

We Will Remember Them

Pte William Feltham
Dvr Walter Sweet
Sgt Hector Down
LCpl Arthur Feltham
2Lt John Wallis
Pte Harold Robinson
LCpl Edward Burgess

RMLI
2nd RHT ASC
1st Wilts
4th Wilts
4th Wilts
R Fusiliers
13th R Sussex

WILLIAM JAMES FELTHAM

William Feltham was born in Chitterne on 30 October 1873 into a family of agricultural workers and in very poor circumstances. He was the third child born to single mother Emily Jane Feltham, a farm servant. Emily had no home of her own and she and her children lived with relatives in Bidden Lane until she married widower John Furnell in 1878 and moved to Townsend, into a small cottage that is now (2011) the garage next to Stable Cottage. William was known as James Furnell in 1881 and lived with his mother, step-father, step-brothers and step-sister. In the 1891 census he is down as William James Feltham and was an agricultural labourer, still living in the same cottage with his mother and step-father and their three children. William never married and had no children that we are aware. He was, according to his service records, 5ft 6 inches tall and a Baptist.

In 1893 William Feltham enlisted into the Royal Marine Light Infantry. He had a number of trades; he was trained in naval gunnery and as a butcher. He left briefly in 1905 but rejoined later that year. In 1906 he was on the training ship HMS Impregnable (which had previously been HMS Howe). In 1910 he joined HMS Pelorus and then in February 1911 he joined HMS Indefatigable as a member of the Xray gun turret crew (the rear gun). In December 1913 HMS Indefatigable joined the 2nd Battlecruiser Squadron in the Mediterranean.

When WW1 started William Feltham was on HMS Indefatigable in the Mediterranean. On 4 August they shadowed the German cruisers Goeben and Breslau as they headed into Messina. Respecting Italian neutrality at this stage, Indefatigable and Indomitable took station to the west of the Messina Straits as they thought that the German ships would head that way to attack French troop ships. The Germans had other plans and on 6 Aug they headed east towards their eventual destination of Constantinople. The arrival of these ships in Constantinople was one of the reasons the Ottomans joined the German side.

Britain declared war on Turkey on 5 November 1914 but this formal declaration came 2 days after Churchill had ordered the shelling of the Dardanelles. The attack was carried out by HMS Indefatigable, HMS Indomitable and 2 French battleships, the intention being to test the fortifications and measure the Turkish response. This was William Feltham's first taste of action. The results were deceptively encouraging. In a 20 minute bombardment, a single shell struck the magazine of the fort at Sedd el Bahr. The attack also displaced 10 guns and killed 86 Turkish soldiers. Sadly, the most significant consequence was the Turks strengthened their defences, and they set about expanding the mine field. Sedd el Bahr is the site of what was to become V Beach, right on the tip of the peninsular, in the Gallipoli invasion in April 1915. In February 1915 HMS Indefatigable returned to UK and rejoined 2nd Battle Cruiser Sqn in the North Sea.

Battle of Jutland. The Royal Navy started the war with a numerical advantage in capital ships over the Germans. The Germans determined to even the odds by luring smaller parts of the Grand Fleet into traps to eventually bring about equality at which point they felt confident they could defeat them. The German plan was to send battlecruisers to the Skagerrak threatening British patrols and merchant ships in the area and on the morning of 31 May the German High Seas Fleet made for sea. The British received indications that the Germans were assembling and

pre-empted them, deploying the Grand Fleet two and a half hours before the Germans. On the afternoon of 31 May the British battlecruisers, under Beatty, were on a course that would take them 20 miles ahead of the German Battlefleet and 40 miles astern of their battlecruisers which is what the Germans wanted to happen. But before this point Beatty turned his fleet north to meet up with Jellicoe. Shortly after this turn the British and the Germans sent ships to investigate the Danish steamer N.J.Fjord which was steaming between the cruiser screens of both battlecruiser fleets. At 1428 the first shots of the battle were fired when the British ships HMS Galatea and HMS Phaeton opened fire on the German ships B109 and B110. Sadly they didn't hit their targets; the accolade of first hit of the battle goes to the German ship SMS Ebling who hit but did not sink HMS Galatea. At 1432 Beatty turned his battlecruisers south-south-east to engage the enemy. Unfortunately for the British, owing to a mixture of bad initial positioning, sloppy signalling, lack of initiative and bad luck the 5th Battle Squadron turned in the other direction and carried on for nearly ten minutes increasing their range from the enemy. At 1548 the Germans opened fire at a range of approximately 14 km. The Royal Navy returned fire but they were firing high and it took them 10 minutes to gauge the range correctly.

Four minutes later a shot from SMS Von Der Tann hit Indefatigable with 3 shells from her 11 inch guns. This detonated X magazine, the magazine below the turret where Feltham worked. Soon after another 11 inch shell hit the forward turret. Seconds later Indefatigable was ripped apart by a huge explosion which hurled large pieces of the ship 200 feet in the air. Only 2 of the crew of 1,017 survived. By the end of the battle the following day 14 British and 11 German ships had been sunk. The British lost 6097 men and the Germans 2545. Both sides claimed victory.



