

# THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories



The First World War cast a long shadow over the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Its veterans have now all died, and there are few people with direct memories of

1914 -18, but many families have stories to tell of a grandfather who fought in the trenches, or a great-uncle who was a conscientious objector, or a grandmother engaged in war work, or children left



fatherless. Many people were left with long-term physical and mental scars themselves, or had to care for those who continued to suffer. The war changed British society too, creating both challenges and opportunities which profoundly affected many lives.



Seal church's **LONG SHADOW** project invites you to tell your family story of WW1. It might be a story of pride or sorrow, a dramatic story or just a story of someone in your family who was involved in or affected by the war. You



may want to write about the impact of the war on subsequent generations of your family. You can write anonymously if you want to, or include your name if you are happy to. Your story doesn't have to have any connection with Seal.



## TO TAKE PART

- Take a sheet and write your story on the blank side. Continue on another sheet of paper if you would like to and staple the sheets together.
- Bring or send your story back to Seal Church at any time before Remembrance Sunday (Nov 9) when all the stories will be displayed in church and then gathered into a file for long-term storage.
- Take a tea light and either light it at home on Remembrance Sunday or bring it to church to light it there as your own memorial to those you have recalled.

Stories can be sent by post to “Revd Anne Le Bas, The Vicarage, Church Street, Seal, TN15 0AR” or left in the box labelled “**The Long Shadow**” in the church porch. Further copies of the sheet can be downloaded from the church website [www.sealpeterandpaul.com](http://www.sealpeterandpaul.com). We would like as many people as possible to share their stories this year, and hope you will join in.

Revd Anne Le Bas

## THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories

my Grandfather HARRY HAMBROOK ROBINSON  
was awarded the military Cross on  
28th December 1914 for acts of exemplary  
gallantry during active operations against  
the enemy. The Duty location is  
France & Flanders. He was in the machine  
Gun Corps (2nd)

He was a very gentle man and  
never mentioned his time in the war to  
my mother. He died after a heart attack  
in the car with my brother and sister & me  
my mother driving to a cousin's birthday  
party in 1966.

JENNY ELLIOTT

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## THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories

My late Auntie Peggy gave me many years ago a little wooden covered book with the word "Jerusalem" engraved on it, which contained pressed wild flowers from the Holy Land. On the inside cover, my paternal Grandpa had written "To dear little Peggy With love from Daddy Xmas 1917", which prompted me to delve further.

We discovered that my paternal Grandpa, Charles Wagstaff, was part of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, serving as a Lieutenant in the Royal Army Service Corps, which fought during the Battle of Jerusalem in 1917. Jerusalem had been under the control of the Ottoman Empire, which was defeated during WW1. I know nothing more than that.

Incidentally in WWII my late father also served with the RASC in Northern Europe as a Captain.

Bobbie Rayner



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## THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories

### Arthur Gerald Thompson (Uncle Gerald) 1897-1917

He was a fifteen year old schoolboy when war broke out, his father being a career officer in the Royal Navy who had recently retired. Since many of his forbears had also been in the Navy (two of whom had reached Flag Rank) the family have assumed that Gerald would have followed in their footsteps as the war developed. But he had poor eyesight and volunteered for the army, understating his age on enlistment. He originally joined the Oxford and Bucks. Light Infantry as a private, but in 1917 was transferred to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the Berkshire Regiment who had suffered heavy casualties earlier in the year. Sadly we know hardly anything of his life or activities after joining the army since no letters survive, but on August 16<sup>th</sup> 1917 he was killed in a disastrous attack near Windhoek in Belgium during the fighting known as Third Ypres. He has no known grave. But his name is on the Tyne Cot memorial.

This gap in family records is perhaps not unusual in that the trauma of loss felt by parents can sometimes result in the obliteration of memories. It was many years before I even heard about Gerald or saw a photograph of him in uniform. However in 2009 my brother and I went to Ypres, and with the aid of trench maps and regimental war diaries, were able to find and visit the small area where he must have been killed. Now a quiet pastoral scene by a stream – then mud, shell holes, and horror.

There is a twist to Gerald's story. In 1966 the surviving Commanding Officer of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the Berkshire Regiment was interviewed by the Imperial War Museum, who recorded his vivid memories of the very morning of the attack in which Gerald was killed.

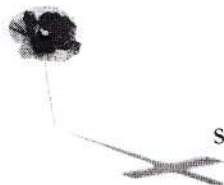
A moving eye-witness account which we treasure.

Peter Milton-Thompson. 2014

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In 1914 the Savage family were living in South Africa, with the exception of the fourth son who was at school in England. On the outbreak of war the two older sons travelled to England, enlisted in the Army and fought in France, both were killed in action: 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant William Howard, 11<sup>th</sup> Bn. Royal Fusiliers, died on 1 July 1916 aged 31 and lies at Dantzig Alley, Mametz; 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Frederick Quinton, 6<sup>th</sup> Bn. Wiltshire Regiment, died on 20 September 1917 and lies at Tyne Cot Memorial. The fourth son, Geoffrey, my father, enlisted in the Royal Army Service Corps in 1914, aged 21. He served in France until 1921 and left the Army with the rank of Captain. None of our family can recall him making any mention of his time in the army.

The Webb family were living in Surrey. Marjorie, my mother, and her older sister Mary, both joined the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) of the Red Cross. Volunteers were sought for nursing and as cooks, maids for kitchen, house & ward, drivers etc. After working in a hospital in England Mary was sent to nurse in France. While there she met an American surgeon, Dennis Crile, a member of the 'Harvard Unit'. They were married in January 1919 and went to live in America. In 1916 Marjorie was working in a local convalescent home, hard work but she enjoyed it. She applied to be sent to Boulogne in May 1918, aged 21. She was sent down to Rouen and was employed as a house-maid at a Red Cross hostel for the parents of dangerously wounded men. She spent the last six months of the War back in Boulogne working in the HQ officer's dining room. It was in Rouen that she first met Geoffrey Savage and they married in September 1923.

Roger Savage



# THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories

## Samuel Locke

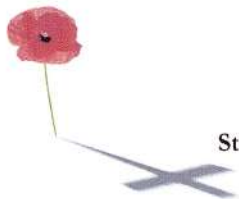
My Great-grandfather, Samuel Locke doesn't appear to have served in the armed forces during WW1. He would have been in his late thirties by the time the war started, so this may be one reason why he was not called up, the other being that he was a fisherman, living in Brixham, which had one of the largest fishing fleets in Britain before the war. The pressure to produce enough food to feed the nation during the war meant that fishermen, with their very specialised skills would have been needed on the home front.

In fact, trawler crews faced great dangers as they tried to bring in their catch, and many were sunk by German U-boats. They also played an important part in patrolling the inshore waters as they fished. The trawler on which my great-grandfather was serving at the time of the census in 1911 was sunk following a collision in 1917, and two other trawlers he was listed as having crewed were sunk by German submarines. Whether he was on board any of these trawlers at the time I don't know.



