

# Brecon Remembers ...

## World War One

### The Men Who Died



Researched and recorded by members of the Brecon University of the Third Age

Brecon U3A registered charity number:1074288.

**BRECON**  
**U3A**

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

Brecon U3a Registered Charity no. 107428

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The content as it appears here is simply a collation of information available from the period. There are inevitably errors and omissions because of the way the information was collected at the time. It is,

therefore, merely a starting point for further research; facts should be verified from primary sources, such as medal rolls and enlistment papers.

Researching the past is a process which grows and develops as time passes when new sources of information come to light. Consequently, the information in this book at the time of publication may be incomplete. We must apologise therefore, if information has been missed by us or comes to light at a later stage.

Our web site will provide a way to add new information or expand what is included at this stage.

The web site address is:

<http://www.breconremembers.co.uk>

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## **INTRODUCTION AND U3A GROUP MEMBERSHIP**

The Family History Group of the Brecon U3A undertook a project to commemorate the centenary of the commencement of World War One, but in choosing the topic they wished it to be both meaningful and useful.

The choice was to try and provide a brief biography of all the Brecon men who fell in World War One, as listed on the town's memorial. This was seen as not only a presentation topic, but also the opportunity to provide a useful outcome through the production of this book, and a subsequent website.

Prior to this there was little detail readily available and the memorial itself only gives initials and surnames, which after one hundred years is not very useful to researchers, let alone family members and others.

The details gathered and produced within this book have been shared with local churches, schools and museums to enhance the process of remembrance, and it is also hoped the book will provide a basic insight into the social and military history of the individuals and their times.

The project was undertaken by a team, giving an opportunity to work together and learn from each other as well as discovering new or different ideas on research and presentation skills that may be required.

During the project, we soon realised the subject matter was worthy of more than our original intent of a presentation and the decision to publish was agreed. Also, as we progressed, we found that there were men with Brecon town connections who, for one reason or another, were not listed on the memorial. Endeavours have therefore been made to include as many men in the research as possible, although we recognise that there may still be errors and omissions.

We subsequently agreed to develop a website where this information could also be accessed, along with additional detail that may become available. The website would also allow the project to remain open and for corrections or additions to be included after the initial publication.

We have talked with and met many relatives of individuals on our list and have been careful to explain our motives and methods, whilst being grateful for the support and help from these people and others. We have also had discussions with other groups and individuals carrying out similar research and learnt lessons and shared ideas.

The project has attempted to be diligent in the research using verifiable sources, local newspapers and relative's submissions wherever possible.

The group comprised the nine individuals listed below:

**Helen Brooker**

**Margaret Davies**

**Rosemary Dean**

**Bruce Hosie**

**Pam Hussin**

**Steve Morris**

**Barbara Westerbury**

**Pat Wilbud**

**Sheila Williams**

Significant support was also received from other U3A members:

**Jean Hosie**

**Mike Ingram**

**Trevor Jones**

**David Mitchell**

**Myra Morris**

**Elaine Starling**

We would also like to thank the enormous number of people who provided information, support, guidance and encouragement without whom this project could not have been carried out.





## A TIME OF CRISIS

(An extract from the Brecon & Radnor Express, August 6th, 1914)

As we write, the whole Nation is awaiting news of what the next few hours will bring forth. The terrible calamity that has come upon the people of Britain without any action on their part has been staggering; and even now the seriousness of a European War is not realised by the masses of the population. The events that led up to the conflagration are well known; how that the recent assassination in Serbia caused drastic action on the part of aggrieved Austria, how Russia stepped in to support the weaker State, and how Germany without declaration of War poured her Army over the French frontier, violating the neutrality of Luxemburg, and forcing on Belgium an ultimatum because that country has refused passage of troops. Truly a mailed-fist movement without parallel in the rest of the World.

This is not the time to forecast the horrors of war and the scarcity of foodstuffs which may arise. Our Colonies have nobly come to our aid. If the area of sea warfare can be confined to European waters there is ample supply of food which Canada and the States would rush into England immediately. A practical move as indicating the solidarity of Britain; the spirit of our forefathers rising above party strife and above the aims and opinions of this generation is that of inviting the leaders of all parties to join the Government and form a Coalition; a coalition bringing together the best brains in the Nation. Britain has shown at this time of crisis a front

which has probably surpassed the World, and a unity which spells victory whatever be the odds to be faced. That the position be serious cannot be gainsaid; but Germany is fighting on her Russian and French frontiers, and on the Baltic. She is practically surrounded by War and the end cannot be long delayed. England has been forced to take protection by the action of Germany not to observe the neutrality of Belgium, and there must be calm preparation and a united front presented by the nation to preserve her place as mistress of the seas. England has answered the call of a weaker sister. Within our gates there must be consideration for the poor in spirit of Him who said 'The poor ye have with you always.' Unless the poor are considered now the results will be appalling. England has shown a united front politically and diplomatically; she must show a unity by bearing the general burden of the masses ....

... A small matter has set Europe aflame, and the blaze must be kept out of our Islands; at any rate until we are forced to attack in self-defence. There is no time, and will be no time, for dealing with results, and the Government must look to the causes which are likely to give rise to internal strife.

We are a great nation, having great traditions, and holding great possessions. We have a great task in front of us, but the God of our fathers is still the God 'of their succeeding race.'

## THE CAUSES OF WW1 - 2014 REVIEW

During the latter half of the 19th century, the German economy enjoyed enormous expansion. This rapid growth led German industrialists such as Krupps to demand an overseas Empire, which Kaiser Wilhelm II enthusiastically embraced and began Naval and Empire building. This was viewed with alarm by Great Britain and France.

In the late 19th century, the rivalry between the three industrial powers of Britain, France and Germany for control of markets and cheap resources led to a scramble for colonies in Africa and Asia. This drew these Powers into competition for strategic sea routes and led them to become involved in the Balkans. At this time there were four Empires - the Turkish Ottoman, by now the 'Sick man of Europe', Austria-Hungary, Russia and the largest, Great Britain.

In June 1900 Germany announced that its Naval build up would expand over the next 20 years to create one of the largest fleets in the world. In March 1903 Britain announced the building of a new naval base at Firth of Forth on the east coast of Scotland, significantly only 560 miles across the North Sea. In February 1906, Great Britain launched *HMS Dreadnought*, the most powerful warship in the World.

Russia had been a very poor country. However, from 1890, it was rapidly expanding its industries and wanted to extend its influence in the Balkans, as she felt like a 'prisoner in the Black Sea'.

The rivalry between the European Nations led to an entangling alliance system. The League of the Three Emperors of 1873, between Austria- Hungary, Russia and Germany split into an alliance between Russia and Austria-Hungary which was subsequently replaced by the Dual Alliance between Germany and Austria.

Tensions had been building between Austria and Serbia and when the Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated by a Serbian student in Bosnia, it was believed that the Serbian Secret Army had assisted with weapons and forged papers. Austria made a series of humiliating demands on Serbia and finally a month later Austria gave Serbia 48 hours to reply.

The ultimatum by Vienna was like a thunderbolt to the Chancelleries of Europe as it had widely been believed that Vienna would seek a settlement by arbitration or negotiation. Austria declared war on Serbia on 28th July 1914. Other European countries began to mobilize troops. Britain strived to avert a War in Europe and made several proposals for mediation which were overtaken by events. The Kaiser, who was at first conciliatory suddenly took offence at what he saw as 'British insolence' in making the proposals. On the 4th August Germany invaded Belgium and Britain declared war on Germany.





Photograph with permission of the Brecon Museum

## BRECON A BRIEF HISTORY

(An edited extract courtesy of Brecon Town Council, with acknowledgement to Sister Bonaventure Kelleher)

The lovely old market town of Brecon nestles in the shadow of the majestic Beacons at the confluence of the Rivers Usk and Honddu, the latter providing the town's Welsh name, ABERHONDDU.

The prelude to the history of the town itself can be of interest to visitors, because this area of Breconshire is generally regarded as one of the most historic locations of settlements in Wales. For example, on the perimeter of the present town, at Slwch Tump and Pen-y-Crug, are the remains of Iron Age forts, ..... Farther west, at Y Gaer, are the remains of an 8 acre Roman fort, built to house a garrison of 500 cavalry, in about AD 80. This site can be visited, and exhibits of excavation materials are on display in Brecknock Museum and Art Gallery.

The name of our town, Brecon, is traced by scholars from legendary fifth century Brychan through Latinised spelling such as Breconia to Anglo-French Brecon. And that is the key to understanding much about the origin of the town, developing gradually after victory by the Norman Bernard de Neufmarche at the end of the 11th century. Dominated by the Castle, which was also the administrative centre, Brecon gradually took the form of a fairly typical Norman walled town. Oval in outline, on the narrow level ground between

the hills, there were gates at strategic points. The outline can still be traced on the current town map, and visitors can see the evidence at the Castle and along the wall site at the Captain's Walk.

Situated in the March borderland between Wales and England, Brecon is steeped in history. The town was granted its borough charter in 1276 by Humphrey de Bohun, Earl of Hereford and Essex, Constable of England and Lord of Brecknock. In 1411, the Borough of Brecknock received a Charter from King Henry IV, who was already Lord of Brecknock through his marriage to Mary de Bohun.

By the middle of the 16th century, Brecon had become one of the most important towns in Wales because of its position on the main route across Southern Wales from London to the coast. It was named in the Act of Union in 1536 as one of four local capitals for Wales. Later, in 1542, Henry VIII set up a Chancery here and installed an Exchequer in the Castle.

Brecon's first Royal Charter was granted by Philip and Mary in 1556, and is seen as important and influential for many years in the political and commercial life of the borough. Reminders of the developments during Tudor, Elizabethan and subsequent periods can be seen in Buckingham House and Havard House (1556) in Glamorgan Street, at Newtown (1582), and in the date 1589 above a shop in the Bulwark. The Guildhall site (1624, noted below) signified the movement of power away from the Castle to the Town.



Brecon's strategic position was important in the turbulent years before the Civil War, and King Charles visited the town in quest of support in 1645. Staying overnight at Priory House, he wrote the letter to his eldest son, advising that he should, in ultimate necessity, convey himself into France. The cobbled King's Steps in The Struet mark his route of exit to Gwernyfed. By the end of the war, the Town's defence walls had been partially dismantled by the citizens.

By the early 18th century, Brecon was developing into one of the leading towns in Wales, ranking with Carmarthen and Caernarvon. Together with its long ecclesiastical and military influence, it was now an important administrative centre. It was an Assize town, the location for Quarter Sessions and twice-yearly Grant Sessions, then held at the Guildhall. Brecon, as the county town and Parliamentary Borough, was an evolving social organism. The first direct commercial coach route from London into Wales was announced in September 1756. The terminus of this 44 hour journey via Oxford, Gloucester and Monmouth was the Golden Lion Inn at Brecon, the site of the present Bethel Square. Other inns such as The George, The Bell and later The Castle provided accommodation for the early stages of tourism.

Fine Georgian-style houses in the High Street, Glamorgan Street, Lion Street and the Bulwark, The Struet and The Watton are evidence of prosperity to which a military presence and commercial interests contributed. A covered market building and a busy canal encouraged trade. Both

today are visitor attractions, but little trace remains now of the network of railway development. The gentry, whose fine houses ringed the town, regarded Brecon as a social centre for balls, play-going, and latterly, horse racing.

Some evidence for the 19th century phase of fine Chapel buildings is still clear today, particularly in Lion Street and Kensington, though Bethel Chapel and the Dr Coke Methodist Chapel in Lion Street have been converted for commercial purposes.

This outline gives a view of Brecon's varied and interesting past.

## PARISH MEMORIAL RECORDS

NAMES FROM ST JOHN'S, ST MARY'S, AND ST DAVID'S

Brecon Men recorded on the town memorials for the parishes of St Mary, St John and St David

There are some discrepancies between initials or spellings in a few cases but this is our best understanding of the men associated with the memorials. Some of the names printed on the memorial do not exactly match the names of those we have researched. We assume that the names there are based on local use at the time, whereas we have generally used names from published records.



**Private Arthur Waters Barrett**

Australian Infantry AIF 23rd Battalion, service no. 1668  
Killed in action at Pozieres, Somme, France 29th July, 1916  
aged 24

Commemorated on the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial,  
Somme, Picardie, France

Arthur was born in 1893 and baptised on Palm Sunday, June 4th, son of Thomas James Barratt and his wife Mary Anne. His father was a butcher and the family lived at 21, The Struet, Brecon. Mary Anne died a few months after Arthur's birth, her fourth child.

In 1901 Arthur is living with his maternal Grandparents at Coed Farm, Llandefaelog Fach, whilst his father and the rest of the family were living at St David Street, Brecon with their maternal Aunt, Sarah Waters, with Thomas now a milk vendor.

By the time he is 19, Arthur is living and working in Abercynon, as an assistant draper in Thomas George's Emporium, but by 1914 he has decided to emigrate to Australia and travels from London (Tilbury), to Melbourne in October of that year. He is listed as a farm student on the passenger list on the ship *Indrapura*.

In 1915 he is living in Melbourne with his Uncle Edwin and working as a book-keeper. He enlists in the army in May 1915 and later that Summer he leaves Australia, probably for Gallipoli, before arriving in France in March 1916. The

battalion moved to the Western Front, occupying the forward positions around Armentieres in northern France on 10 April 1916. In mid-July, the battalion was transferred to the Somme where they subsequently took part in the battles of Pozieres and Mouquet Farm, during which they suffered almost 90 per cent casualties. Arthur is initially listed as missing before finally being confirmed as killed in action.

The memorial plaque in the Brecon Cathedral lists an address for Arthur and one of his brothers as The Griffin, in The Struet. It is here that his father was living at the time, having moved from St David Street, via 12, The Postern.

It is from this address that Arthur's father Thomas writes for news of his son in March 1918, having not heard anything since he went missing in July 1916. He receives his reply a few days later, confirming, via witness accounts, the death of his son. Arthur had apparently joined the machine gun section and soon after going over the top at Pozieres at 00.30 am, he was hit by a shell and his body was never recovered.

**Gunner Percy Thomas Bate**

Royal Field Artillery, 44th Brigade, service no. 75834

Died of wounds in France on 27th September, 1914, aged 18

Buried in the Vendresse British Cemetery in Aisne, France

(also commemorated in St David's Churchyard on his  
parents' gravestone)

Percy Bate's parents were both born in Shropshire. Richard was born in St Chad's, Shrewsbury, in 1856, and Martha in Hedgement, Salop, in 1857. Richard married Martha Tipton in 1878 in Atcham, Shropshire. They continued to live in Shropshire and their first two children were born in Ludlow St Lawrence, William in 1881 and Elizabeth in 1886.

By 1888 they had moved to Wales and were living in Brecon, having had three further children Ernest (1888), Alice (1892) and Percy (1897), all born in St Davids, Brecon.

In 1901 they are shown as living at 50, Newton Green, Llanfaes, Brecon, with their 5 children. Richard is a tinsmith and eldest son William is an engine cleaner.

By 1911 the family are still living in Newton Green but the four elder children are no longer at home and Percy, 14 is living with his parents, as well as Martha's brother William Tipton, 41, a stoker, and his son Edward, 21 a general labourer. Richard is now a boot maker. Richard and Martha record that at this time they have had 10 children, of whom 5 died.

Percy enlisted in Merthyr and joined the Royal Horse Artillery and Royal Field Artillery and became a gunner. The 44th Brigade went to France as part of the British Expeditionary Force and saw considerable action in the Retreat from Mons in August, as well as the Marne and the Aisne in September 1914. Percy was wounded at the front and subsequently died in hospital in France.



**Private Charles Edward Bather**

South Wales Borderers 4th Battalion, service no. 27745

Killed in action April 30th, 1917, aged 21

Commemorated at Basra War Memorial, Iraq

Charles was born to John Morris Bather and his wife Annie (nee Rees) in 1896 in Lower Sydenham, Kent, although the town was later included within the borough of Lewisham.

Charles's father John had been born in Brecon in 1860 and lived at 60, Orchard Street, Llanfaes. his family moving to 71, Heol Rhydd, St Mary's, Brecon by 1871. By the time he is 21, John is boarding in Ystradyfodwg and working as a gas fitter. He later meets Annie Rees from Tredegar and they get married in Lewisham in 1885 and live there for a number of years, having five children, with Charles being the youngest.

Most of the family move back to Brecon and are living at 73, The Struet in 1911, although unfortunately, John had died in 1908. Charles is 15 and working as a boot and shoe errand boy at the time. Also at the house at the census date was Charles Richard George Phillips, listed as a visitor, who was 14 years old and working as a grocery errand boy. (Charles Phillips is reported separately<sup>1</sup>). Brothers Fred and Ben were boarding in London in 1911, both working as gas fitters.

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<sup>1</sup> See page 278

By 1914, Charles is working as an apprentice in the blacksmith trade at Messrs Rich and son, having previously been an apprentice with Mr. Sam Garratt at his Boot Factory. He enlisted in Brecon and first went overseas on 3rd July 1915. He initially joined the South Wales Borderers before transferring to the Devon Regiment and later back to the Borderers.

He served in a number of campaigns before falling in Mesopotamia on April 30th, 1917. He was part of a big attack that took place on that date and four other Brecon men lost their lives on the same battlefield, Private William John Jenkins<sup>2</sup>, Private William Edwin Morgan<sup>3</sup>, and Lieutenant Stephen Best<sup>4</sup> who are also featured in this book. A sixth Brecon man was reported as killed, but this later proved to be erroneous although he was taken prisoner by the Turks

Charles' brother Benjamin also lost his life in the war, whilst eldest brother Fred survived, despite suffering severe burns to the face and arms whilst serving in France. (Benjamin's story features separately in this book<sup>5</sup>).

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<sup>2</sup> See page 95

<sup>3</sup> See page 127

<sup>4</sup> See page 27

<sup>5</sup> See page 223

**Lieutenant Arthur Stephen Middleton Best**

Royal Engineers 71st Field Company

Killed in Action in Mesopotamia on February 23rd, 1917

aged 32

Buried at Amara War Cemetery



Arthur Best was born in London on May 25th, 1885, the second son of Charles and Julia Best, and was a day boy at Christ College between 1897 and 1901. His father was the county surveyor and former Mayor of Brecon (1904).

Arthur left school to undertake engineering work with his father, and then undertook a course at the Central Technical College leading to a diploma and then a B.Sc. for Engineering from the University of London. For some time, he assisted his father in the work of County Surveyor for Breconshire, and early in 1913 he left Britain to take up an appointment as assistant engineer in the Public Works Department of the Federated Malay States which he liked and was successful at.

However, in early 1915 he returned to England at his own expense to volunteer for service in the war. He received a commission as second lieutenant in the Royal Engineers, Welsh Division in April 1915 and was promoted lieutenant in

the November. He was stationed at Abergavenny and afterwards Llandudno where he commanded a company for a short time, and then volunteered for service in the East and arrived there in October 1916.

He was wounded in December 1916, but returned to duty in January 1917.

Arthur and his two brothers, Stephen and Frank, were serving in the same campaign and he met them unexpectedly at Bombay on his way out from home and there was a happy reunion of the brothers on Christmas day 1916. Arthur was killed in action on February 23rd, 1917, probably in the battles leading up to the capture of Baghdad in early March.

He died just ten days after his younger brother Frank and only nine weeks before younger brother Stephen.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> See next two records

### **Lieutenant Frank Harrington Best**

South Wales Borderers, Brecknock Battalion

Killed in Action in Mesopotamia on February 13th, 1917

aged 22

Commemorated at Basra War Memorial, Iraq



Frank was born in Brecon on June 24th, 1894 the fourth and youngest son of Charles and Julia Best. During a successful school career at Christ College between 1904 and 1910 he was described as a universal favourite; wholly irresponsible but most charming, with the gift of friendship.

Frank was making a promising start in engineering having passed the Intermediate examination for the B.Sc. in Engineering at the University of London in July 1914.

He was gazetted to the 1st Brecknockshire Battalion as a second lieutenant on August 16th, 1914 and posted to the Cefn-Coed Company, staying with them practically throughout his time with the Brecknocks.

He went with the Battalion to Aden, and went on to Mhow in India with the Brecknocks in 1915 and was promoted to temporary lieutenant on December 16th, 1915. In early 1917 Frank, with his brother Stephen, led a draft of 140 volunteers

to join the 4th Battalion, South Wales Borderers, in Mesopotamia, arriving on February 7th, 1917.

Just two days later, they were involved in a large attack on Turkish forces. Initially held as reserves, they subsequently joined the fighting on February 13th, and Frank was killed in action that day.

Ten days before, his brother Arthur had died, and his brother Stephen died later in April<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> See previous and next records

### **Lieutenant Stephen Wriothsley Best**

South Wales Borderers, Brecknock Battalion

Killed in Action in Mesopotamia on April 30th, 1917, aged  
28

Commemorated at the Basra War Memorial, Iraq



Stephen was born on January 16th, 1889 in Brecon, being the third eldest son of Charles and Julia Best. At school in Christ College between 1900 and 1906 he was quiet and steady, and won respect and affection. After school he secured a good Civil Service appointment in Edinburgh, then in 1912 started studying law at Edinburgh University, joining their Officer Training Corps in 1913. In

August 1914, Stephen returned to Brecon, becoming an officer cadet in the Brecknocks and gazetted as second lieutenant in October 1914, alongside his brother Frank. They served together in Aden, India and Mesopotamia and were not long divided in death.

Having fought with the Brecknocks in Aden, Stephen went with them to Mhow in India in 1915. He was made lieutenant in August 1916.

In early 1917, Stephen, his brother Frank and about 140 men left to join the 4th Battalion, South Wales Borderers in Mesopotamia; Frank died in February but Stephen fought in numerous battles.

On the day he died, the 4th Battalion, alongside the Cheshires, took part in an attack on Turkish forces but lack of communication led to Stephen and his men being cut off. They continued to fight and attempted to capture an enemy battery, but were eventually overwhelmed by the Turks.

Stephen fell alongside about 30 other men.

Extracts from a letter of May 1917, from Lieutenant Colonel C E Kitchen commanding the South Wales Borderers in Mesopotamia, can be read with interest:

*'I must take the opportunity of telling you how splendid the men of the Brecknocks who have been attached to us have done in all the fighting ..... the death of both the Bests ... was a very sad blow. Stephen Best and [others] were both killed in the last fight we had. Stephen had apparently captured some Turkish guns, which unfortunately, through no fault of the Regiment, were retaken by the enemy. His body, together with those of 30 men, were found round the guns, and there was ample evidence that they made the Turks pay dearly.'*



Stephen became the third member of this family to fall in this country within the short space of three months<sup>8</sup>



**Frank, Arthur and Stephen Best. December 1916**

The reproduction of this photograph, and others, is with the kind permission of Christ College, Brecon

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<sup>8</sup> See previous two records

**Lance Corporal John Bevan**

Monmouthshire Regiment 1st/2nd Battalion, service no.  
267423

Died of wounds in France on June 4th, 1918, aged 20  
Buried at Ebblesham Military Cemetery, Department du  
Nord, France

John was born in Brecon in 1898, one of nine children of James, a postman, and Mary Bevan of 8, Mount Street, Brecon. By 1911 the family had moved to 1, Usk Terrace, Brecon and John, now 13, is working as an errand boy.