William Feltham is commemorated on the Royal Navy War Memorial on Plymouth Hoe. Debate as to who actually won and what the consequences of the battle were continue to this day. One certain consequence is that the Germans changed their rules on submarine warfare – from now on there were no rules, all allied shipping was a target.

WALTER HENRY SWEET

Walter Sweet was born in Salisbury on 12 July 1878, the son of Samuel Sweet of Milford and Susan Elliott of Fisherton. Before becoming a soldier he was a journeyman farrier. He came to Chitterne after the death in Kent in 1909 of his first wife Alice Prince, who he married in Bromley in 1899. He left his children, John and Walter junior, in the Dartford Workhouse. In 1911 he married Emma Grant the widow of Henry Grant, with whom he boarded, who had two children of her own. The family lived at number 10 Townsend. Walter was given the nickname Sugary.



Walter Sweet served in the 2nd Reserve Horse Transport Depot of the Army Service Corps, based at Blackheath. As this was a home based unit no war diaries were kept and so researching Walter Sweet has been very challenging. The depot's task was to 'turn out' complete horse transport units ready for service, complete with officers, NCOs and men, animals, wagons and stores. In the period April 1915 - October 1917 almost 1,100 officers and over 28,000 men passed through the depot. Walter Sweet never served overseas. He died on 22 August 1918 and is buried in Bryngwyn St. Peter Churchyard, near Raglan in South Wales.

HECTOR JAMES DOWN

Hector Down was born 14 Mar 1883 in Bournemouth. He was the eldest son of James Down, a railway engine stoker from Stockton, and Chitterne-born Frances Polden. They married in Bournemouth and spent most of their married life in Hampshire until James died of smallpox in 1894. In 1901 two of Hector's siblings were in orphanages in the Lambeth area of London, and the youngest three were living with their grandparents in Bidden Lane. By 1911 his mother was back living with her widowed mother in Chitterne in Well Cottage, Bidden Lane. Hector was unmarried.

In 1900, when Hector Down enlisted into the Wiltshire Regiment aged 17, the British Army was very much an army of the Empire. He was posted to the 1st Battalion and sailed to India to join them. He remained in India on empire garrison duties until 1909 when they moved to South Africa where they remained until 1913, returning to Tidworth that year. The 1st Wilts received their mobilization orders on 4 August 1914 in Tidworth and they spent the next 9 days integrating and equipping reservists, training, inoculating and packing and on the 13 Aug they boarded 2 ships in Southampton, bound for France. On the 14th August 1914 they landed at Le Havre and from here they entrained to the vicinity of Mauberge. The Battalion was part of 7 Brigade in 3rd Division, II Corps.

Mons. It wasn't long before the BEF (British Expeditionary Force) went into action. The Germans were advancing over a broad front and that advance met the BEF on 21 Aug at near Mons when the first British soldier was killed. On 22 August the first British shots were fired, and on 23 August the 1st Wiltshires came under artillery fire for the first time. They were just south of Mons where the first British battle of WW1 had just started. Mons was the first British battle on the continent of Europe since Waterloo and it was also the first time we had fought the Germans since the Anglo-Saxon invasion after the collapse of the Roman Empire. The Battle really only lasted a day and although the BEF fought well and had held the line of the canal until dusk, Field Marshal Sir John French who was commanding the BEF realised that they were facing an overwhelmingly superior enemy in terms of numbers and that the French 5th Army to his south were withdrawing, so he gave orders to withdraw. II Corps, in which the 1st Wilts served, didn't receive the order until the early hours of the 24th Aug. The 1st Wilts didn't start the move until 1pm by which stage 4 men had been killed, the CO's horse was shot from underneath him and the Adjutant was wounded.

Le Cateau. Thankfully the Germans followed up leisurely and although there were some contacts, there was no large scale fighting until the BEF got to Le Cateau on 26 August. The battle of Le Cateau was the last great battle to be fought within the space of a day and was in many ways a battle of an older age, one that Wellington would have recognised. As the position became untenable, the 1st Wilts started to head south in the late afternoon. They had suffered 80 – 100 casualties including 5 killed. Le Cateau had achieved its objective, and enabled the British Expeditionary Force to retreat largely unmolested by the Germans for a further five days. Many military historians consider Le Cateau as amongst the most successful holding actions in British military history, ranking alongside the Battle of the Imjin River during the Korean War in terms of its overall effect.