There were economic threats to trawlermen during the war as well. The government had declared many of their fishing grounds off-limits because of the war, and it was hard for them to catch enough fish where they were allowed to trawl. Many of the younger men had been called up, and the fishing fleet shrank dramatically during the war as a result. That may be the reason why my grandfather, his oldest son, did not follow him into the fishing industry, but joined the Navy when he grew up. As far as I know, Samuel was the last in my family to work as a fisherman.

Anne Le Bas



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## THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories

The photograph shows my Great Grandfather William Thomas Farrin taken around the time of his marriage in 1903. At the start of World War 1 he had four young children (one of whom was my Nana) and he was working in London as a Drapers assistant.

He died in 1917 aged 44 when the place he was working in London was hit by bombs dropped in the daylight bombing raids of June 1917.

Nicky Harvey



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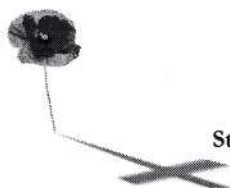
THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories

## Reginald Hugo Price

12.4.1880's to 1960's

Mr. Price was a Despatch Driver in France from 1914 to 1918. He was there for the whole of the war, returning home at the end of it.

Dawn Young



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### Lilian Maud Mary Aplin (née) Ruse

Lilian Maud Mary Ruse was my maternal grandmother. She was born on 14<sup>th</sup> May 1890 in Plymouth, Devon and had 4 (perhaps 5) brothers, some of which were killed in the 1<sup>st</sup> World War, and 1 sister.

She married her first husband in London in late 1916 (believed to be Albert William King) and he was sadly killed in action in the 1<sup>st</sup> World War within just a few months of the wedding.

She married Percy Cecil Aplin in 1923 and lived in Balham, London. They had 2 children, Peter (born in 1924 but died of cancer in 1963 aged 38) and my Mum (born in 1928 and still with us aged 86). Percy was gassed in the trenches in the 1<sup>st</sup> World War and suffered badly with the after-effects, particularly with bronchitis. This eventually brought about his premature death in 1947 when my Mum was still a teenager.

In 1959, we moved from Balham to Wallington, Surrey and my granny and Peter lived next door to us in the self-contained wing of a large house.

In spite of enduring a lot of sadness during her life, as you can see, Lilian Maud Mary was well loved by her family (including her 3 grandchildren) and was fit and healthy up until she died at the age of 90 in Wallington.

Mike Harvey



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I was born in 1927, the youngest of 3 children. By the time I arrived my father's health was really starting to deteriorate, but true to form, he carried on uncomplainingly for as long as he was able. Eventually all four of his heart valves failed and he died in 1949, aged 54.

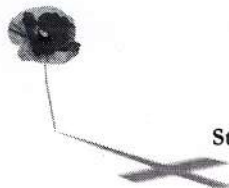
From his early days he'd obviously been very competitive, but strangely, he was a very modest man and never talked about his achievements either on the sportsfield or the battlefield.

It was some years after both he and my mother had died that my father's younger brother told us what Dad had done to be awarded the Military Medal. Typically, my father always felt his Meritorious Service Medal was the greater honour.

After the war ended, he came back to the "Land fit for heroes to live in" – back to the depression of the 20's; back to very little, actually. But he did his best without complaining, and was a good father. I never, ever, saw him lose his temper!

What he did lose, however, was his Christian faith. Having never discussed his beliefs with me before, as I sat with him when he was dying he said that having seen the carnage on the Somme he could no longer believe that there was a benevolent God watching and guiding us, whilst at the same time allowing those horrendous events to take place. Sadly it all achieved nothing as only 20 years later my father witnessed it all being gone through again. It would be interesting to know how he felt about that – but he never said.

Madelaine Evans (nee Watson)



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## THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories

My father, Arthur Watson, was born in 1895, and brought up in Heywood, Lancashire, as a member of the Church of England, attending St James' Sunday School and day school/ He loved sport, played cricket for his local team, and also became a very proficient, competitive swimmer, winning many prizes locally, and playing for his local water-polo team.

Aged 17 he joined the Territorial Army, training at Bury Barracks. From there, aged 19 ½ he was sent to France to join the 2/5 Battalion, Lancashire Fusiliers. He was quickly promoted to Company Quartermaster-Sergeant and was put in charge of a team taking supplies to the front-line trenches on the Somme.

Prior to the 1916 attack by British and Colonial troops, Britain's artillery had poured thousands of shells into the German lines to break down their defences and flatten their wire entanglements. Disastrously our troops, crossing no-mans-land, were met by solid machine-gun fire, and decimated, and the few who reached the German lines found the defences had hardly been damaged, and it was impossible for them to get through. Before advancing again the British needed soil and barbed-wire samples from the German trenches to re-assess their tactics, and my father went across no-mans-land in the middle of the night to collect these samples, which he did successfully, and for which feat he was awarded the Military Medal.

He was later promoted to Regimental Quartermaster-Sergeant, and was honoured with a Meritorious Service Medal for unflinchingly carrying out his duties during the 4 ½ years he spent on the front-line. He took part in the following campaigns: 3<sup>rd</sup> Ypres 1916, Cambrai 1917, Givency 1917.

He was fortunate in that he was never wounded but did not come through it all completely unscathed. Those years of handling heavy ammunition took their toll. The carts full of shells, and the mules pulling them, sometimes slid into water-filled shell-holes and had to be retrieved with back-breaking labour – no easy task. Consequently my father came home in 1919, aged 24 with a strained heart.



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These are our Great-great grandparents, Robert and Nancy Chambers. For several years, they both worked in a large manor house in Oxfordshire. Many people like our family, worked in service and they felt lucky to have relatively comfortable living conditions and plenty of food. Robert and Nancy were engaged to be married, but when war broke out in 1914, Robert joined the Royal Medical Corps and Nancy moved to Bexley to join other family members. Robert came home on leave in 1915, and they were married in Bexley on July 4<sup>th</sup>.

They didn't see much of each other at all for the next 3 years, but when the war was over, Robert came home and the couple decided to stay in Kent.

The war had changed them as it had so many people. They no longer felt prepared to look after wealthy people in their grand homes, so they rented a small cottage with a small plot of land in Hextable and settled there. They worked very hard on this land, which they had turned into a nursery, and they had become market gardeners.

By 1921, they had managed to buy a large plot of land in the same village. Here they built their own home, and ran a nursery, and a family florist shop. Robert worked on the nursery until he died in 1983, aged 93 years.

Freya Logan - Age 9 years

Ruby Logan - Age 6 years

James Logan - Age 6 years

Verity Stupple - Age 3 years

Honor Stupple - Age 6 months.

James Coates Born 30<sup>th</sup> June 1885 at 2 Walton Street, Colne, Lancashire  
Died July 22<sup>nd</sup> 1916 in France.

James Coates, Regimental Number 6748, Lance Corporal East Lancashire Regiment.

James Coates enlisted in the East Lancs. Regiment very early in September 1914 at Stonehouse in Gloucestershire.