Jack, as he was familiarly known, subsequently worked at the Castle Hotel, Brecon, The Gwalia in Llandrindod Wells and at the Royal Gatehouse, Tenby.

Jack initially joined the Brecknockshire (Reserve) Battalion on November 9th, 1914 and was transferred to the Monmouthshire Regiment (C Company), on July 30th, 1916, when he arrived in France.

He had been in France for about two years through several engagements before being wounded.

A sister at the hospital where he was treated wrote to his mother to tell them:

*'Dear Mrs Bevan,*

*I regret very much to tell you, that your son, Lance-Corpl. J. Bevan, has died in the hospital at 3.30 to-day. He was admitted there shortly after he was wounded, with a very severe wound in his chest*

*and stomach. Everything possible was done to try and save his life, but unfortunately his wounds were fatal. Your son became unconscious an hour before he died, and sank very quietly without suffering. He was visited by the Catholic Priest while he was conscious. May I express to you my sincere sympathy in this very sad loss.*

*Yours faithfully, ....., Sister.'*

Jack's elder brother James was serving with the Brecknocks in India, having been with them since the outbreak of war.

**Able Seaman William Bowen**

Royal Navy HMS Defence, service no. J/19493

Died at Sea, Battle of Jutland. May 31st, 1916

Commemorated at Plymouth Naval Memorial

William was born in Brecon in November 1895 and is living with his family in 24, Silver Street, Llanfaes, in 1901, listed as the son of William and Martha Bowen. By 1911, young William, 16, has left home and is a labourer on a farm in Carmarthenshire. At this time the family were living at 6, Maendu Street, although by the time of his death they are listed at 4, London Row, Brecon.

William joined the Royal Navy later in 1911 and in July 1914, whilst serving on the *HMS Temeraire*, he takes some unauthorised time off to return home to Brecon where he is subsequently arrested. He appeared in court and was ordered to be handed over to the Naval authorities. Punishment could not have been too severe as by 1916 he was serving as an Able Seaman aboard the *HMS Defence*. This was a Minotaur class Armoured Cruiser which was ordered in 1904/5 and then built by Pembroke Dockyard, and completed in 1909. She served in the Mediterranean at the start of the war but had returned home to become flagship of the Grand Fleet in January 1915.

*HMS Defence* was sunk on 31 May 1916, during the Battle of Jutland, the largest naval battle of the war. Escorting the main body of the Grand Fleet, the ship was fired upon by one

German battle cruiser, the *Friedrich der Grosse*, and four Dreadnoughts as she attempted to engage a disabled German light cruiser. She was struck by salvos from the German ships that detonated her rear magazine. The fire from that explosion spread to the ship's secondary magazines, which exploded in turn. All hands (approximately 900 officers and men) were lost.

**Private Ernest Butterworth**

The King's Liverpool Regiment/Labour Corps, service no.  
25005/244618

Died October 30th, 1918 at home, aged 29

Buried in St David's Churchyard, Brecon

Ernest was born in Colne, Lancashire in 1889, the son of Abraham and Sarah Butterworth. The family lived in Colne for many years before moving to nearby Nelson, by 1918. In 1911 Ernest is working as a cotton weaver, like most of his family at that time. He enlisted at Colne, initially joining the Liverpool Regiment and later transferring to the Labour Corps. Ernest married Minnie Games Jones of 1, Newmarch Street, in May 1918, in St David's Church, Brecon. Minnie wore her Land Workers' uniform, as did her bridesmaids, Misses E Talmage and E Jones.

Ernest appears to have left the army as he had recently been employed at Messrs. Harris and Williams, Timber Merchants, Brecon. He died after an illness of only one week.

A military funeral took place at St David's Church, Brecon, and a company of troops from the Barracks were in attendance. The South Wales Borderers band also attended and played in the procession and at the graveside. The usual volleys were fired and the last post sounded. Minnie and her brother were unable to attend due to illness.

Their son Ernest William was born early in 1919 in Brecon, just months after his father's death.

**Lance Corporal Charles Guest Champion**

Australian Infantry, 4th Battalion, 1st Infantry Brigade

Killed in action April, 15th, 1917 in France, aged 34

Buried at Dept. de la Somme, Picardie. Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux, France

Charles Guest Champion was born in Brecon in October 1882, the son of Thomas and Jane. Thomas was born in Ireland but settled in Brecon and was a grocer and provisions dealer, and later a commercial traveller. Jane Guest married Thomas in 1866. she was born in Westminster but had lived in The Struet, Brecon since a small child.

The family were living in High Street soon after the marriage, but had moved to The Struet by 1881. The birth of Charles and a younger sister Clara at Llanddew suggests they were living there in the early 1880s. Charles' father died in 1886, aged 46 with youngest daughter Helena born in January, 1887. The family had moved to 4, Harp Terrace by 1891 and Jane lived there for most of the rest of her life, dying in 1928, aged 84.

By 1901, Charles, at 18 years old, was still living at home, but working as a footman. He emigrated to Australia in the early 1900s and appears to have worked as a steward on the passenger ships for some years. His sister, Helena Beatrix, had also emigrated there and managed a millinery establishment. Another sister, Florence Jane, emigrated there in 1913.

Charles joined the Australian Army at Sydney in 1914, and sailed with the Australian Expeditionary Force in October that year. They initially went to Egypt, then went to Gallipoli, serving in practically the whole operation there, before returning to Egypt. He was then sent to France in April 1916. He spent a leave later that year in Brecon; at the same time his brother Frank, a sergeant major with the Royal Engineers, was also home on leave. On return to France he rejoined the battalion who were fighting on the Western Front, mainly in the Somme valley and around Ypres.

Charles was reported missing in France, in April 1917 and his death in action was confirmed later in the year.



**Private David James Charles**

Lancashire Fusiliers 1/5 Battalion, service no. 52450

Killed in Action in France on August 22nd, 1918, aged 35

Buried at Sucrierie Military Cemetery, Colincamps, The  
Somme, France

David was born in Machen, Monmouthshire, in 1883, the son of Rees and Sarah Charles, who were both born in Breconshire. By 1891, the family are living in Oswestry, where Rees is a railway inspector and David's elder brother John, 19 is a railway platelayer. The family remain in Oswestry in 1901 where David, now 18, is an ironmongers apprentice.

By 1911 David is living with his elderly parents at 4, St John's Road in Brecon and working as an ironmonger's assistant.

David enlisted at Colwyn Bay, serving firstly with the Liverpool Regiment and then the Lancashire Fusiliers.

**Lance Corporal Thomas John Clark**

South Wales Borderers 1st Battalion, service no. 8114

Killed in action in France September 26th, 1914, aged 28

Commemorated at La Ferte-Sous-Jouarre Memorial, Seine-et-Marne, France

Thomas was born in Westbury on Trym in Gloucestershire in 1886, the son of Frederick and Louisa Clark. Frederick is listed as a coachman in 1891 but by 1901 he is a bricklayer's labourer with the 14-year-old Tom shown as a gardener's assistant, and the family still living in Gloucestershire.

Tom enlisted in the army at Devonport in the 1900s. He married Edith Beatrice Williams of Brecon in 1910. They lived with his in-laws at 19, Newgate Street in Brecon in 1911 and his occupation is shown as a soldier (lance corporal).

He left for France on August 13th, 1914 and was killed in action the following month.

**Private William Henry Clarke**

South Wales Borderers 1st Battalion, service no. 11135

Killed in action in France on February 22nd, 1917, aged 20

Commemorated at the Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France

William, known as Willie, was born in Battle, Breconshire, in 1896, the son of Samuel and Elizabeth Clarke. Whilst the family had previously lived at Penoyre Lodge, with Samuel working as a cowman, by 1901 they were at number 2, The Cottages, Llanspyddid, with Samuel now a gardener. Young Willie, 15 has left home by 1911 and is working as a cowboy on Llwyncynog farm in Llandefalle, whilst his parents and sister Minnie have moved to 22, Newgate Street, Llanfaes. Willie went on to work for Messrs. Tyler and Son, builders, of Brecon and was well known in the town.

He enlisted at Manchester, joining the South Wales Borderers. He had been at the front in France on three occasions, having been wounded once before being killed in action in 1917, aged just 20.

### **Lance Sergeant William Thomas Clifford**

South Wales Borderers. 1st Battalion, service no .7975

Killed in action in France on September 18th, 1914, aged 21

Commemorated at La Ferte-Sous-Jouarre Memorial, Seine-et-Marne, France



William was born in St Mary's, Cheltenham in 1886 to Henry and Ann Clifford. The family came to Brecon around 1893 and William attended Mount Street school. By 1901 they are living at 45, High Street, where William works as an apprentice to his father as manager of Eastman's butcher shop.

At seventeen years old, he joined the 2nd Battalion of the 24th Regiment at Brecon Barracks, during the South Africa campaign. He was sent to the Cape but was not in any fighting in South Africa. He contracted enteric fever and was very ill, but through careful nursing at the military hospital at Bloemfontein, he recovered well. In 1908, he was at the depot as a corporal for a tour of duty. When he was in Brecon, Lance Sergeant Clifford was very popular and was a groom to Major Walker who spoke highly of him.

He left the colours in 1911 and took a job as coal picker in Ystradgynlais, living there with his brother Richard and

family. He married Daisy Olive Dugdale in 1912 and she is listed on his military records. She later married again and lived in Swansea.

On August 5th, 1914, he was called to rejoin the army and proceeded with the British Expeditionary Force to France, under General Grierson. He was in several engagements including Mons before receiving his fatal injury, when he was shot through the lungs and died shortly afterwards. He was buried by a comrade who had been at school with him, who was subsequently taken prisoner by the Germans the next day.

**Private Percy Alexander Coombe**

1st Brecknock Battalion, South Wales Borderers, service no.  
1781

Killed in action July 4th, 1915, aged 20

Buried near Aden; Commemorated Heliopolis (Aden)  
Memorial



Percy was born in Exeter, Devon, about 1895, and was the son of John and Ellen Elizabeth Coombe. The 1901 Census shows the family living in Swansea, South Wales, where his father was a gas fitter. Later they moved to 10 Dainter Street, Brecon, where the family, with eight other children, are shown on the 1911 Census, with Percy age 16 years working as an errand boy. His parents later moved to 2, North Road, Brecon.

Percy joined the South Wales Borderers, Brecknockshire Battalion, and served as a private. He went with the Brecknocks to Aden and apparently arriving there on July

3rd, 1915, and was one of a number of the battalion to die the next day (see separate account)<sup>9</sup>.

He is buried near Aden and remembered on the Heliopolis (Aden) Memorial, Egypt.

Percy's father and two brothers also served in the war. In 1915, his father John, a much decorated veteran served as Hospital Sergeant in Milford Haven, older brother Frank was also in Aden, whilst the younger William was a bugler with the Reserve Battalion in Milford Haven.

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<sup>9</sup> See page 216

### **Private Ernest Cripps**

Grenadier Guards. 2nd Battalion, service no. 16250

Killed in Action October 11th 1915, aged 21

Buried at St Mary's A.D.S Cemetery, Haisnes, France



Ernest was born to George and Elizabeth Ann Cripps in 1895 in Brecon. They lived at 2, Harp Terrace and his father was a railway guard.

Harp Terrace must have been used for the railway workers, as in the census, the main occupations for the families seem to be to do with the railway.

In the 1911 Census, there are seven children in the family; Ernest was 16 and he had a brother Harold who was 12. Harold also joined up later in the war and survived. Ernest went to Mount Street School and at 16 and still at school.

He went out with the first Expeditionary Force in August 1914 and fought with the Guards throughout most of the major battles, including Mons and Ypres.

In April 1915, the local paper reported the Grenadiers went out 1200 strong, and of that number only 50 survived. Ernest had been home on leave a few weeks before his death and was reported as in good health and spirit.



**Private David Dacey**

Monmouthshire Regiment. 1st/ 2nd Battalion, service no.  
267449

Died in Action on April 24th 1918, aged 37  
Commemorated in La Kruele Military Cemetery,  
Hazebroucke, France

David Dacey was born in 1880 in Brecon, the son of Cornelius and Ann Dacey, living at 4, Honddu View, Kensington. By 1901 he is married to Alma and they have one son, also David, born in 1900. The young family are living at 2, Avenue Court with his parents. His occupation was plasterer and mason and he worked for John Griffiths of Brecon. By 1911 he had moved to 10, Maendu Street with his wife and 6 children.

He volunteered to join the Brecknocks, Territorial Force of the South Wales Borderers, on January 1st 1915, and on enlisting, he was stationed at Bedford where he was appointed lance corporal on September 20th 1915. He transferred to the Monmouthshire Regiment on July 30th 1916 and embarked for France, where he remained until a period of leave in October 1917, before returning to the French trenches. David saw action in Ypres, Arras, Bapaume, Poperinghe and Hazebroucke.

In a letter to the family on April 29th, Chaplain Hunkin advised that he had recently been in heavy fighting, where his regiment suffered heavy losses but David came out

untouched. However, on the night of April 24th, he died suddenly in camp from an internal haemorrhage.

He left a widow and nine children, living at 10, Maendu Street. David was well known in town as a former rugby player and a member of the Ancient Order of Buffaloes. A memorial service was held in the Mission Church in Brecon.

**Private Charles Davies**

South Wales Borderers. Brecknock Battalion, service no.  
3600

Died August 3rd, 1916 in Mhow, India, aged 24  
Buried at Mhow New Cemetery, Mhow, India

Charles, known as Bowie, was born in Brecon in 1892, a fourth son to David, a stonemason, and Jane (nee Griffiths), who lived at 3, Rock and Castle, Brecon. The family were still living there in 1911 when Charles, 19, was listed as a labourer.

Later, Charles married Margaret and they had one child. They lived at King Street, The Struet, Brecon and he was a plasterer and a member of The Watton Presbyterian Church.

Charles joined the Brecknock Battalion of the South Wales Borderers in April 1916 and went out with the first of the married groups and was in the last draft that went to India to join the Brecknocks. In the official notification from the War Office it was stated he died from ulcerative enteritis.

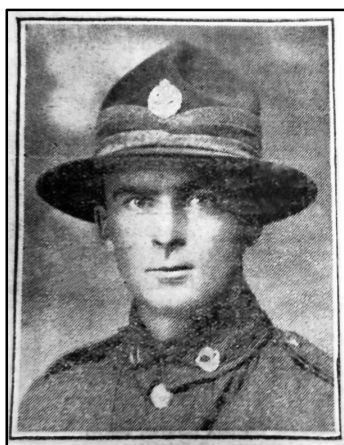
Margaret, his widow, was granted a midwifery scholarship of £25 by the County Council later in 1916.

### **Private David Stanley Davies**

Otago Infantry Regiment(NZEF}, service no. 8/4444

Killed in Action in France on February 12th, 1917, aged 26

Buried at Ration Farm Military Cemetery, La Chapelle-  
S'Armentiere, France



David Stanley Davies was born in 1890, to William, and Margaret, the daughter of an innkeeper. William had worked with his own father, Thomas, at Bailyhelig Farm before marriage. Afterwards, William lived with his wife at the Bell Inn, Brecon. William continued to work on the farm but the family lived at the Bell Inn in 1891. By 1901, they are still at the Bell, William is now innkeeper, and Stanley, 11 is with his parents and 5 siblings. Stanley went to Brecon County School and later to Aberystwyth (agricultural studies), boarding there in 1911. His parents moved to Bailyhelig with William as farmer. Stanley emigrated to New Zealand in about 1914, and joined the army in 1915. He was a private in the First Otago Battalion, New Zealand Forces. He died in action in France in February, 1917, when he was killed instantaneously by a shell. The family were living at 16, The Watton, Brecon then, and Stanley is commemorated at St Mary's Church and Kensington Baptist Church.

### **Second Lieutenant Ivor G Davies**

Duke of Edinburgh's (Wiltshire Regiment), 2nd Battalion

Killed in Action in France on August 8th, 1918, aged 24

Buried at Le Vertannoy British Cemetery, Hinges, France



Ivor was born in 1895 to David John Davies and Magdalen, (nee Moses). An only child brought up in the Green Dragon Temperance Hotel, High Street, Brecon. His parents married in 1894 when he was 35 and his wife was 39.

David was born in Llywel to a farming family. Magdalen was born in Maescar, Defynnog; her father was a tiler. By 16 in 1871, she was a general servant for the governor of the Brecon County Gaol.

Later she was in London as a head nurse/domestic to a solicitor's family and by 1891 returned to Brecon as a coffee tavern proprietor at 24, High Street, later to be the Green Dragon.

Ivor went to Mount Street School and then the County School in Brecon and later was a clerk in Barclays bank at Hay. He joined the Duke of Edinburgh's (Wiltshire Regiment) and in France was killed by a machine gun bullet as they were following up the retreating enemy.

The chaplain of the battalion wrote to his parents to advise them of the death and that their son had been buried in a little military cemetery at Le Vertounoy.

### **Lieutenant W J Davies**

Royal Field Artillery 70th Brigade

Killed in Action in France on November 5th, 1916

Buried at Warlencourt Military Cemetery, Pas de Calais,  
France



William was born in about 1877 to George and Annie Davies. The family lived in 25, Church Street, Brecon in 1881, and George worked as a drayman. By 1891, the family had moved to 1, Free Street, Brecon, which was to remain the family home for many years.

William was educated at Dr Coke's Memorial School under Mr. D Fisher. At the age of 16 years, he joined the Royal Field Artillery as a driver and completed 21 years' service in December 1914, when he was a sergeant major. He twice served in India, spending 12 years in total in that country. He had the India Frontier Medal with two bars, along with the long service medal. He volunteered for active service at the outbreak of war and was promoted to second lieutenant in December 1914 and then lieutenant and adjutant in 1915.

One of his sisters, Mrs W J G Wotton of the Kings Arms Hotel, Brecon, had previously lost her stepson, James Phillip Arthur

James of the South Wales Borderers, in action in 1914<sup>10</sup>. William had been married and although he had lost his wife in 1915, he left a boy, Willie, aged 16 and a daughter aged 6 years.

A letter from his Lieutenant Colonel advised, '*... he had been shot through the head and killed on the spot...*'

A captain later wrote to his son Willie and explained, '*... He was observing fire from their battery from a place close to the front line trench when a shrapnel bullet hit him in the forehead and killed him...*'.

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<sup>10</sup> See page 93



**Second Lieutenant William Francis Trevor Dixon**

Sherwood Foresters (Notts. and Derby) Regiment, 15th  
Battalion

Killed in Action July 20th 1916, aged 18

Commemorated at Thiepval Memorial, Picardie, France



Trevor was born in 1897, to George Hutton Dixon and his wife Gwenllian Blanche, nee Joseph, and had a brother, Donald, two years older. His father was a commercial traveller and his mother a school mistress. His father died later in 1897 and in 1901, Trevor, aged three, Donald five, and Gwenllian, a widow, lived with Grandparents, four aunts and one uncle at 100, The Struet. In 1911, they lived at 3, Usk Side Brecon. Gwenllian, still a widow, with Trevor lived with her father; her mother had died. Donald, not with the family was at Worksop College in Nottingham. He had previously attended Mount Street school in Brecon. He promoted the Scout Movement in Brecon and was instrumental in setting up the first troop in the town. He was also a keen athlete and cricketer. He was the grandson of Police Superintendent John Joseph and was well known in the town. Gwenllian remarried in 1912 to Ernest Goslin and moved with her husband to Enfield in Middlesex, where the notice of Trevor's death was sent.

He volunteered as early as he could and was commissioned in the Sherwood Foresters in 1915 and was in the front line for about three months. On July 20th he was instantaneously killed in action whilst leading his men, and giving an inspiring example of coolness under fire and devotion to duty. He had gone through the bombing course and become very proficient, and was employed as a leader of bombing parties.

Major Vickers (himself wounded) wrote to Trevor's mother:

*'It is with feelings of intense sorrow I write to acquaint you of the manner of your son's death. He was in my company, where he was beloved by his fellow officers and men of his platoon. On the 20th we were holding the line. The enemy shelled us, and had done so for several days heavily. The boy was killed instantaneously by a large piece of a shell which must have burst near to him. Your son died at his post as an officer and a brave gentleman. He was buried in the trench and a wooden cross, made as well as we were able, marks the spot.'*

Major Cochran wrote:

*'I would like you to know that your son's death was instantaneous. He was in the trenches with his platoon during a very intensive bombardment, and had been up and down and along the trench all the morning, encouraging and rallying his men; and it was while doing this that he was struck by a shell. We all miss him very much, and I personally was very much attached to him and greatly admired his pluck and cheerfulness under all conditions.'*

**Company Quartermaster Sergeant William Burt Elston**  
 King's Shropshire Light Infantry 10th Btn, service no. 230006  
 Died of Wounds in Alexandria November 6th, 1917, aged 33  
 Buried at Beersheba War Cemetery, Palestine



William was born in 1885 in Birmingham like his parents and next two siblings, Olive and John.

In 1891 he was living with his family at 45, High Street. His father, also William Burt, 30, was a butcher and his mother Mary Elizabeth, 32 was also listed as a butcher. Both of his parents came from families in the butchery trade. William was the eldest

Elston child, being 6 years old in 1891, with a sister Olive, 5 and a younger brother John, 3 and step brother Aaron, 15.

William's father died in 1900 and, by 1901 his mother, as a widow, was listed as a butcher and shopkeeper. Young William, 16 continued to live at home, with his sister Olive, 15, and new arrivals Harold, 9 and Gwladys, 4 who were both born in Brecon. Brother John, 13 is not living at home at this time but is listed as living in Birmingham and working as a butcher's apprentice, and Aaron has also left home.

William was educated at Pendre School and Brecon County School and went on to work in the family firm, being shown

as a butcher in 1911. He was a right hand man to his mother in a business that he carried out with great success, and was one of the most competent judges of cattle in the local marts. He was a sidesman at St Mary's Church and also, with other family members, arranged and took part in amateur theatrical performances in aid of local charities and was known as a humorous vocalist and actor.

He initially joined the Shropshire Yeomanry some years before the war and as a splendid horseman and smart soldier, he quickly gained promotion. On the outbreak of war, he served with the Yeomanry, later transferring to the 10th Battalion of the King's Shropshire Light Infantry, becoming company quartermaster sergeant. In early 1916, he went with his regiment to Egypt, and later Palestine, where he was wounded in fighting and died of his wounds in Alexandria hospital on November 6th, 1917, aged 33.