Retreat. From Le Cateau the Bn continued its withdrawal south along with the rest of the BEF and on 4 Sep it arrived at a place called Chatres, 30 miles east of Paris. It had travelled 200 miles in 15 days and had fought 2 major battles en route. But there was little time to rest and 2 days later the BEF changed direction and headed north. The 1st Wilts were the advance guard as 3 Div crossed the Petit Morin river, a tributary of the Marne, on the 6 Sep but had to hold position and

later withdraw as the rest of the Division was unable to match their rate of advance. On 8 Sep they crossed the Marne and by this stage the Germans were retreating north to the Aisne but on 10 Sep the heavens opened and this considerably slowed the BEF's progress. They reached and crossed the Aisne (using a plank in place of the destroyed railway bridge) on 14 Sep. They then dug in for the next 9 days during which a pattern of shelling, patrolling and being attacked became the norm, especially so on the 20 Sep when the CO among those injured. The Bn left the line on 22 Sep and moved to billets near Braine, just east of Soissons, where it stayed for 9 days. They had been in action and on the move for 6 weeks

Race for the sea, On 1 Oct the 1st Wilts left this battle and eventually entrained for Abbeville where they arrived on 6 Oct. The Race for the Sea, was underway and they rejoined the fight on 12 October and were in action on and off until 29 October. During this period the First Battle Of Ypres had started to their north. The fighting that the 1st Wilts were engaged in around Neuve Chapelle was heavy and the death toll was high. And although the BEF had dug trenches, this was not the same as the trench warfare that was to follow; this was still mobile warfare with both sides regularly attacking and counter attacking. In October the 1st Wilts lost 14 officers and 550 ORs killed, injured or taken prisoner and by the time they moved back to billets on 29 Oct the Bn consisted of just 5 officers and 200 men.

Shot at dawn. The same day a soldier from the 1st Wilts, Pte Edward Tanner, was shot at dawn. He had been briefly hospitalised with dysentery and on 18th October he started making his way back to the Battalion. He was found the following day dressed in civilian clothes and without his rifle - he had hidden it in a nearby village. He was arrested, and in a 15 minute Field General Court Martial in which he was given no defence, he was convicted of desertion and sentenced to death. No doubt this was done, in the words of Voltaire albeit at the opposite end of the rank scale, pour encourager les autres. As was the case with most soldiers executed during the first 6 months of the war his burial site was not recorded but after the war his name was added to the Le Touret memorial to the missing

November and December 1914. On 29 October the Battalion received reinforcement as well as letters, warm clothing and gifts from home. They then moved into Belgium and the Ypres Sector and joined the trench line. They spent November rotating in and out of the trenches. It was a quiet month in terms of casualties with only 38 killed and 86 wounded. In Flanders there was no truce in the 1 Wilts area that Christmas. 2 men were killed, 1 was wounded and 1 went missing on Christmas Day.

1st Wilts casualties in 1914. In the action on the Aisne some 160 all ranks had been killed, injured or were missing. Since arriving in France 40 days previously the Bn had had 3 officers and 37 men killed, 9 officers and 200 men wounded and 125 soldiers were missing, a total loss of 360. The Adjutant, wounded near Mons, rejoined the Bn on 24 Sep. By 4 Nov the Bn had lost 26 Offrs and 1000 men, equivalent to a whole Bn. Of the 25 offrs that landed in France in August 1914. 5 had been killed in action and 1 had died from wounds. 8 were invalided home of which 6 took no further part in the war. 4 were taken prisoner and 1 was sent home for reasons unknown. This mean that of the 25 officers just 6 were left.

1915. In France and Belgium the stalemate had begun. The winter weather had been bad and it wasn't until the end of January that conditions in the trenches started to improve a little as supplies of material and equipment started to arrive, the most important of which were water pumps. The Battalions started to settle into their trench routine; 8 days in the front line trenches, 4 days in billets followed by 4 days in rear trenches. The period in the frontline trenches had its own rotation system in order to try and keep soldiers as safe and healthy as possible. Hot baths were available when out of the line and the rations were considerably better than that which they had experienced in the mobile actions of 1914.

2nd Ypres. The 2nd Battle Of Ypres started on the 22 April when the Germans used Chlorine Gas for the first time. The 1st Wilts weren't directly involved in the battle but they reported hearing heavy gun fire to the north of Ypres as the battle progressed from their position near Dickebusche. The

1st Wilts routine and fairly low casualty rate came to an end on 16 Jun when they attacked the German line 2 miles south east of Ypres. The initial assault was a success but the Germans counter attacked and the Battalion was slowly forced back. By mid afternoon the 1st Wilts had lost 9 officers and 200 men killed, wounded or missing. In terms of deaths it was the 2nd worst day of the war for them with 57 killed. 6 Days later they attacked again but their efforts yet again failed. The Battalion then settled back into trench routine for the next 6 months. On 30 Jul Hector Down received a gunshot injury to his left hand while in the trenches on the southern side of the salient near St Eloi and spent 6 days in hospital. And also that month the final officer of the 25 who landed in Aug 1914 left the Battalion, he was invalided home.

62. Campaign :- 1914				(A) Where decoration was earned.		
				(B) Present situation.		
Name	Corps	Rank	Reg. No.	Roll on which included (if any)		
(A) DOWN	1 st Wilts R	PTE	5572	MEDAL	ROLL	PAGE
(B) Hector Down	—	*Sjt	—	VICTORY	C/102 24	434
				BRITISH	do	do
Action taken				14 STAR	C/113	35
* Down / of 2680.						* Dec 15
QUALIFYING DATE.				14. 8. 14		
(6 34 46) W234—HP5590 500,000 4/19 HWY(P240) K608				[OVER.]		

