local censuses for 1911.

Images & photographs



Gravestone in Helmdon Churchyard

In Memory of

Private

Harry Turnham

203423, 6th Bn., Northamptonshire Regiment who died on 05 July 1918 Age 23

Son of Thomas and Sarah Turnham, of Falcutt, nr. Brackley, Northants.

Remembered with Honour

Pernois British Cemetery, Halloy-Les-Pernois



**Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission**

William Edwin Turnham

1900 - 1918



From Commonwealth War Graves Commission Records

Family name:	TURNHAM	Given name(s):	William Edwin
Rank:	Private	Service No.:	66657
Date of death:	05 November 1918	Age:	18
Regiment/Service:	Suffolk Regiment		
Memorial:	Helmdon Churchyard		
Additional information:	Son of Thomas and Sarah Turnham. Husband of Ellen Turnham		

From Forces War Records

Family name:	TURNHAM	Given name(s):	William Edwin
Date of birth:	April 30 th 1900	Age:	18
Resided Town:	Helmdon	Nationality:	British
Date of death:	05 November 1918	Fate:	Died of influenza at Hastings VAD Hospital
Rank:	Private	Service No.:	66657
Duty Location:			

Roll of Honour of Old Boys of Helmdon School Serving in the Great War

Not listed

Additional Military Information

None Found

1911 Census

Address	Name	Status	M, S or W	Sex	Age	Birth Year	Occupation	Birthplace
Falcutt	Thomas Turnham	Head	M	M	49		Farmer	Stone, Bucks
	Sarah Turnham	Wife	M	F	53			Thornborough, Bucks
	William George Turnham	Son	S	M	14		Farm worker	Thornborough, Bucks
	William Edwin Turnham	Son	S	M	10	1900	School	Falcutt, Northants

Additional Family Information

He went to Helmdon School. The school register lists his date of birth as 30th April 1900.

Brother of Harry Turnham who was killed on 5th July 1918. Married to Ellen Turnham (nee Humphrey).

Images & photographs-Helmdon Churchyard Grave



In Memory of

Private

William Edwin Turnham

66657, 2nd Garrison Bn., Suffolk Regiment who died on 05 November 1918

Remembered with Honour

Helmdon (St. Mary Magdalene) Churchyard



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Frederick John Watson

1884 - 1920



From Commonwealth War Graves Commission Records			
Family name:	Watson	Given name(s):	Fredrick John
Rank:	Private	Service No.:	50316
Date of death:	19/01/1920	Age:	36
Regiment/Service:	Essex Regiment		
Memorial:	Buried in Helmdon		
Additional information:	Son of George Watson; husband of Elizabeth Ann Watson, of Helmdon. Born at Helmdon.		

From Forces War Records			
Family name:	WATSON	Given name(s):	Frederick John
Date of birth:	b1884 baptised 3/8/1884	Age: 44	
Resided Town:	Helmdon	Nationality:	British
Date of death:	24/1/1920	Fate:	Reason for death not known
Rank:	Private – Army Service Corp.	Service No.:	S/4145114

Duty Location:	Flanders
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Roll of Honour of Old Boys of Helmdon School Serving in the Great War
Not listed

1911 Census
Not found

Additional Family Information
Parents :George Watson b1856 Helmdon d 4/5/1927 Eliza Turvey b1878 Helmdon d 1920 both buried in Helmdon Old Boy of Helmdon School

Images & photographs
 <i>Gravestone in Helmdon Churchyard</i>

In Memory of

Private

Fredrick John Watson

50316, Essex Regiment who died on 19 January 1920 Age 36

Son of George Watson; husband of Elizabeth Ann Watson, of Helmdon. Born at Helmdon.

Remembered with Honour

Helmdon (St. Mary Magdalene) Churchyard



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Frank Branson Watts

1890 – 1915



From Commonwealth War Graves Commission Records

Family name:	WATTS	Given name(s):	Frank Branson
Rank:	Private	Service No.:	2343
Date of death:	13/05/1915	Age:	
Regiment/Service:	Leicestershire Yeomanry		
Memorial:	Ypres (Menin Gate Memorial)		
Additional information:	Resided Town: Brackley. Nationality: British. Fate: Killed in action Duty Location: France and Flanders		

From Forces War Records

Family name:	WATTS	Given name(s):	Frank Branson
Date of birth:		Age:	
Resided Town:	Brackley	Nationality:	
Date of death:	13 May 1915	Fate:	Killed in action
Rank:	Private	Service No.:	2343
Duty Location:	Western European Theatre, France & Flanders		

Additional Military Information

Frank resided in the Brackley area, probably Helmdon, at the time of his enlistment, which was in Leicester.

Note: Frank was in the Leicestershire Yeomanry but he was also described as being in the Household Cavalry and Cavalry (and Imperial Camel Corps)

The Leicestershire Yeomanry (Prince Albert's Own) was a yeomanry regiment of the British Army which provided cavalry and mounted infantry in the First World War.

With the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, the 1/1st Leicestershire Yeomanry regiment mobilised in the North Midland Mounted Brigade and moved to France in November joining the 3rd Cavalry Division. It saw service at the First Battle of Ypres in 1914 and the Second Battle of Ypres in 1915. At Second Ypres, the regiment gained battle honours for the Battle of St Julien and - perhaps most notably - the Battle of Frezenberg, where a squadron of the regiment held the line for its entire brigade.

The Second Battle of Ypres (newspaper extract)

The second Battle of Ypres was fought April 22nd – May 24th, 1915, practically over the same ground. In this fight the Leicestershire Yeomanry again took part, suffered very severely and had to mourn the loss of their gallant Colonel, on May 13th, besides many others officers and men killed and wounded. G Valentine Williams tells the story as follows: "At 4.30 on the morning of May 13th, the Germans opened the heaviest bombardment yet experience in the battle on the trenches occupied by two cavalry brigades on a line running from the Ypres-Roulers railway to the Bellewaarde Lake. The Germans shelled mercilessly the whole triangle between the railway and the Lake, while Bellewaarde Wood was enveloped in dense masses of smoke from the bursting shells. The cavalry trenches were simply obliterated. The 3rd Dragoon Guards were buried and though the North Somerset Yeomanry held on with magnificent endurance, the line could not be held and here we fell back about 800 yards. The Royals (1st Dragoons) were rushed up to reinforce, and suffered heavily on the way. Presently news came back that on the right the Life Guards had been buried in their trenches, and had to fall back, but that the Leicestershire Yeomanry were holding out. The 2nd Essex Regiment managed to fill one of the gaps by a fine charge, and held out until relieved by the cavalry supports.

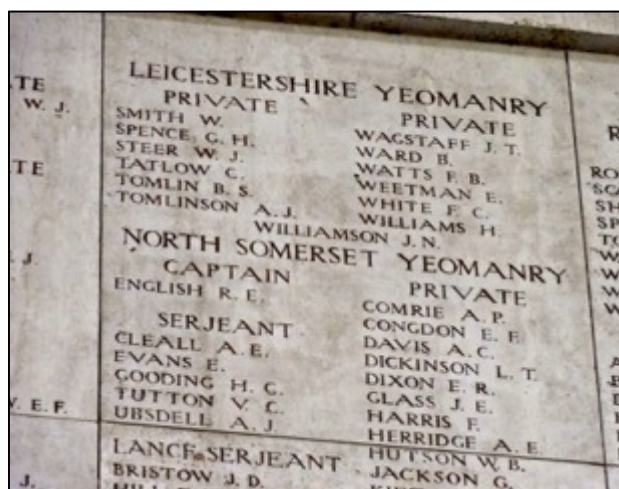
"A counter attack was organised. It was preceded by a very heavy bombardment of the German positions with all available guns firing high explosive shells. Then – it was 3.20 p.m. the attack went forward. It was led by the 10th Hussars, who went forward with such splendid dash that at the sight of them the gallant Leicestershire Yeomanry, reduced in numbers as they were, could not restrain themselves, but tumbled out of their trenches and the Blues (Royal Horse Guards), also took part in the attack. These magnificent men went forward under a very heavy fire of shrapnel and high explosive as steady as on parade. The Germans were routed out of the trenches they had won from us. The Germans fairly bolted, in some instances' with the cavalry after them. For a little time it was as though we had returned to the war in the open. But the position we had won was untenable. Directly our men had recovered in the trenches they were blown out again, and had to fall back.

"May 13th may be reckoned the last day of the second Battle of Ypres. It was not a battle like the first battle of Ypres, when our men met the flower of the Prussian army face to face, and withstood a succession of onslaughts delivered with an incredible disregard of human life. The second Battle of Ypres was a battle of machinery in which the German infantry skulked behind their gas-cylinders and machine guns and waited for their heavy guns to prepare for the victory at a cheap price".