**Private Alfred Edward Evans**

Somerset Light Infantry C Coy. 6th Btn., service no. 9997

Died October 30th, 1918, aged 28

Buried in Brecon Cemetery, Powys, Wales

Alfred was born in 1890 to Charles and Jane Evans of 4, Market Street, Brecon. Charles is a coachman and Alfred has three older siblings. By the 1901 census, the family are still in Market Street but Alfred's brother David, aged 20, is a postman and his other brother, William Charles, 16, a carpenter. Alfred was still at school and his sister has left home.

In 1911 Albert is still single and a boarder at 44, Llanwern Street, Newport, working as a draper's assistant at the Department Store, Reynolds and Company Ltd.

Alf joined the Somerset Light Infantry as one of Kitchener's Army in 1914 and saw a great deal of heavy fighting in France with that regiment. He was discharged in April, 1916, after severe shell shock and gassing.

He was well known and was an old member of the local company of the Church Lads' Brigade. He served his apprenticeship as a draper with Messrs. Thomas and Adcock, and for some time previous to his death, was employed at Cavendish House, Cheltenham.

He died on Wednesday, October 30th, from influenza, having arrived home ill the previous week. The funeral took place at

Brecon Cemetery on Saturday, November 2nd, when the Rev. T. Aneurin Davies, Llanfigan, officiated. The Rev. D. Saunders Jones, Cantref. R.A.O.B. chaplain, also read the funeral service of that Order, Mr. Evans being a member of the Star (Cheltenham) Lodge.

Alf's brother William was serving in Palestine at the time of his death. Although his parents are associated with Market Street, they were later shown in military records as living at 22, North Road, Brecon.

**Private Frederick Evans**

Monmouthshire Regiment 1st Battalion, service no. 267451

Killed in action October 5th 1917, aged 40

Commemorated at Bethune Town Cemetery, Pas de Calais,  
France

Frederick was born in 1877 in Brecon, to Thomas and Elizabeth Evans (nee Williams). They lived at 36, Church Street, Llanfaes, Brecon, and Thomas was a labourer.

They subsequently moved to number 29, as this shows up in later census records. By 1891, Frederick, then 13 years, is shown as an agricultural labourer.

In 1911, Fred is still living with his parents, who are recorded as being married for 42 years and having had 14 children, eight of whom survived. There are five sons and one daughter living at home at this time, all single and with ages ranging from 20 to 37 years. Frederick is shown as a general labourer.

He enlisted in Brecon, joining the Monmouthshire Regiment. The Second Battalion of the Monmouth's joined the 29th Division as a Pioneer Battalion in 1916 and was involved in the three Battles of the Scarpe during the Arras Offensive of 1917. Frederick was wounded in action in France and died from his injuries.

**Private Wilfred Easthope Evans**

Royal Welsh Fusiliers 4th Battalion, service no. 235394

Killed in action on September 2nd, 1917 in Belgium

Burial Place at Zonnebeke, West Vlaanderen, Belgium

Wilfred was born in 1899 in Cleobury Mortimer in Shropshire. He was the son of Arthur John Johnston Evans, a labourer, and his wife Emma Barrett Evans (nee Coates), a dressmaker, who had married in 1879. Albert and Emma had 9 children with 8 still living in 1911.

Whilst the family were living in Shropshire when Wilfred was born, by 1911, the parents, with young Wilfred, had moved to The Common, Cathedine, Bwlch. Arthur is now listed as a clerk, Emma is still a dressmaker and Wilfred is at school. Two of Wilfred's sisters are in service in a nearby property.

Wilfred's brother Percy had joined the army in 1906 and served with the Border Regiment. He died in service in 1914 and his records show addresses for him at both Rectory Cottage and Well Cottage, Bwlch.

Wilfred enlisted in Brecon in October 1914 from 14, The Struet where he appears to be living with his brother Ivor Vincent Evans and is listed as a grocer. He initially joins the Brecknockshire Battalion of the South Wales Borderers (service no. 2622) and gives his age as 18 years and 4 months. He remains in Great Britain until June 1917 when he is posted to the Royal Welsh Fusiliers and embarks for France from



Southampton, landing at Rouen on June 18th and posted to the 4th Battalion on July 8th.

He is wounded and gassed on July 28th and spends some weeks out of the line receiving treatment, rejoining his unit on August 27th. When he was killed in action in Flanders in September 1917, he was aged just 18 years.

At the time of his death, his contact address was with his parents, at Well Cottage in Bwlch, but by 1919 the family address was 93, The Struet, Brecon, although they later moved to 31, Free Street, Brecon, before finally moving to Haverfordwest.

Easthope may have been a family name as Arthur had an elder brother Edwin Easthope Evans.

**Private William Evans**

South Wales Borderers 1st Battalion, service no. 12008

Killed in Action in Belgium on July 9th, 1917

Commemorated at the Nieuport Memorial, West  
Vlaanderen, Belgium

William was born in Brecon in 1885, a son to Samuel and Susannah Evans. The family had previously lived at 25, Newmarch Street. Samuel was a painter and glazier. By 1901, they had moved to the Flag and Castle, 11, Orchard Street Llanfaes, and Samuel was publican, and continuing his previous trades. By 1911, the family had moved next door to 10, Orchard Street, where Samuel, then 60, was a painter. William married Elizabeth Anne Harding in 1904. Elizabeth was born in 1884 and was a dressmaker living with her family in Free Street, Brecon (46a and 26). After their marriage they lived in 21, Free Street and had one child, Muriel Cecilia Lavinia born in 1905. Having previously served as a volunteer with the Brecknocks and then the Monmouthshire Regiment during the 1900s, including being a member of the band, William was employed as a fitter by Messrs. J. E. Nott and Son. At the time of his enlistment, November 1915 William was living at 37, Church Street, Llanfaes with his wife and daughter and was a painter. He was appointed to the Royal Engineers in May 1916, although he did not go out to France and Flanders until May 1917. He was initially reported as missing but later confirmed as Killed in Action.

**Private Harry William Finch**

South Wales Borderers 4th Battalion, service no. 9095

Died December 31st, 1917 in Baghdad, aged 30

Buried at Baghdad (North Gate) Cemetery, Iraq



Harry was born on 18th March 1888 in Bermondsey, London, son of Henry Finch and his wife Margaret Bertha (née Jackson). He was baptised in March 1890 alongside four of his siblings in St. Mary Magdalene, Bermondsey.

His father died in 1901 and his widowed mother became a dressmaker and needle worker, later remarrying in 1906.

Harry joined the 5th Battalion, The Rifle Brigade, Surrey Regiment in 1905 and was transferred to the 4th Battalion, South Wales Borderers in 1906.

He married Amy Esther Church in Southwark, London in 1909 and was then posted to Brecon and set up home in John Street. They had two daughters, Amy Bertha Myfanwy, born 1910 and Millicent Iris, born 1916.

Harry continued his army career eventually becoming of sergeant. He trained soldiers to fight in the war and eventually gave up his sergeant's stripes so that he too could

go to fight in the war. He sailed for Mesopotamia in April 1916 and was posted as missing on 30th April 1917. On 6th September 1917, Harry was identified as a prisoner of war and unfortunately died of dysentery whilst in captivity on 31st December 1917.

**Lance Corporal Harold John Gible**

10th Battalion, Kings Royal Rifle Corps, service no.

A/201705

Died of wounds, 14th August 1917, aged 23

Harlebeke New British Cemetery. Grave ref. XI.B.I

Harold John Gible was the son of William and Minnie Gible and born in Talgarth in 1899. John William Gible, his father married three times. He was born in Tewkesbury and married Sarah Ann Clements in 1870. They had three children Ernest born 1873, Elizabeth born 1875 and Florence born 1878, Sarah died in 1896.

In 1897 John William married Minnie Freebury in Hay and they were living with 2-year-old Harold at High Cliff, Church St., Talgarth in 1901. Minnie died and in 1902 John Williams married Harriet Agnes Morgan in Newbridge on Wye.

In 1911 John William, Harriet and Harold age 12, were living in Elms Cottage, 11, Struet, Brecon. Harold later worked in the Brecon and Radnor Express printing works. His father, John died aged 71 in 1919.

Harold enlisted in Canning Town Essex. He was a prisoner of war in Germany when he died of wounds received in action.

Army records show Harold as 23 years old at the time of his death although he cannot have been more than 18 years, indicating he may have lied about his age on enlistment.

### **Lt Colonel Franklin Macaulay Gillespie**

South Wales Borderers 4th Battalion

Killed in action August 9th, 1915 in Gallipoli, Turkey

Buried in Gallipoli, Canakkale, Turkey. Commemorated on  
the Helles Memorial



Whilst not a Brecon man, Colonel Gillespie had connections with both the South Wales Borderers and mid Wales and is on the town memorial.

Frank was born in 1872 in Colchester, Essex, a son to Lt Colonel Franklin Gillespie and his wife Harriet (nee Freeth), of Bromley, Camberley, Surrey.

In 1891, he is shown as a lodger in Colchester when he attended Cadet College at Sandhurst with his younger brother Alfred. Soon after this, he was gazetted to the South Wales Borderers. He saw service in West Africa and went through the Boer War. He had been mentioned in despatches and received the Queen's Medal with three clasps and the King's Medal with two clasps.

Frank became adjutant to the 5th South Wales Borderers based at Newtown and was married in 1905 to Agnes Rose Pryce-Jones in Newtown, Montgomeryshire.

By 1911 he was a major with the South Wales Borderers 2nd Battalion and stationed at Pretoria in South Africa. He was appointed to raise and command the new 4th Service Battalion of the Borderers in 1914. Colonel Gillespie was killed by a sniper while directing the fire of a machine gun in defence of Damakjelik Bair (later named Gillespie Hill).

He left a widow and three children, Rollo, Henry and Phillis, born respectively 1910, 1913 and 1915.

Extract from the Brecon and Radnor Express 13th January 1916:

*'Traditions Well Maintained by new army in Gallipoli'*

#### *HIGH TRIBUTE TO LATE COLONEL GILLESPIE.*

*'In the tragic story of Suvla Bay, told in the report of Sir Ian Hamilton, another glorious page is added to the annals of the 24th S.W. Borderers. There were 14 or 15 Welsh units engaged, and to some of these, notably to the part played the Left Covering Column the 4th South Wales Borderers, in the night attack on Sari Bair Ridge, Sir Ian Hamilton refers at length, and pays a high tribute to. Lieut. Col. Gillespie.*

*The left covering column, under Brigadier General Travers, after marching along the beach to No. 3 Outpost, resumed its northerly advance as soon as the attack on Bauchop's Hill had developed. Once the Chailak Dere was cleared the column moved by the mouth of the Aghyl Dere, disregarding the enfilade fire from sections of Bauchop's Hill still uncaptured. The rapid success of this movement was largely due to Lieutenant Colonel Gillespie, a very*

*fine man, who commanded the advance guard consisting of his own regiment, the 4th South Wales Borderers, a Corps worthy of such a leader.*

*Every trench encountered was instantly rushed by the Borderers until, having reached the predetermined spot, the whole column was unhesitatingly launched at Damakjelic Bair. Several Turkish trenches were captured at the bayonet's point, and by 1.30 a.m. the whole of the hill was occupied, thus safe guarding the left rear of the whole of the Anzac attack. Here was an encouraging example of what the New Army, under good auspices, could accomplish. Sad to say, the Borderers lost their intrepid leader, Lieutenant Colonel Gillespie, in the course of this affair.*

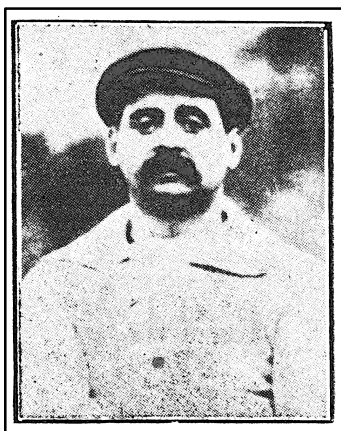
*He was an old campaigner who commanded at the Depot, Brecon before the War. He received his first commission in the South Wales Borderers in 1890 and in 1890 was promoted Captain and Major in 1909. He also took part in the 1897-98 West African operations and also fought in South Africa'.*



### **Private Ernest Green**

1st Brecknock Battalion, South Wales Borderers, service no.  
2308

Killed in action near Aden, July 4th, 1915, aged 28  
Buried at Maala Cemetery, Yemen; Commemorated  
Heliopolis (Aden) Memorial



Ernie was born in January, 1887 in Brecon, the son of Joseph Green and his wife Mary (nee Silk). The family lived at 77, The Watton, Brecon, and Joseph worked as an army pensions clerk, having previously been quarter master sergeant in the 24th Regiment, South Wales Borderers.

Ernie was well known in Wales as a footballer, having been the goalkeeper for Llanfaes Brigade for some years. He was also an expert angler. He worked for A.H. Tyler and Sons, builders, for a number of years as a house painter alongside his brother Alfred (b.1890), known as Monty. Ernie and Monty were the youngest of seven sons and one daughter.

He enlisted on September 14th, 1914 and went to Egypt and then Aden where he died of heatstroke during a forced march

through the desert to Lahej and back on July 4th, 1915. Twelve other Brecknocks died of heatstroke that day<sup>11</sup>.

Ernie's brother Alfred (Monty) had also enlisted in the Brecknocks and was with Ernie when he died. Two other brothers were also on active service.

Alfred married Elizabeth Thomas in 1917 whilst still serving, returned from the war, and lived in Brecon, where his son, John Joseph Green, was born in 1920.

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<sup>11</sup> See page 216

**Colour Sergeant Joseph Groom DCM**

King's Shropshire Light Infantry 3rd Btn., service no. 9865

Died April, 7th, 1919, aged 23

Buried at Brecon cemetery



Joseph was born in Norbury, Cheshire, in about 1896. He and his older sister, Nellie, lived with the Hopley family there in 1901. By 1911, at fifteen Joseph was a farm groom at Bickley Hall in Cheshire.

He joined the army later that year, as a boy soldier, and later became a lance corporal. When war broke out he was a sergeant, stationed with in Tipperary. He went to

France in November 1914 as part of the British Expeditionary Force and was there until the beginning of 1917. He was ranked as a first class machine gunner, twice wounded and also won the Distinguished Conduct Medal in 1915.

*Citation: 'For conspicuous gallantry on the 9th August 1915, during the attack on the Hooze trenches, when he was ordered to reinforce the captured trenches with a machine gun. In the advance he came under heavy shell fire, the gun was damaged and several of the gun team wounded. Although wounded himself, he bound up his comrades' wounds, returned to headquarters and reported, and successfully took another gun and team to the firing line.'*

Joseph transferred home to be a staff sergeant but was not content and volunteered to serve in German East Africa. He married in Pembroke on March 1917 to Edith Mabel DeLonra of Brecon.

Joseph was sent to East Africa in April 1917. He was wounded again and during twelve months' service and was made company sergeant major. He came home on two months leave in April 1918 before going out to West Africa. On 17th June 1918, aged 22 he sailed on the ship *Akado* from Tilbury to Lagos, Nigeria. The King's Shropshire Light Infantry had a Nigerian regiment, officered by Europeans with Nigerian troopers. In 1918 the Aduki war or Egba Uprising occurred in Nigeria hence the need to strengthen troops. The rising was over when Joseph arrived. Whilst there he was promoted to regimental company sergeant major and returned home in February 1919.

Whilst on holiday in Welshpool with his wife in 1919, he was taken ill on the 5th of April with blackwater fever, contracted in west Africa. Two days later he died and he was taken with military honours, to Brecon where a full military funeral was held with the band of the Second Battalion, South Wales Borderers in attendance along with troops from the depot in Brecon. Buried at the town's cemetery, the usual volleys were fired over the grave and the Last Post was sounded. Joseph died at the Buck Inn in Welshpool, but his home address was 56, The Struet, Brecon.

**Lance Corporal Albert Lewis Harding**

Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry. 7th Btn., service no. 22867

Killed in Action in Salonika, Greece on April 25th, 1917,  
aged 29

Buried at Doiran, Kilis, Greece. Commemorated at Doiran  
Memorial, Greece

Albert was born in Brecon in May 1886 to John and Mary Ann Harding of 46a, Free Street, Brecon, and was baptised at St Mary's Church in June of that year. His father was a railway foreman and porter.

By 1901 the family have moved to 26, Free Street and Albert is also working for the railway, having joined the Midland Railway as a junior clerk in 1900. He moved with the railway to Leicester in 1907, and then onto Bourneville in 1909. In 1911 he is still single and a boarder in Kings Norton, Birmingham, while still working as a railway clerk.

He enlists in Birmingham and gives Brecon as his residential address. He is initially a private with the 3rd Reserve Battalion of the Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry before later transferring to the 7th Battalion.

The Battalion was formed in 1914 and landed in France in September 1915, before going to Salonika in November of that year. Albert was initially listed as missing, but later confirmed as Killed in Action. He died in the first battle of Doiran.

**Private Eustace William Harding**

Monmouthshire Regiment (Territorial Force) 2nd Battalion,  
service no. 267467

Killed in action 1st July 1917, aged 19  
Bard Cot Cemetery, grave ref. II.I.3

Eustace was born in Bath, Somerset in 1897. His father, later a widower, was in Bristol. In the 1901 census, aged 3, Eustace is at 75, Lawn Road, Bristol, a visitor with Mary Jane Harding, a widow and her son Leonard Jeffrey Harding, 22. By 1911 Eustace was in Brecon, at 4, Harp Terrace, boarding with Jane Champion and her daughter Clare; he is still at school. Jane is the mother of Charles Guest Champion who also features in this book<sup>12</sup>. By 1914 he was a dental mechanic at 5, The Bulwark, Brecon. Eustace joined the South Wales Borderers, 1st Brecknocks in Brecon on September 2nd, 1914 and transferred to the Monmouthshire Regiment in the late July 1916, before crossing to France. In August 1916 shortly after arriving, he was hospitalised through illness at Boulogne before moving to hospitals at Le Havre and then Rouen. He rejoined his battalion on September 9th, 1916. Eustace had another two weeks in hospital through sickness in early June 1917, rejoining his Battalion on June 15th. He died in action on 1st July 1917.

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<sup>12</sup> See page 35

**Lieutenant William Emlyn Hardwick**

Australian Infantry, A.I.F., 21st Btn., Military Cross and Bar  
Killed in action in France on October 5th, 27th, 1918, aged 33  
Buried at the Tincourt New British Cemetery in France



William was born in Brecon on March 12th, 1885, the son of Thomas and Mary Hardwick. The family lived at 24, Pendre, Brecon in the early years of his life, before moving to 2, Jubilee Place, The Avenue, Brecon by 1901. William worked as a painter and plumber's apprentice before he emigrated to Australia in 1906.

He departed from London on November 16th, aged 21, on the *SS Ortona* bound for Brisbane. He is listed as a painter.

By 1910 he had settled in Leongatha, Australia, working as a carpenter and builder. In January 1915 he enlisted with D Company, 21st Battalion, 6th Australian Infantry and becomes a sergeant.

In May 1915, aged 30, he embarked for Gallipoli on the *HMAT A38 Ulysses*. In January 1916 he was involved in the retreat from Gallipoli, by which time he was company sergeant major and had been mentioned in dispatches. Later

in 1916 he served in Arabia and the Suez Canal zone and was commissioned as second lieutenant.

On March 25th, 1917, aged 32, he was awarded the Military Cross for gallantry in France, and on 28th of August 1918 he was awarded a bar to the Military Cross, again for gallantry in France.

William was killed in action on the Hindenburg Line in Northern France on October 5th, 1918, aged 33 years.



**Private Philip Hargest**

Lancashire Fusiliers. 2nd Battalion, service no. 240

Killed in Action in France on August 26th, 1914

Buried at Departement de Seine-et-Marne, Ile-de-France,  
France

Philip was born in the Summer of 1885, the son of Evan and Margaret Hargest of 11, St David Street, Llanfaes, Brecon. Evan was a stone mason like his father and uncles before him, and a number of his sons also become stone masons, including Philip.

His father Evan died in 1891 when Philip was only 6, although a number of older brothers were still living at home and able to support their widowed mother.

Phillip is shown as an apprentice mason in the 1901 census, and a journeyman mason in 1911, alongside his brothers Reuben and James, all still single and living at home.

Whilst born and bred in Brecon, Philip enlisted in Pontypool in August, 1914 and joined the Lancashire Fusiliers. He embarked to France on August 22nd and was killed in action just four days later at the Battle of Mons.

He was initially posted as missing but the relatives received a letter in the December of 1914 stating he was killed in the retreat from Mons.

### **Lance Corporal Leonard Augustus Hedge**

Montgomeryshire Yeomanry 2nd/1st Btn., service no. 2471  
Died on active service June 16th, 1915 at Llanymynech, aged  
27

Buried at Welshpool (Christ Church) Churchyard



Leonard was born in Shelton, Stoke on Trent, in June 1888, the son of Charles Edward Hedge and his wife Mary Ann (nee Mugliston). Charles was the managing director of a brewery firm.

Leonard attended boarding school at Dean Close Memorial School in Cheltenham and after leaving school worked as a clerk for the

United Counties Bank in several towns, including Uttoxeter where he was boarding in 1911.

Soon after he moved to the Brecon branch of the bank when he became senior clerk.

He was well known in Brecon having been a good sportsman and involved himself in a number of pastimes including cricket, snooker and billiards.

When war broke out he volunteered, joining the Montgomeryshire Yeomanry, and was stationed in

Welshpool. Leonard was attached to the motor cycle section having recently applied to be a despatch rider at the front.

Previously a trooper he gained his promotion to lance corporal on the day he died. Leonard's motorcycle was in collision with a lorry and he suffered fatal injuries. An inquest was held and returned a verdict of accidental death.

A full military funeral was held in Welshpool and was attended by Leonard's father and his brother who was serving in a Canadian cavalry regiment.

**Private William Mostyn Hellard**

Welsh Regiment 9th Battalion, service no. 58071

Died 29th September 1918, aged 18

Buried Cabaret-Rouge British Cemetery, Souchez, France



Willie was born in Brecon to John and Sarah Ann (Annie) Hellard on 13th October 1898 and living at 35, The Watton. His father, John, was listed as a grocer.

Willie's father John was born in Wells, Somerset but by the age of 14 in 1881, was living in 8, Moderator Terrace Street, Brecon with his parents and two sisters. By 1891

John had married Sarah Ann Jones and was living at 37, The Watton, with his father in law and a Jones cousin. His occupation is butcher. William had 2 brothers Charles Washburn Hellard, born 1891 and John Naish Hellard born 1893. There is no record of the family in the 1901 census in Brecon except for grandmother Sarah and grandson Charles living at Moderator Wharf.