Hector is injured. In October 1915 the 1st Wilts moved into the line and back to trench routine in the Ploegsteert, area (or Plugstreet as the soldiers called it). Their Brigade was transferred from 3rd Division to the 25th Division in a swap with the 76th Brigade which was a new army brigade in order to balance out experienced units across the whole force. On 4 Dec Hector Down injured by a piece of shrapnel from german artillery and he spent 8 days in hospital and 4 days later he went back to hospital, this time for 23 days, suffering from rheumatism. The rest of 1st Wilts

spent Christmas in the trenches in Ploegsteert Wood, the scene of a Christmas truce in 1914. In 1915 the Germans tried to raise a white flag but it was shot at by the British and so was quickly taken down by the Germans.

1st Wilts casualties in 1915. In 1915 the 1st Wilts had 299 men killed and at least 600 men injured, missing or captured. July 1915 had been the quietest month with only 3 men killed, 4 who died of wounds and 11 injured.

1916. The 1st Wilts were spared the horrors of the two days of the battle. On 3 July they took over in some enemy trenches at Leipzig Salient. On 5 July they attacked the area of the Leipzig Redoubt aiming to capture a stretch of trenches 300 yards wide. In this action 40 men were killed or were missing and 160 were wounded. The attacks continued the following day with similarly high casualty rates and it was during this action that Hector Down received a gunshot wound to the right thigh. He was evacuated to a hospital in Antwerp and then back to the UK. On 11 December 1916 Hector Down rejoined his Bn in France.

1917. On 5 Jan 1917 Hector Down was promoted to Sgt. In June 1917 The 1st Wilts took part in the Battle of Messines and on 9 July they moved north to Ypres where a day later they were attacked with mustard gas, the first time it had been used in action. At the end of the month the 3rd Battle of Ypres, or as it is more often referred to the Battle of Paschendale started. On 29 Dec 1917 Hector Down went to UK on leave for 2 weeks, returning on 13 January 1918.



1918. The Germans launched a massive offensive on 21 March 1918. The 1st Wilts were in Achiet le Grand and they came under heavy artillery fire. Hector Down was one of ten men from the Battalion who were killed that day. He is buried in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery in Achiet Le Grand.

ARTHUR FELTHAM

Arthur Feltham was born 1890 in Chitterne to single mother Mercy Feltham. Mercy was a nurse and midwife who never married and Arthur was her only child. Arthur and his mother lived with his grandparents at first near the top of Bidden Lane and then further down the Lane with his uncle Herbert at 1 Chestnut Cottages. Arthur was a farm labourer in 1911, he never married and left no offspring as far as we know.

In January 1916 Arthur Feltham enlisted into 1st/₄th Wilts and deployed by boat to India. In September 1917 Arthur Feltham's Battalion, the 1st/₄th Wilts relinquished its duties guarding the great Indian Empire and sailed west to Egypt. They landed in Suez on the 25 September and moved to Al Qantara.. The campaign in Palestine started in 1916 when the British started to push east from their defences on the Suez canal to defeat the Ottoman forces that had invaded in 1915. The major battles in early 1917 had been the unsuccessful British attempts to take Gaza. After these failures General Sir Edmund Allenby has been put in charge and his orders from London were very clear; take Jerusalem by Christmas 1917.

It was into this action that the 1st/₄th Wilts were thrust and by mid October they were in the trenches in the vicinity of Kurd Hill and Lees Hill, a few miles south of Gaza City. On 31 October the town of Beersheba was taken, thus securing a logistic base and perhaps most importantly a water supply for the forthcoming advance. This battle is perhaps most famous for the cavalry charge by the Australian 4th Light Horse Brigade. The following day the attack on Gaza started. As part of this battle, on 6 Nov the Battalion attacked Outpost Hill and in this action 8 men were killed and 73 wounded, all from shellfire. It was estimated that a quarter of these injuries were caused by friendly fire.

The Ottomans knew they couldn't hold out against Allenby's superior forces and so they began to withdraw with Allenby in pursuit. On half rations and short of water, the 1st/₄th Wiltshires reached Junction Station on 16 November. The final advance to Jerusalem began the following day. It was wet and the ground south west of Jerusalem is steep and rocky. On the same day that over in France 400 tanks were going into action at Cambrai, the Wiltshires attacked Kuryet el Enab (which is now called Abu Gosh and has the world record for making the biggest pot of humus). And a day later they were on sight of Nebi Samwil which is where prophet Samuel is said to be buried. Nebi Samwil is known as the key to Jerusalem and it was from there in 1099 that the Crusaders gained their first sight of Jerusalem. On 22 November the 1st/₄th Wiltshires were ordered to attack the village of El Jib (the village of Gibeon attacked by Joshua) but sadly the attack was not successful.