In the local newspaper the Stroud News dated September 4th 1914 there is a description of a Recruiting Meeting Held in Stonehouse a few days before at which 27 young men enlisted, the majority of them joining the 5th Battalion of the Gloucestershire Regiment, but James Coates chose the East Lancs. What James Coates was doing in Stonehouse is not known, but the Stonehouse and Stroud area in those days had a textile industry, so maybe he was there looking for work. Whilst he was living in Colne he worked at J W Barritt & Co, Colne as a Warp Dresser.

Initially he was enrolled in the 3rd. Reserve Battalion and then transferred to the 7th Battalion when this battalion was formed,

The 7th Battalion was a K 2 battalion, a Kitchener battalion, part of the 56th Infantry Brigade; in the 19th Western Division, the recruits came mainly from of I.C.I., at Northwich.

The Battalion was first quartered at Lucknow Barracks at Tidworth, but at the end of September 1914 it was moved under canvas to Tidworth Pennings on the lower slopes of Sidbury Hill. At the end of November the battalion moved to billets in Andover and in early February to billets at Clevedon on the Bristol Channel. According to the Regimental History "here the billets were excellent and the battalion owed much to the kindness of the inhabitants which extended long after the battalion had left Clevedon.

"Many will remember with gratitude the constant stream of parcels that found there way to the trenches and billets in France throughout the years of the war".

James Coates married Elizabeth Ayland on June 16th 1915 at the Wesleyan Chapel, Lindon Road, Clevedon, and his address is given as Parham Down, Andover. The 7th Battalion sailed for France early in July 1915, so probably James was married whilst on Embarkation leave. Where did he meet his wife? The 7th battalion were only in Clevedon for about six weeks, but Elizabeth Ayland's home was only a few miles from Stonehouse and Stroud, where James was presumably working, therefore there is a distinct possibility that James met Elizabeth before the war, and when the 7th East Lancs. were moved to Clevedon, Elizabeth followed him there.

Some time between July 1915 and July 1916 James Coates was moved from the 7th Battalion to the 8th Battalion, but as his service records no longer exist we do not know when or why, but it is known that he was wounded by a bomb in the summer of 1915 and presumably when he recovered had some time on leave, and when he returned to France, he was posted to the 8th Battalion.

From the 6th July 1916 to 22nd August the 8th Battalion the East Lancs. was part of 112 Brigade which was attached to 34th Division.

On July 15th, as part of the Somme Offensive, the 8th Battalion attacked Pozieres from Contalmaison Wood, an attack which was, unsuccessful and resulted in over 350 casualties, the battalion were then put in reserve absorbing new drafts to replace the casualties from July 16th to 31st July. James Coates was reported as being killed

on July 22nd 1916, and as the casualties suffered during the attack on the 15th were reported promptly, it must be presumed that he was killed on our about the 22nd, from a shell probably whilst on a working party in the front line at night, something that all men in the battalions supposedly resting in reserve had to carry out. In a letter from Sergeant C Lowe " Dear Madam No doubt you will already know that your brother James was killed in action on July 22nd by a shell which burst quite close to him. As I was near the spot myself at the time, I can assure you that he was killed instatly. I am writing on behalf of the platoon to which he belonged, who send their deepest sympathy and regret. He was well liked and respected by us all"

The 8th Battalion of the East Lancs. was disbanded in France on February 21st 1918 with 20 Officers and 400 men transferring to the 11th Battalion of the East Lancs. The Accrington Pals.

James Coates has no known grave, being commemorated on the Theipval Memorial.Pier and Face 6 C

"Uncles we never knew, remembered only by a faded photograph and medal ribbons wrapped in tissue paper.

## George Coates

Born 18<sup>th</sup> February 1890 at 11 Spring Lane, Colne, Lancashire

Died 15<sup>th</sup> March 1952 at 21 Talbot Street, Colne Lancashire

At the P R O, Army Records W O 364 George Coates Service papers give the following information. He enlisted in the 10th Battalion the Lancashire Fusiliers on September 3rd 1914, one of the first wave of Kitchener Volunteers. His regimental number in the Lancashire Fusiliers was 8765. This battalion was part of 52 nd. Brigade, in the 17th Northern Division. He was described as being 5' 3 half inches tall weighing 8 stone 11 lbs, chest 35 half inches with an expansion of 2 inches, with a fresh complexion. His address was given as 10 Lancaster Street, Colne, no next of kin were given. His trade is given as Loomer and Twister employed by David Tattersall's, Seedhill Mills, Nelson. He went to France with the Lancashire Fusiliers on July 15th 1915 and stayed in France with them until September 9th 1917 when he was posted to 796 Area Labour Company with a service number of 400305. They were an Area Employment Company employed on Lines of Communication work, but they could well have been involved in helping to dig tunnels. This unit did not keep a War Diary but in January 1918 they were in the Boulogne Area and in August 1918 were at Wimillee not far from Lille. He stayed with them until he was discharged on March 14th 1919. He had a series of bouts of Bronchitis during his time in France, being hospitalised several times, and on his discharge was granted a 20% disability pension for 20 months due to his bronchitis. In his evidence to obtain this pension he stated that he had worked as a Sapper and Miner in wet Shafts and Galleries and suffered from exposure. His address on discharge was 20 Lord Street, Blackpool where his two sisters were living.



Mrs B. M. Hughes, daughter of  
James Arnold Plint has written -

### THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories

James Arnold Plint. b. 1889. d. 1981  
← Liverpool →

An existing Territorial soldier. He  
enlisted on 8/8/14 into the 1/6th  
Battalion King's Liverpool Regiment  
(Rifles).

He joined with a work colleague (they  
were both in timber) and both were  
good athletes.

September 1914 - February 1915, based in  
Kent, Sussex and Surrey.

February 24th 1915. Sailed for France.  
Entrained in a cattle wagon and on  
arrival in Bailleul the ground  
was shaking.

Went Corporal and Corporal A16.  
Gassed in 1918.

Demobilized in 1919 at Pees Heath,  
Shropshire as an Acting Sergeant.

Mentioned in Despatches in 1919  
and so entitled to  
wear an Oakleaf

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emblem on his Victory Medal.

Battles undertaken by the 1/6th  
Kings Liverpool Rifles:-

Hill 60. April 1915

2nd Battle of Ypres. 22/4-25/5  
1915

Somme. August/September 1916  
includes

Swillemont 4/6 Sept.

Grinchy 9 Sept.

Fless-Courcelette 17/22 Sept.

Morval 25/28 Sept.

3rd Battle of Ypres 1917

includes

Pilckern Ridge 31/7-2/8

Menin Road 20/23rd Sept.

Cambrai 30th Nov.

Festubert 1918. 9th April.

Crossing of Haute Deule Canal  
October 1918.

Tournai November 1918.

## THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories

My uncle Robin (Robert Noel Mountheld) was killed at Ypres in 1917. The attached extract from our family history describes his time in the army and his death, aged 29.