In 1911, the family, including grandmother Sarah were living in Lansdowne Terrace. Willie's father is listed at the post office Brecon and working as a night telephone operator.

Willie joined the army in October 1917, when he is listed as a timber haulier, living at the Cock and Horse Inn, 49, The

Watton. His father at the same address is listed as next of kin. He initially joined the Young Soldiers Battalion of the Welch Regiment, being not quite 18 years old, though he soon transferred to the main regiment, joining the 9th Battalion. He went to France around July 1918 and in his first week there he met his brother Jack who was with the Royal Army Medical Corps. They were together until Willie went up to the lines around August.

His other brother Charles was with the Brecknocks in India at this time.

The 9th Battalion of the Welsh Regiment formed part of the 19th Division of Kitchener's New Army (K2) which fought in France from 1915 until November 1918.

**Across the seas our thoughts do wander, To a grave we  
ne'er may see  
But as long as life and memory last ,We will remember  
thee**

**Sergeant Thomas John Hodson**

South Wales Borderers 3rd Battalion

Died on July 4th, 1916, aged 31

Buried at St Davids Churchyard, Brecon

Thomas was born in Brecon in 1885 to George and Margaret Hodson of 1, Ffrwdgrech Road, Llanfaes, Brecon. The family were well travelled with George having been in the army previously and had spells in Gibraltar where Thomas' sister Margaret Ann was born in 1879, and Ireland where Thomas' older brother Lewis George was born in 1872. (Lewis George Hodson is also included in this book<sup>13</sup>) By 1885 the family had settled in Llanfaes and George had left the army and was first a railway labourer and then a mason's labourer by 1891.

The family suffered upheaval around 1901. Lewis George had already left the household and Margaret Ann had left to become a servant in Cardiff. George was in the mental asylum in Abergavenny. No record has been found for Margaret and Thomas, although Margaret was living in 7, Ffrwdgrech Road in 1911, suggesting she had stayed in Llanfaes until later moving to Twickenham and then Abergavenny.

Tom joined the army before 1911, when he was shown living in Brecon Barracks as a lance corporal with the South Wales

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<sup>13</sup> See page 249

Borderers. He married a Brecon girl in 1912, Gwladys E M Webster who was the sister of Douglas Webster (also in this volume<sup>14</sup>), whose family lived in The Watton

Tom is called up with the reserve at the outbreak of war and is seriously wounded at the first Battle of Aisne in September 1914. He was shot through the lungs which ultimately caused his death in 1916. It appears that after he was wounded Tom, along with seven others, were captured and held in captivity for eight days before making their escape.

He returned to Brecon in 1914 and was able to carry out duties at the Depot, Brecon before later obtaining a job with the post office at Twickenham, where he subsequently died at his sister's house. The body was conveyed by train to Brecon where it was met by soldiers from the depot including the sergeant who were to be bearers and the depot band. A military funeral was held at St David's Churchyard attended by various family members. Tom left a widow and two children. He had previously worked for the Midland Railway at Brynamman.

**Friends may think I have forgotten  
When at times they see me smile  
Little knowing grief is hidden  
Beneath the surface all the while**

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<sup>14</sup> See page 193

**Corporal Richard William Hooper**

South Wales Borderers 3rd Battalion, service no. 5951

Died in Liverpool June 29th 1915, aged 35

Commemorated at Brecon Cemetery

Richard was born on September 30th, 1880 to Mary Ann Hall in Awre, in the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire. Mary married Thomas Hooper shortly after and he was named as Richard's father. The 1891 Census shows him still living in Awre with his parents. He was the eldest child with one brother and four sisters. Another sister was born 1892.



He enlisted the South Wales Borderers, 3rd Battalion, C Company in November 1897, giving his age as 18 years, and was living in St. Woolos, Newport at the time and working



as a farm labourer. He served in South Africa earning both the King's and Queen's medal for campaigns.

Richard was living in Brecon in 1908 and married Ethel Alice Brookes in Hereford. She was born in Herefordshire in 1887. The 1911 census lists him as a private in the South Wales Borderers living at 56, The Watton, with his wife and son, Richard aged 2. They had three other children, one being born a few months before Richard's death.

Richard served for about 18 years in the South Wales Borderers and was for some time attached to the depot staff in Brecon. On the outbreak of World War One he was mobilised with his battalion and served with it at various stations. At the time of his death, the battalion were based in Liverpool and Richard died at Fazackerly General Hospital there of a perforated gastric ulcer and general peritonitis, apparently whilst undergoing an operation. His body was transported to Brecon for a full military funeral at the town's cemetery. Richard's wife Ethel died in Brecon in 1959 age 72 years. She was well known in the town and had lived in the same house in The Watton for over fifty years.

**Private Henry Simpson Howcroft**

South Wales Borderers, 1st Battalion, service no. 8740

Killed in Action September 27th, 1914, aged 29

Buried at La Ferte-Sous-Jouarre Memorial, Dept. de Seine-et-Marne, France

Harry was born in Tadcaster, Yorkshire, in 1885 the son of David and Mary (nee Simpson). His parents had married in 1875 when they were both only 17 years old and by 1881 they were living in Hambleton, Yorkshire with their first three children. David was working as a farm labourer at this time. Four more children follow between 1882 and 1887 but unfortunately Mary dies in 1889, aged 31.

In 1891 David is working as a coalminer and bringing up his seven children alone. His eldest daughter Annie, 15, was at home and his eldest son William, 13, working as a pony driver at the coalmine. the other children, including Harry, were at school.

Another tragedy strikes the family when David dies in 1898, aged 38. Harry is living in Yorkshire with his married sister in 1901, along with two of his brothers. He is working as a pit pony driver at this time.

By 1911 Harry has enlisted and is serving as a private with the 1st Battalion, South Wales Borderers and is based at Chatham Barracks in Kent. He marries Eleanor Jane Youseman, 24 in August 1912 at St John's Church, Brecon.

Harry is sent to France on August 13th, 1914 and would have been involved in the Battle of Mons, and the subsequent retreat, the Battles of Marne and Aisne.

A contemporary report from an officer of the battalion described the night of September 26th, 1914 as:

*'The most ghastly day of my life and yet one of the proudest because my Regiment did its job and held on against heavy odds. At 4.15am Germans attacked. Main attack apparently against my regiment, which is the left of our line ... About 3pm, things began to quieten down. Total casualties, 3 Officers and 86 men killed, with another 3 officers and 95 men wounded, and 12 men missing. In spite of casualties the rest of the Regiment stuck to it and fought as Englishmen and 24th men could fight'.*

(The Long Long Trail)

Harry's brother William also served in the Borderers. Having joined up in 1900, he served in South Africa until 1904, remaining in the army he served in World War One in the Balkans and Salonika before coming out in 1919. Having married Brecon girl Grace Eldred in 1905, they lived in The Watton.

### **Company Sergeant Major James Irons**

South Wales Borderers 2nd Battalion service no. 8719

Killed in Action 20th November 1917, aged 32

Commemorated at Villers-Plouich Communal Cemetery  
Nord, France



James was born about 1885 in Fulham Middlesex son of Henry and Bridget Irons. In 1901 James, 16, worked as a builder's labourer. His father was also a labourer and his mother a laundress.

By 1911 James enlisted in the army as corporal in the South Wales Borderers in Brecon Barracks. He became a sergeant and an instructor

at the depot before the war and was a prominent footballer for the depot side in the Mid Wales League. James went to France with the 1st Battalion on August 13th, 1914 and was in the Retreat from Mons. By November 1914 he was back in Brecon recovering from wounds received during two months' hard service with the Borderers

He married Bertha Atkin Smith in October 1915 at Priory Church in Brecon. They then caught the midday train to London. Bertha had previously lived in Glasbury, before moving to 31, The Watton, Brecon, by 1911, with her parents. Bertha was a teacher at Pendre School.

In October 1915 he went to the Gallipoli Peninsula, being amongst the last to leave there in 1916. He returned to France where he served until his death

He was wounded twice during his service. James had been home on leave about six weeks before his death.

Bertha received a letter from Colonel Raikes after the event who wrote:

*'I am very sorry you have not received news of your husband's death before this but the Battalion has been in action practically every day for 15 days and all the Officers were hit.*

*On November 20th when the attack started we came up to a position in our original front line preparatory to going through to a further objective. There was fairly heavy shelling and Co. Sergeant Major Irons was hit by a piece of shell just as we were arriving at this position. I saw him myself almost immediately after he was hit, he was quite unconscious and died almost immediately. this was about 7.30 on the 20th. It was not possible to carry him back at this time as the Battalion was moving forward to the attack almost at once.*

*There were stretcher bearers of another division working over that part of the ground and no doubt it was one of those that carried him back and buried him.*

*I have known Sgt Major Irons for many years' time and was with him in the 1st Battalion some time before the war. I well know his many sterling qualities and his death is a great loss to us. He has always shown a high sense of duty, cool and courageous in all circumstance and his service has been of the greatest value in the*

*Battalion where he will always be remembered as one who upheld the finest traditions of the regiment. His grave is sure to have been marked and registered by the Graves Registration and I will try and ascertain exactly where it is. I hope you will accept my sincerest sympathy in your loss'.*

Some extracts from the Pendre School Log Book of the time give some insight into Bertha's life:

*October 19th 1915 – Miss Smith was to have been married at Xmas but her fiancé suddenly received orders to proceed to the front so the wedding is to take place this week, consequently she is absent today.*

*October 28th 1915 – Mrs Irons (nee Miss Smith) returned to school today.*

*June 15th 1917 – Mrs Iron's Husband has ten days leave from France, the first since October 1915, so I told her she could have the time off school. However, she will come in the mornings.*

*September 28th, 1917 – Mrs Irons will be away till Tuesday morning. She has accompanied her husband who is home from France on a visit to his friends.*

*November 26th 1917 – Mrs. Irons heard this morning that her husband had been killed in France, so I do not expect her in school this week at least.*

*December 3rd, 1917 – Mrs. Irons returned to school today.*

*July 30th, 1918– Mrs. Irons leaves today and is entering Derby Training College in September.*

**Private Cyril Isaac**

1st Brecknock Btn., South Wales Borderers, service no. 2316

Killed in action July 4th, 1915, aged 18

Buried near Aden; Commemorated Heliopolis, Aden  
Memorial



Cyril was the second son of Major William Thomas, and Eleanor Isaac of Castle Farm, Llanfaes, Brecon and was born in Brecon in late 1896, and baptised in St David's Church in January 1897.

He was a member of the Brecon junior football team and was educated at Mount Street Junior School and the County School, Brecon and after leaving there he worked in a surveyor's office in Newport.

His father was well known for his work with volunteers and territorials, as well as Brecon Show Secretary and was gazetted Major in April, 1915, having been quartermaster of the battalion before.

Cyril joined the Territorials at the outbreak of war and went with the battalion to Aden in 1915. He was one of 13 Brecknocks to die on this day, all from heat apoplexy during the course of a forced march, battle and retreat. These men, together with other colleagues from the battalion, were

commemorated by a brass tablet placed in the Garrison Church, in Aden. (This story of the Brecknocks is separately related in this book<sup>15</sup>).

Cyril's death is also commemorated on a family gravestone in the churchyard of St David's Church, Llanfaes, Brecon.

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<sup>15</sup> See page 216



**Sergeant James Phillip Arthur James**

South Wales Borderers 1st Battalion, service no. 10266

Killed in Action Died December 27th, 1914, aged 23

Commemorated at the Le Touret Memorial, Calais, France

James was born in Aldershot in about 1893, the son of Evan Jenkin James and his wife Rosetta Annie (nee Childs). Evan was born in Tredegar and was a colour sergeant in the South Wales Borderers.

Rosetta was born in London and moved to Brecon with her family before 1881 when they were living at 1, The Struet. Her father Henry was a house painter. By 1891 Rosetta's father had died and she was helping her mother run a tobacconist shop. She married Evan early in 1892 and the next year James was born.

However, Rosetta appears to have died later that decade as in the 1901 Census, James, 8 is living with the Davies family in Free Street, Brecon and shown as a nurse child and later the same year father Evan marries Esther Anne Davies, 19 who becomes James' step mother. Anne is a younger sister of Lieutenant William J Davies who is separately featured in this book<sup>16</sup>.

By 1905 James is living in Brynmawr and joins the Brecknock battalion as a boy soldier at 12 years old and gives his address

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<sup>16</sup> See page 51

as The Armoury, Brynmawr which is a base for the volunteers. He serves three years before turning 15 in 1908. He then enlists giving his trade as a fitter with the Ebbw Vale Iron and Coal Company and becomes a bugler and attends annual training in Porthcawl in June of that year. James later decides to leave the army and gives three months' notice before leaving in March 1909, but has rejoined by 1911 when he is shown with the 1st Battalion, South Wales Borderers at Chatham Barracks.

James' father Evan dies in March 1909 and step mother Anne later remarries William John Wootton a Brecon born solicitors clerk and the couple run the Kings Arms Hotel in the town.

James became an acting sergeant and went to France on August 13th, 1914 and would have been involved in many battles probably including Mons, Marne, Aisne, Ypres, before Givenchy and Wytschaete.

**Rifleman William John Jenkins**

Monmouthshire Regiment. 1st Battalion, service no. 2375

Killed in Action on May 8th, 1915, aged 32

Commemorated on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial



William was born in Brecon in 1883, the eldest son to ex police sergeant John Jenkins and his wife Martha Mary. The family were living at 16 Free Street in 1881, with John listed as a travelling agent and Martha as a milliner.

By 1891 the family had moved to the New Market Inn at 27, Free Street, Brecon, where William's father is now listed as innkeeper.

William went to Mount Street and Brecon County Schools and later became a clerk for the County Council and also worked as a clerk for the Brecon Gas Company. By 1911 he had left the family home and was boarding at Tredegar where he worked as a railway clerk, and later was employed by Tredegar Iron and Coal at Blackwood.

Having enlisted at Blackwood, William went to France in February 1915. As well as a rifleman, William was also a telephone operator. Originally listed as missing, he was later confirmed as killed at the first Battle of Ypres.

**Lieutenant Ernest David Jones**

Royal Air Force, 52nd Squadron

Killed in action on April 3rd, 1918, aged 19

Commemorated on the Arras Memorial, France



Ernie was born in 1899, the second son of Benjamin & Matilda Jones of George Street, Brecon. Benjamin was a foreman printer.

By 1901 the family were living at 38, Orchard Street, Llanfaes, Brecon, and by 1911 they were at the same address but his mother was now a widow and a grocer, as her mother had been previously, at this address. Both Ernest and his brother Ivor attended Mount Street and Brecon County School. After leaving school Ernie was a clerk with Barclays, first at Newport, and then Cardiff.

Ernie joined the Royal Flying Corps and later the RAF and whilst piloting his aircraft on a bombing sortie over the front lines, he was shot down by the Red Baron. In Baron von Richthofen's own combat report there is a full account of the air action in which he commends the bravery of his adversary. Initially listed as missing, Ernie was later reported as killed.

**Second Lieutenant John Harold Jones**

Royal Welsh Fusiliers 1st Battalion, service no. 241978

Killed in Action 1st October 1917 Age 28

Commemorated at Tyne Cot Memorial Zonnebeke Belgium

John was born to Benjamin and Mary Jones in Aberaeron, Cardiganshire in 1889. On the 1901 census the family lived 16, Alban Square Aberaeron, John being the second of six children. His father's occupation was clerk to the Local Guardians workhouse.

In 1911 John was a boarder age 21 living in Portmadoc, Caernarvonshire and his occupation was bank clerk. He later moved to Brecon and worked for four years at the National Provincial Bank before joining up in 1916. He was well known and liked in the town.

His Service Records state the he was originally a private in the East Kent Regiment (Buffs) and transferred on his Commission to the Royal Welsh Fusiliers on 27th March 1917. He had been in the trenches for about four months and was said to have been struck by a bullet from an enemy aeroplane and died instantly.

At the time of his death his father was a widower and still living at the same address in Aberaeron.

**Second Lieutenant Richard Alun Jones**

Tank Corps, 4th Battalion D

Died November 20th, 1917, aged 20

Buried at Flesquieres Hill British Cemetery, Nord, France

Alun was born in February 1897 in Carmarthenshire, eldest son of Reverend Griffith Jones and his wife Catherine. The Reverend Jones was a Congregational pastor for Capel Newydd Church in Hendy. By 1901 Alun, 4 had a younger brother, Elphin. The family lived in Llanedy, Carmarthen shire. Ten years later they were still at the same address but Alun was at the Congregational school in Caterham. A boarding school for sons of Congregational ministers and had been in so for a hundred years. About 1912, after school Alun came to Brecon as a bank clerk at the National Provincial Bank and spent a number of years in the town. He joined the Montgomery Yeomanry in January 1916; they were camped at Slwch in Brecon. Later he was an officer in the Tank Corps. He was involved in a tank attack at Cambrai and killed when struck by a shell. He was good friends with John Harold Jones, also a clerk at the bank. John also lost his life some weeks before Alun<sup>17</sup> and is also featured in this book. Alun's younger brother Elphin was invalided out of the Mercantile Marine after having contracted malaria.

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<sup>17</sup> See previous record

**Private William Jones**

Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment), 10th Battalion  
service no. L/11213

Died of Wounds September 25th, 1916, aged 17

Buried at St Sever Cemetery, Rouen, France

See the Pritchard Family<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> See page 151 and 155

**Private William Jones**

Royal Welsh Fusiliers, 19th Battalion, service no. 54369

Died November 23rd, 1917, aged 28

Commemorated at Cambrai Memorial, Louverval, Nord,  
France

William was born at the Glyn, near Brecon in about 1889. He married Gladys Rose Bugby in 1914 and later that year they had a daughter, Margaret Elizabeth.

Gladys was from a local family. Her parents had run the Fountain Inn in Watertgate, Brecon before later moving to 8, St. David Street. William and Gladys lived in Newmarch Street.

William joined the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. His battalion, the 19th, formed part of the 119th Brigade, 40th Division and during November 1917, were involved in the Cambrai Operations. They fought in the battle to capture Bourion Wood on November 20/21. Tanks at last came in to their own in this battle with over 400 deployed. The British force advanced some miles into enemy territory but not all objectives were met.

On November 23rd the battle to capture Bourion Wood commenced and lasted for five days. The 40th division received orders on November 22nd to relieve the 62nd Division the next day, but roads were congested with men and vehicles and it took 15 hours to travel the 9 miles to Havrincourt. An assault plan was drawn up with the 119th



Brigade tasked with capturing the wood. The attack started from a sunken lane with some units having to cover 1000 yards whilst under shell fire. There was close and vicious fighting but after three hours the men of the 119th broke through and occupied the north and east ridges.

William was reported missing at the time and was not notified as killed until almost a year later.

**Private James Kelly**

South Staffordshire Regiment, 4th Battalion, service no.  
45425

Killed in action in France May 29th, 1918, aged 37  
Commemorated at the Soissons Memorial, Aisne, France

James was born in about 1880 in Brecon, the son of John Kelly and his wife Anne (nee Bullen) living at 1, Bailey Glaes Court and later 1, Buckland Row. John is listed as a hawker in 1881 but by 1911 is a general labourer.

By 1901 James has left home and is boarding at Garth Road, Builth age 23 and working as a fellmonger (a worker in hides and skins).

However, he returns to Brecon later and marries Theresa Watkins in the town in 1905.

James joins the Brecknockshire Battalion (Territorial Force) in March 1909 and his occupation is listed as labourer with Brecon Corporation, and he attends annual training with them for four years, until 1912. In the 1911 Census he is shown as returned to the family home, now at 54, The Watton, Brecon, and is working as a general labourer and listed as single.

On enlistment he initially joins the Liverpool Regiment before moving to the South Staffordshire Regiment. The regiment landed at Le Havre in October 1917 and came under the orders of the 7th Brigade in the 25th Division. They were

involved in numerous battles on the Western Front but at the time of James's death they were fighting in the Battle of Aisne. The many units of the 25th Division were all but destroyed with the remnants fighting a withdrawal as the enemy pressed on. Between May 26th and June 14th casualties amounted 4338 officers and men, of whom 2511 were listed as missing.

**Private Thomas John Kelly**

Yorkshire Regiment, 2nd Battalion, service no. 35479

Killed in Action in France November 6th, 1918, aged 19

Buried at Bettrechies Communal Cemetery, Calais, France



Thomas was born in Welshpool in 1899 the eldest son of Thomas and Annie (nee Watkins). His father was born in Brecon and was a brother to James Kelly (previous record). In the 1901 Census, young Thomas is living with his mother and her parents in their family home in Staunton on Wye, whilst his father was listed as a visitor at an address in Brecon, with an

occupation of fellmonger.

By 1911 the family have moved to 19, Newmarch Street, Llanfaes, Brecon and Thomas's father is now a coal merchant and there are seven children at home. At the time of his death the family address was Dolphin House, Brecon although a later report in 1919 lists an address for Thomas as Well House, Brecon.

Thomas enlisted in Bargoed, initially joined the 69th Training Reserve Battalion in about 1916, before joining Alexandra, Princess of Wales's Own (Yorkshire Regiment), also known as the Green Howards.

The second battalion, together with the sixth battalion, later joined the 32nd Brigade as part of the 11th (Northern) division fighting in France during 1917 and 1918 leading to the final advance in Picardy in October/November 1918. At the time of his death the fighting had reached the passage of the Grand Honelle, as part of the Battle of Sambre.

**Private Herbert Wallace Kendall**

Welsh Regiment, 16th Battalion, service no. 23308

Killed in Action in France on July 7th, 1916, aged 42

Buried Departement de la Somme, Picardie, France

Herbert was born in 1874 in Gateshead, Durham to John Hinton Kendall and his wife, Sarah (nee Wilson). His father, John, was a surgeon dentist and had also been a chemist. Herbert, 7 is still in Gateshead, with his parents and siblings, in 1881.

Herbert married Beatrice Mary Ann Piddington in 1897 in Newcastle and they continue to live there as their two children are born there Ernest, in 1899 (Ernest Herbert) and in 1900 (Doris Beatrice). Unfortunately, Ernest dies in 1901 in Newcastle and in the same year the family are shown living with John's father, now a widower in Durham where Herbert is working as a mechanic dentist. The young family later move to Brecon and in 1911 they are living in 1, Dainter Street, Brecon and Herbert is now working as a dentist.

Herbert enlists in Cardiff and joins the Welsh Regiment, 16th (Cardiff City) Battalion leaving for Le Havre, France in December 1915. The Battalion became part of the 115th Brigade of the 38th Welsh Division and this Division was used to assault and clear Mametz Wood following the capture of Mametz on July 1st, 1916. It suffered severe casualties and did not return to major action until over a year later.