The 1st/4th Wilts then moved into reserve and headed back towards Gaza, ending up in Ludd (Lydd/Lydd), the burial place of St George on 29 November 1917 and then on 9 Dec they moved to Ramleh, the same day that Jerusalem surrendered to the British. The 1st/4th lit fires and ¾ pint of tea per man was issued in celebration. Christmas celebrations 2 weeks later were even better; although there were no extra rations each man was given ¾ pint red wine. On 1 Jan 1918 the 1st/4th Wilts moved to El Tireh and relieved 1/8 Hants in the outpost line.

Name	Grade	Rank	Regt. No.
FELTHAM.	Wilt's R.	ACPL	201100
Arthur.			
Medal	Roll	Page	Remarks
Victoria	81/102 516	1888	
Honour	do	12	
Star			
Theatre of War first served in			
Date of entry theatre			

In January 1918 the 1st/4th Wilts issued steel helmets for the first time and later in 1918 the force significantly reorganised. In 3 of the Divisions, all but one battalion from each brigade was sent to France and by Aug 1918 these troops had been replaced by Indian Army battalions and so the 1st/4th Wilts lined up alongside the 2nd/3rd Gurkhas, the 72nd Punjabis and the 3rd Kashmir Rifles for the Battle of Megiddo, the final push north. On 19 September the Battalion attacked Turkish positions in El Tire. The attack was successful although 19 men were killed, including the

Commanding Officer, Col Armstrong, who had been with the battalion since the start of the war, first as 2IC and latterly as CO. 62 men were wounded in the attack, one of which was Arthur Feltham.



On 17 or 18 Oct Arthur Feltham died of his wounds. He is buried in Ramleh Commonwealth War Grave Commission cemetery which is on the outskirts of Tel Aviv. On 31 Oct the Armistice with Turkey was signed. Arthur Feltham was the last member of 1st/4th Wilts to die in World War 1.

JOHN BUCKERIDGE WALLIS

John Wallis was born on 7 May 1892 into a Chitterne farming family who lived at Chitterne St Mary Manor, rented from the Lord of the Manor, Walter Long. The family had lived there since about 1823. John was one of ten children and the second son of Frederick Buckeridge Wallis and his wife. Besides farming the Manor, John's father also farmed Glebe farm, which he rented from the Vicar of Chitterne. After WW1 Frederick bought The Manor from Walter Long. John was unmarried and left no heirs.

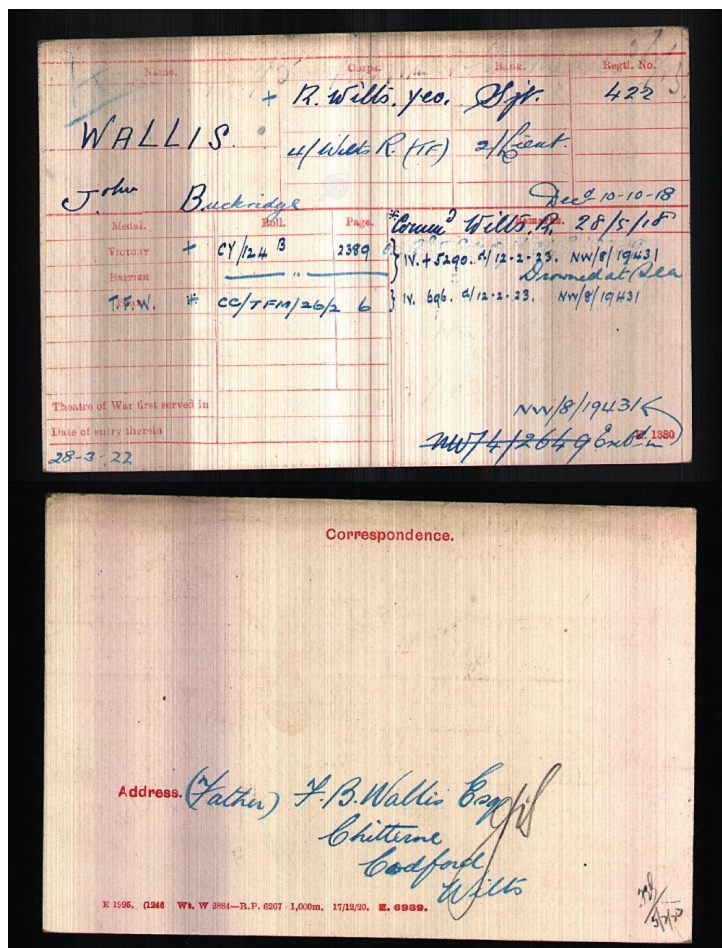
Mobilisation. The Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry, a Territorial Force unit, received their mobilization orders on 4 Aug and Squadrons formed up the following day in their Squadron drill halls in Chippenham, Warminster, Devizes and Swindon. Sergeant John Wallis was a member of A Squadron which was commanded by Lord Alex Thynne. On 12 Aug they moved to Winchester to join the remainder of the 1st South Western Mounted Brigade commanded by Lord Shaftesbury. At Winchester they were billeted in the College, the first time this had happened since Oliver Cromwell had insisted on tying up his horses in the cloisters. When asked by the Bursar where the

Yeomanry would put their horses, Lt Awdry (an old Wykehamist) replied "in the cloisters of course, to preserve history". Later in 1914 the Regiment moved from Winchester to Sussex, eventually moving out of tents and into huts in December.