Sir John French, the Commander in Chief, said later in his report that for the first time in history British soldiers had been called upon to fight gas fumes. "This dastardly gas attack, for it could not be described in any other terms, came as a bolt from the blue to the troops in the Ypres region".

Frank Branson Watts is remembered on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial (plot: Panel 3). Ypres (now Ieper) is a town in the Province of West Flanders. It is situated at the eastern

side of the town on the road to Menin (Menen) and Courtrai (Kortrijk). The Memorial now bears the names of more than 54,000 officers and men whose graves are not known. It was designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield with sculpture by Sir William Reid-Dick, and unveiled by Lord Plummer on 24 July 1927.



Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, showing Watts, F.B.

Additional Family Information

1891 Census

Address	Name	Status	M, S or W	Sex	Age	Birth Year	Occupation	Birthplace
Church Street, Helmdon	Watts, Alfred J.	Head	M	M	29	1862	Builder	Weston by Weedon, Northamptonshire
	Watts, Mary A.E.	Wife	M	F	26	1865		Moreton Pinkney, Northamptonshire
	Frank B. Watts	Son	S	M	0 (8m)	1891		Helmdon, Northamptonshire
	Wooten, Florence H.	Servant	S	F	13	1878	General Servant	Helmdon, Northamptonshire

Frank's mother's maiden name was Mary Ann Edith Branson.

His father was described as a builder in the 1891 census but by 1911 had a farm in Helmdon, on which Frank was working.

He went to Helmdon School. Entry in school log for May 14th, 1915: "Heard that Arthur Winmill had been wounded and that Frank Watts had been killed in action." The main impact of this event on the children is recorded on May 20th 1915 as follows - "Hoisted the flag half-mast high for Frank Watts. The children saluted the flag and said their midday prayers afterwards. The Master reminded them why this was done."

Roll of Honour of Old Boys of Helmdon School Serving in the Great War

Frank Watts	Private	2343	Leicestershire Yeomanry
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In Memory of

Private

Frank Branson Watts

2343, Leicestershire Yeomanry who died on 13 May 1915

Remembered with Honour

Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Francis John Winmill 1890 – 1914



Both photos show John as Stoker 2nd Class. The first photo, taken when he was on HMS Nelson, was probably around 1905 - 1910. HMS Nelson was a training ship for stokers, scrapped in 1910. The second photo was taken when he was on HMS Achilles; again he is Stoker 2nd Class. He was on the Achilles at the time of the 1911 census by which time he had been promoted to Stoker first class.

From Commonwealth War Graves Commission Records

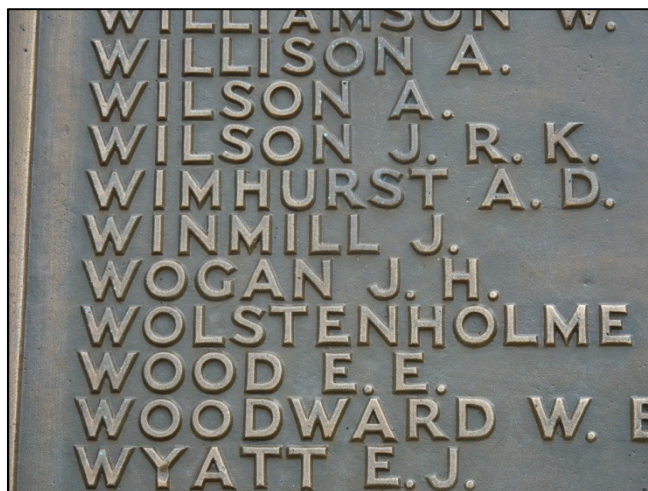
Family name:	WINMILL	Given name(s):	Francis John
Rank:	Stoker 1 st Class	Service No.:	K/4/702
Date of death:	01/11/14	Age:	24
Regiment/Service:	Royal Navy H.M.S "Good Hope"		
Memorial:	PORTSMOUTH NAVAL MEMORIAL, panel ref: 5		
Additional information:	Son of Mr F.J. Winmill of Helmdon, Brackley, Northants.		

From Forces War Records

Family name:	WINMILL	Given name(s):	John
Date of birth:	Circa 1890	Age:	24

Resided Town:		Nationality:	British
Date of death:	01/11/1914	Fate:	Ship sunk whilst in Action off Chilean Coast
Rank:	Stoker 1 st Class	Service No.:	K/4702
Duty Location:	Chilean Coast		

Additional Military Information	
1911 Census HMS Achilles Portsmouth	
Name	John Winmill
Age in 1911:	22
Estimated birth year:	Abt 1889
Gender:	Male
Birth Place:	Helmdon, Brackley, Northamptonshire, England
Civil Parish:	Portsmouth
County/Island:	Hampshire
Country:	England
Occupation:	Stoker 1 st Class
Registration District:	Portsmouth
Registration District No:	90
Sub-Registration District:	Portsmouth and Mid-Southsea
ED, Institution or Vessel:	34



On the left the memorial at Portsmouth commemorating the sailors who died in the Great War, and on the right a close-up of the entry for J Winmill.



HMS Nelson training ship of the Royal Navy on which Francis served as a stoker.

HMS *Good Hope* was one of four *Drake*-class armoured cruisers built for the Royal Navy around 1900, and was the flagship of the 2nd Cruiser Squadron in 1908. Obsolescent and undergunned for a 14,100 ton displacement she was reduced to reserve in 1913, but was recommissioned in mid-1914.

When war was declared in August 1914, *Good Hope* was ordered to reinforce the 4th Cruiser Squadron and became the flagship of Rear Admiral Christopher Craddock. John Winmill was a stoker on board. Craddock moved the available ships of his squadron later that month to the coast of South America to search for German commerce raiders. He was then ordered further south to the Strait of Magellan to block any attempt of the German East Asia

Squadron to penetrate into the South Atlantic. He sighted the German squadron, a more numerous, modern, faster and more heavily armed force, led by Admiral Graf von Spee, on 1 November, off the coast of Chile. The British force was outlined against the setting sun and presented good targets. After less than an hour's battle, and sustaining three dozen hits, a terrific internal explosion ripped the *Good Hope* apart and she was no more. She sank after an hour and was lost with all hands. Further information can be found at <http://www.coronel.org.uk/>

Or <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/world-history/history-of-the-first-world-war-in-100-moments/a-history-of-the-first-world-war-in-100-moments-a-forgotten-naval-victory-in-which-even-nature-played-a-part-9265638.html>

The widow of Rear Admiral Christopher Craddock provided memorial cards for each of the crew of the *Good Hope*.

The Banbury Guardian, Thursday, 12 November 1914 (from a section devoted to news about the War): November 6th – Admiralty issue report of an action in Pacific in which the *Good Hope*, *Monmouth*, and *Glasgow*, engaged the *Scharnhorst*, *Gneisenau*, *Leipzig* and *Dresden*, in which the *Good Hope* caught fire and sank, and the *Monmouth* drew off severely damaged and was again attacked. No loss was reported in the German cruisers, which had heavier armament.

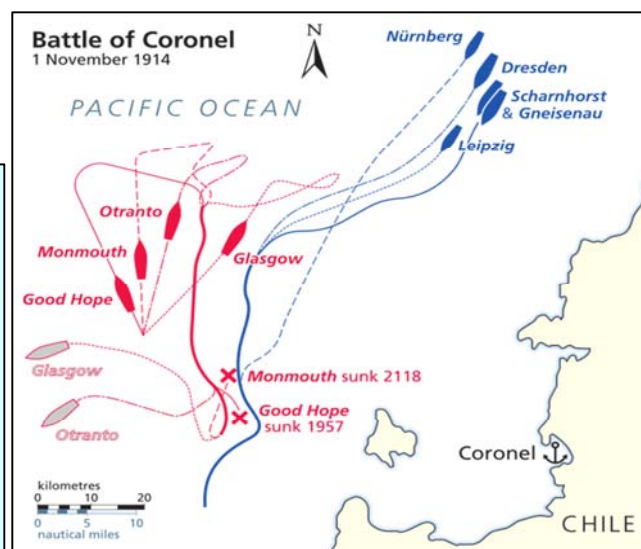
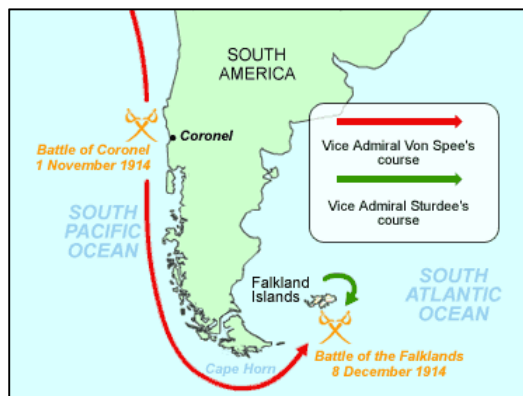
Update: In November 2014 under brilliant Pacific skies within sight of the coast of Chile the heads of the Royal, Canadian, German and Chilean Navies saluted the fallen of the Great War.