**Private Patrick George Kennedy**

South Wales Borderers, Brecknock Battalion, service no.  
200612

Died on Active Service January 29th, 1917 in India, aged 22  
Commemorated at the Kirkee Memorial, Mumbai (Bombay),  
Maharashtra, India

Patrick was born in Chepstow in 1894 a son of James and Elizabeth Kennedy. His father was a confectioner and baker. By 1911 he has left school and is working at the Post Office, but later that year is appointed to Brecon as a clerk and worked in the town for a number of years.

Patrick enlisted in Brecon and joined the Brecknock Battalion of the South Wales Borderers, travelling to Asia in July 1915. He later went to Mhow in India with the Battalion

He was treated for enteric (intestinal) problems in Cumballa Hospital, Bombay but unfortunately died. Patrick was initially buried in Bombay (Sewri) Cemetery but later reburied at Kirkee War Cemetery.

**Private John Henry Kingdon**

South Wales Borderers 1st Brecknock Battalion, service no.  
200135

Died 22nd November 1918, aged 25

Commemorated at the Tehran War Cemetery, Iran

Born in 1893 in Cardiff, son of John Joseph and Jane Kingdon. His father was originally from Cardiff and John and his sisters, Alexander and Mabel, were born there. The family moved to Newport in about 1900. Emma Jane was born there in about 1902. They move to 1, Lion Yard, Brecon by 1911. John worked as an apprentice cycle fitter, Alex an apprentice plumber and the girls still at school. John's father died in 1917 at 55 and had worked as a baker for Mr Hood Williams at 34, The Watton for many years. Due to recent ill health he moved to confectionery opening a small shop in The Watton. John's mother Jane moved back to Cardiff.

Alex, John's younger brother had been a corporal in the Church Lads Brigade with a very good record and had joined the army himself by 1917. John enlisted at the outbreak of war and joined the Brecknockshire Battalion of the South Wales Borderers. He went to Aden in early July 1915 with the Brecknocks but he was later attached to the Royal Engineers as part of a Wireless Signals unit. He served all through the war and died in Mesopotamia, of pneumonia, 11 days after the armistice.

He was engaged to a cousin, Edith, from Cardiff.



**Private Michael Knight**

Royal Army Medical Corps, 27th Field Ambulance no. 2962

Formerly South Wales Borderers 8486

Killed in Action 25th April 1918, aged 32

Commemorated at Tyne Cot Memorial, Zonnebeke, West  
Flanders, Belgium

Michael was born in Brecon in 1886 to Michael and Annie Knight. His father was born in Ireland and was a serving soldier with the South Wales Borderers. Michael's parents were married in Brecon in 1884 and his younger sister Janie was born in the town in 1890. The family were living at Brecon Barracks in 1891.

By 1901 the 14 year old Michael was working as a porter and staying with the Clarke family at 71, The Watton, Brecon, but ten years later, in 1911, Michael is a boarder in Swansea working as a cutter. He is lodging with Mr David Griffiths, a dock labourer, and his family, along with four other cutters.

Michael enlisted in Newport in 1914 and was initially with the South Wales Borderers, but later transferred to the Royal Army Medical Corps working with a field ambulance unit. he entered the Western Front in August 1914.

**Private George Thomas Knowles**

South Wales Borderers, 2nd Battalion, service no. 11261

Killed in action at Gallipoli on June 11th, 1915, aged 21

Commemorated at the Helles Memorial, Turkey



George was born in Brecon in 1893, the son of Frank and Charlotte Ann Knowles, and lived at 18, Pendre, Brecon. His father Frank worked as a gardener. By 1901 the family had moved to Penlan Lodge in The Struet and George attended Pendre School. Ten years later they were living at 64, The Watton with

father, Frank, now working as a groundsman for the Brecon Sports Club, and George was working as a bricklayer's labourer at this time. George was one of eleven children of whom seven were alive in 1911.

Frank had previously served in the military and rejoined as a reservist, serving in Pembroke.

George enlisted in Tonypandy at the outbreak of the war in 1914 and joined the South Wales Borderers, entering France in November of that year, although he was later wounded and invalided home with frostbite. He later went to the Dardanelles, Turkey to fight in the Gallipoli campaign and was initially reported missing in early July 1915, but was subsequently confirmed as killed in action. In January 1916,

before his death had been confirmed, George's mother received a letter from a soldier attached to the Essex Regiment enclosing a well-preserved photograph of George's little sister. The soldier had found it on the Peninsula but did not know who it belonged to. As it had Mrs Knowles address on the back he had felt it his duty to return it to her. George had carried this photograph with him. The family later moved to Pontardawe, Glamorgan.

**Private Benjamin Alec Lane**

South Wales Borderers, 4th Battalion, C Coy, service no.  
27502

Killed in action in Mesopotamia on February 14th, 1917  
Buried at Al Basrah, Iraq. Commemorated in the Basrah  
Memorial

Benjamin was born in Kempley, Gloucestershire in about 1877, a son of Allen and Elizabeth Lane. His father was an agricultural labourer and his mother a tailoress. He was the youngest of seven children. The family lived in Gloucestershire for many years but in 1896 Allen died. Benjamin worked as a farm servant and later cowman living at home in Gloucestershire with his widowed mother.

In 1912 Benjamin marries Rosina Sleeman. Rosina was born in Cornwall but in 1911 was working as a nurse domestic at the Vicarage in Kempley. They had two children, a daughter Mary born in 1913 in Gloucestershire and then a son John born in 1916 in Brecon. They were living at Penoyre at the time of Benjamin's death. Their daughter Mary continued to live in Brecon.

Benjamin enlisted in Brecon and seems to have spent some time at the depot in Brecon before going to fight in Mesopotamia with the Borderers as part of the 13th Western Division.

**Company Sergeant Major Aaron Letton**

South Wales Borderers A Company 1st Battalion, service no.  
8198

Killed in Action 10th November 1917, aged 32

Commemorated at West-Vlaanderen, Belgium, Tyne Cot  
Memorial

Aaron Letton was born in Brecon in 1885 to Joseph and Catherine Letton (nee Downing).

Joseph was born in Essex and was himself a soldier with the 24th Regiment South Wales Borderers, having spent 36 years with the colours, rising to quartermaster sergeant major. He served many years abroad and later spent eighteen years stationed in Brecon and continued to live there after retirement. Catherine was born in Ireland and was a widow with three sons when she married Joseph. They had three more sons and a daughter, of whom Aaron was the youngest.

In 1891 Joseph was still a serving soldier and the family were living at Brecon Barracks. There were five children at home at this time. Joseph retired from the army in about 1892 but continued to work at the Barracks and in 1901 he was the canteen manager at Brecon Barracks and Aaron, aged 16, and brother Arthur, aged 18, were canteen workers at the Barracks.

Catherine died in 1904 and by 1911 Joseph was a widower living at 44 The Watton, as an army pensioner. Aaron was a

lance corporal living at Shornmead Fort near Gravesend and listed his trade as assistant grocer.

Already a serving soldier Aaron went to the Western Front on November 5th 1914 and went through numerous battles during his three years on the front line. On the evening of November 9th 1917 the Battalion moved up ready to launch an assault with Canadian forces near Brielen in Belgium, not far from Ypres and in the early hours of the 10th the attack began. Conditions were fairly good to start with but heavy rain soon made movement difficult. Fighting continued all day with fierce counter attacks from the enemy, as well as artillery and aircraft fire. Casualties were heavy with ten officers and 372 men killed or wounded. This attack was at the end of the second Battle of Passchendaele, as part of the third Battle of Ypres.

In his will Aaron gave his address as 15, Conway Street Brecon and he left everything to his brother Arthur.

**Private John Sydney Letton**

Montgomeryshire Yeomanry 1st/1st with the Household  
Cavalry, service no. 2866

Died October 2nd, 1916, in Egypt, aged 26

Buried at Cairo War Memorial Cemetery, Egypt

John, known as Jack, was born about 1890, son of John and Elizabeth Letton. living at 92, The Watton, Brecon. His father was a mason and died in the early 1890s. His mother remarried John Watkins of Brecon, also a mason. The family remained at the same address.

Jack joined the Territorial Force of the Brecknock Battalion in March 1909 at 19 and was a Carriage Painter (apprentice) at Rich and Sons, The Watton. By 21 Jack was a fully-fledged carriage painter. He served and trained with the Brecknock Battalion until at least 1912. He enlisted in the Regular Army at Bargoed in November 1914, with the Army Service Corps. His previous service was noted but he was rejected on health grounds. He subsequently served with the Montgomeryshire Yeomanry Dragoons as part of the Household Cavalry and Cavalry of the Line. The 1st Montgomery Yeomanry were initially a mounted force but were dismounted in November 1915 prior to sailing to the Middle East in March 1916. There they joined with the Welsh Border Mounted Brigade to form the 4th Dismounted Brigade.

Jack served in Egypt and saw active service against the Turks but died of heart failure near Cairo in 1916, aged 26 years.

**Private Clifford Lewis**

South Wales Borderers, Brecknock Btn, service no. 2967

Died April 6th, 1916, aged 17

Buried at St David's Churchyard Brecon

Cliff was born in Carmarthenshire in 1899, youngest child of David and Ann Lewis. The family had moved to Brecon by 1901 to 37, Newmarch Street, Llanfaes and David was assistant warden at Brecon Gaol. Unfortunately, Cliff's father died in the 1900s but his mother remarried William Jones and in 1911 the family lived at 10, Newmarch Street, Llanfaes, Brecon. Cliff had two brothers and two sisters and in 1911 his elder brothers, Fred, Sidney and their stepfather worked on the Brecon and Neath railway. Cliff was a school shop assistant in the boot business. Fred and Sidney both joined up early in the war and served with the 1st Brecknocks. By late 1915 Cliff too had joined the Brecknocks, enlisting with the 2nd Battalion although not yet 17 years old. The Brecon and Radnor Express wrote a small article in the November referring to the three brothers all serving with the same regiment, although Fred and Sidney were in India and Cliff remained in Britain. In 1916 Cliff was taken ill whilst in Skipton and was admitted to the local cottage hospital where he died of double pneumonia after a short period of illness. His body was brought back to Brecon for a military funeral and burial in St David's churchyard. A band and firing party were in attendance, as were staff of the Brecknocks based at the Depot in Brecon.



**Private Albert Edward Lowe**

Monmouthshire Regiment, 2nd Battalion, service no. 267495

Killed in Action in Belgium, April 12th, 1918, aged 21

Commemorated at the Ploegsteert Memorial, Hainault,  
Belgium



Albert, known as Bertie, was born in 1895, the son of Thomas and Alice Lowe of 16, Newgate Street, Llanfaes, Brecon. In 1901 Thomas was working as a railway drayman and Albert, 5 was the second youngest of six children living at home. Whilst the parents, with younger brother Charlie and three new siblings continued to live in Newgate Street in 1911, the other children had left home including Bertie who was working as a cow

boy for the Morgan family at Ty Uchaf, Trawscoed, near Felinfach.

Bertie joined the Territorial Force at Brecon on November 6th, 1914 when aged 20 years, and listed his occupation as farmer. He transferred to the Monmouthshire Regiment on July 30th, 1916 before embarking for France in early August. His military records show a hospital stay in May 1917 and a leave

to the UK. in November of that year, when he was reported as looking fit and well.

In April 1918 he was initially reported missing with notification to the family being reported in the local paper in July. An entry in the December edition of the parish magazine stated he was still listed missing.

At the date of his death the 2nd Monmouthshire were serving as part of the 29th Division in the Battles of the Lys, which were fought in the Ypres Salient in response to the German Spring Offensive. In particular, on April 12th the 29th Division were at the start of the Battle of Hazebrouck, and fought in the defence of Nieppe Forest.

In 1920 his parents and eight siblings are still alive with most of them listed as still living at Newgate Street and in 1921 his father received his memorial scroll and plaque, with his medals being issued in 1922.

### **Lieutenant Richard Aveline Maybery**

Royal Flying Corps, 56th Squadron. Military Cross and Bar  
Killed in Action, Alexandria, December 19th, 1917, aged 22  
Buried at Flesquieres Hill British Cemetery, Nord, France



Richard Aveline Maybery was born in Brecon in January 1895, the only son of Henry Oxenford Aveline Maybery, a solicitor, and his wife Lucy (nee Cobb); they lived at The Priory, Brecon. The family were actively involved in public life in Breconshire for some time, and had connections with the Wilkins, Lloyd, Best and de Winton families.

Richard was educated at Wellington College, Berkshire, before going to Military College at Sandhurst. Afterwards he was Gazetted as Second Lieutenant (21st Lancers) on September 17th 1913. At the outbreak of war, he served in the North West Frontier province until during fighting at Shrabkadr on September 15th, 1915 he was wounded.

Apparently bored during his rehabilitation and unable to sit on a horse he became involved in observing for a unit of the Royal Flying Corps who were based nearby. He later travelled to Egypt and trained as a pilot obtaining his Wings on May 26th, 1917; then posted to France with 56 Squadron

alongside aces James McCudden, Arthur Rhys Davies and Keith Muspratt.

He served in France and Flanders from July 5th, 1917 and quickly proved to be one of the best pilots in the squadron, scoring six victories in July, including one on his first patrol.

He was awarded the Military Cross and later a bar for the two incidents related in the following extracts:

*Lt. Richard Aveline Maybery, Lrs. and RFC*

*'For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. After attacking two aerodromes in succession at very low altitudes, and inflicting considerable damage, he attacked and dispersed a number of mounted men and then attacked a goods train. He next attacked and shot down a hostile machine at 500 feet, and before returning attacked a passenger train. On numerous occasions he has attacked, single handed, large hostile formations and set a fine example by his gallantry and determination.'*

Supplement to the London Gazette, 9 January 1918  
(30466/627)

*'Lt. Richard Aveline Maybery, M.C., Lrs. and R.F.C. For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty as leader of offensive patrols for three months, during which he personally destroyed nine enemy aeroplanes and drove down three out of control. On one occasion, having lost his patrol, he attacked a formation of eight enemy aeroplanes. One was seen to crash and two others went down, out of control, the formation being completely broken up.'*

Supplement to the London Gazette, 23 April 1918  
(30645/4858)

*'Richard Maybery scored his 21st victory in December 1917, over Bourlon Wood, downing an enemy Albatross D V aeroplane, but as he followed the plane to the ground his own machine was hit by anti-aircraft fire and he crashed south of the village of Heynecourt. He was buried by members of the German Flakbatterie in their cemetery at Heynecourt. later being removed from there after the Armistice and placed in Flesquieres Hill British Cemetery.'*

In a letter to Mrs Maybery, Richard`s Commanding Officer wrote:

*'Your son had just crashed down his 20th Hun in flames, when his own machine was seen to be going down. It was very misty and the fighting was severe, and in the mist another German came from behind and above, and shot him down.'*

Royal Flying Corps Communiqué no. 119 (dated 19 December, 1917) confirms:

*'An SE5 formation of 56 Squadron saw eight EA [enemy aircraft] scouts south of Masnieres, so dived at them. Captain R.A. Maybery failed to return from this combat and was last seen behind an EA which he had shot down in flames. This pilot has accounted for 20 EA and his is the only machine missing during the day.'*

**Lance Bombardier Cyril Stuart Moore**

Royal Garrison Artillery No 2 Depot, service no. 146600

Died of Injuries Received July 6th, 1918.

Beechwood Red Cross Hospital Hereford, aged 23

Buried at Hereford Cemetery, Herefordshire, United  
Kingdom

Cyril was born at Malvern in 1895, the second son of George William and Constance Helen Moore. During his early years the family continued to live in Malvern where George was a butcher. Later they moved to Wales and by 1911 his father was landlord of Cwm Inn at Avenue Road, Brecon. His mother and older sister, Beatrice, aged 22, helped to run the public house. Cyril, then 16 years old was a grocer's apprentice and his younger brother Lionel attended school.

Cyril enlisted in the army in September 1914 at Pentre, Glamorgan initially joining the Army Service Corps as a private and being promoted Sergeant only weeks after. He later moved to the Royal Garrison Artillery.

His wife was Eleanor Mary Vaughan, known as Nellie, and the couple married in March 1917 at Leominster, Herefordshire and were later living at The Lichfield Vaults, Church Street, Hereford. Nellie later remarried and became Mrs Tudge.

Cyril was wounded and later died of his injuries on 6th July 1918.

### **Sergeant Christmas Morgan**

South Wales Borderers, 1st Battalion, service no. 8014

Killed in action February 19th, 1916, aged 32

Commemorated: Arras Memorial at Faubourg-D'Amiens  
Cemetery, Arras



Christmas Morgan was born in 1885 in Glamorganshire to Thomas and Hannah Morgan. His father was a coal miner in 1891 but by 1901 the family had moved to Yorkshire where Chris's father and two elder brothers were working on the railway. There were 11 children living at home at this time.

By 1911 Hannah has moved to Hull, and there were now only six children living with their mother. Christmas had left home by this time and enlisted in the army.

In 1909 he was a private in the South Wales Borderers based at the barracks in Brecon and in February that year he was married in Brecon to Ada Matilda Rose Kate Skinner, known as Kate, and they lived at 5, John Street, Brecon.

By 1911 he was a lance corporal and they had their first child, Harry. They had three children altogether although one died young. The two boys in the picture are Harry (standing) with Bert on the chair

Christmas continued in the army and rose to the rank of sergeant. He went to France in late December 1915 and was killed in action in France in February 1916. Kate received letters of sympathy from two officers.

Lieutenant Colonel Collier, commanding the battalion, wrote:

*'.... your husband died a very glorious death for his country on the 19th (Feb.). the regiment had to make an attack on two large mine craters the Germans were holding and your husband gallantly assisted in the attack on one by getting his Lewis gun on the top of the crater and opening fire on the enemy inside. He was hit through the head by a bullet and killed instantly, so there was no pain or lingering ..... I had, as you know, the greatest regard and affection for your husband, and feel I have lost a true friend'*

Lieutenant Webb of Chris' platoon wrote:

*'We were both together and he fell at my side when taking part in an attack on a dangerous position. He did not suffer, but was killed instantly. I personally saw to his interment which was carried out by his own men. your sacrifice and loss are shared by all those who fought on Saturday evening last (February 19th)'*

For those with long Brecon memories, the son Harry went on to be town mayor and was a long standing councillor for the Llanfaes ward.



**Private Reginald Tyndall Morgan**

Royal Army Medical Corps, 2/1st Welsh Casualty Clearing  
Station, service no. 152

Died July 28th, 1918 at Newport Sanatorium, aged 21

Buried at Brecon Cemetery

Reginald was born in Brecon in late 1896, the fourth of six children for William and Catherine E Morgan. The family lived at 2, St John's Terrace, Pendre and William worked as company secretary.

Unfortunately, Reginald's father William died in about 1907, while Reginald was still a child. The family, with Catherine at its head, remained in Pendre in 1911. Reginald worked as a solicitor's assistant for J A Jebb at this time.

By 1915 the family had moved to 91, The Struet, Brecon and it was in June of this year that Reginald enlisted in Cardiff with the Royal Army Medical Corps to serve as a private in the 2/1st Welsh Casualty Clearing Station for the duration of the war.

Reggie was discharged from the Army in September 1916 as being no longer physically fit for war service. His discharge was in relation to bronchial pneumonia and followed several months in hospital. Whilst he had several medical reports subsequently, he remained unfit for service and was listed as an army pensioner and awarded a Silver War Badge. He returned to Brecon and worked as a clerk for the Breconshire Education Authority based at the County Hall.

Reggie died in the Newport Sanatorium and his body was transported to Brecon by train for a military funeral. The train was met by a firing party and a squad of soldiers from the Barracks. At the cemetery the usual three volleys were fired and the last post was sounded.

At the County School governors meeting before the funeral the Bishop of Swansea said they all appreciated Reginald's worth and greatly regretted his death.

**Private William Edwin Morgan**

South Wales Borderers 4th Battalion. service no. 27794

Killed in action in Mesopotamia on April 30th, 1917, aged 19

Commemorated at the Basra War Memorial, Iraq



William was born in the Breconshire village of Llanspyddid in January 1898 the eldest child of William Morgan and Annie Elenore Morgan (nee Price). His father was born in the county and his mother in Radnorshire.

In 1901 when William was three the family was still living in the village at cottage number 4 and his father was a waggoner. By 1911 the family was living at Church Road, Llanfrynach and William, then thirteen, was a newsboy. His father was now employed by the Midland Railway as a coalman. Later they moved to Avenue Court, Brecon. Prior to joining the colours William worked at the fitting shops of Brecon and Merthyr Railway in Machen.

In October, 1914, when he was sixteen William enlisted in the Brecknockshire (Reserve) Battalion at Brecon, and went to Aden in early July 1915 with other troops to join the Brecknocks already there.

After the Affair at Lahej,<sup>19</sup> he went to Mhow in India but later volunteered to go to Mesopotamia and transferred, with others, to the South Wales Borderers, 4th Battalion in October 1916 and they were involved in fighting there from February 1917 onwards. It was there during a big attack on 30th April 1917 that he was killed in action, as was his friend from Llanfrynach, Private John Walters. Other Brecon men died that day in the fighting including Private Charles Edward Bather, Private William John Jenkins and Lieutenant Stephen Best.

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<sup>19</sup> See page 216

**Private George Morris**

Royal Welsh Fusiliers 19th Battalion, service no. 29308

Killed in action April 21st 1917, aged 19

Commemorated Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France



George was born at Brecon in 1898 to Morgan and Margaret Ellen Morris, both from Brecon, who had two other sons and a daughter younger than George. During George's childhood Morgan lived at 8, Mill Green, Brecon and later at 15, Mill Street, Brecon. In 1911 the young family, including George resided at 7, Mill Street. George, at thirteen, attended Pendre school, and his father was a council labourer. In June 1915 at seventeen George enlisted in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers at Welshpool, Montgomeryshire but appears to have not been truthful about his age and birthplace. He was baker. He then spent some time training in Aldershot before embarking for France in June 1916. George was wounded by a gunshot to his right hand in early August but returned to service a week later. He is described as a sniper and he had been fighting in France for eleven months before being killed in action. His father Morgan, aged 39, was also fighting in France at the time but he survived the war and returned to the then family home of 6, Mill Street where he lived until his death in 1953.

### **Sergeant John Harold Morris**

South Wales Borderers, Brecknockshire Battalion, service  
no. 200521

Died at Mhow, India on September 13th, 1918, aged 37

Buried at the English Cemetery, Mhow

Commemorated at the Kirkee 1914-18 Memorial. India

John was born in about 1882, in St Mary's, Brecon. In 1891 John is shown as a 9 year old, living with his parents, John, 46 and Rose, 42 and also his siblings William, 7; Rose, 5 and Gladys, 4. The family are shown as living at 2, High Street and his father's occupation is listed as chemist. His father was born in Breconshire, whilst his mother was born in Sussex.

By 1901 John is 19 years old and shown as working as a chemist's assistant to his father. The address is now 3, High Street and William and Gladys are also still there, although Rose is not shown.