Deployment. In June 1916 Sergeant Wallis deployed to France with A Sqn the Wiltshire Yeomanry, landing on 3 Jun and moving into positions north-west of Bethune, a safe distance from the front but close enough to be able to hear the guns firing. In November 1916 the Wiltshire Yeomanry were reunited as a complete Regiment and they took on the role of XV Corps Cavalry Regiment. They moved to the area south west of Abbeville, a significant way from the front, where their main task was traffic control.

Cavalry action. During the German withdrawal in early 1917 the Wiltshire Yeomanry carried out their only cavalry action of the war. They were tasked to follow the Germans during their retreat and on the 19 March 1917, in driving snow and a biting cold wind and across ground of liquid mud, they moved close to Peronne. Halting overnight, they continued their move east at dawn on 20 March. In the vicinity of Gurlu Wood A Squadron came under fire and one soldier was killed instantly. This pattern of advance, skirmish and retreat repeated itself over the next week or so before the Regiment handed over responsibility for its area to the infantry. This was in effect the end of active operations by the Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry as a mounted regiment as within days of the German withdrawal ending, trench warfare resumed. In a period of 11 days the Wiltshire Yeomanry had 2 men and 22 horses killed, and 14 men and 25 horses wounded.

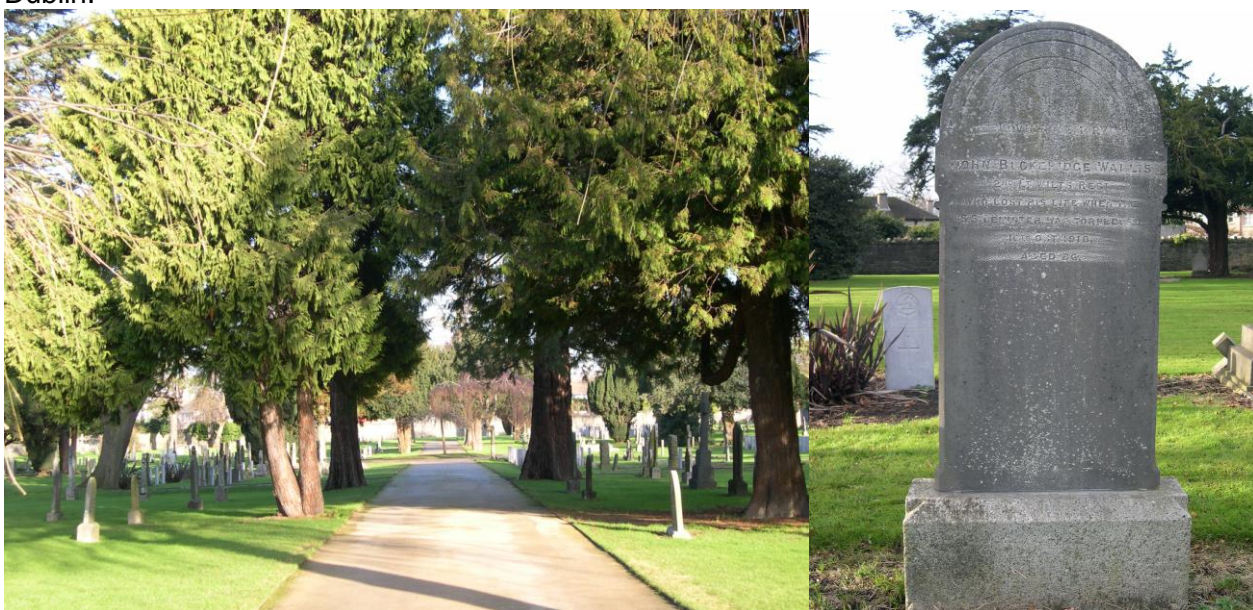
Disbandment. In late July 1917 the Wiltshire Yeomanry were taken out of their mounted role and combined with the remnants of the 6th Bn the Wiltshire Regiment to form the 6th Wiltshire Yeomanry Battalion and Sergeant John Wallis moved with the Battalion to Rouen for training in this new role. Lord Alex Thynne, having moved from the Worcesters to the Wiltshires earlier in 1916, was the Commanding Officer. Once trained the regiment, or Bn as it was now, moved to the Ypres sector to join the Paschendale battle in October and November where it suffered heavy casualties. After a very brief rest it conducted a 3 day forced march down to the area of Cambrai to help try and fight off the successful German counter attack in late November 1917 and they remained in the Cambrai area until February 1918.