Nearly 1,600 British and Commonwealth sailors were killed when their ships went down at the Battle of Coronel in 1914 – the Royal Navy's first major defeat in more than a century.

One hundred years on, Type 45 destroyer HMS Dragon and Chilean frigate CNS Almirante Cochrane paused over the wrecks of HMS *Good Hope* and HMS *Monmouth* for a service of remembrance.

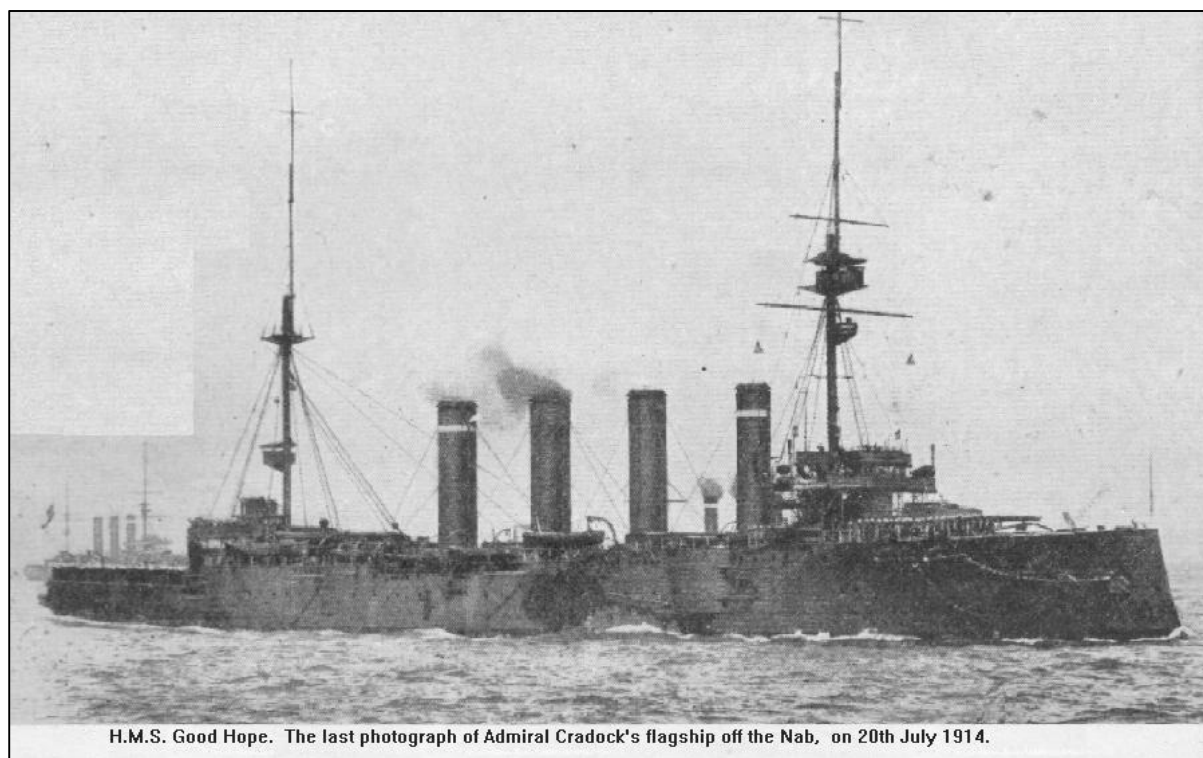
On board the CNS Almirante Cochrane was the head of the Chilean Navy, Almirante Enrique Larranaga Martin, First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zambellas, the Commander of the Canadian Navy, Vice Admiral Mark Norman, and German Flotilla Admiral Karl-Wilhelm Ohms. Each cast a wreath into the Pacific to remember those who were lost.

Defeat at Coronel in November 1914 at the hands of a German cruiser squadron under Admiral Graf Spee cost the lives of 1,570 Allied sailors, among them the British commander Rear Admiral Christopher Craddock and four Canadian junior officers – the first Canadians killed in the Great War and the first Royal Canadian Navy sailors killed in action.



First the Battle of Coronel and then the Battle of the Falkland Islands

Detailed diagram of the Battle of Coronel



HMS GOODHOPE, a 14,100 ton cruiser, built 21 Feb 1901, was sunk by the gunfire of German Cruisers, Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, off Coronel, Chile, on 1 Nov 1914

Additional Family Information								
1901 Census								
Address	Name	Status	M, S or W	Sex	Age	Birth Year	Occupation	Birthplace
Chapel Road	Frederick J. Winmill	Head	M	M	44		Navvy	Northamptonshire, Helmdon
	Ann Winmill	Wife	M	F	47			Northamptonshire, Helmdon
	Francis J. Winmill	Son	M	M	11			Northamptonshire, Helmdon
	Harold Winmill	Son	S	M	9			Northamptonshire, Helmdon
	Arthur Winmill	Son	S	M	7			Northamptonshire, Helmdon
	Sarah Winmill	Sister	S	F	52		Charwoman	Northamptonshire, Helmdon

Francis John's father Frederick John Winmill (the son of Nathaniel and Sarah) began work as a labourer but by 1911 was a navvy, almost certainly working on the nearby Great Central Railway.

Francis John went to Helmdon School. He was usually called John.

An entry in the Helmdon school log book for November 13th 1914 records: "One boy in the 'Roll of Honour' went down in the *Good Hope*". Thus John Winmill died at his post".

Francis John's other brothers, Harold and Arthur, also went to war, but it was only Francis who did not return. Harold married Gertrude Amy Ayres (born 1889) 1919, and Arthur her sister Dorothy (born 1902) in 1924.

NB Chapel Road, mentioned in the census information, is now called Wappenham Road.



Francis, as a baby, with his father, Frederick John, a navvy (almost certainly on the nearby Great Central Railway), about 1891.

Roll of Honour of Old Boys of Helmdon School Serving in the Great War

John Winmill	Stoker	"Good Hope"	Lost in the "Good Hope" Nov 1 st /14
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In Memory of
Stoker 1st Class

John Winmill

K/4702, H.M.S. "Good Hope.", Royal Navy who died on 01 November 1914 Age 24

Son of Mr. F. J. Winmill, of Helmdon, Brackley, Northants.

Remembered with Honour
Portsmouth Naval Memorial



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Alfred George Humphrey

c.1911 - 1941



From Commonwealth War Graves Commission Records

Family name:	HUMPHREY	Given name(s):	Alfred George
Rank:	Gunner	Service No.:	1604983
Date of death:	01 January 1941	Age:	30
Regiment/Service:	Royal Artillery 357 Battery, 114H.A.A. Regt		
Memorial:	Helmdon Churchyard		
Additional information:	Son of Jonas & Lillie Humphrey of Helmdon		

From Forces War Records

Family name:	Humphrey	Given name(s):	Alfred George
Date of birth:	C 1911	Age:	30
Resided Town:	Helmdon	Nationality:	British
Date of death:	01 January 1941	Fate:	Died at Edinburgh Castle Military Hospital
Rank:	Gunner	Service No.:	1604983
Duty Location:	United Kingdom		

Additional Military Information

None

1911 Census

Address	Name	Relation to head of family	Sex	Age	Occupation	Birthplace
Helmdon	Jonas Humphrey	Head	M	33	Platelayer on Railway	Helmdon
	Lillie Humphrey	Wife	F	40		Chipping Norton, Oxon
	Louisa F Humphrey	daughter	F	10	School	Helmdon
	Kate E Humphrey	daughter	F	8		Helmdon
	Albert E Humphrey	Son	M	6		Helmdon
	Doris A Humphrey	daughter	F	3		Helmdon
	Alfred G Humphrey	Son	M	10 mths		Helmdon
	Frederick Humphrey	Widower	M	81	Old Age Pensioner	Helmdon

Images & photographs



Gravestone in Helmdon Churchyard

Newspaper reports

Banbury Guardian – 16 January 1941

DEATH OF GUNNER ALFRED HUMPHREY

The death of Gunner Alfred Humphrey, at the age of 30, occurred at Edinburgh Castle Military Hospital, following an operation on January 1st. He was brought home and buried at Helmdon Parish Church on January 4th. The service was conducted by the Rev. R. B. Ball. The organist was Miss Brown. The bearers were Messrs. H. Batchelor, J Dytem, L Watson and E Saunders (all bell ringers). The mourners were Mr. Jonas Humphrey (father), Miss R Humphrey, Mr. and Mrs. J Holloway, Mr. and Mrs. A Humphrey, Mr. And Mrs. F. Thompson, Mrs. May and Mr. M. Saunders, Mr. J and Mrs. H. Batchelor, Miss J Rose, and many other friends.