The photograph shows my grand-daughter Jessie visiting her great-uncle's grave last year.

Echoes of War: Solferino Farm

Peter Mountheld



Seal, Kent

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### ***Robert Noel (Robin) Mountfield during the first world war***

Having already served four years as a Territorial rifleman, he rejoined his regiment immediately on the outbreak of war in August 1914. That autumn found his unit billeted briefly in Sevenoaks (in the house of a clergyman whose wife spoke highly of him); he wrote to his little brother Stuart on a long picture-postcard of Sevenoaks (much of it still recognisable today) which has been preserved. The unit then moved to Canterbury. Here he was interviewed by a Board and recommended for a commission. His letters to his father show that he hoped for recommendations from others (including Lord Derby, then in charge of the local Territorials, to whom Robert had written) and he wanted to remain in a Territorial battalion ('there is something about the Regulars I don't care for'). He was also anxious to avoid being posted to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion King's Regiment, the Liverpool Irish ('that is the one Liverpool Battn I should object to be in') but he finished in another of the Liverpool Irish battalions. (It was, as it happens, also the battalion in which Peter's future father-in-law Walter Smithies served as a Private, but *not at the same time*.) Robin was commissioned as Second Lieutenant in the 6<sup>th</sup> Territorial Battalion of the Kings Regiment on 24 February 1915, having been drafted to France a week earlier.

It is not clear how soon he went into the trenches. His battalion was engaged in the battle of Festubert in May and June of 1915, and he saw *continuous service*, apparently without any home leave, for almost a year. That October he wrote to his sister from his dugout 'The general position here does not seem to be very much changed and in this quarter they are evidently settling down for the winter and making everything as comfortable as can be for all concerned'. This was probably a reassuring idea designed to keep the family happy. Later in this letter he discusses the failure of the Dardanelles campaign, and goes on 'Winston Churchill is said to be longing to come out to the front. I am sure he is welcome to it'. He describes some of the young soldiers serving with him: 'How much they long to be home again. Poor laddies, many of them are terribly young to be out here'. Despite his comforting words in such letters, conditions in the waterlogged trenches were awful, and he was badly affected, despite the new top-boots his loving family had sent out from England. On 15 January 1916 he was invalided home for an operation on varicose veins ('trench fever', as it was known). Several photographs show him in hospital at this time. After convalescence, but still not fit for the trenches, he went on a bombing course in North Wales, and he left a notebook in which he sketches *an exercise he ran* for some of the troops there. In July 1916 he was declared fit enough to return to France, but it is not clear when he went back. Later that year he was promoted Lieutenant, then Acting Captain, and seconded from his own 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion to the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, soon amalgamated with the 2<sup>nd</sup> as one unit. He seems to have been a popular but effective officer. A field notebook has survived from July 1917, describing in detail a night-time reconnaissance of the no-man's-land in front of their sector of the front line; he countersigned it but does not seem to have been across

himself (no doubt he had done similar patrols himself when a more junior officer). One fellow officer later said: I cannot tell you how much I shall miss Mounty - he and I were always together ...' and the regimental magazine had a light-hearted list of 'Things We Want to Know', including 'Why Capts Holland and Mountfield used so often to be seen standing in the doors of their respective Orderly Rooms, watches in hand?' (Perhaps they were trying to see which company got on parade fastest). But there was a serious side too. One of the last letters he received in the trenches (October 1917) came from a regimental chaplain, Norman Lycett, telling him 'How thankful I am & pleased that you feel called to enter the Ministry of the Church'. It is not clear whether he told his family about his intention at the time, although they found this letter among his papers after his death, and many years later CBM showed it to Lycett (by then a vicar in Sussex).

The end came on 4 November 1917 near Ypres, in the last days of the battle of Passchendaele. The regimental history tells the story: 'Until 4 pm, there was comparative quietude, though Boche aeroplanes were very active. From 4 pm onwards, however, the enemy put down a very heavy bombardment between Langemarck Corner and Au Bon Gite. Unfortunately the 2/10<sup>th</sup> were due to take over the line from the 2/9<sup>th</sup> at 5pm. The result was that both battalions caught the blast of the bombardment and suffered casualties. The 2/9<sup>th</sup> lost Captain R N Mountfield killed and Lieutenant-Colonel E V Manger [the commanding officer] and Capt and Adjutant J Wright wounded.' In fact, Robin was 'hit by a piece of shell low down' and died next day in the Main Dressing Station at Brielen.

The news reached the family a day later, in one of the thousands of similar telegrams which came to families that year (preserved, in its original orange envelope, among the family papers). 'I deeply regret to inform you War Office reports Captain R N Mountfield 8<sup>th</sup> Kings Liverpool Regiment died of wounds Nov 5<sup>th</sup>. The Secretary of State for War expresses his sympathy'. ASM later recalled being met, on his return from school, by his sister, who told him 'We have had some bad news'.

He was buried next day in the Solferino Farm cemetery opposite the farm, and about three miles from Ypres, where his family visited his grave in 1922, as did his nephew and namesake Robin, with his own family, fifty years later. There is another strange family connection here; French troops had invented the name Solferino for this Belgian farm, naming it after a famous battle of 1860 won by Napoleon III; it was the carnage of that battle which moved Henri Dunant to found the Red Cross for which Ben worked many years later.

## THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories

My maternal grandfather, William Bellamy, born in 1890, served first with the Territorial Army which was absorbed into the 1/5th East Surrey Regiment. He served the whole of the first world war in India and Mesopotamia, embarking from Southampton on 29<sup>th</sup> October 1914 and arriving in Bombay on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1914. My mother's only memory of my grandfather's war years was that he used to give his water ration away to his comrades whilst marching in intense heat. He returned home unscathed at the end of war but contracted malaria whilst in India and had recurrent attacks for the rest of his life.

The 1/5<sup>th</sup> East Surreys were part of the force that guarded the North West Frontier of India from Turkish invasion and subsequently forced them to surrender in Mesopotamia.

Sadly, his elder brother Herbert born in 1888, who also joined the East Surreys was posted to the Western Front, initially with the 1st Battalion Royal Fusiliers and subsequently with the 26<sup>th</sup> Royal Fusiliers was killed in action in Flanders on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1918.

Hilary Coffey, Seal



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## THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories

EDMUND GEORGE MARTIN MORRIS The story of my Dad's half brother.

Whilst doing some research for my daughter I came across the family tree my dad compiled years ago and realised I had a half uncle who was killed in action in WW 1. His death was recorded by my Dad on the family tree. This is what I have been able to find out about his story so far.

Edmund was born in April 1895 in Chelsea. On the 1911 census he is listed as aged 15 and an Errand Boy- my Dad is also listed as a baby 1 week old.

Edmund enlisted on 26/08/1914 as a Private in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force serving in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the Otago Infantry Division.