6th Wilts Yeo Bn. In March 1918 the German launched a huge offensive. They had realised that the only way to victory was to defeat the British and French before the Americans arrived in strength. The 6th Wilts who were in the Bapaume area, suffered significantly. The CO, Lord Thynne, was injured and his replacement, Major Charles Awdry, was killed 2 days later. They got Lord Thynne back as CO on 11 Apr but within the week he was dead. The Bn had lost over 500 men dead or injured during the German advance and in May the Bn was disbanded and most of the men went to the 2nd Bn the Wiltshire Regiment. Sergeant John Wallis didn't go with them as on 28 May he was commissioned and sent to the 3rd/4th Bn who were stationed in Dublin.

RMS Leinster. On 10 Oct he boarded the RMS Leinster at Dun Laoghaire just south of Dublin in order to head home for a spot of leave. She left port just before

9am and headed out into the Irish Sea bound for Holyhead. She was carrying 771 passengers and crew, the majority of which were soldiers. About an hour into the journey a few people on deck saw a torpedo approaching the port (left) side of the ship fired from U Boat 123. It missed but soon afterwards another torpedo struck the port side and exploded, blowing a hole in the port side. The explosion traveled across the ship, also blowing a whole in the starboard side. In an attempt to return to port, the Leinster turned 180 degrees, until it faced the direction from which it had come. With speed reduced and slowly sinking, the ship had sustained few casualties. Lifeboats were being launched. At this point a torpedo struck the ship on the starboard (right) side, practically blowing it to pieces. The Leinster sank soon afterwards bow first. 501 people died in the sinking. Together with 143 other soldiers he is buried in Grangegorman Military Cemetery, near Dublin.



HAROLD ROBINSON

Harold Robinson was born in 1892. His parents were William & Lucy Robinson who were from Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. We think Harold and his younger siblings, Nora, Amy and Cecil, were born in the Manchester area where the family had moved by 1891 although a descendant believes that at least one of the children was born here in Chitterne. His father was a builder and must have been a successful one because he bought Clump Farm, a mixed arable and livestock farm with pigs and milking cows for Harold from Walter Long. William Robinson is noted as one of principal landowners in Chitterne 1911/13, but the family didn't live here.



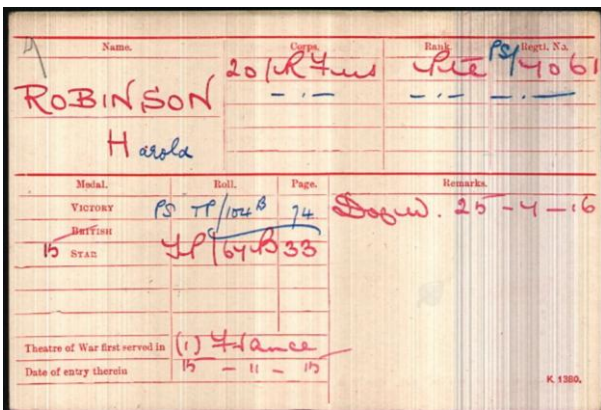
Public Schools Battalion.

At some stage in 1915 Harold completed his final pre-deployment training here on Salisbury Plain he moved to France on 15 Nov 1915. The Battalion was part of 33 Division, one of Kitchener's New Army Divisions made up of volunteers. The division was largely comprised of locally raised units often known as Pals battalions, as well as units raised by the public schools, footballers and other sportsmen and the Church Lads Brigade. 33rd Division troops were predominantly from the south of England although Harold had enlisted in Manchester. His Battalion



was one of the 5 public school battalions which originally recruited exclusively ex public schoolboys who chose to serve as private soldiers rather than as officers. On arrival in Europe the Bn moved to the area south west of Ypres, on the French/Belgian border.

High Wood. Harold Robinson's 20th Royal Fusiliers were also spared the horrors of the first few days of the Battle of the Somme. The British first attempted to capture High Wood on the 14th July and then again on the 15th but failed both times. High Wood was part of a new and well defended German trench line and an added problem was Bazentin ridge over which the guns were finding it difficult to fire, many rounds hitting the ridge and causing friendly fire casualties. A few days later the task of taking the wood fell to 33 Division, in which the 20th Fusiliers was serving as part of 19 Brigade. The day started badly. As the Fusiliers were moving forward to get into their forming up position at around 1am a German shell landed amongst them and there were 20 or so casualties. The British artillery barrage opened at 2.55am and, 40 minutes later, the leading elements of the 5th Scottish Rifles forced their way into the Wood where they came under heavy machine gun fire. On their right, the Fusiliers had also fought their way forward. Casualties quickly mounted as German machine guns, rifles and artillery poured fire onto them. During the early afternoon reinforcements arrived which included Robert Graves' Battalion, the 2nd Royal Welsh Fusiliers, and this enabled the troops to be rallied and push even further forward and soon all but the northern edge was later in British hands. But at dusk, the Germans heavily shelled the area and this forced the British to give up the northern half of the Wood which was quickly occupied by the enemy. The two sides dug in and at midnight the Fusiliers were relieved.