Floral tributes were sent by Dad; Kate, Jack and Louie; Albert and Elsie; Amy, Fred and children; aunts and uncles at Wappenham and Towcester; Mr. And Mrs. H Batchelor and family; Aunt Em, Harry and Minnie; Mrs Rose and Joyce; friends at the Bell Inn; the Rector, Choir, Choral Society and Bellringers; N.C.C. workmates; Mont; Stan; Ted and Reg; all ranks of the 357th R.A.

Members of the Home Guard formed a Guard of Honour. Previous to enlistment the deceased had for many years been a member of the Bellringers' Association and had been in the Church Choir and Choral Society.

In Memory of

Gunner

Alfred George Humphrey

1604983, 357 Bty., 114 H.A.A. Regt., Royal Artillery who died on 01 January 1941 Age 30

Son of Jonas and Tilly Humphrey, of Helmdon.

Remembered with Honour

Helmdon (St. Mary Magdalene) Churchyard



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

BOYS ON THE HELMDON SCHOOL "ROLL OF OLD BOYS"

And other Helmdon connections....

Old Boys of Helmdon School that served in The Great War

Some years ago, sorting through a box of old photos revealed a two page document entitled the 'Helmdon Council School Roll of Old Boys'; the document is a list of ex pupils of the village school that served in any capacity during the Great War.

The earliest reference found is in the Helmdon School Log Book, which can now be found in the Northampton Records Office. An entry in that Log dated October 9th 1914 by Thomas Harold Goodwin, Headmaster of the school states: "Put up the "Roll of Honour". Sixteen old boys are serving with the King at the present time." Some other information has been gleaned from the School Log up to 5th November 1915. The Log Book records can only be accessed 100 years after they were written; further updates will be made to this section as the records for 1916 – 1918 become available.

Including as it does the service and / or regiments in which former pupils served and also, where known, their fate, the Roll of Honour is a valuable historical archive.

Often, such documents raise more questions than they answer and the Roll of Old Boys is no exception. Who was Stanley Strachan (killed at Loos in 1915) and why is William Major (killed on the Western Front on 9th May 1915) not on the Helmdon War Memorial?

The Roll of Old Boys appears to have been started by one person (the first 13 names appear in a distinctly different hand) and completed by another.

Two pages have an illuminated title with column titles written in a neat script; the name of the school appears to have been added to the Title by the by the first contributor suggesting that the two pages were issued to the school for their completion, but this is speculation.

The second sheet has names added on the reverse; this reverse side has no illuminated title nor column headings, maybe entries were added subsequently as more names and fates became known or maybe it might be simply that the School was only issued with two pages and there was insufficient room to list all serving men of the two front pages.

If anyone can add to the origins of the document, the Local History Group would be pleased to hear from you.

County of Northampton.

Melton Council School.

Roll of Old Boys

Serving in the Great War.

Name.	Rank or Rating.	Battalion.	Regiment or Ship.	Notes.
Alfred Templeman	Staff Surg ^t	118112	Royal Engineers	
Lennis Taylor	Surg ^t	11858	" "	
John Winnill	Stoker	-	"Good Hope"	Lost in the Good Hope Nov 1/14
Edwin G. Neal	Cook's Mate	-	HMS "Weymouth"	
Eric Rose	Private	9999	Wiltshire Reg ^t	Prisoner in Germany Dec 21/14
Harry Campin	L Corp ^s	989	Royal Bucks Hussars	Invalided out - Shell shock.
Arnold Finch	Private	312	Northamptonshire	Wounded
Howard Barnes	Farrar	401	Wiltshire R.E.	Wounded
Arthur Winnill	Private	13107	Northamptonshire	wounded May 9/15. Wounded
Norman Stearn	1 st Lieut ^e	-	West Kent Reg ^t	wounded July 13/15
George Turnham	Private	1501	Royal Bucks Hussars	
Harry Suttonington	"	2195	North & Derby	wounded Oct 1/15
John Grant	"	19397	Grenadier Guards	Died of wounds Oct 23/15
William Neal	"	-	Warwickshire Yeomanry	
Frank Watts	"	2343	Leicestershire "	
Arthur Wood	"	2367	" "	
Holland Humphrey	"	14494	Canadian Contingent	
William Wilkins	"	13481	Oxford & Bucks L.I.	
Ralph Wilkins	Lieut Cpl		" "	
Edward Campin	Lieut Cpl.	16494	Oxford & Bucks L.I.	
William Major	Pte	9091	D Coy 2 nd Northants	Missing May 9 th 1915
Clement Gibbons	Signal Boy		H.M.I. "Inflexible"	
Henry Barnes	Sapper	87,626	Royal Engineers	
Stanley Strachan	2 nd Lieutenant		3 rd Sherwood Foresters	Killed in action Oct. 14 th 1915
Frederick Finch	Pte	18313	Northants Regt.	Killed in action
Joseph Paston	Pte		9 th Middlesex	Invalided
Archibald Barber	Pte	4965	1/4 Oxford & Bucks L.I.	
Harold Winnill	Pte	18884	" "	
William Meppison	Pte	19055	" "	Died of wounds 15.11.16

County of Northampton.

Helmdon Cl School.

Roll of Old Boys

Serving in the Great War.

Name.	Rank or Rating.	Battalion.	Regiment or Ship.	Notes.
Frank Seckington				
William Kelcher	Pte	105810	Royal Field Artillery	
Charles Southam	Pte	20335	3 rd Northants	Missing
John Holloway	Pte	20334	" "	Wounded
Richard Saunders	Pte	16721	Goldstream Guards	Wounded. Invalided out
Harry Morris	Pte		Queen's Own Ox. Hussars	
Frank Carpenter	Pte	2898	" " " "	
Waite Iley	Cpl	10283	C. Sqdr 18 th Hussars	2.M.O. Wounded May 26 th 1915
William Southam	Pte	4140	Oxford & Bucks L.I.	Wounded
Benjamin Archer	Trooper		Queen's Own Oxford Hussars	
William Humphrey	L. Corporal	P2837	Military Police	
Harold Seckington				
James Carpenter	Pte	5317	Oxford & Bucks L.I.	
Alf J. Bazeley	Driver	151518	A. S.G. M.T.	
Oliver Franklin	Pte	15456	Royal Warwicks	Killed in action
G Cyril Brown	Pte	20,099	Royal Flying Corps	
Arthur Franklin	Pte	14806	" " "	
Harold Franklin	Pte	24270	" " "	Wounded Sept 13 th 1916.
Fred. Winmill	Pte	25810	C Coy 7 th Northants	
Ralph Branson	L. Corporal		Winnipeg Grenadiers	Wounded Jan. 11 th 1917.
James Batchelor	Pte		Essex Regt.	
Lewis Ayres	Pte	74,154	R. G. A.	
Charles Holloway	Pte	6624	Middlesex Regt.	
Herbert Wood	Pte	48944	" "	
Herbert Saunders	Pte		Worcestershire Regt.	Invalided out
William Tyrell	Pte	18645	B Coy 3 rd Northants	
Alfred Humphrey	Pte	27420	G " " "	Missing
Fred Stockley	Rifleman	6378	F Coy London Reserves	
Harvey Franklin	Pte	2744	G Coy 3 rd Northants	

Roll of Old Boys: .Sheet 2 reverse

School

Herbert Finch	Pte.	5098	Durham L.I.	
Frank Finch	Pte	30236	D Coy 3 rd Northants	
Edmund John Ayres	Pte	31018	3 rd Coy 5 th Bat. Bedfords.	Died of wounds Apl 15 th 1917
Charles R Gibbons	Pte.	213500	Royal Engineers	
Walter Watson	Pte	140399	—	
Frank Humphrey	Driver	207583	R. F. A.	
Fred. Wooldridge	Pte	1866	D Coy 10 th Norfolk	
Fred. Watson	Pte	5/4145114	A. S. C	
Hubert Wrighton	Pte		A S. C.	
Charles Finch	Stoker		H. M. S. —	
Harry Turnham	Pte	203423	3 rd Northants	Died of wounds
Wm Wrighton	Pte	G 25626	8 th E Surreys	
John Lightwood			R. F. C	
Harry Humphrey	—	—	—	
Herbert Humphrey	Pte		Queen Victoria's Regt	
Stanley Saunders	Pte	17217	Royal Sussex	
William H Humphrey	Pte	59228	G Coy. 3 rd Northants.	
Gilbert Middleton	Pte	31087	4 th Bat. Queen's R. W. S	
Guy Evans	Pte	183923	Royal Sussex	

The Roll of Old Boys is incomplete and may not be accurate; there is little supporting documentation from the time to cross reference the names. Additionally, given the propensity of village families to use the same names, it is difficult to determine which boys belonged to which families. Additionally, some boys are listed by the name commonly used at school; this may not be the name that appears in a census or other official record.