In late 1907 John married Mary Florence Sarah Price, also a Breconian and daughter of Mr. Price of the Sarah Siddons Public House. Their son Frederick was born in about 1909. By 1911 John's occupation is shown as chemist and at 29 he is living with his wife Mary, 28 and two year old son Frederick at 3, Lansdowne Terrace, Brecon. John was popular in the town and associated himself with both the football and cricket clubs.

John enlisted in Brecon a few days before war broke out, and joined the Brecknock Battalion of the South Wales Borderers

as a private. He travelled with the Brecknocks to Aden, arriving on July 3rd, 1915 and later went with the Battalion to Mhow. As a chemist his services as a dispenser were immediately requisitioned by Dr Tomley and he worked closely with him throughout his service, in both Aden and Mhow.

John was an acting sergeant when he died of pneumonia at the Mhow station hospital in India on September 13th, 1918, less than two months before the war ended. He was buried with full military honours including eight buglers sounding the last post.

He was a member of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes (Usk Lodge) and was included in a service of remembrance held by them at Brecon Priory Church in June 1919.

**There is a link death cannot sever, love and remembrance  
last forever**

**Private Thomas Morris**

Royal North Lancashire Regiment, 2/5th Battalion, service  
no. 244891; 5/10003

Killed in action October 26th, 1917, aged 19

Commemorated at Tyne Cot Memorial, West Vlaanderen,  
Belgium

Thomas was born in Brecon in December 1897, the youngest child of William and Susan Morris. Their address at the time was the Union House (workhouse), St. David's Parish, Brecon with William listed as a labourer. By 1901 the family were living at 5, Silver Street, Llanfaes, Brecon with William working as a market labourer. All five children are shown at this address with their parents.

In 1911 the family are still in Silver Street, although now in number 4. Thomas's father is a widower, the eldest son William (Junior) is a sailor, and Thomas is not at home but appears to be in school in Neath. The establishment he is at was originally a reformatory school, although in 1907 it was renamed as a Farm School and much later became an approved school.

Elizabeth, a twin daughter also appears to have left home, whilst twin Alice is still there along with Susie, a grandchild to William. Thomas is shown on his attestation forms as a coach painter.

Thomas enlisted in June 1916 but is initially posted as a reserve and not mobilised until October that year. He then



spends some months training before embarking from Southampton for Le Havre in February 1917.

He is wounded in action in late October and subsequently reported as missing and later accepted as dead.

The Loyal North Lancashire Regiment as part of the 55th (west Lancashire) Division were involved in much fighting, not least as part of the Third Battle of Ypres including Pilken Ridge (July/August) and Menin Road Ridge (September) and suffered heavy casualties.

On 26th October 1917, the 2/5th battalion were involved in the fighting at Poelcappelle. Before 6.00 a.m. that morning three companies began to attack the enemy. The ground was almost impassable and the Battalion struggled to use their rifles or Lewis guns and had to rely on the bayonet. In this manner the Battalion accounted for some 500 of the enemy and captured eight German machine guns. Casualties had been heavy and probably included Private Thomas Morris.

### **Private Francis Alfred Ismay Musk**

Coldstream Guards 2nd Battalion, service no. 19747

Killed in action in France on August 27th, 1918, aged 20

Buried at the Croiselles British Cemetery in France



Francis was born in Brecon in 1898, the only son of Richard William and Agnes Mary Musk (nee Summers), who had married in Kent in 1897. His father was a music teacher who worked at both the Brecon County School and Christ College. In 1901 he was listed as a professor of music, whilst his entry for 1911 records

him as a teacher of music and organist. He was also organist at St Mary's church in Brecon.

The family lived in 6, Bowen Terrace in Brecon in 1901 and 1911, with Francis being an only child, although his parents had moved to The Cottage, Llanfaes, Brecon by the time of Francis' death in 1918.

Francis was educated at the County School, Brecon and Christ College and worked as a bank clerk in Bath before going into the army.

He joined the Coldstream Guards on attaining the age of 18 and went through a good deal of fighting on the Western Front. The 2nd Coldstream had recently taken part in fierce

fighting round Bapaume and were now to take part in the Battle of the Scarpe. Attacking through the wood the Coldstream were held up by heavy machine gunfire. The enemy counter attacked from South of Croiselles and forced a withdrawal. There was apparently fierce hand-to-hand fighting and total casualties among the 2nd Coldstream for 27th August are three hundred and ten killed or wounded. Francis was initially posted as missing but subsequently confirmed as killed in St Leger Wood in August 1918. He was awarded the Allied Victory Medal, and the British War Medal.

There is a small bronze plaque in St Mary's Church, Brecon to commemorate the death of Francis Alfred Ismay Musk. In 1921 Francis' mother, in memory of her son, presented a framed Roll of Honour to the church that also hangs there to commemorate the World War One fallen of the parish.

**Gunner David Evan Parry**

Royal Field Artillery, C Btn., 119th Brigade, service no.

W/3360

Died of Wounds on July 18th, 1916 at the Somme in France  
aged 33

Buried at Heilly Station Cemetery, Mericourt- L'Abbe,  
France

David was born in September 1883 in Brecon and baptised later that month at St Mary's Church. His parents were James and Jane and the family lived in Mill Street, Brecon. James was a platelayer for the Midland Railway. James is originally from Hereford; Jane was born in Brecon. By 1901 the family are still in Mill Street. David and his father are general labourers, as is his; younger brother John, 16 is a mason. In the 1911 Census David has left home and is boarding in Llansamlet, Glamorgan, working as a platelayer. David enlists in Swansea with the Royal Field Artillery as a gunner and arrives in France in December 1915. He was killed in an advance in mid-July 1916, having been in France for about seven months. The 119th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery fought as part of the 38th (Welsh) Division during 1916. In June and July, they were involved in the initial bombardments and then the first phase of the battles of the Somme, that being the Battle of Albert and it is likely that David sustained his fatal wounds here. His younger brother John, now living in The Struet, Brecon, was serving with the Brecknocks at the time.

**Private Charles James Robert Pawley**

Machine Gun Corps (Infantry) 61st Company, service no.  
123633

Killed in Action on March 22nd, 1918 in France, aged 32  
Commemorated at the Pozieres Memorial, France

Charles was born in Norfolk in February 1886, to Robert and Harriet, nee Lake. The family had moved to Middlesbrough by 1891 where Robert was a labourer in a steelworks. By 1901 the family had returned to Norfolk and Charles and his father were agricultural labourers. In 1911, Robert and Harriet remained in Norfolk but the children had left home. It is not clear where Charles was, although there was a Charles Pawley working as a baker in The Watton, Brecon. In 1917 Charles married Annie Elizabeth Price of Danygaer Place in Brecon, and previously of Wern Farm, Llanfrynach. The wedding was held at the Priory Church. Charles enlisted in the army in Swansea, initially joining the Army Service Corps, he was later assigned to the Machine Gun Corps. The 61st Company Machine Gun Corps fought with the 20th (Light) Division from 1916 until March 1918 when machine gun battalions were formed and joined the 20th Machine Gun Battalion on March 15th, 1918. The date of his death suggests he was involved in the Battle of Saint Quentin which was the first phase of the 1918 Battles of the Somme.

Charles was killed only three weeks before the birth of his son, William.

**Private Edgar Pearce**

Durham Light Infantry, 2nd Btn., service no. 4/9946

Died of Wounds on December 19th, 1915, aged 29

Buried at Hop Store Cemetery, Ypres, Belgium



Edgar was born in June, 1886 in Brecon and baptised in St Mary's Church in August of that year. He was the eldest son of Charles Pearce (a plasterer) and his wife Annie (nee Jones). Charles was also born in Brecon in 1862 and married Annie on 18th June, 1884.

By 1891, when Edgar was 5 years old, the family were living at 46 The Struet, Brecon and he had 3 sisters. At this time his father was a steam-riser with the Midland Railway. Twenty years later in 1911 the family were still in The Struet, but now at number 43. Charles continued to work for the railway, but was now a boiler washer. Edgar, now 24 and single, joined his father working for the railway as a fitter's labourer. The family had now grown, his parents having been married for 26 years and having had 9 children, although one had died.

Edgar enlisted at Ferndale on September 1st, 1914 and joined the Durham Light Infantry and left for France in August 1915. He is listed as dying of wounds after a shell wound to the skull. He was admitted to a field dressing station, but died

the same day. Edgar is buried at the Hop Store Cemetery which is described as being a little narrow cemetery at Ypres, between a hedge and the hop store. This was very close to the battlefield and used as an advanced dressing station and reported to be in range of the enemy guns.

The 2nd Battalion of the Durham Light Infantry served with the 6th Division at this time and would have fought in the Battle of Loos. On December 19th, 1915 holding the lines of the Ypres salient they faced the first German phosgene gas attack and many men were lost to the effects of the gas as well as shellfire.

Edgar's three brothers Charles, Frederick and William all served in the army during the war.

**And we know that all things work together for good**

**Private Frederick John Pearce**

Oxford and Buckingham Light Infantry 7th Battalion service  
no. 15059

Killed in Action May 9th 1917 Aged 24  
Commemorated at Doiran Memorial, Greece

Frederick was born in September 1897 in Brecon, to Frederick and Alice Pearce and was baptised in St John's Church on October 17th. In 1901, when he was three, the family were living at 54, The Struet and he had two older sisters and a younger brother. His father, listed as a labourer at the baptism was now shown as a mason and was still in this occupation in 1911 by which time the family had moved to 71, The Struet. The family had now increased with the addition of another daughter and three sons.

Frederick enlisted in Swansea and joined the Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry. He went to France in September 1915. He was reported missing after fighting in Salonica in May 1917 but his parents had to wait a further seventeen months for the news that he was presumed killed during the action on May 9th.

Whilst Frederick is listed in army records as being 24 at the time of his death, his actual age would have been about 19 and a half, indicating he probably falsified his age at enlistment.

The 7th Battalion was formed in Oxford in 1914 and landed at Boulogne in September 1915, but moved to Salonika in



November of that year. They fought as part of the 78th Brigade within the 26th Division.

In April and May 1917 they were involved in the first two Battles of Doiran where British forces initially attacked the Bulgarians, gained valuable ground and resisted strong counter attacks. Over time in April they were forced back to their initial positions suffering heavy casualties. The second battle involved another assault commencing on May 8th but through the night the British were defeated and suffered enormous losses.

**Private George Rhys Phillips**

Lincolnshire Regiment 1st Battalion, service no. 38925

Died of Wounds August 5th 1918, aged 20

Commemorated at Niederzwehren Cemetery Hessen,  
Germany

George was born to James Henry Phillips and Hannah Maria (nee Robbins), in 1897 in Brecon. His parents were married in 1892 in Gloucester and his father was a railway employee, working in Hereford where 2 of their children were born before the family moved to Brecon. In 1901 the family were living at 6, White Lion Terrace, Brecon.

By 1911 they lived at 2, King Street, Brecon. His father was now aged 42 and a railway engine driver. George, aged 13, was in school part time and also worked as a draper's errand boy. He later worked for the Midland Railway in Brecon.

George enlisted in about January 1918, joining the Lincolnshire Regiment and was taken prisoner by the Germans that Summer but unfortunately died in Germany of his wounds received in Flanders. Two of his brothers were also serving at this time.

The 1st Battalion, Lincolnshire Regiment fought as part of the 21st Brigade within the 62nd Division during 1918 and were involved in many battles on the Western Front including Lys, Aisne and Marne.

**Private Alfred Evan Price**

Machine Gun Corps (Infantry) 18th Battalion, service no.  
119961

Killed in Action April 4th 1918, aged 19  
Commemorated on the Pozieres Memorial, France

Alfred was born to Edward Thomas and Catherine (Kate) Price in Brecon about 1899. His father was born in Montgomery, whilst his mother came from Sunderland.

The 1901 Census lists him as aged 2 years and living at Brecon Barracks with his mother who was born in Sunderland, and 2 brothers. His father is not listed so could have been in the Army himself and posted elsewhere at this time.

On the 1911 Census the family were living at 55, The Watton, Brecon. Alfred's father Edward is 41 and shown with the occupation of groom. Whilst there were four brothers, Alfred is not shown and presumably away from home.

Alfred's service record shows that he initially joined the South Wales Borderers and later moved to the Machine Gun Corps. His battalion fought as part of the 18th (Eastern) Division and were involved in the Battle of the Somme in 1918. On April 4th, 1918 they took part in the Battle of Avre. The men who died in these battles have no known grave and are commemorated on the Pozieres Memorial in France.

### **Private Albert John Price**

Royal Army Medical Corps. 55th Field Ambulance, service  
no. 368420

Killed in action October 22nd, 1917 Age 33

Interred in Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Flanders,  
Belgium



Bert was born in Llanfaes, Brecon, in 1884, one of eight children of William and Anna Price. The family lived at 6, Orchard Street, Llanfaes and William was a life assurance salesman. Bert's mother Anna died in early 1901 and the family moved to 14, Orchard Street.

Bert attended the Brecon County School and later worked as a clothier's shop assistant in Tredegar, whilst living at 102, Commercial Street, Tredegar in 1911. Bert married Mary Jane Burch on 21st December, 1915 in Swansea, and it is there that he had enlisted two months earlier. At the time of his death, Mary Jane was living in Albion House, Rhymney.

Bert initially joined the Welsh Ambulance Service as a Territorial but agreed to serve outside the United Kingdom if required. He embarked for France on June 3rd, 1917 arriving at Boulogne a day later and then moving on to Rouen on June

5th. Bert was posted to the 55th Field Ambulance later that month.

The 55th Field Ambulance served with the 18th (Eastern) Division and were involved in the Third Battle of Ypres, which included a number of phases and it seems likely that he was wounded in action sometime after the First Battle of Passchendaele on October 12th,



1917 and died at Number 3, Canadian Clearing Station, Remy Siding, Flanders.

**Private David Richard Price**

Monmouthshire Regiment 1st/2nd Btn., service no. 15610

Killed in Action November 23rd 1916, aged 19

Commemorated at A. I. F. burial Ground, Flers, Somme  
France

David was born to Evan and Frances Price in about 1897 in Brecon. His parents married in about 1894. On the 1901 census the family were living at the Lamb Inn, 48, The Watton, Brecon where Evan was publican. There were 5 children at this time with the eldest two shown as born in Merthyr Cynog, where Frances came from. The next two, including David were born in St David's parish in Llanfaes, whilst the youngest at this time was born in St Mary's parish a month before the Census date. David's army records list him as born in Dinas and residing in Pendre, Brecon.

By 1911 the family had moved to Gardeners Cottage, Dinas Road, Llanfaes Brecon and his father's occupation was gardener. Four more children were listed, all born in Llanfaes with the eldest of these born in 1902.

After his death his mother is recorded as living at 14 Charles Street, The Watton, Brecon.

The Monmouthshire Regiment was a territorial force, and the 1/2nd Battalion became part of the 29th Division, as a Pioneer Battalion. During 1916 they fought mainly on the Western front including various phases of the Battle of the Somme.

**Lance Corporal David Price Williams**

South Wales Borderers, 2nd Battalion, service no. 11199

Killed in action April 6th, 1916, aged 26

Buried at Mesnil Ridge Cemetery, Mesnil-Martinsart,  
Somme, France

David was born about 1890 in Llanrug, Caernarvonshire, the son of John and Mary Williams. John worked as a slate loader at a quarry. The family were living in Llanrug in 1891, but by 1901 had moved to Llanberis. David's father continued to work in a quarry and was joined by his two elder sons as slate loaders.

In 1911 David is still in Llanberis, although now working as a driver and living with his married brother Robert and family. David enlisted in Brecon, joining the South Wales Borderers, initially as private and later as lance corporal. He served as David Price although it is not known if this was by choice or error.

The South Wales Borderers, 2nd Battalion fought as part of the 29th Division in 1916 and after evacuating Gallipoli in January they returned to Egypt to await their move to France in March, arriving in the area of Pont Remy. The Division remained in the Western Front for the rest of the war.

### **Sergeant Jeffrey Price**

South Wales Borderers, Brecknockshire Btn, service no. 6

Died on September 30th, 1916 in Mesopotamia, aged 31

Buried at the Basra War Cemetery, Iraq



Jeffrey was born in 1884 in Llanfihangel Nant Bran, near Brecon, a son to Jeffrey and Margaret Price (nee Williams).

His father was a farmer at 226 acre Beiliau. By 1891 the family are farming at Upper Trostre, Llanwern. There are six children at this time, the eldest 4 were all born in Llanfihangel Nant Bran between 1876 and 1884. The youngest two were born in Llanwern in 1887 and

1891, giving a good indication of when the family moved.

In 1901 the 17 year old Jeff has left home and is working as an ironmonger's clerk for Mr J. E. Nott and lodging at 13, Bridge Street, Llanfaes (The Greyhound Coffee Tavern). Ten years later Jeffrey is now an ironmonger's assistant but now boarding at Rhyd Bernard Terrace, Brecon along with his younger brother Thomas who is working as a carpenter.

Jeff enlisted in Brecon joining the Brecknockshire Battalion, South Wales Borderers. He went out to Asia arriving on July 3rd, 1915, at Aden and was immediately involved in the Lahej



Affair<sup>20</sup>. He was promoted from lance sergeant to full sergeant later that month. He went with the Brecknocks to Mhow, India but he later served in Mesopotamia where he contracted a fever that led to his death at the 3rd British Hospital, Basrah, Mesopotamia.

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<sup>20</sup> See page 216

**Private William George Price**

South Wales Borderers 5th Battalion, service no. 15447

Killed on Action August 1st 1916, aged 44

Commemorated at St Sever Cemetery, Rouen, France

William was born to James and Ann Price in about 1871 in New Church, near Chepstow, Monmouthshire. The family were living there at the time; James was a labourer. In 1881 the family lived in a house at the Rogerstone Works, Newport although his father was a shepherd. By 1891 they were living at Wern Cottage, Rogerstone (a farm cottage) and his father was a farm labourer, William, aged 20, was a dresser in the ironworks. William married Ellen (nee Haycock) in 1900 and on the 1901 Census they were shown living at Ysgyborwen Rogerstone, and his occupation was crane driver. By 1911 William and his wife lived in council housing in Risca, near Newport and he was a storekeeper in a foundry. They later moved to 62, Orchard Street, Brecon which was Ellen's address in the army records. William joined the South Wales Borderers and landed in France in mid-July 1915. They fought as part of the 19th (Western) Division, 58th Brigade and were in numerous battles on the Western Front, not least the Battle of the Somme and particularly the phase that included the Battle of Pozieres which commenced on July 23rd 1916 and went on until early September. This is probably where William received his fatal wounds.

**Gone but not forgotten**

## **The Pritchard Family**

This family are worthy of special mention as four members feature in this selection. At one time there were at least 10 family members on active service with the Army or Navy during World War One, with five of these listed at the same address, 41, The Struet.

Thomas and Rachel Pritchard lived in Chapel Street in Brecon, just off The Struet. They had ten sons between 1864 and 1884. The boys attended Pendre School in Brecon.

A number of the brothers left Brecon for jobs in different areas of South Wales, but some remained in Brecon including John who married and raised his own family, living at 41, The Struet in 1911.

Arthur and Phillip were the two of the brothers who fell in the war, along with Alfred, one of John's sons and William Jones, a stepson of John's following his remarriage in 1907.

Thomas and Rachel both died in 1907 and John's home became the family base with Henry, James and Sidney all listing this address on their service records.

**Private Alfred Pritchard**

South Wales Borderers, 4th Battalion, service no. 18783

Died on December 25th, 1915 in Malta, aged 21

Buried in Pieta Military Cemetery, Malta



Alfred was born in Brecon in 1894, a second son of John Pritchard and Margaret Ann (nee Lewis). By 1901 the family lived in 7, Prospect Close; Alfred and his elder brother John now had sisters Margaret and Sarah. Alfred's mother died in 1902 and John remarried in 1907, moving to 41, The Struet by 1911.

Alfred had moved to Pontypool for work and here, in 1913 married Annie Williams. He enlisted with the South Wales Borderers 1st Battalion in Pontypridd in February 1915. He disembarked in France on May 2nd, 1915 and was probably involved in the Battle of Aubers on May 9th, as well as subsequent fighting in Flanders where he was wounded and sent home. It is then that he was probably transferred to the Fourth Battalion. They landed at Gallipoli in July 1915 and were engaged in various actions against the Turkish Army. The Battalion suffered severe casualties from combat, disease and harsh conditions and were fully evacuated to Egypt by early January of 1916. Alfred left earlier in December 1915, having contracted dysentery. He was taken to Malta where he died from the disease on Christmas Day 1915.

**Stoker Arthur Pritchard**

Royal Naval Reserve, H.M.S. Vivid, service no. 3649.S

Died from Disease on October 17th, 1918, aged 34

Buried at Ford Park Cemetery (Pennycomequick),  
Plymouth, Devon

Arthur was born in Brecon in 1884, youngest of ten sons of Thomas and Rachel Pritchard who lived in Chapel Street for many years. By 1891 Arthur is 7 and at Pendre School. By 1901 he is working in the coal industry and boarding in Merthyr with his eldest brother Thomas, twenty years his senior. Later in 1911 at 27, he is a draper's assistant in Swansea but in 1914 he is a labourer prior to his first enlistment.

Arthur initially joined the Army enlisting in Swansea in August 1914, and assigned to the Royal Field Artillery but then posted to the Welch Regiment in Cardiff. However, he is discharged after 59 days' service as '*unlikely to become efficient*', probably referring to poor health. On his application forms he lists his brother John, of 41, The Struet, as his next of kin, both parents having died in 1907.

Arthur later joins the Royal Naval Reserve and in 1918 is as a Stoker at *HMS Vivid*, a shore based Royal Navy establishment in Devonport, Plymouth when he died from an unspecified disease. Given that five members of the base died on the same day, it is likely to have been the second wave of the Spanish flu pandemic that cost so many lives in 1918.

**Private Phillip Pritchard**

Welsh Regiment, 15th Battalion, service no. 19976  
Killed in Action on July 28th, 1917 in Flanders, Belgium  
Buried at Bard Cottage Cemetery, West Vlaanderen,  
Belgium

Phillip was born in Brecon in 1873, the fifth of ten sons born to Thomas and Rachel Pritchard of Chapel Street.

By 1881 Phillip was eight years old, living at home with his parents and six of his brothers and was attending Pendre School in Brecon. Ten years later Phillip was boarding at Vaynor, Merthyr with his brothers Tom, 27 and Charles, 17. They are all working locally as coal miners.

In 1901 Phillip was boarding in a fairly large boarding house in Tudor Street, Abergavenny and is listed as a hawker or pedlar. By 1913 he appears to be living back in Brecon, in The Struet and working as a labourer

Phillip enlists at Llandovery and joins the Welch Regiment. He arrives in France in December 1915. The date of his arrival in France and subsequent death in Flanders two years later suggest that he was involved in many battles in the trench warfare of the Western Front, particularly the Somme, 1916 and Ypres, 1917.