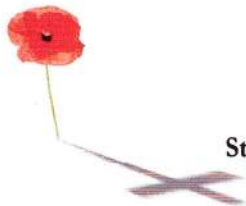
Now this is a mystery- Edmund left home sometime after 1911 and turned up in NZ in 1914! He was the eldest child of my grandfather and his first wife, they had 3 more children. My grandfather remarried after his first wife died and had 3 more boys with his second wife, the middle boy being my Dad. Was there a falling out with his Father and Stepmother or jealousy about the second family or did he think he had greater opportunity in life by emigrating? He was very young when he left home, as far as I am aware there was no family connection in NZ. My Dad was very small when Edmund left so I guess he would have had no recollection of him.

Edmund rose to the rank of Sargeant on 7/10/1916 but sadly he was killed in action. He died of his wounds on 16 June 1917, having been shot in the lung. I wondered if he was killed in the Battle of Messines which occurred 7-14 June 1917 and involved Anzac troops however I have no confirmation. He is buried at Trois Arbres Cemetery in Steenwick N France in Plot I.R.5. He was 22 years old and had survived for 3 years as a soldier!

My Dad never spoke to me about Edmund as far as I recall. I do have the attached photo of Edmund in uniform with his father, also in uniform so there must have been a reconciliation. After he died his medals were sent to my Grandfather but we do not have them now.

I feel so incredibly sad about Edmund. He was like so many others so young when he died. I intend to visit his grave at some point in the near future, I don't suppose anyone else has ever done so. In the meantime I will be remembering him especially on Armistice Day and I have purchased a poppy at the Tower of London in his memory.

JILL MYERS



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EDMUND GEORGE MARTIN MORRIS



## THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories

In memory of my two Uncles  
who lost their lives in the first  
world war.

Frederick George Price who was  
a Second Lieutenant Pilot and  
was killed in May 1919 aged 27.

+

Edward George Saltu 48586  
Rifle Brigade who died in Sept  
1918 aged 19.

Jackie Clews.  
nee Saltu.



## THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories

Dave's family were farmers and lived for at least a hundred and fifty years in the same farm house in Hunton, Kent.

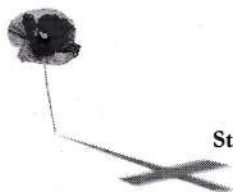
One of his family went to war, if it was Tom ( Dave's grandad), William or Arthur we do not know. We have a photo but no name. Couldn't find them in war records but by 1914 the farm had been lost. The brothers spread over the county and by 1922 William was in Winnipeg, we know this because he sent a printed Christmas card home. Tom continued to farm and eventually settled as farm manager at Fullers Hill Farm to be succeeded by Tom (Dave's dad) he also farmed near Horsmonden, possible at nevergood or evergood farm as Elsie remembers going to school at Horsmonden but not where she lived! He also worked on at least two other farms. Arthur, well, I haven't found him yet! He was in the 1891 census but had gone by 1901

So as to the question about how the Great War affected our family. We really don't know.

I can only assume they had to manage the farms they were working on with a lot less help, while being under orders to make the land more productive, the harvest would have been very difficult with less man power available.

So not much, I'm sorry. Interesting to find there were five Tom Martin's before we get back to a John in 1798. We now have another, though he's only two.

Barbara Martin



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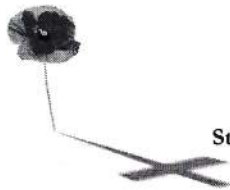
# THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories

## John Hoare

John Hoare, an uncle of Peter Milton-Thompson, was the son of the Bishop of Hong Kong. His father had drowned at sea during a typhoon in 1906 while the young John was at prep school in England. He later went on to Repton school, where he joined the Officers' Training Corps, becoming the senior boy officer in 1913. During the summer of 1914, John injured his ankle, and while laid up recovering, he had a lot of time to think. He was a somewhat solitary and serious-minded boy, and during that summer came to the conclusion that, as he wrote later: *"all war is wrong and that it is perhaps the worst crime that men can possibly commit against a loving God and against their fellow men"*. He resigned from the OTC, and declared himself to be a pacifist, a stance from which he never wavered for the rest of his life.

He went up to Oxford to read for a degree there, but conscription was brought in soon afterwards. He could have opted, as a conscientious objector, for some sort of non-combatant role which supported the war effort without him having to fight, but felt that to do so would be to condone war and would be no better than fighting himself. He was therefore arrested and court-martialled, since once one was called up one was deemed to be under military law. He spent time in Pentonville and Wormwood Scrubs, where the regime was brutal, the food sparse – often bread and water – and a rule of silence enforced. Prisoners were not allowed to talk to each other or to the guards. Despite this, he was able, for the first time, to meet other conscientious objectors and eventually was sent to work camps in Wakefield and then Dartmoor with many others who shared his convictions. His family remained supportive of him throughout this, and an older brother was also a conscientious objector.

He lost his faith in the God of his childhood during this time, but found that his pacifist principles remained strong. He later came back to faith, becoming a Quaker. He had many Quaker ancestors.



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## THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories

His great-great aunt was Elizabeth Fry, the great Quaker prison reformer, whose likeness, ironically, was carved into the gatepost of Wormwood Scrubs.

After the war, John was not allowed to resume his studies at Oxford and became a youth worker in the East End of London, working for the Highway Clubs. When WW2 started he resigned from this post so that he could devote himself to supporting other pacifists. He worked with his wife, Margaret, managing a Quaker/International Voluntary Service for Peace project in Cornwall, training German, Czech and Austrian Refugees, and then moved onto the Spiceland Training Centre in Devon, a project which equipped volunteers with basic skills for emergency relief work. From 1944 to 1966 when he retired he resumed his work with youth in East London.

Anne Le Bas (for Peter Milton-Thompson)



1937

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# THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories

## Herbert and Marie-Therese Le Bas



Herbert Le Bas

I never knew my grandfather on my father's side, as he died when I was still very young. However, it seems that Herbert Le Bas was something of a hero in the first world war, being awarded both the British Military Cross and the French Croix de Guerre. He became a Captain and then a Major in the Guernsey Light Infantry, having grown up in Guernsey. My father tells me that he would run up to German tanks, climb on top, open the hatch, drop in a hand grenade, and then run like mad. Somehow he survived this. According to the London Gazette in 1918 it also seems that he "held a bridge-head for a day and a night under very heavy fire, keeping his men together by his courage and splendid example, and when the withdrawal was ordered he formed

a screen behind which the remainder of the brigade withdrew."

My grandmother met Herbert at the end of the war, as she was part of a wealthy family in Valenciennes in northern France. My mother wrote up the story like this: "After the war [Herbert] had volunteered to "adopt" an army retriever dog, Ginger, that had been used for finding the wounded in the war and now needed a home. When he was in Valenciennes it was proving difficult to find lodgings that would tolerate a large retriever besides himself, but he was advised to try 13 Place Verte, because it was known that they had kennels for the hunting hounds kept by the family. This was the home of Marie-Therese (Zette) Lamotte, and thus he met his future wife!"