And certainly there is at least one omission. William Edwin Turnham appears in the School Register as Admission Number 911 but he is not listed on the Roll of Old Boys. This would appear to be a glaring oversight as William did not survive the war.

Conversely, Frank Branson Watts does appear on the Roll of Old Boys but there is no trace of him in the School Register. Given that Frank was born in 1891 and his siblings can be seen in the Register, it would be expected that his name should appear.

It should be pointed out that the earliest surviving Register lists pupils from 14th August 1894 onward; the first listed is **Lewis Ayres**, Admission Number 641; Lewis later saw service in the Royal Garrison Artillery. The earlier Register cannot be found and it is likely that several of the Helmdon fatalities would have been in the earlier Register.

The War Memorial lists sixteen names from the Great War with twelve being former pupils of the village school; these twelve are listed below. Where they appear in the School Register, their names are shown as written in the Register; where they don't, the names are as shown on the War Memorial. Where known, details of their association with the school is shown.

Edmund John Ayres	born 1886 therefore presumed to be in a previous Register
Arthur Oliver Franklin	born 1881 therefore presumed to be in a previous Register
Charles Frederick Finch	born 1880 therefore presumed to be in a previous Register
John Grant	born 20.3.1891 Admission Number 891 from 25.4.1904 – 21.04.1905
Alfred Humphrey	Admission Number 641 from (no date) – 5.07.1907
William Merrison	born 1.12.1896 Admission Number 834 from 22.4/1901 – 29.7.1910
William Harold Seckington	born 1883 therefore presumed to be in a previous Register
Charles Southam	born 19.6.1895 Admission Number 776 from 27.6.1905 – 5.06.1908
Harry Turnham	born 3.8.1894 Admission Number 807 from 16.10.1899 – 2.8.1907
Frederick John Watson	born 1884 therefore presumed to be in a previous Register
Frank Branson Watts	born 1891, unclear why he is not in the 1894 School Register
Francis John Winmill	born 1890, unclear why he is not in the 1894 School Register

The Roll of Old Boys shows that Helmdon men enlisted in all three services. As would be expected from a largely rural and agricultural community, most men enlisted as Privates or equivalent rank but there were exceptions. Below are snippets about some of the names on the Roll of Old Boys.

Brothers **Herbert Wood** and **Arthur Wood** both joined as Privates, Herbert in the Middlesex Regiment and Arthur in the Leicester Yeomanry but subsequently both received commissions in the field.

As expected, most Helmdon men served in "France and Flanders" but some saw service in other theatres. The first Helmdon casualty, **John Francis Winmill** was a stoker on HMS Good Hope. The Good Hope was sunk with all hands lost on 8th November 1914 in the Pacific battle off Coronel, Chile. An entry in the School Log book for November 13th 1914 records; "One boy in the "Roll of Honour" went down in the "Good Hope". Thus John Winmill died at his post."

William Harold Seckington is thought to be the 'Harold Seckington' that appears in the Roll of Old Boys. Generally known as Harold, he is listed as a Helmdon resident in the 1891 census so it can be assumed he would have attended the village school. When Harold married, he moved to Southam and it was there that he enlisted. Buried in the Esquelbecq Military Cemetery in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais district of France he is unusually commemorated on two English village War Memorials. It is likely his parents had him added at Helmdon, where he is listed as William Harold Seckington, and his widow at the Southam Memorial, where he is listed as William Seckington.

Clements Tom Gibbons (born in Greatworth on 23rd July 1898) attended Helmdon School between 13th December 1904 and 2nd August 1906; he was listed in the Register as a 'Visitor' and his 'Reason for Leaving' the school was 'Gone Home'. Clements joined the Navy and was a signalboy on HMS Inflexible; this ship saw action in the South Atlantic, the Mediterranean and the North Sea. It was also part of the fleet at the Battle of Falklands which avenged the earlier defeat at the Battle of Coronel.

Edwin George Neal (born in Sulgrave on 17th January 1890) attended Helmdon School between 18th October 1899 and 23rd December 1904; his Reason for Leaving was '14 years old'. Edwin would have been 24 at the outbreak of war and if on HMS Weymouth for the duration, would have seen service in the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean. During his time on HMS Weymouth, Edwin was a 'Cooks Mate'.

Ralph Branson (born 15th September 1895) moved to Helmdon from Irthlingborough and attended the school from 30th January 1905 until 3rd October 1905 when he left the village but was readmitted to the school on 6th November 1905. Soon after, in 1906, Ralph emigrated to Saskatchewan Canada aged 11. He enlisted in the Winnipeg Grenadiers in 1915 and served in France with the Canadian Army. Ralph was wounded on 11th January 1917 but survived the war and returned to Canada - the 1921 census shows Ralph with a wife and ten month old daughter.

Holland Humphrey, born Helmdon 1885. Another who left for Canada with his wife and two children in 1910 but returned with the CEF. Holland survived and returned to Canada after the War.

The 1911 census shows that **William Major** was a regular in the 2nd Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment. In 1891 William lived in Wappenham Road but at the time of his death, his family were living in Crowfield. This might explain why William is listed on the memorial plaque in Syresham Church (as shown below) rather than (as might be expected) on the Helmdon War Memorial. An entry in the School Log book for June 25th 1915 reads; "Saw in the paper that Wm Major, No 9091, was reported missing on date June 7th."



Edward Stanley Strachan must have attended Helmdon School at some stage but his connection with the village is uncertain as it is known that he grew up in Clapham in South London. However, he is recorded on the Roll of Honour and an entry in the School Log book for November 5th 1915 reads; "Heard that 2nd Lieut. Stanley Strachan, a former boy, was 'Missing supposed killed' ". It is possible his connection to Helmdon may be through his mother's family, the Franklins. Stanley was a Lieutenant in the Sherwood Foresters and was killed in action at Loos in October 1915.

There are many entries in the School Register that list the pupil as 'Visitor'. The reasons for this are not given but it may be because of illness or death in their own family resulting in them moving to relatives for a period. Some entries in the Register show that a 'Visitor' may have only attended the School for a few weeks at most, but this was sufficient for them to be listed as an Old Boy."

The date and place of **William Major's** death indicates that he fell in the Battle of Aubers Ridge, which took place on the 9th and 10th May 1915. The battle was an unmitigated disaster for the British Army, poorly conceived and poorly executed. The 2nd Battalion of the Northamptonshire Regiment suffered heavy losses; 432 men were killed out of battalion strength of 616.

News from the front travelled slowly. On August 17th 1916, the Banbury Guardian reported that Private **Charles Arthur John Southam** of the Northamptonshire Regiment had been wounded; unfortunately Private Southam had been killed in action some weeks before, on the 7th July 1916.

His elder brother **Arthur William Southam**, who prior to the war had been a railway porter, was more fortunate; he survived the war, married and raised a family.

Sometimes news from the front was more welcoming. In 1915, the Banbury Guardian reported that **Eric Rose** had been captured and was now a Prisoner of War and not killed in action as previously reported. Eric was born in Blisworth on 14th November 1898 and attended Helmdon School between 6th February 1909 and 7th October 1910; the reason given for his leaving was 'Left the Village'. A School Log entry dated April 22nd 1915 states; "Heard that Eric Rose, supposed to have been killed in action at Armentieres, was a prisoner of war in Germany." Eric's father George was a police officer and it is known he was living in Moreton Pinkney at the time of the 1911 census. George and his wife Eliza returned to Helmdon upon his retirement from the Police Force and for many years were the landlord and landlady of The Bell.

Also reported in the Banbury Guardian on 9th December 1915 was the following "The sum of £15 has been obtained for sending Christmas presents to the troops that have gone from Helmdon." £15 may not sound much but the equivalent purchasing power today (2014) is around £1250.