**Private William Jones (Pritchard)**

Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment), 10th Battalion  
service no. L/11213

Died of Wounds September 25th, 1916, aged 17

Buried at St Sever Cemetery, Rouen, France

William is born in 1899 in Builth to Margaret Ann Jones. In 1907 Margaret marries John Pritchard, a widower from Brecon.

(John is a brother of Arthur and Phillip and father of Alfred Pritchard who all feature on the Brecon Roll of Honour and in this book<sup>21</sup>. John had been married before but his first wife died in 1902.)

After their marriage in 1907, the family lived in 41, The Struet, Brecon and William attends Pendre School

When he enlisted, William's address was in South Wales, suggesting he had probably left the family home. He was listed as William Pritchard on the 1911 Brecon Census but enlists as William Jones, probably having to lie about his age to do so. He joins the Queens (Royal West Surrey) Regiment serving in France. The 10th Battalion formed part of the 41st Division, 124th Brigade.

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<sup>21</sup> See pages 151- 155

At the time of William's death, the 41st Division had just taken part in the Battle for Flers-Courcellette, a phase of the 1916 Battles of the Somme. A renewal of the offensive finally broke through the area that had proved to be so difficult since 14 July. Using a small number of tanks for the first time in history, the British Army finally captured High Wood and pressed on through Flers and up the Bapaume road to Courcellette.

The Brecon and Radnor Express report his death, listing him as a stepson of John Pritchard, who had already lost his son Alfred just nine months before.



**Private Charles Henry Prosser**

South Wales Borderers Second Battalion, service no. 25998

Killed in action in France on October 20th, 1916, aged 19

Commemorated at the Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France

Henry was born in Merthyr in 1897 but by 1901 his father has died and he is living with his widowed mother Catherine, at 41, The Struet along with his younger brother Thomas, one born in Brecon, and a lodger Charles Price, 26 a plasterer from Brecon.

Unfortunately, Thomas dies in 1902 aged two. Catherine Prosser marries Charles Price in the same year and by 1911 they are living at Silver Street, Brecon when Charles Price is shown as a labourer in a timber yard, with Henry, 15 now an apprentice railway wagon builder, shown as stepson.

He enlisted in Cefn-Coed and joined the South Wales Borderers as a private. The Second Battalion had joined the 87th Brigade within the 29th Division in 1915 and had fought through Gallipoli in 1915 before arriving in France and the Somme battlefield in 1916. The 29th were involved from the start in July through to the end in November and Henry is likely to have been killed in one of the final battles, possibly Ancre Heights.

### **Private Alfred Gordon Quarrell**

Queens (Royal West Surrey Regiment) 6th Btn., service no.  
10969

Killed in action in France on August 12th, 1918, aged 22  
Buried at Morlancourt British Cemetery No. 2, Somme,  
France



Alfred Gordon's father, also Alfred, was born in Worcestershire but by the age of 15 (1881) had left home and was working as a farm servant in Gloucestershire. By 1891 he had moved on to Llangattock where he was a domestic gardener. It was here that he probably met his first wife, Ada Kate Greening, and they were married in 1894.

By the time of Gordon's birth in 1896 they were living in Brecon. Ada died in 1899 and in 1901 Gordon was living with his widowed father in 34, High Street, Brecon, along with his one-year-old brother Gerald Mortimer and his Aunt Sarah. Alfred had started trading as a florist and fruiterer by this time. Gordon's father remarried in 1903 to Mary Margaret Probert and in 1911 the family are living in 36, High Street. with the fourteen-year-old Gordon, his eleven-year-old brother Gerald and two more brothers, William James, 7 and Charles Robert, 4.

He was educated at Brecon County School and Colston School, Bristol and was learning his father's business of florist and nurseryman at the Wisley Horticultural Gardens, Surrey.

He joined the Queens (Royal West Surrey) Regiment in Easter 1915 and he went to France on August 19th, 1915. He was wounded by a bullet at Loos in October of that year but recovered well in a London hospital and rejoined his regiment after Christmas. He returned to France in March 1916 and fought in many engagements. The 6th Battalion Queens (RWS) fought as part of the 12th (Eastern) Division under the command of the 37th Brigade. At the time of Gordon's death they were involved in the Battle of Amiens

Gordon was killed on the evening of August 12th, 1918 a piece of shell entered just below his heart and he died a few minutes later. He was buried the following afternoon in a military cemetery north of Morlancourt.

His brother Gerald also served but returned home safely.

**Private David John Rees**

Royal Welsh Fusiliers 2nd Battalion, service no.17827

Killed in action in France on July 20th 1916, aged 19

Commemorated on Thiepval Memorial, Somme, Picardie,  
France

David was born in Merthyr Tydfil in 1897, a son of William and Elizabeth (nee Harris). In 1901 the family are living in Cefn Cribwr, near Bridgend and William is a labourer. His parents were both born in Llanfaes, Brecon and were married in Brecon in 1893. By 1911 the family have moved to 24, Silver Street, Brecon. William and David are not at home, presumed to be working away. David had previously attended Llanfaes School. In 1916 William and family were living at 1, Maund's Court, Kensington, Brecon.

David enlisted in Bargoed joining the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, going to France in early May, 1915. The second battalion fought with the 19th Infantry Brigade within a number of Divisions in 1914 and 1915. In 1916 with the 33rd Division they were involved in various battles in the Somme campaign. On July 19th and 20th they took part in the attacks on High Wood. The fight for this prominent observation area went on from July 14th until mid-September. This area was the centre for attack and counter attack of attritional fighting during that period.

David's brother William also served and was wounded and in hospital in Liverpool at the time of David's death.

**Private Ivor Rees**

Cheshire Regiment 9th Btn, service no. 66147

Killed in Action 17th April 1918, aged 19

Commemorated at Zonnebeke West Flanders, Belgium

Ivor was born in Brecon in on 27th September, 1898, youngest son of Evan and Ann Rees of 69, The Struet. Evan was a cowman. By 1911 the family still occupied 69, The Struet but also at number 70 and Evan is an under-gardener, with Ivor, 12, still at school. Later Ivor worked for Mr. Lewis Meredith a local builder. Ivor initially joined a Training Reserve Battalion in March 1917 but was posted to the 9th Battalion, Cheshire Regiment at Rouen after arriving in France in January 1918. His battalion served with 58th and then the 56th Brigade within the 19th (Western) Division, experiencing some severe fighting, including the Cambrai withdrawal. In April 1918 the Division was involved in the Battles of the Lys which included a number of phases incorporating the German attack known as Operation Georgette and subsequent fighting in the valley of the River Lys and in the Flemish hills. The 19th (Western) Division were directly involved in the Battle for Bailleul between the 13th and 15th of April, immediately followed by the first Battle of Kemmel (17-19th, April). Ivor's brother David, served with the Brecknocks in India.

**God will clasp the broken chain, closer when we meet  
again**

**Lance Corporal David Richards**

South Wales Borderers 6th Battalion, service no. 17367

Died at Home on October 12th. 1918, aged 26

Remembered with Honour Llanspyddid (St Cattwg)  
Churchyard

David was born to William and Ann Richards in 1891. There were then, seven children living with the family at the Drover's Arms, 1, Newgate Street, Llanfaes, Brecon where William was the inn keeper. David's mother Ann died about 1896 and in the 1901 Census, his father was a widower with seven children, the youngest being 6, so his mother probably died when David was only 5. William was still running the Drover's Arms at this time. By 1911 William has left the pub and he and David are living at 6, Newgate Street. David's father, now 66, worked as a gardener's labourer at this time and David, 19, was a labourer in a colliery. Only two of the family are now together although the records show there were 12 children in total, of whom 9 were living in 1911.

David enlisted with the South Wales Borderers in 1914 and went to France in September 1915 serving for over 3 years in France going through a lot of hard fighting in most of the chief engagements. He was at home on leave in October 1918 when he suffered influenza followed by pneumonia, leading to his death at the Barracks hospital. David was buried with military honours at Llanspyddid on Wednesday Oct 16th 1918.

**Private Frank Richards**

South Wales Borderers 4th Battalion, service no. 12742

Killed in Action August 9th 1915, aged 29

Buried at Hill 60 Cemetery Ref 11 B 2, Turkey.

Frank Northan Richards was born to Frederick Charles and his wife Harriett Amelia, known as Minnie, on November 5th, 1885. He was christened at St David's Church on November 22nd. The family were living at 15, Orchard Street, Llanfaes at this time, although prior to this, Frank's parents had lived at the Buck Inn, 57, Orchard Street, Llanfaes where Frank's grandmother, also Harriet (Davies), was the licensed victualler.

In 1891, the family lived at 3, St David Street, Brecon. His father came from Burry Port, Glamorganshire and his mother from Monmouthshire. His father's trade was watchmaker. Frank had an older brother Harry and older sister Rose, and some ten years after his birth his younger brother and sister were born. By 1901 the family had moved to 20, Orchard Street, Llanfaes, Brecon and grandmother Harriet Davies was living with them. Frederick was listed as a journeyman watchmaker.

In about 1904 Frank married Elizabeth Jones from Leominster and in 1911 he was working as a coal hewer, and the family with 3 young children were living in Duck Street, Neath. A fourth child arrived later.

He enlisted in Neath with the South Wales Borderers, although it is recorded he was an able seaman with the Navy before this. At the end of June 1915, the Battalion sailed from Avonmouth to Mudros and landed at Gallipoli in July 1915 where there was fierce fighting. He died in the August of that year and left his wife and four children.

A subsequent report from a colleague, Private W Crane, gave an insight into Frank's death. The two were manning a machine gun against advancing Turks when Frank fell, in his comrade's arms, shot in the head and killed outright. Private Crane carried on until relieved, although wounded himself. He also remained to witness Frank's burial.

Frank had two other brothers who served in France, Harry with the Headquarters staff and Osmond in the trenches.

(See also William Osmond Richards, brother, also included in this book<sup>22</sup>)

### **For God and Country**

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<sup>22</sup> See next page



**Private William Osmond Richards**

Royal Welsh Fusiliers C Coy., 2nd Btn., service no. 11444

Killed in Action July 18th 1916, aged 20

Remembered with Honour at the Thiepval Memorial,  
Picardie France



Osmond Richards was born in January 1895 to Frederick Charles and Harriet Amelia, nee Davies, and baptised in St David's Church the following month. Osmond was the younger brother by ten years, of Frank, who was killed 11 months earlier. (See previous record).

The family were living at 20, Orchard Street, Llanfaes, Brecon at this time and Frederick was a watchmaker and jeweller working

for J Hando Ltd., Brecon.

Before enlistment Osmond was working as a locomotive engine cleaner and a member of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants since 1912. He joined up in 1914 initially with the Royal Engineers and subsequently the Royal Welsh Fusiliers and went to France in early December, 1914 taking part in some severe engagements over the following 18 months.

The Second Battalion, Royal Welsh Fusiliers fought with several divisions in France before joining the 33rd Division in November 1915. The Division took part in the opening phase of the Battle of the Somme, that being the Battle of Albert, 1st to 13th July 1916, immediately followed by the Battle of Bazentin, or Bazentin Ridge, 14th to 17th July, 1916.

His eldest brother Harry was serving as a sergeant with the Royal Welsh Fusiliers and was home on leave when the news came through of Osmond's death.

**For God and Country**

### **Captain Willie Ross**

South Wales Borderers 2nd Battalion, service no. 6082

Killed in Action 8th August 1917, aged 38

Commemorated at Artillery Wood Cemetery, Belgium



Willie was born and baptised in September 1879 in Bradford, Yorkshire. He was the second child of William and Ann Ross. William, his father, worked as a dyer's labourer and later a dyer's finisher. The family had moved to Bramley by 1891 but William continued in the same trade.

By 1901 Willie has left home and has joined the South Wales Borderers as a young man and by dint of good soldiering rose from the ranks to become a captain. He was promoted to company sergeant major in early 1915, then warrant officer, lieutenant and captain.

His service records show that he had been in the South Wales Borderers during the 2nd Boer War in South Africa and received the South Africa Medal with the Cape Colony and Orange Free State Clasps.

Willie was stationed at the depot in Brecon for a long time and was well known in the town. He married Mary Caroline Victoria Hooton in Brecon on 28th September 1907 in St Mary's Church. She was the daughter of Samuel and

Margaret Hooton and was born in Brecon in 1888. They lived at 18, Charles Street, Brecon. Her father was also in the South Wales Borderers, ex Sergeant Major Hooton who had served in the Zulu campaign of 1879 and was one of the most respected townsmen. At the time of their marriage Willie was a sergeant living at the Barracks in Aldershot and by the 1911 census he was age 32 and a colour sergeant in the South Wales Borderers living in the barracks in Bradford.

At the outbreak of war Willie was with the 2nd Battalion in Tientsin, China, and participated with the Japanese army in the capture of Tsing-Tau. On return from China he was given his commission and left for the Dardanelles in early 1915. In the landing operations at Gallipoli in May 1915 he was severely wounded. He was mentioned in despatches for distinguished service and devotion to duty in the field. Upon his recovery he went to France where he spent some time as an instructor. In April 1916 he was with the battalion in reserve at Louvencourt but after the disastrous July 1st attack at Beaumont-Hamel in the Somme, the battalion was reorganised into two companies with Willie Ross being in command of one of these.

A year later, the battalion was in Flanders, and on 15 August moved up into front-line trenches just north of Pilckem. An attack towards Langemarck next day saw Lieutenant (now Captain) Ross lead his D Company once more into action. At 4.45 am, the whole battalion climbed out of their trenches and began to move forward, a slow advance through swamps -

which would see men struggling up to their waists in mud and slime - C and D Companies are noted in the Battalion War Diary as being particularly bothered by machine guns firing from two strongly-held German positions - Champaubert and Montmirail Farms. Pressing on, and with the help of French artillery, these troublesome points were cleared, and by 10 am all objectives had been taken. For what was gained, the one hundred and seventy casualties of the day, are on record as being '*reasonable*'. Captain Ross was among those killed.

His widow and young child lived at 19, The Watton before moving from Brecon, first to Cheltenham and later to Lewisham.

**He gave his life that others might live**

**Private Thomas Edward Rowlands**

Machine Gun Corps (Infantry), 30th Btn., service no. 114207

Died November 17th, 1918 in France, aged 21

Buried at Tourcoing (Pont-Neuville) Community Cemetery,  
France

Tommy was born in Nantmel in Radnorshire in 1897, a son of Richard Rowlands and his wife Mary Ann (nee Worthing). His father was a miller and had learnt his trade working with his father, also a miller, both at Argoed Mill, Nantmel, the family home.

Unfortunately, Tommy's father died in 1906 and the family moved to Brecon living at 5, Kensington Place in 1911 when Mary Ann is listed as a licensed victualler. Tommy's mother subsequently resided at 104, The Struet, Brecon.

Before the war Tommy was an apprentice with Messrs Nott and Co, Ironmongers. He joined the Brecknock Battalion in March 1915, initially going to Pembroke and then on to India with the Battalion. He was then transferred to the Machine Gun Corps and was sent to Egypt, before arriving in France in June 1918. Tommy was home on leave in Brecon in September 1918, with 5 colleagues from the Machine Gun Corps who had also served with the Brecknocks. They were all said to be looking fit and in good spirits.

When back in France Tom contracted influenza and was sent to Number 10 Casualty Clearing Station where he passed away, 6 days after the Armistice.

There was an influenza epidemic in Europe at the time and local reports on the same day as his death was listed stated that the influenza epidemic was showing signs of abating but there had been many fresh cases locally and doctors were worn out.

**Don't grieve for me, dear mother, We'll meet again  
someday**

**You waited my safe returning, But now I'm waiting for  
you**

**And when you reach the golden gates, I'll be there to let  
you through**

**Private Fred Russell**

South Wales Borderers, 4th Battalion, service no. 27811

Killed in Action in Mesopotamia April 30th, 1917, aged 30

Commemorated on the Basra Memorial, Iraq

Fred was born in Brecon in January 1887, and was baptised in St David's Church a month later. His father Henry was a carpenter and joiner and the family lived at 29, Orchard Street, Llanfaes, Brecon. Fred had two older sisters and a younger brother, Harold. His parents had married in 1874 Henry marrying Anne Price (nee Morgan), a widow.

Henry's mother died in 1894 when he was only 7 years old. In 1901 Henry is shown on his own at 26, Silver Street although the two boys are probably living with him as they are listed as visitors with a family in Newmarch Street on the day the census was taken. Fred later worked for the Brecon and Merthyr Railway in Brecon before leaving for Ystradgynlais in about 1908 to board with his married sister and work at the colliery. Harold also made the same move and both young men are living with their sister and her family in 1911 and working above ground at a local colliery.

Fred had been with the Brecknocks before the war and enlisted with them at soon as war has declared, leaving for Asia with his battalion in October 1914, almost certainly via Aden to India where he spent some time before leaving to join the South Wales Borderers, 4th Battalion in Mesopotamia, probably amongst the 140 or volunteers that



went with Lieutenants Stephen and Frank Best to rebuild the 4th Battalion in February 1917.

He served in Mesopotamia until his death on April 30th, 1917. He was part of a big attack that took place on that date and other Brecon men lost their lives on the same battlefield, Privates William John Jenkins, William Morgan, Charles Bather and Lieutenant Stephen Best<sup>23</sup>. A sixth Brecon man was reported as killed, but this later proved to be erroneous although he was taken prisoner by the Turks.

Fred's father received a cheerful letter from him only weeks before his death, in which he said that he had been in two engagements and escaped without a scratch. Henry was living at 39, Newmarch Street before his death in 1922.

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<sup>23</sup> See pages 95, 127, 21 and 27

**Lance Corporal John Joseph Sessarago**

South Wales Borderers 10th Battalion, service no. 42136

Died of wounds 30th April 1918, aged 21

Commemorated at Doullens Communal Cemetery Somme  
France

John was born in Brecon in 1897 to John and Emily Sessarago. His father, John, was born in Newry, Northern Ireland, but came to Hereford where he married Emily Florence Williams in 1890. The family moved to Brecon in the mid 1890s and settled in The Struet. They were in number 65 in 1901, but moved to number 46 by 1911. John had three sisters and a brother. His father was a general dealer in old and second hand goods and was well known in the town. A young duo calling themselves the Brecon Nightingales sang at local variety concerts before the war and consisted of Master Clarke and Sessarago. Given John's brother was born in 1910 it is safe to assume this was John. John's father died in 1911, and his mother followed in 1913. His elder sisters were eighteen and fifteen in 1911 and it is likely they maintained the family home. All three sisters married away from Brecon between 1921 and 1923.

John enlisted in Llandrindod Wells, initially with the Hereford Regiment and later the South Wales Borderers.

The 10th Battalion served with the 115th Brigade, 38th Division, which served in France and Flanders from 1915 until the end of the war.

**Private Alfred Thomas Tedstone**

Notts. & Derby (Sherwood Foresters) Regt, 17th Btn.,

Machine Gun Corps, service no. 17976

Killed in action on November 10th, 1917, Flanders, aged 32

Commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium

Alfred was born at Audlem, Cheshire in 1886 and was the eldest son of David Henry Tedstone and his first wife, Lydia (nee Thomas). The family lived in New Radnor in 1891, where David was a saddler by trade, having previously served an apprenticeship. Alfred had a younger brother and sister at this time.

Lydia, Alfred's mother, died in 1894 and David remarried in 1895, to Martha (nee Minton). By 1901 the family were living in the Ledbury area and David was now an insurance agent. Young Alfred, 15 was working as a porter. David and Martha had two further children.

The family moved to Brecon in about 1903 and David became a superintendent at the Refuge Assurance Company and was well known and respected in the town. The family lived at 16, Alexandra Road, Brecon. They remained there until 1918 when David moved with the company to Leominster. Alfred had left home before 1911, possibly moving to Derbyshire.

Alfred joined the Notts and Derby Regiment in 1914 and went to France in December 1915. He served as Alfred Thomas, taking his mother's maiden name. He was wounded in June 1917 when he and a comrade were blown up by a

large shell landing close to them. Alfred sustained two wounds to his right arm and a slight wound to his leg. An operation was performed at Boulogne but more shrapnel was discovered when he arrived at Devonport and another operation was needed. Some months previous to these wounds he had been listed as killed, having been stunned by a piece of shrapnel that hit his steel helmet. He was carried away but later recovered.

He was subsequently killed on November 10th, 1917 in Belgium, probably fighting with the 39th Division in the second battle of Passchendaele.

**Private Rees Thomas**

King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment), 8th Battalion  
service no. 37062.

Killed in Action August 23rd 1918, aged 19

Commemorated at Vis-En-Artois Memorial, France

Rees was born in 1899 to Mary Davies of Tybach Libanus, but by 1901 he is living with his grandfather, also Rees Thomas, and family, at Bolgoed Maen, Libanus and remained with them through his early years. He attended Tairbull Council School and then Brecon County Intermediate School from 1911 until 1913 when he left to go farming.

He enlisted in the King's Own, 4th of Foot and fell in action as the battalion made a gallant attack on August 23rd, 1918. The colonel conveyed his sympathies to Mrs. Thomas via a letter from the chaplain and sympathy was also expressed for Mrs. Davies, Pontlottyn with whom Rees stayed prior to joining up.

**Private Edward James Tonge**

Royal Welsh Fusiliers, 2nd Battalion, service no. 77457

Killed in Action in France on September 1st, 1918, aged 19

Commemorated on the Vis-en-Artois Memorial in Pas de Calais, France

Edward was born in Brecon in 1899, the son of William, an agricultural labourer, and his wife, Ellen. The family were living in Llanfihangel Talyllyn at this time and Edward was baptised in the local church in July of this year.

The family subsequently moved to Brecon and lived at 6, Bridge Street. In 1911 William was still listed as a farm labourer, with Ellen shown as a general grocer.

Edward enlisted in Brecon and joined the Royal Welsh Fusiliers serving in France. The 2nd Battalion were serving within the 19th Brigade of the Second Division in August 1918 and were involved in the Battle of Albert (August 21-23) before the second Battle of Bapaume from August 31st to September 3rd, 1918. Edward was initially listed as missing but subsequently confirmed as killed in action.

**Rifleman James Victor Trevelyan**

Rifle Brigade, (The Prince Consort's Own) 1st Btn., service  
no. S/23328

Killed in action on October 4th, 1917 in Belgium, aged 37  
Commemorated at Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium

Victor was born in Hackney, Middlesex in 1880, the youngest of four sons of John Edmund and Jane Trevelyan (nee Williams). John was also born in Hackney but Jane was from Brecon, a daughter to William Williams, a local tailor.