Zette (Marie-Therese) as a Red Cross nurse with some of her patients in 1<sup>st</sup> World War

Marie-Therese herself spent most of the war as a Red Cross nurse in Deauville (between Rouen and Caen), working all day and every day at the hospital

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## THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories

there, "with no time off at all." How she ended up there is again described by my mother: "At the age of 19 Marie-Therese was on holiday in Switzerland with her mother and brother when war broke out in 1914. It took them three whole days and nights to travel from Geneva to Paris and this was in a second-class train with hard wooden seats. Their train was continually being held up for hours, as military trains were given priority. At the stations they were able to get water only, and the only food they had with them was a box of biscuits. From Paris they took a train heading back to their home at Valenciennes, near Lille, but by the time they reached Amiens the Germans were advancing from Belgium and the passengers were told they could go no further. They were therefore obliged to return to Paris. While they were frantically trying to get food in the station restaurant, they met, by chance, some friends from Valenciennes who told them that the family had had to leave the house, because the Germans were advancing towards the town." They were eventually reunited with the rest of the family a couple of weeks later near Cognac, but from then on they were refugees throughout the war, much resented by local people wherever they went, who themselves had very little to live on. "After the war", writes my mother, "they were able to return to Valenciennes, but the Germans had looted everything of value and the only items saved were the few things that the servants had managed to bury hastily in the garden."

Herbert seems never to have settled after the first world war, at first attempting to manage a vineyard near Bordeaux, and then to work for a newspaper back in Paris. Neither of these ventures succeeded, the money ran out, and the family moved to London in 1934, as he was British citizen. When the second world war broke out he joined the RAF as a Squadron Leader. He ran the "bomb decoy" in Hampshire and landed in Normandy with the Canadian army as a liaison officer on D+10 in June 1944. After this war he organised the "Missing, Research and Enquiry Unit", which tried to track down missing British airmen. So much war must have left deep scars in him, and perhaps this is the reason I never had the chance to get to know him.

Philip Le Bas, October 2014



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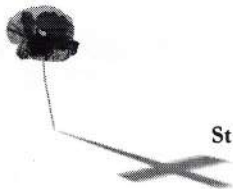
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## THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories

I had an Uncle who served in the First World War, I do not know what Regiment or where. He was always jolly & good fun & I know he played the drums in the local dance bands in the Village Hall.

He told me that once he was having a cup of tea with a mate & they were sitting either side of an oil drum, suddenly his mate fell, he was dead! either from a snipers bullet or shrapnel, he had gone! and my Uncle said, very matter of factly, had I been sitting that side it would have been me. However, he lived well into his 90s & was always happy & content with his life - may I be the same. There were many more stories but unfortunately I cannot remember them.

God Bless you Uncle Charlie.



## THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories

**Leonard John Robert Holdstock - Pte 27092 also 2605404 - 1898 – 1986**

Leonard John Robert Holdstock, known as Jack, enlisted in the Grenadier Guards on the 9<sup>th</sup> October 1916, aged 18. After training at Caterham, he joined the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion in France in 1917. He was involved in the battle of Cambrai, on the last day of that particular offensive. At 06:45 on the 27<sup>th</sup> November 1917, Nos 1 and 2 Companies, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Grenadier Guards, advanced on the village of Fontaine-Notre Dame as part of the attack on Bourlon Wood.

The Grenadier Guards  
in Britain  
November 1917



With fixed bayonets, advancing side by side in a broad line, Guardsman Holdstock had his eyes set on the remains of a large tree trunk, thinking that if he kept this between him and the enemy he would stand a better chance. Heavy machine gun fire took its toll almost immediately. To his left hand side he heard his friend, "Knighty", from Westerham, Kent, call out "Mother, Mother". As he turned to his friend he saw that he was holding his stomach in his hands and in that split second of time he saw his friend's head explode as it was hit by a bullet. As this happened Guardsman Holdstock was also hit by an exploding bullet which had hit the edge of his steel helmet wounding him in the face and neck. His company had fought their way into the centre of Fontaine by 07:15 but the cellars were full of Germans who, having set up machine guns, poured fire on them from all sides. All Officers, including both Company Commanders, both Sergeant Majors and all Sergeants were casualties along with two thirds of the men. The attack failed when subsequent Companies 3 and 4 were beaten back.

When Guardsman Holdstock finally recovered his senses everything was quiet and as he looked around he saw a German officer with a stretcher party, looking for wounded. The officer "finished off" any wounded who were deemed "too far gone". On seeing this he thought he better look more alive than he felt and dragged himself to the stump of a tree upon which he rested.

Luckily he was picked up by the stretcher party and on doing so the German officer remarked in perfect English, "Today it's you Tommy, tomorrow it could be us".



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## THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories

When he was finally able to leave hospital he was made to march to the rear areas. He had discovered that all of his kit had been taken by other soldiers probably on the assumption that he was going to die and wouldn't therefore be in need of it. He had only handouts to wear including a cast off overcoat and wooden clogs. Whilst on route to the rear areas a Frenchwoman stepped forward and handed him a woolly hat. Putting it on he thought to himself "A Guardsman! I bet I look more like a bloody guy" (Guy Fawkes).

Following treatment he was held for varying lengths of time in Limburg, Dulman and Le Quesnoy before being transferred to Schneidermuhl in northern Germany on 19<sup>th</sup> February 1918, where he worked as a labourer on nearby farms. He was eventually repatriated in 1919. On his return he was discharged on 10<sup>th</sup> August 1919, re-enlisting the following day, again in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Grenadier Guards, serving for a further two years.

On the first anniversary of the Armistice on the 11<sup>th</sup> November 1919 Guardsman Holdstock was the guard on duty outside the gates of Buckingham Palace at 11 o'clock. He recalled the deafening silence during those two minutes, when even the birds seemed to stop singing. He recalled the silence was only broken by the crying of the women who had gathered at the gates to remember lost loved ones or pay their respects. This haunting experience was to remain a vivid memory for the rest of his life. The image was captured on the front cover of the second edition of The Daily Mirror on 12<sup>th</sup> November 1919.

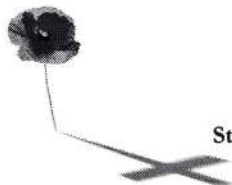


The soldier, Lt. K. Holdstock, 3rd Batt. Grenadier Guards, releases in the future, two minutes' silence outside of Buckingham Palace, December 11th, 1919.

During his final years of service Guardsman Holdstock was involved in the "Keys" ceremony at The Tower of London before finally being discharged on the 10<sup>th</sup> November 1921.

Some sixty years after being wounded in 1917, Jack experienced pain in one of the toes of his left foot. On investigation this was found to be due to a piece of shrapnel, a souvenir from World War I.