Helmdon school children were very aware of the war as many had relatives serving in the forces and events would bring the consequences of the conflict directly into the school. One example is found in the School Log entry for January 13th 1915; "Admitted two boys, Belgian refugees." An entry in the School Log later that year reported that the two boys had been given permission to be absent from school so that they could visit an elder brother who was on leave from the front.

Another is the entry for May 14th 1915; "Heard that Arthur Winmill had been wounded and that Frank Watts had been killed in action." The impact of this event on the children is recorded on May 20th 1915 as follows; "Hoisted the flag half-mast high for Frank Watts. The children saluted the flag and said their midday prayers afterwards. The Master reminded them why this was done.

The entry for the following day reads; "Kept Empire Day. The flag was hoisted and sang all the National Anthems and Patriotic songs. The Master addressed the children on the meaning of the Empire and referred to the War. In response to the appeal for our brave soldiers and sailors, a collection was made which resulted in 9/- being collected. This is very good."

A collection of 9/- (nine shillings) from school children may not sound much in today's money, the equivalent being 45p but the minimum daily pay for a private soldier in 1914 was 1/- (5p) and that would buy around 60 cigarettes.

Whether the result of the Empire Day collection or another, on September 15th 1915, the Head wrote; "I've received two post cards from soldiers somewhere in France thanking the children for the tobacco and cigarettes sent."

Other Helmdon Connections

In addition to the names that appear either on the War Memorial or the Helmdon Roll of Old Boys, there are servicemen that have a connection with the village that appear on neither.

One example is **Edwin Salisbury**, buried in Helmdon Churchyard where his grave is marked with a Commonwealth War Graves headstone. Private Edwin Salisbury was originally from London, the 1911 census shows him and his wife living in Clock Passage, Newington, but had married a Helmdon girl, Mary Winifred Eva Branson in 1906. Edwin died in the Horton Hospital in 1917 and at that time, he and Mary were living in Sulgrave. It is uncertain why Edwin was buried in Helmdon rather than Sulgrave but it may be that Mary returned to live with her family in Helmdon after his death. Notwithstanding that, it is unclear why Edwin's name is not recorded on any War Memorial either locally or in London.

Edwin Tompkins was born in Great Houghton and is commemorated in Dallington cemetery. He enlisted in the Australian forces and died on 16th August 1916 in France. As far as we know Edwin never visited Helmdon but his father, Henry James Tompkins, is shown as living in 'Break House, Helmdon', at the time of Edwin's death. 'Break House' is probably an error but there appears to have been a 'Bleak House' in either Cross Lane or Wappenham Road as recently as the 1950s.

Private **G J Jennings** was another in the Northamptonshire Regiment (2nd Battalion) but little more is known of him other than, at the time of his death, his parents "John and T Jennings" were living in Helmdon. Private Jennings is buried in the Rue-Petillon Military Cemetery, Fleurbaix, France.

Private **Bernard Humphrey** (17th Battalion Sherwood Foresters) was born in Weston in 1896. Private Humphrey died on the 15th September 1917 and is buried in Woods Cemetery, Zillebeke, Belgium. At the time of his death, Bernard's parents are recorded as "Joseph and Caroline Humphrey of Bleak House, Wappenham Road, Helmdon, Northants". Bernard's name is included on the commemoration plaque in St Mary and St Peter, Lois Weedon as shown below.



Private E Abel (Machine Gun Corps) died on 27th October 1918, just two weeks before the end of the hostilities. Ernest Abel was the husband of Clara Humphrey and thereby the brother in law of Alfred Humphrey, who died in France in March 1918. Private Abel is buried in Belgrade Cemetery, Namur, Belgium; his headstone and Memorial Card are shown below.



Celebrating the Peace. Although fighting between the Allies and Germany famously ceased with the signing of the Armistice at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month in 1918, the formal peace treaty signifying the end of hostilities was not signed until the Treaty of Versailles on the 28th June 1919, exactly five years to the day after the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand. This explains why some memorials (e.g. Helmdon's) carry the Great War dates as 1914 – 1918 and others (e.g. The Cenotaph in Whitehall, London) 1914 – 1919.

As negotiations towards the Treaty of Versailles were being undertaken, the British government were already making plans to celebrate the official peace and had established a Peace Committee, chaired by Lord Curzon, Foreign Secretary, to decide how the official end of the war should be marked. The original proposal was for a four day August celebration but this plan was scaled down and it was eventually decided to hold a single day of festivities on 19th July 1919.

It should be said that a Peace Celebration was not universally accepted across the country with a feeling that the money would be better used supporting returning servicemen, many of whom were struggling to cope with the injuries they had suffered.

Helmdon's Peace Celebration Day was reported in the Northampton Mercury of Friday 25th July 1919, as follows:

HELMDON. – A large number of the villages turned out on Saturday to take part in the Peace celebrations held in a field lent by Mr. L. Watson. A meat tea was provided for the adults. The children met at the school, where they were presented with a souvenir and sports arranged for them. Owing to the rain, the adults' sports could not all be gone through, but it is hoped to finish this program later. The day was finished with dancing in the Reading Room.

William John Major

1887 - 1915



From Commonwealth War Graves Commission Records

Family name:	Major	Given name(s):	William John
Rank:	Private	Service No.:	9091
Date of death:	09 May 1915	Age:	
Regiment/Service:	2 nd Battalion Northamptonshire regiment		
Panel Reference	87 - 89		
Memorial:	Ploegsteert Memorial		
Additional information:			

From Forces War Records

Family name:	MAJOR	Given name(s):	William John
Birth Town	Elmdon	Date of Birth	
Resided Town:	Northampton	Nationality:	British
Date of death:	09 May 1915	Fate:	Killed in Action
Rank:	Private	Service No.:	9091
Duty Location:	France and Flanders		

Roll of Honour of Old Boys of Helmdon School Serving in the Great War

William Major	Private	D Coy 2 nd Northants	Missing May 9 th 1915
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Additional Military Information

William Major was a regular soldier. His battalion embarked to Malta in January 1911 (the census was taken in April 1911) and stayed there until the outbreak of war. His battalion returned in September/October 1914 to join 8th Division.

1911 Census -

Address	Name in Full	Rank	Age (last Birthday)	Condition as to Marriage	Unit, or Arm of Service	Trade or Occupation (if any)	Birthplace
Floriana Barracks, Malta	William John Major	Private	24	Single	2 nd Northamptonshire Regt	Soldier	Brackley, Northants

1911 Census (William John Major's family in Crowfield)

Address	Name	Status	M, S or W	Sex	Age	Birth Year	Occupation	Birthplace
Crowfield, Syresham	Timothy Major	Head	M	M	54	1866	Farm Ag. Labourer	Radstone
	Lottie	Daughter	S	F	24	1887		Helmdon
	May	Daughter	S	F	10	1901		Helmdon
	Lily	Daughter	S	M	8	1903		Helmdon
	Jack	Son	S	M	3	1908		Helmdon

1901 Census (William John Major's family in Helmdon)

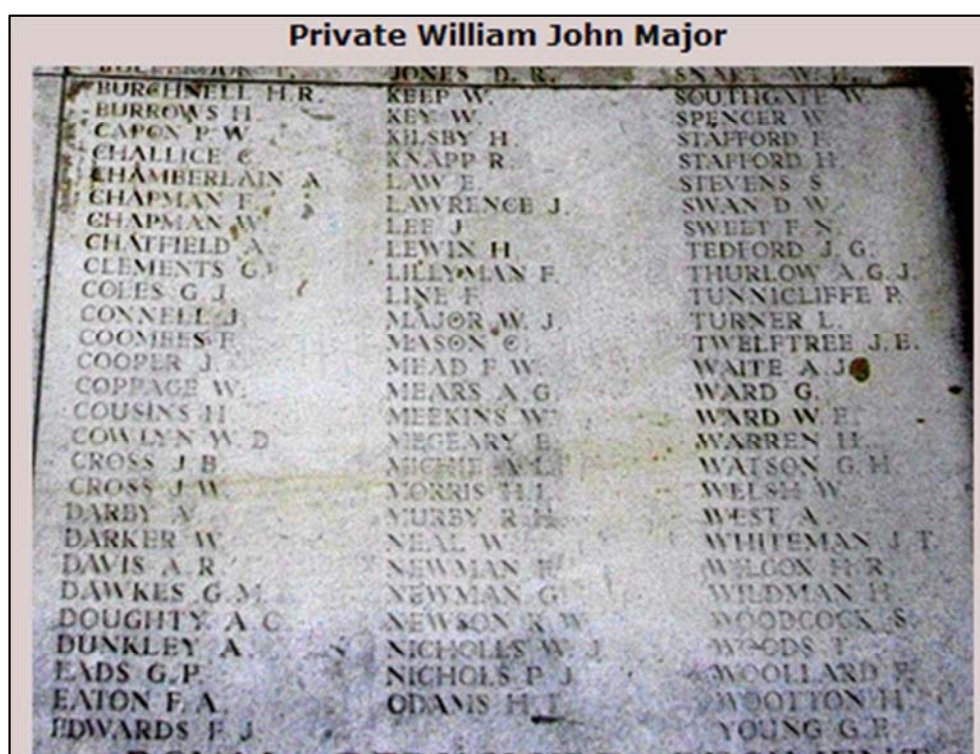
Address	Name	Status	M, S or W	Sex	Age	Birth Year	Occupation	Birthplace
Ellis Row, Helmdon	Timothy Major	Head	M	M	45	1866	Farm Ag. Labourer	Radstone
	Lottie	Daughter	S	F	24	1887		Helmdon
	May	Daughter	S	F	10	1901		Helmdon
	Lily	Daughter	S	M	8	1903		Helmdon
	Jack	Son	S	M	3	1908		Helmdon