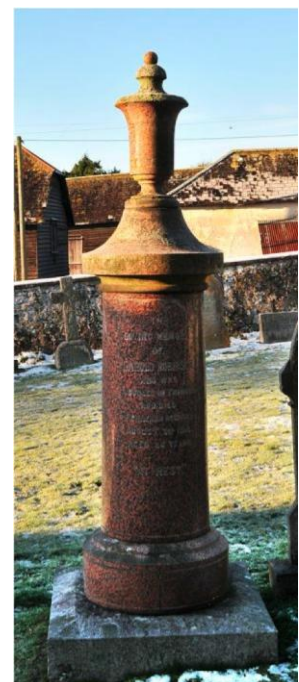


Goodbye to all That. In his book Goodbye to all that, Robert Graves wrote that he had been told by a wounded staff officer that “I believe what happened was that the Public School Battalion 20th RF came away at dark; and so did most of the Scotsmen. Your chaps were left there more or less alone for some time”. The debate that followed the book’s publication in 1929 did not persuade Graves to remove this controversial and critical passage but he did insert the following lines in future editions: “This was not entirely accurate. I know some men of the Public Schools Battalion, without officers or NCOs, maintained their positions in the left centre

of the wood, where they stayed until relieved by a brigade of the Seventh Division twenty-two hours later.” In the 20th Fusiliers, 397 men, two thirds of the effective strength of the Battalion, had become casualties - dead, wounded or missing. This included every single officer. Harold Robinson was one of the 397 casualties, having been injured in the arm.

R.F.	RISK L. B.	SHERBURN W. C.	STEVEN
	ROACH R. D.	SHERMAN H. H.	STEVEN
W.	ROAN H. A.	SHERRINGTON R.	STEWART
	ROBERTS F. E.	SHERWOOD C. W.	STICKLE
A.	ROBERTS G.	SHILLINGLOW W.	STIFF
R.	ROBERTS H.	SHINGLES C. P.	STILLM
G. A.	ROBERTS J.	SHOCK A. E.	STOCKT
W. T.	ROBERTS J. G.	SHORT B. A.	STOGD
L.	ROBERTS P.	SHORT C. S. T.	STOKES
K.	ROBERTS R.	SHOTTON J. S.	STOKES
A.	ROBINSON A. G.	SHRIMPION S. A.	STONE
	ROBINSON H.	SHUTS R. H. H.	STONE
R. D. S.	ROBINSON J.	SIBLEY A. F.	STONE
C. B. E.	ROBINSON J. W.	SIDEBOTTOM J. T.	STONE
	ROBINSON P.	SILVER B.	STONE
	ROBINSON S. J.	SIMMONDS A.	STOTF

Injured or dead? Harold Robinson's medal card states he Died Of Wounds on 25 July 1916. He is commemorated on the Thiepval memorial which carries the names of the 72,000 missing from the battle of the Somme.



But Harold Robinson's body wasn't missing. In fact, on 25 July he wasn't dead. Having been injured at High Wood he contracted Tetanus and had been evacuated to Fort Pitt Hospital in Rochester, Kent. Sadly the infection took over and he died on 3 Aug. He was buried in St Mary's in Chitterne on 5 August 1916.

EDWARD GEORGE BURGESS.

Edward Burgess' parents were born in Shrewton and Lavington but had been living in London before coming to Chitterne between 1903 and 1911. Edward, their only son, was born in 1898 in Finsbury. In Chitterne George became a publican and ran the King's Head for Bartlett's Brewery of Warminster. Besides running the pub George Burgess also dealt in poultry and eggs. Edward's sister Edith married Edward Polden in 1916.



In July 1917 Edward Burgess joined the Army. He was posted to the 13th Bn The Royal Sussex Regiment or 3rd South Down Bn as it was known and in September 1917 he arrived in Flanders and moved to the Ypres sector. On 26 January 1918 Edward Burgess' 13th Royal Sussex left Ypres and moved south to the area of Peronne.

In March 1918 13th Sussex were holding the line between Epehy and Sainte Emile (Villers-Faucon). The following day they were forced to withdraw and with the rest of the 39th Div they joined the 5th Army's fighting retreat across the Somme. On 23 Mar they were still 3 miles east of Peronne, covering the withdrawal of the other 2 Brigades in their

Division but were forced to fall back on Peronne and the bridges. Private Edward Burgess, who was 19 years old, was one of 6 men from the 13th Bn killed in action that day.

His body was never identified and he is commemorated on the memorial wall at the Pozieres cemetery. The Memorial commemorates over 14,000 casualties of the United Kingdom and 300 of the South African Forces who have no known grave and who died on the Somme in 1918.

Name	Rank	Regt.	Serial No.
BURGESS	Private	13th	917064
Edward G.			
Enlistment	8/2/10	1/10/18	
Discharge	do	do	
Remarks			
Theatre of War Discovered in			
Date of entry to service			



Pozieres Cemetery

Gareth Davies 2011

Photographs of Hector Downs grave; Walter Sweet's grave; William Feltham's Naval Memorial (2); Arthur Feltham's cemetery (2) and John Wallis's (2) all courtesy of The War Graves Photographic Project www.twgpp.org

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<http://www.1914-1918.net/army.htm>