Peter Holdstock



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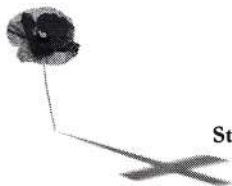
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## THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories

On Sept 30<sup>th</sup> 1915, my grandfather, Richard Sutton, a young man in his mid-twenties wrote to his extended family. He was on board a troopship – the Olympic, sister ship to the Titanic, converted for the duration, with his younger brother, Angus, who had enlisted along with him in the Royal North Devon Hussars when war broke out in 1914. *“Just a short letter to let you know we are getting on fine. We have to have letters censored so I cannot write much. We are still on the water, but have got used to it and are quite enjoying it.”* He writes of swimming in a swimming pool on board the ship and evidently this voyage was quite exciting for him. *“We shall have lots to tell you of when we come back, but we must not mention any names of places, or where we are going, if we knew it, which we do not.”* In fact they were on their way to Gallipoli, sent in as reinforcements at a point when it was already clear that the battle was unlikely to end in victory, and was possibly also pointless. After a few hellish months the campaign was abandoned, but not until many thousands had died – many from frostbite and hypothermia as torrential rain and then blizzards set in.

Among the frostbite victims were my grandfather and his brother. The family story is that Grandad was so badly frostbitten that he was going to be left for dead. It was only because his younger brother, Angus, announced that he wouldn't leave without him that he was rescued. If that hadn't happened, I wouldn't be here, since my father wasn't born till after the war. Both brothers were discharged in 1916, and in the photo on the right, presumably taken soon afterwards, my grandfather is wearing the Silver War Badge on his lapel, given to soldiers discharged honourably during the course of the war to show that they had “done their bit”, since not all injuries were visible ones. Although my grandfather recovered from the effects of the frostbite, he suffered intermittently throughout the rest of his life from what would now be called Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. He was a loving father and grandfather (I remember with fondness), but there were times when life was very difficult both for him and for those around him. Those few months of hell left a long shadow which stretched right through the rest of his life and had a profound effect on his family too. Anne Le Bas



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## THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories

My Uncle Arthur was  
Mustard Gassed in the  
1st World War and  
suffered long after.

Annie Lewis.



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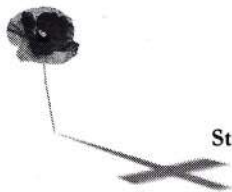
## THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories

My great uncle, Marny Humphreys, from an old farming family in Shropshire, lied about his age (he was only sixteen) and enlisted.

He was reported missing at the Battle of The Somme in July 1916. His body was never found.

My granny told me that his mother (her mother-in-law) lit a candle in the window of their farmhouse every night in case he came home.

Use Michaelides



## THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories



My father, Reginald James Lewis, was only 15 years old when he joined the East Surrey Regiment in 1914 and served in the First World War. He lied about his age to get into the army. Fortunately he survived, otherwise I wouldn't be here!

Annie Lewis



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# THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories

## George Watson, Australian Forces 1914-18

My father's older brother, George Watson, was born in Lancashire, circa 1891. At the age of 16, he left England to go and make a life for himself in Australia and was still living there when the war started in 1914. He joined the Australian army and was drafted to France, finishing up on the Somme in a sector not very far from where my father was serving.

On hearing that Lancashire forces from the area where he grew up were in the trenches nearby he made enquiries and the two brothers were able to contact each other.

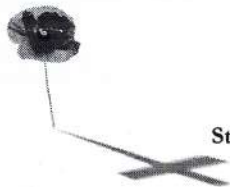
During combat, George received a chest wound and was sent to England for treatment. Hearing of this, my father managed to get a short compassionate leave, and the whole family were able to have a reunion. When he recovered, he was sent back to France.

After the War ended George went back to Australia and again lost touch with his family. Eventually one of his sisters traced him, by which time he was married with 3 grown-up children – 2 boys, 1 girl.

The daughter came to England to get to know all her family and stayed here for quite a long period. On her return to Australia she kept in touch with us all, and 60 years on she and I are still in regular contact by letter and phone, and the best of friends.

An odd twist to this story is that my cousin once told me that her mother was of German extraction. So it is possible that my uncle could have been fighting against his future in-laws on the Somme. Stranger things have happened.

Madelaine Evans



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## THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories

### Albert Newton

My great –grandfather, Albert Newton, didn't serve in the armed forces during WW1 – he was in his late 30's by the time it started. However, we know he worked for Sir John Jackson Ltd, building breakwaters among other things, and that he was involved in the construction of Brixham breakwater and lighthouse in 1916. My grandmother remembered being sent along the breakwater to take him his lunch.

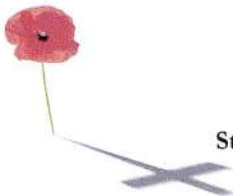


Sir John Jackson was the Conservative MP for Devonport, and his company was one of the largest construction companies in Britain at the time. He had won the contract to build army huts during the war, having built the first group of huts for free. Later in the war he was accused of profiteering , and although the allegations were not proven, the ensuing scandal over what was certainly a lack of transparency in the process caused him to step down from parliament in 1918. He died a year later.

Later on a further scandal was discovered. He had ordered the coast around the village of Hallsands in Devon to be dredged for shingle to build the Devonport dockyard before the war, despite the villagers warning that this would undermine the cliffs on which the village was built. In 1917, during a ferocious storm, virtually the whole village collapsed into the sea. The report on this disaster was suppressed at the time, however, and only came to light many years later.

Sir John Jackson used his wealth and power to make money out of the war, and his reputation was irreparably damaged as a result. My great grandfather would have known nothing of this at the time, but it is an illustration of the way in which war can enrich as well as impoverish people.

Anne Le Bas



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## THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories

My Grandfather , Horace Watts was an army regular in 1914, serving I believe with the Essex Light Infantry. At the outbreak of hostilities on August 4<sup>th</sup> , he was among the first enlisted soldiers to be sent to France. He would have been about 20 years old at this time.

He reached the rank of sergeant with the Royal Army Medical Corps, and was proud in later life to have earned the intended insult Old Contemptible, from Kaiser Wilhelm 2<sup>nd</sup> of Germany, as he had dubbed the British Expeditionary Force who had had the temerity to confront him, after the invasion of Belgium.

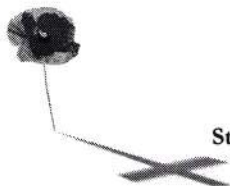
Horace served throughout the entire conflict, and had a scar either side of one arm where a Mauser bullet had passed clean through. He was among the troops who took part in the 1914 Retreat from Mons to the River Marne after the disastrous Battle of Mons for which he was given the Mons Star. The retreat took about a week with troops marching the whole time with virtually no rest.

Men took turns propping each other up as they moved, with the perhaps unfounded rumour of any stragglers being bayoneted by the following Germans spurring them on. I am not quite sure which engagements Horace too part in after this, though he remained in the army after the armistice in 1918, when he and his growing family moved to, and settled in Lucknow, in what was then British India, where he remained until sometime in 1935.

I only have vague memories of him as he died when I was six, but my father told me the Great War transformed him into a staunch socialist after having seen what happens when the world is suddenly not big enough for several capitalistic national giants.