Additional Family Information

According to the 1891 census, William was born in Falcutt. By 1911, William's family were living in Crowfield which falls within Syresham parish; William is commemorated on the Roll of Honour in St James the Great, Syresham.

Images & photographs

Panel 87 – 89 on the Ploegsteert Memorial



Panel 87 – 89 on the Ploegsteert Memorial



Memorial Plaque in St James The Great, Syresham

In Memory of

Private

William John Major

9091, 2nd Bn., Northamptonshire Regiment who died on 09 May 1915

Remembered with Honour

Ploegsteert Memorial



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Edward Stanley Strachan

1879 – 1915



(Photograph courtesy of Professor Sir Hew Strachan, Stanley's Great Nephew.)

From Commonwealth War Graves Commission Records

Family name:	STRACHAN	Given name(s):	Edward Stanley
Rank:	2nd Lieutenant	Service No.:	
Date of death:	14 October 1915	Age:	36
Regiment/Service:	2/8 Sherwood Foresters		
Memorial:	Loos Memorial (panel Reference 87 – 89)		
Additional information:			

From Forces War Records

Family name:	STRACHAN	Given name(s):	Edward Stanley
Date of birth:	Circa 1879	Age:	36
Resided Town:		Nationality:	British
Date of death:	14 October 1915	Fate:	
Rank:	Second Lieutenant	Service No.:	
Information:	Son of James Edward and Elizabeth Strachan of "Kingswood", 14 Kings Avenue, Clapham Park, London		

Roll of Honour of Old Boys of Helmdon School Serving in the Great War

Stanley Strachan	2 nd Lieutenant	2/8 Sherwood Foresters	Killed in Action Oct 14 th 1915
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Additional Military Information

"We were spared strenuous work as far as possible on the very hot days, but carried out much useful training of a general kind, and reorganised and refitted all the units in the Battalion. Two new Officers, 2nd Lieuts. R. E. Hemingway, and **E. S. Strachan** joined us..."
The Project Gutenberg EBook of The Sherwood Foresters in the Great War 1914 - 1919, by W.C.C. Weetman

"The only thing to be done was to consolidate what we had, and try to extend our gains laterally by bombing along the West Face. Grenadiers and grenades (English and German) were collected, parties were organised by Ashwell and Vann, and several more yards of trench were gained. **Strachan** leading one of these along the trench with utter fearlessness was never seen again, and was probably killed at once."
The Project Gutenberg EBook of The Sherwood Foresters in the Great War 1914 - 1919, by W.C.C. Weetman

"We got across the open to attack a well-known spot (the Hozenhollern Redoubt) which you probably know of, although I think I shall leave it nameless...Of course they heard us coming and we soon knew it. Young Goze was the first down, a nasty one I'm afraid. Then **Strachan** disappeared along the trench and I fear was killed."
Tommy, by Richard Holmes

"In memory of my grandfather, Captain F. W. Strachan, wounded, Givenchy, 14 January 1915; of his brother, **Second-Lieutenant E. S. Strachan**, missing presumed killed, Loos, 14 October 1915; and of Major R.B. Talbot Kelly, M. C. wounded, Ypres, 5 August 1917"
The First World War. Volume 1 – 'To Arms', by Hew Strachan, Oxford University Press

Additional Family Information

There is nothing in the Census information to suggest that either Edward Stanley Strachan or his immediate family ever lived in Helmdon. Indeed, all relevant Census data (i.e. 1881, 1891, 1901) indicates that they lived in the Clapham area when Edward was a boy; no reference to Edward could be found in the 1911 Census.

The fact that Stanley Strachan appears in the Helmdon School 'Roll of Honour' suggests there was a connection with Helmdon School, however brief. Unfortunately, the earliest Helmdon School register dates from 1894, too late to have recorded Stanley's attendance. His mother's maiden name was Franklin; she was born in Eydon in 1853, proving that there was a local connection. There was a Miss Mary Franklin teaching the infant class at Helmdon in the early 1880s; it is possible she was a relation and Edward attended Helmdon school as an infant. It is known that he attended Merchant Taylors school in the City of London when older.

Images & photographs

Manchester Courier.
ESTABLISHED 1825.
PAPER WHICH ALWAYS HAS UPHOLD AN ALL-POWERFUL TWO-TO-ONE NAVY AND A POWERFUL EFFICIENT ARMY

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1915. ONE HALFPENNY.

BEST WAR NEWS.
AL EDITION
er Office, Monday, Five a.m.
BY PRIVATE WIRES.
MY BEATEN OFF

THE FIGHTING IN CHAMPAGNE.



THE ROLL OF HONOUR
234 OFFICERS: 5,553
RANK & FILE.
Long lists of casualties were issued during the week-end, containing the names of 234 officers (253 dead) and 5,553 men (1,164 dead).
GENERAL HEADQUARTERS, Updated.

MISSING, BELIEVED KILLED.
Lieut. R. J. Emery, R.E., 2nd North Midland Field Company (T.F.).
Lieut. A. H. Eames, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, 2nd Batt.
Sec.-Lieut. E. S. Statham, Sherwood For., 2nd Batt. (T.F.).

MISSING, BELIEVED WOUNDED.
Sec.-Lieut. J. E. Barker, Leicestershire Regt., 4th Batt. (T.F.).



**2/Lieutenant
Edward Stanley STRACHAN**

Infantry
Died: 14/10/1915 - Age: 36



Military:

Unit : 1/8 Sherwood Foresters (Notts and Derby Regiment)
Action: The Battle of Loos and associated actions
Buried : LOOS MEMORIAL
Grave Location: Panel 87 to 89.
Awards :
Summary :

Masonic Career:

Mother Lodge: SIR THOMAS WHITE No. 1820
Province: London
Rank:

Initiated:
Passed:
Raised:

Career Summary :

Legend:

Summary : 2/Lt Edward Stanley STRACHAN, 1/8 The Sherwood Foresters STRACHAN was a 36 year old from London. At 0415 hrs on 14 Oct 1915 the 8th Foresters (temporarily under command of 138 Brigade) attacked the approaches to the Hohenzollern Redoubt at Loos to take pressure off the rest of 46 Division who were under severe pressure in the redoubt itself from German counter attacks. The Battalion was relieved after 25 hours fighting having established a strongpoint 80 yds short of Point 60. On the same day Capt Charles Vickers of the 7th Foresters was winning a VC by his bombing exploits inside the redoubt itself. With 170 casualties the 8th Foresters had suffered more heavily than any other Battalion in the Forester Brigade. 2/Lt Edward STRACHAN was killed in this action on 14th October 1915 and has no known grave and is remembered on the Loos Memorial. His name apparently appears on the Jesus College Cambridge Roll of Honour but the date of death apparently shows 14/10/1918 rather than 14/10/1915. This requires confirmation. In the same attack his fellow officer in the 1/8 Sherwood Foresters and Brother Mason 2/Lieutenant Ralph Eustace HEMINGWAY of NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LODGE No 1434 also fell. Sources: John Cotterill

Other Data :

Family : "Son of James Edward and Elizabeth Strachan, of "Kingswood", 14, Kings Avenue, Clapham Park, London."

In Memory of
Second Lieutenant
Edward Stanley Strachan

8th Bn., Sherwood Foresters (Notts and Derby Regiment) who died on 14 October 1915 Age 36

Son of James Edward and Elizabeth Strachan, of "Kingswood", 14, Kings Avenue, Clapham Park, London.