I hope you find this story interesting, and the fact that I am currently writing a novel set in WW1 entitled Angels in the Mist, which you are welcome to read if you so wish. I have already had one book published.

**Alan Watts**



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## THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories

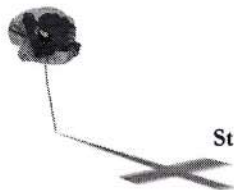
GOWLLAND, Edward Lake 1876-1942

He was a G.P. in Faversham before he started his war service as a gunner. He was a Major in the T.A. commanding the Kent Heavy Battery and Ammunition Column.

In 1915 he transferred to the R.A.M.C. He commanded the County of London Field Ambulance and promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel. He was awarded the D.S.O. and was twice mentioned in dispatches.

In 1924 he was appointed the first Commandant of the Royal Star and Garter Home at Richmond. There he was enabled to specialise in war-related conditions and did much original work in the rehabilitation of soldiers injured in the war.

R. Milton Thompson née Gowlland



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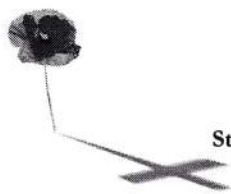
## THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories

My great-uncle William Laws served with the Royal Army Service Corps . He drowned on the Royal Edward at Gallipoli on 13th August 1915 aged 47.

Family information leads us to believe he was an itinerant or "a gentleman of the road", with no settled home and maybe it was this situation which led him to enlist/volunteer at the age of 47 - at least he would be guaranteed shelter and food.

His name is on the Helles Memorial located on the tip of the Gallipoli Peninsular and also on the Otford War Memorial and we, his family, proudly remember him and the ultimate sacrifice he made.

Hilary Curtis



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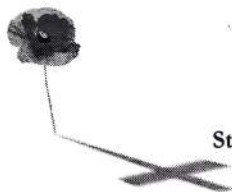
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## THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories

Both my grandfathers served in WW1. My father's father was an ambulance soldier, and was awarded a military OBE for his efforts. My mother's father started in a cavalry regiment which changed to tanks, and was recommended for a Military Cross.

Both my grandfathers survived the war intact - physically anyway. Unfortunately both died before I was old enough to learn more.

Paul Thompson.



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## THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories



Gilbert Bassett

My granddad was Gilbert Bassett and he lived at Bassett's Garage, Seal with his wife, Minnie and their 5 children. In WW1 he was a gunner/observer with 62<sup>nd</sup> Squadron in the RFC. He had several missions over France and one such mission he noted in his diary as follows:

'On June 14<sup>th</sup> I was detailed for another bus but it did not go so stood by again on the 15<sup>th</sup> and then the weather turned dud, but eventually we make a start on the 16<sup>th</sup> with Captain Buck as pilot, but he can't fly a "Handley Page" and it is too windy for my liking and he can't keep her on an even keel. Anyway we got to Marques all safe in 35 minutes after a hell of a bumpy landing in which he almost threw us out of the bus. When we got there we found two more ready to go to Dunkirk and we all started away together and arrived there in 25 minutes with a much better landing too.



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## THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories

We go into the Sergeants` Mess for tea and the pilot comes round, picks us up in the CC`s touring car and we start back again for Marques. I might mention here that Dunkirk must be a very unhealthy place to live in as the `drome from above looked like a large plum pudding with plenty of plum in as Jerry had been over there on the nights of June 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> and dropped 240 bombs on it so you may guess it made a mess of things. In fact the door of the Sergeants` Mess was riddled with shrapnel holes and hangars and machines were blown to pieces. Now they put all the machines on the sands and just bring them up to the `drome to load up with bombs and things and then go back to the sands again and wait for going out at night. Nobody sleeps on the `drome either now. They all go out and the place is left only for the cats and dogs at night.'

On another occasion my granddad was reported missing and all his belongings were returned to his wife, Minnie, as he was presumed dead but he then turned up in a hospital in Folkestone. No one seemed to know how he got there and it always remained a mystery. My granddad was one of the lucky ones and was able to return home to his loving family.

Angela Vicars



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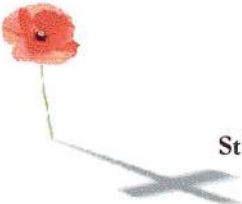
## THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories



Ann Bassett

My great grandmother was Ann Bassett and she lived at 27 Church Street, Seal. During WW1 she made more than 100 shirts for the soldiers and at the end of the war was presented with a basket of flowers for all her hard work. She was a fine needle woman and in Sevenoaks Library Museum is displayed a christening robe she made which passed down the family and 34 babies including myself, brother, sister and cousins all had the honour of wearing at our christening. When she died at the age of 98 in 1933 it was reported that she was Seal's oldest inhabitant.

Angela Vicars



St Peter and St Paul's Church, Seal, Kent

## THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories

James Coates Born Colne, Lancs  
June 30<sup>th</sup> 1885  
enlisted East Lancashire Regt.  
early Sept 1914  
Killed on the Somme July 1916.

George Coates Born Colne, Lancs.  
February 18<sup>th</sup> 1890.  
enlisted Lancashire Fusiliers.  
Sept 3<sup>rd</sup> 1914  
Died Colne, Lancs. 15<sup>th</sup> March.  
1952.

"Uncles we never knew, remembered  
only by a faded photograph and  
medal ribbons wrapped in tissue  
paper"



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## THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories

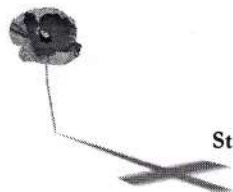
Maud Foss 21 Feb 1883 - Jan 1965

Clara Firth

Was left with ~~2~~<sup>two</sup> small babies as her husband went to fight in the war. The second baby was my Grand-mother, Marjorie, now 101 years old!

Clara was helped enormously by her own mother, Rachel Amelia Brook.

Rachel was glamorous, loved dancing, and had 'lots of shoes and feather boas' according to Granny! She lived in Huddersfield, Yorkshire and was an expert cigar-maker.



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My Stables - the strongest  
woman I know.

### THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories

My Great Grandmother  
May Stables.

May met her husband  
Stanley Cornelly at the local  
dance. She was 20, he 21  
and they became engaged.  
Stanley went to war the day  
after they were married in  
1917(?) They were married at  
Nottingham Cathedral and given  
a Carriage clock by the Mayor  
(Stanley was his ~~best~~ man)  
When Stanley came home at the  
end of the war he was  
weak from the trenches.

He developed pneumonia  
and died.

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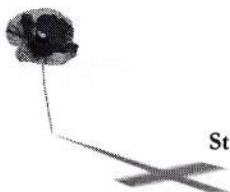
My Great Grandmother went into marriage  
twice. She and lost a son to  
war. She survived her husbands.

## THE LONG SHADOW: WW1 Stories

My Great-Great Grandad, Arthur Day,  
was in WW1.

He was about 17/18 years old.

Olivia – Woodpeckers class,  
Seal School



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