Remembered with Honour
Loos Memorial



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Acknowledgements

The Group who gathered the information were Judy Cairns, Audrey Forgham, Cec Harrold, Danny Moody and Ross Vicars. Charles Binns retouched some of the old photographs and postcards and Danny Moody prepared the material for the website.

They wish to thank all those who helped with the project, particularly Mike Barnes, Charles Binns, Doreen England, Lynda Fellowes, Derek Pasquire, Sir Hew Strachan and Celia Terrey, who provided photographs, a cap badge, medals and death pennies.

They would love to hear from anyone who can throw more light on the histories of these Helmdon servicemen. Please contact the website editor Audrey Forgham (editor@helmdon.com) or Danny Moody (webmaster@helmdon.com).

HELMDON.

Dedication of War Memorial Cross

BY THE
LORD BISHOP OF LEICESTER.

Hymn.

O GOD our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home.
Beneath the shadow of Thy Throne
Thy saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is Thine Arm alone,
And our defence is sure.

Before the hills in order stood,
Or earth received her frame,
From everlasting Thou art God,
To endless years the Same.

A thousand ages in Thy sight
Are like an evening gone,
Short as the watch that ends the night
Before the rising sun.

Time, like an ever-rolling stream
Bears all its sons away;
They fly forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day.

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be Thou our guard while troubles last,
And our eternal home. *AMEN.*

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who according to His great mercy begat us again to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away. And He that sitteth on the throne said: Behold I make all things new.

(All kneeling.)

OUR Father, which art in heaven. Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil; For thine is the kingdom. The power, and the glory, For ever and ever. *AMEN.*

O Lord, open thou our lips.

Answer. And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

O God, make speed to save us.

Answer. O Lord, make haste to help us.

(All standing up.) Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost.

Answer. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. *AMEN.*

Praise ye the Lord.

Answer. The Lord's Name be praised.

PSALM XXIII.

THE Lord is my shepherd : therefore can I lack nothing.

2. He shall feed me in a green pasture ; and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort.

3. He shall convert my soul : and bring me forth in the paths of righteousness, for his Name's sake.

4. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil : for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff comfort me.

5. Thou shalt prepare a table before me against them that trouble me : thou hast annointed my head with oil, and my cup shall be full.

6. But thy loving-kindness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life : and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

THE LESSON. Rev. vii. 9 to end.

Hymn.

JESUS lives ! no longer now
Can thy terrors, death, appal us ;
Jesus lives ! by this we know
Thou, O grave, canst not enthrall us.
Alleluia !

Jesus lives ! henceforth is death
But the gate of life immortal ;
This shall calm our trembling breath
When we pass its gloomy portal.
Alleluia !

Jesus lives ! for us He died ;
Then, alone to Jesus living,

Pure in heart may we abide,
Glory to our Saviour giving.
Alleluia !

Jesus lives ! our hearts know well
Nought from us His love shall sever.
Life, nor death, nor powers of hell
Tear us from His keeping ever.
Alleluia !

Jesus lives ! to Him the Throne
Over all the world is given ;
May we go where He is gone,
Rest and reign with Him in heaven.
Alleluia ! AMEN.

Let us pray.

ALMIGHTY God, who hast given thine only Son to be unto us both a sacrifice for sin, and also an ensample of godly life ; Give us grace that we may always most thankfully receive that his inestimable benefit, and also daily endeavour ourselves to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life : through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

O GOD of the spirits of all flesh, we praise and magnify thy holy Name for all thy servants, who, having fought a good fight, have finished their course in thy faith and fear ; and we beseech thee that, encouraged by their example and strengthened by our fellowship with them, we may be with them partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light ; through the merits of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

UNTO thy loving-kindness, O Lord God, we commend all those in our own and in other lands whom the War has left stricken and suffering : the disabled, the blinded, the fatherless children and widows, the destitute, all who have been bereaved, all whose faith in Thee has been shaken. Comfort them that mourn : give courage and hope to the afflicted ; quietness and strength to the restless ; faith and love to us all ; and help us to bear one another's burdens, for the sake of Him who bore the Cross for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

O ALMIGHTY God, who hast taught us to look for the coming of Thy kingdom, help Thy children to live together in charity and peace ; and grant that the nations of the world may be united in fellowship for the promotion of Thy glory and the good of all mankind ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

O LORD God of our fathers, who in Thy goodness hast led and blessed our nation in past days, we beseech Thee still to guide and guard the Empire over which thou hast called Thy servant George to be King. Grant that all, of whatever race or tongue, may in prosperity and peace be united in the bond of brotherhood and in the fellowship of the one Faith, so that we may be Thy people, and thou mayest be our God for ever and ever, and our guide even unto death ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

O LORD Christ, thou Prince of Peace, the Faithful and True, who in righteousness dost judge and make war; grant that putting on the whole armour of God, we may follow Thee as thou goest forth conquering and to conquer, and fighting manfully under Thy banner against sin, the world, and the devil, we may be found more than conquerors, and at the last may be refreshed with the multitude of peace in the heavenly Jerusalem, the holy city of our God; whose is the greatness and the power, the victory, and the majesty, for ever. AMEN.

Hymn.

LET saints on earth in concert sing
With those whose work is done:
For all the servants of our King
In heaven and earth are one.
One family, we dwell in Him,
One Church, above, beneath;
Though now divided by the stream,
The narrow stream of death.
One army of the living God,
To his command we bow:

Part of the host have crossed the flood,
And part are crossing now.
E'en now to their eternal home
There pass some spirits blest:
While others to the margin come,
Waiting their call to rest.
Jesu be thou our constant Guide,
Then, when the word is given,
Bid Jordan's narrow stream divide,
And bring us safe to heaven. AMEN.

THE ADDRESS.

(The Bishop will then proceed to the Memorial followed by the congregation.)

Hymn.

WHEN I survey the wondrous Cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.
Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
Save in the Cross of Christ my God:

All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His Blood.
Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so Divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all. AMEN

(The inscription will be unveiled and read by the Rector.)

Remember Him who died for us all.

Forget not the men who gave their lives for England.

EDMUND JOHN AYRES.
GEORGE VICTOR CREED.
CHARLES FREDERICK FINCH.
ARTHUR OLIVER FRANKLIN.
JOHN THOMAS GRANT.
ALFRED HUMPHREY.
SIDNEY LINES.
WILLIAM MERRISON.

WILLIAM HAROLD SECKINGTON.
CHARLES ARTHUR JOHN SOUTHAM.
JAMES TUGWOOD.
HARRY TURNHAM.
WILLIAM EDWIN TURNHAM.
FREDERICK JOHN WATSON.
FRANK BRANSON WATTS.
FRANCIS JOHN WINMILL.

(After the reading of the names wreaths may be brought and laid at the foot of the Cross.)

THE BISHOP WILL THEN DEDICATE THE CROSS.

Hymn (set for men's voices).

THINK, O Lord, in mercy,
On the souls of those
Who in faith gone from us,
Now in death repose.
Here, 'mid stress and conflict,
Toil can never cease;
There, the warfare ended,
Bid them rest in peace.
Often they were wounded
In the deadly strife;
Heal them, good Physician,
With the balm of life.

Every taint of evil,
Frailty and decay,
Good and gracious Saviour,
Cleanse and purge away.
Rest eternal grant them
After weary fight,
Shed on them the radiance
Of Thy heavenly light;
Lead them onward, upward,
To the holy place,
Where Thy saints made perfect
Gaze upon Thy face.

ALMIGHTY God, we beseech Thee graciously to behold this thy family, for which our Lord Jesus Christ was contented to be betrayed, and given up into the hands of wicked men, and to suffer death upon the cross, who now liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. AMEN.

LET this Cross, O Saviour of men, bear witness to all who pass by, declaring the protection of thy strong right hand, uplifting the appeal of thine outstretched arms, recalling their promise to fight under this banner, and moving them to deny themselves and take up their cross and follow thee, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost be glory for evermore. AMEN.

Hymn.

Hold Thou Thy Cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies;
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me. AMEN.

The Blessing.

The Last Post.

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM.

GOD save our gracious King,
Long live our noble King,
God save the King.
Send him victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us,
God save the King.

God bless our native land,
May heaven's protecting hand
Still guard our shore;
May peace her power extend,
Foe be transformed to friend,
And Britain's rights depend
On war no more.

Nor on this land alone,
But be God's mercies known
From shore to shore,
Lord make the nations see
That men should brothers be,
And form one family
The wide world o'er.