His parents married in London and John was shown as a grocer, like his father. Their first son was born in Brecon but the family home was mainly in Hackney, where the other boys were born and, subsequently, two girls. Victor's father died in 1899 and the family moved to Brecon to live at 8, Lion Yard with Jane's mother and brother, where Jane is shown as a dressmaker in 1891. Ten years later they are still at the same address with one brother working as a coach builder and Victor, 14 shown as a private secretary.

By 1911 Victor has left home, although his mother remains in Brecon living at 4, Dorlangoch with her younger daughter. Victor is living in London with his eldest brother and family, as well as Mary, his wife of two years and their baby son, also Victor. Victor has four children in all, born between 1911 and 1915 in Hackney or Lambeth.

He enlists in Lambeth in December 1915, initially being posted to the Reserve before being mobilised in June 1916 and

travelling from Southampton to Le Havre. On enlistment he is listed as a jeweller's assistant working in London. He is only 5 feet 1-inch-tall and weighs just 120 pounds.

The 1st Battalion, Rifle Brigade, attached to the 4th Division were heavily involved in the Third Battles of Ypres and took part in the Battle for Broodseinde on October 4th, 1917.



**Private Melville George Trew**

Lancashire Fusiliers 15th Battalion, service no. 235417

Killed in action September 18th, 1917 in Belgium, aged 36

Buried at Coxyde Military Cemetery, Belgium

Melville was born in 1881 in Brecon and was a son to Martha Elizabeth and Thomas Edward Trew. the family were butchers and lived at 13, Ship street, Brecon. His father was also a Justice of the Peace in the town.

Thomas had followed his father and grandfather who had been butchers in Brecon for over 100 years but by 1871 he was in his own business. He married Mary Ann Price in 1863 and had 4 children before Mary died in 1870. Thomas remarried in 1872 to Martha Elizabeth Thomas and had a further 6 children.

In 1881 the family were at Ship Street and young Melville was at home with his parents, seven siblings, an aunt, uncle and cousin as well as a governess and a servant. Ten years later the family living at home in Ship Street has reduced a little with Melville, his parents and now only five siblings, an aunt and a servant.

Melville's brother Edwin is one of the siblings at home in this period; his is the next record in this book.

Melville initially worked as a draper and having trained in Cardiff, is back home in 1901 and working in the drapery trade, but was later a bookkeeper and worked in his father's

butchery business. He was well known in the town being an accomplished musician and popular as a piano accompanist on the concert platform and with choral parties. He was a lifelong member of Kensington Baptist Church and was, for a number of years, the organist there.

He joined the South Wales Borderers in June 1916 and was subsequently transferred to the Lancashire Fusiliers. The 15th Battalion were known as the First Salford Pals and fought with the 32nd Division. Melville had been in the thick of the fighting in France for about three months.

The 32nd division, fighting with Rawlinson's Fourth Army were involved in a number of large battles aimed at breaking the Hindenburg line system in 1918. The Battle of Epehy was on September 18th and it is probably here that Melville was killed.

**Private Edwin Charles Trew, MM**

1st Buffs (East Anglia Regiment) 1st Battalion, service no.

T/242015

Died of Wounds August 3rd, 1918 in France, aged 42

Buried at Esquelbecq Military Cemetery, Nord

Edwin was born about 1876 in Brecon, the son of Thomas Edward and Martha Elizabeth. The family were butchers and lived at 13, Ship street, Brecon. His father was also a Justice of the Peace in the town.

Thomas had followed his father and grandfather who had been butchers in Brecon for over 100 years but by 1871 he was in his own business. He married Mary Ann Price in 1863 and had 4 children before Mary died in 1870. Thomas remarried in 1872 to Martha Elizabeth Thomas and had a further 6 children.

In 1881 the family are still at Ship Street and Edwin is at home with his parents, seven siblings, an aunt, uncle and cousin as well as a governess and a servant, ten years later the family living at home in Ship Street has reduced a little with Edwin, his parents and now only five siblings, an aunt and a servant.

Edwin's brother Melville is one of the siblings at home in this period; his is the previous record in this book.

Edwin attended Christ College from 1890 until 1892 and later went into the banking industry, working in Lloyds Bank for over twenty years in a number of different branches. By 1901

he is working as a bank clerk in Staffordshire, living with his father's brother Charles, a hotel proprietor and ten years later, at the age of 34 was boarding in Tamworth where he continued to work as a bank clerk. By 1915 he had moved on to Swansea working as a bank cashier.

He enlisted in Swansea at the age of 39 and joined the East Kents in December 1915, going to France in September 1917. He took part in the Cambrai advance in November and December 1917, and later was in the thick of the fighting around the St Quentin area in March 1918.

Edwin was awarded the Military Medal in March 1918 for actions in December 1917 when he rescued a wounded soldier from no-man's land under heavy machine gun fire. In August 1918 he was severely wounded by a shell causing a thigh wound which ultimately proved fatal.

**Lance Corporal Ernest Frederick Tricker**

South Wales Borderers, 3rd Battalion, service no. 8322

Died on May 27th, 1916 at home, aged 27

Buried in St David's Churchyard, Brecon

Ernest was born in Ipswich in 1888, a son to James, a shoemaker, and his wife Alice (nee Turner). Beatrice his older sister was born in 1884, with younger sister Ellen Florence born in 1893.

James died in 1896 and Alice probably died the next year, leaving the children orphaned. By 1901 Beatrice is working as a servant, but Ernest and Ellen are inmates in St John's School for Boys and Girls in Ipswich. This school is associated to the Ipswich Union Workhouse.

Ellen died in 1907 aged only 14 years and by 1911 Ernest has already joined the army and is a private with the South Wales Borderers based in Brecon Barracks.

Ernest's wife Nellie (Ellen) Lewis was born in Brecon and lived with her family in Newmarch Street, Llanfaes, Brecon working as a domestic servant in 1911, although the family moved to Ogmore Vale after that.

The couple married in August 1915 in St David's Church, Llanfaes. The wedding breakfast was held at Nellie's sister's house at 3, Masons Row, Llanfaes, before the couple left for Liverpool for their honeymoon.

Ernest was in camp there at the time and it was a Liverpool parish declared for him in the banns.

Having been on the depot staff at the Brecon Barracks, Ernest was later a drummer. He was well known in local sporting circles, having played fullback for the depot team in the Mid Wales League.

The 3rd Battalion, South Wales Borderers were a reserve battalion and remained in the United Kingdom throughout the war. They moved from Brecon to Pembroke Dock in August 1914 and later to Hightown near Liverpool in June 1915 as part of the Mersey Garrison.

Ernest died at his home in Bristol in May, 1916 after being ill for some time. His body was conveyed to Brecon by train and it was met at the station to be taken in procession to St David's Church, where a service was held before interment in the churchyard, with full military honours. Mourners included Nellie, as well as Ernest's sister and Nellie's father George and other members of her family.

**Sergeant William Charles Turner**

Royal Flying Corps, 38th Training Squadron, service no.  
1022

Died June 3rd, 1917, aged 26

Buried in Brecon Cemetery

William (Will) was born in Kingston on Thames in 1891, the eldest son of Charles Turner and his wife, Sarah Jane, (nee Price), His father was steward of the Brecon County Club for many years. Will attended Brecon County School between 1911 and 1912 before he trained in the motor trade at Sulleys in Cardiff and for some time worked alongside Bentfield Hucks who was later a famous aviator. Will was for a short while in business in Brecon.

He became the first Breconian to join the Army Flying Corps in January 1914 after passing War Office tests, and served at the Flying Corps Headquarters in Farnborough. He obtained his pilot's licence in May 1914 at Central Flying Club in Upavon and was in the first Royal Flying Corps squadron to go to France in August that year, sailing from Newhaven.

He wrote home in October to tell of his experience in France including having his plane riddled with bullets, and another time having a bullet hole in his fuel tank that he plugged with his finger. Will spent 16 months in France before returning to England in Nov 1915 to become an aero engineer mechanic, and passed at aero school to get his wings. He was qualifying for a first class pilot certificate when accidentally killed while

flying at Rendcombe Aerodrome in Cirencester. He had been training there prior to receiving his commission and returning to the front.

His body was brought back to Brecon for burial and there was a most impressive procession from the barracks to the cemetery. It was watched by hundreds of people and many houses and businesses showed signs of mourning.

Will's younger brother Fred served with the Brecknocks in India.



**Private William Samuel Watkins**

Devonshire Regiment 1 / 6th Btn., (Territorials), service no.  
5176

Died on December 30th, 1916 in Mesopotamia, aged 22  
Buried in the Amara War Cemetery, Iraq



William was born in Brecon in October 1894, the eldest son of Samuel Watkins and his wife Hannah, nee Bevan, of 12, Priory Hill, Brecon. William's father worked as an ironmonger's warehouseman and was born in Brecon. His mother was born in Talgarth.

William had two siblings, a sister Annie born in about 1900 and a younger Brother, Ernie born in about 1908.

The family remain at 12, Priory Hill for many years and also take in boarders. In 1911 one of their boarders is George Hardwick, who is a brother to William Emlyn, and uncle of Cyril, who both feature in this book<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> See pages 75 and 247

By the time he was 16, William is working as a cabinet maker, and later works for the Midland Railway as a fireman.

Willie, as he was known was well respected in the town where he was a member of the St Mary's Church choir, the Church Lads Brigade and a long standing member of the Rechabites, a temperance friendly society.

He joined the Brecknocks in Brecon in September 1914, first being posted to Neyland, Pembrokeshire before going out to Aden with the draft that arrived on July 3rd, 1915. He, with others, immediately joined the forced march to fight the Turks at Lahej<sup>25</sup>. He survived this encounter and went with the Brecknocks to Mhow, India. In 1916 he was drafted with others to Mesopotamia where he joined the 1/6 Devonshire Regiment and was attached to the Signalling company. Willie was in the trenches in Mesopotamia for about a month before going to hospital in early November and spending about seven weeks there before dying of dysentery in December 1916.

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<sup>25</sup> See page 216

**Sergeant Albert Webster**

South Wales Borderers 10th Battalion, service no. 35010

Died of wounds on June 6th, 1918 in France, aged 39

Buried at Varennes Military Cemetery, Somme, France

Albert was the second son of George and Ellen Webster. He was born on August 28th, 1879 in Brecon and was baptized on September 17th in St Mary's Church. The family were living at 92, The Watton, Brecon., next door to the Prince of Wales Inn, which they were later to live in and manage. George was an army pensioner having served with the South Wales Borderers.

In 1891 Albert had six older sisters, Ellen Eugenie, Gertrude, Vida, May, Gladys and Kate and two brothers Harry George and Douglas Gordon; and by 1895 a younger brother Maurice. Vida died in 1898.

Sometime in the 1890s Albert enlisted in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. He served in the Boxer Rebellion of 1900 and was present at the Relief of Peking, for which he received a medal.

By 1907 Albert was no longer in the army but was an insurance agent living at 88, The Watton with his parents. On September 2nd he married Annie Matilda Boxhall, who was living at 49, Orchard Street in Brecon and working as a grocery shop assistant. Her father Joseph was a house decorator. Albert's brother George and sister Kate were witnesses at the wedding.

In 1911 Albert and Annie were living at 282, Caerleon Road, Newport and he was still an insurance agent. Albert's father died in 1912.

Around 1916 Albert enlisted in the South Wales Borderers and by June of that year he was a corporal when he attended the funeral of his sister Gertrude in Brecon, together with his brother Douglas who was now serving as second lieutenant in the East Surrey Regiment, Machine Gun Corps. Albert later became acting sergeant major serving on the Western Front.

At 11.30 on the 6th June 1918 he was hit by a shell, and although the Germans were shelling heavily at the time he carried on fighting. The wound was not thought to be serious but as he was carried away to the dressing station he said to his fellow soldiers that he would be in Blighty before them and would get a nice rest out of it. He was quite conscious and did not suffer much pain. However, he died a few hours later. He was buried the following day and was greatly missed by his commanding officer and fellow soldiers.

Albert's one brother Douglas Gordon Webster,<sup>26</sup> was killed at the front shortly afterwards on the 29th September 1918. His other brothers, Maurice and Harry were also serving there. They had both settled in Canada, but joined up as soon as the war broke out, and came over with a Canadian contingent.

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<sup>26</sup> See next record

**Lieutenant Douglas Gordon Webster MC**

South Wales Borderers attached to Machine Gun Corps, 21st  
Battalion

Killed in action September 29th, 1918, aged 26

Buried in Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium

Douglas was born on November 25th, 1891, the third son of George, an army pensioner, and Ellen Webster living at the Brecon Barracks. George was a canteen steward, having previously served with the South Wales Borderers. Douglas was baptised in Brecon in St Mary's Church on March 18th, 1892. At the time he had six older sisters, Ellen Eugenie, Gertrude, Vida, May, Gladys and Kate and two older brothers Harry George and Albert and by 1895, a younger brother Maurice. Vida died in 1898. By 1901 the family had moved to 88, The Watton, Brecon. Douglas attended Pendre and Brecon County Schools and, at fifteen, became a railway clerk in Brecon in 1907 with a salary of six shillings per week. Douglas was a prominent player for the town football club.

In 1911 he had moved to Carlisle, still working as a clerk for the Railway, but his salary had advanced to £55 per year. The family were now running the Prince of Wales Inn at 91, The Watton in Brecon. In 1912 his father died.

Douglas was with the local Territorial Force before the war and was mobilised with them in August 1914, initially with the Brecknockshire Battalion South Wales Borderers, as a corporal in Aden and Mhow, India in 1915 under Colonel

Lord Glanusk. He was home on leave in May 1915 before he transferred to the East Surrey Regiment as a second lieutenant, and then volunteered for the Machine Gun Corps, and was promoted to lieutenant. He was awarded the Military Cross for gallantry.

In March of 1916 his sister Gertrude died and Douglas was able to attend her funeral. Four months later he attended the funeral of the husband of his sister, May, Sergeant Thomas Hodson at St David's Churchyard in Llanfaes, Brecon. Thomas, who had been serving with the South Wales Borderers when severely wounded in the battle of the Aisne in 1914, which eventually caused his death.

Douglas was home again from the front in April 1917 acting as best man at the wedding of a friend, Private W. D. Vaughan and Gertrude Watkins, both from Brecon.

Douglas married Edith Elizabeth Hutchings in Llangattock on 11 February 1918. Edith had been working at Douglas's regimental canteen at Grantham.

In June 1918 his elder brother Albert<sup>27</sup>, a sergeant in the South Wales Borderers was killed in France; his other brothers Maurice and Harry were also serving there. They both had settled in Canada, but joined up as soon as the war broke out, and came over with a Canadian contingent.

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<sup>27</sup> See previous record

Douglas was awarded the Military Cross in 1918 for gallantry. During an enemy attack he kept his guns in action under heavy shell and rifle fire, until forced to leave by enemy bombers at close range. Later he gave great assistance to troops defending a village and was instrumental in checking the enemy's advance. It was reported that he had set a fine example of courage and determination.

He was killed 29 September 1918. The Major commanding his company wrote to his wife on September 30th

*'It is with deep regret that I have to inform you of the death of your husband. He was killed during our advance yesterday at 1-30 pm. He was 200 yards ahead of the infantry with two guns, and was directing the fire of one of his guns when a sniper shot him through the neck. The bullet passed through his spine and he died instantaneously. We are burying him tonight, where he fell. I knew your husband at Grantham and it was a great joy to me when he joined my company. He was my best officer, and his men would follow him anywhere. I was hoping to have him promoted shortly, as he richly deserved it. He died a soldier's death in face of the enemy, as he always said he would like to, if fate destined his death in the war.'*

**Company Sergeant Major Arthur Whatley**

South Wales Borderers, 1st Battalion, service no. 4680  
Killed in Action on October 31st, 1914 in Ypres, aged 39  
Commemorated on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial

Arthur was born in Heystbury Parish, Warminster, Wiltshire to William, a farm labourer, and Grace Whatley in 1876. He is shown on the 1891 Census, aged 15 years, as an errand boy. He left the family home and moved to Bedwellty, Ebbw Vale where he joined the Army on the 4th July 1894. His attestation shows that he had been living in Bedwellty for the previous 12 months and had been working for a Mr Jacob Davies as a haulier. Arthur was 18 years and 7 months old when he joined the British Army as a private signing on for 6 years in the 4th Battalion South Wales Borderers in Brecon.

In 1911, at the time of the census, he was staying with his family in Wiltshire by which time he is a sergeant.

He then spent some time at the Depot in Brecon and was well known in the town. During 1913 he spent a month on recruiting duties in Pontypool and in early 1914 he spent some time away from Brecon training to be a colour sergeant.

On 8th October 1913 Arthur married Caroline M.E.A Skinner of 5, John Street, Brecon. The marriage record states that Arthur was 37 years old, a bachelor, and a sergeant in the South Wales Borderers living in the Barracks, Brecon. Their daughter Annie was born in 1914. The family were living at 22, John Street at the time of Arthur's death.



He was killed in action at The Battle of Gheluvelt in Flanders on 31st October 1914 aged 39. He and another sergeant were hit by a shell burst. At the time he was a company sergeant major in the 1st Battalion South Wales Borderers. His wife Caroline was living at 22, John Street, Brecon.

The Battle of Gheluvelt, fought on 31 October 1914 is significant as the nearest that the German army came to breaking through Allied lines at Ypres until 1918. Gheluvelt is a tiny village outside Ypres.

Although one of the least known battles of WW1 it stopped a critical German advance and is memorialised for having '*saved civilization*'.

The British Expeditionary Force was in full retreat, and the road to the Channel ports opening up for the advancing Germans. Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, the Worcestershire Regiment, were ordered to stop the German advance at all costs and they mounted a bayonet charge through heavy artillery and machine gun fire, and drove more than 1,000 German troops out of the grounds of Gheluvelt Chateau, where they met up with a small contingent from the South Wales Borderers, who were holding out against the Germans.

The Borderers had been holding the position for the previous ten days together with the Scots Guards and the Welch Regiment. During the 31st October there had been constant sniping, frequent shelling and bombardment of tremendous severity from the Germans together with repeated infantry attacks. The situation became worse in the evening when

after some success the British troops became overwhelmed by the Germans. The Borderers were forced into the Gheluveld Chateau grounds. Meanwhile, Borderers who had occupied a position along the light railway just west of the Chateau, together with a few Scots Guardsmen, counter attacked.

The effect was to surprise the Germans. Many were killed or wounded, others fled, becoming targets for other groups of the Borderers and Scots Guards. The position was still very insecure and soon the Germans began bombarding. It was then that the 2nd Worcestershire arrived joining the defence. The Germans eventually fled in confusion.

This defence came at a critical moment for the British Expeditionary Force was standing with its back to the wall. Had the Germans succeeded in breaking through the Channel ports were at their mercy.

**Private James Richard Wheeler**

Royal Welch Fusiliers, B Company, 1st Btn., service no. 5280

Died on May 16th, 1915 in France, aged 19

Commemorated at Le Touret Memorial, Pas de Calais,  
France

James was born in Brecon in 1896, the son of Eli William Wheeler and his wife Esther (nee Morris). The family were living at 12, Mill Street, Brecon. in 1901 when Eli was employed as a coal agent's carter. James is now 5 years old and has been joined by younger brother William, 3.

In the 1911 Census the family are still living at number 12, but father Eli is at this time listed as working as a coalminer, along with James' elder brother Morgan who is now living at home. Young sister Bessie was born in 1903.

James enlists in Newport in 1914, joins the Royal Welch Fusiliers and leaves for France on October 29th. He was involved in much fighting around the Ypres salient and on the day of his death the 1st Battalion were involved in the Battle of Festubert in France.

William, James' younger brother, also joined up when old enough and fought with the South Wales Borderers before being wounded in the ankle in May 1918 and subsequently serving with the Army Service Corps.

**Lance Corporal Arthur Williams**

South Wales Borderers, 2nd Battalion, service no. 11541

Died of Wounds October 6th, 1917 in Flanders, Belgium

aged 21

Buried at Dozinghem Military Cemetery, West Vlaanderen,  
Belgium

Arthur was born in about 1896 in Pembrokeshire, the son of Thomas and Mary Williams. The family had previously lived in St Davids, Brecon where Thomas worked as a gamekeeper. He was still working as a gamekeeper in Pembroke when Arthur was born, suggesting the family had moved for work.

Thomas was born in Radnorshire, but married Mary Jane Probert from Brecon, in 1884 and this was the year that Annie Maud was born. Thomas Stanley (1887) and William Ivor (1893) followed, all born in St David's.

By 1901 when Arthur was 5, the family were living at 15, Newgate Street in Llanfaes Brecon with Thomas still working as a gamekeeper. In 1911 the family had moved down the road to 29, Orchard St, Llanfaes. Arthur now had a third brother, Reginald (1902). Arthur was working as an errand boy in a stationery shop and his father was now a tanner.

Arthur enlisted in the South Wales Borderers and went to France in January 1915. In July 1916 he came home on leave to Brecon; his family were then at 45, Orchard Street. By then he had been wounded twice, once in the Battle of Loos (1915) and later in the battle of the Somme (July 1916). He had been

wounded in both arms, a gunshot wound in the left and a shrapnel wound in the right elbow. Arthur was later promoted to lance corporal.

The Battalion fought with the 29th Division in the Battle of Arras in Spring 1917, and later that year at the Third Battle of Ypres, where Arthur was mortally wounded, dying at the Casualty Clearing Station at Dozinghem.

It is likely that Arthur received his fatal wounds in the Battle of Broodseinde, near Ypres. as that battle commenced on October 4th, 1917.

His brother Ivor, a driver with the Royal Engineers had been in France since the beginning war, seeing service at many of the major battles. Brother Tom was with the South Wales Borderers and wounded in the hip at the advance on Kut.

Arthur's father had become foreman at Evan Morgan's Tannery in Llanfaes by this time and the family later lived in Dinas Row, Llanfaes.

**Private David Thomas Williams**

Cheshire Regiment, 10th Battalion, service no. 315646

Killed in action on May 30th, 1918 in France, aged 23 years

Commemorated on the Soissons Memorial, Aisne, France

David was born in Brecon on February 10th, 1895, the eldest son of David Williams, a labourer, and his wife Elisabeth, nee Hinks. His parents had him baptised at St Mary's Church, Brecon on April 24th of that year.

In 1901 the family were living at 3, London Row, Brecon and David, 6 has a younger brother George, 4, and sister Violet, 2. Siblings Harold and Ivor soon followed. All the family were born in Brecon.

David's father dies during the 1900s but the family are still at 3, London Row in 1911 with Elisabeth, now a widow, head of the family. David is not at home at this time, but is working at Christ College in 1911 and probably living in. The family is later recorded as living at 1, London Row.

David enlisted and is initially with the Brecknock Battalion, South Wales Borderers arriving with them at Aden on July 3rd, 1915. He later transfers to the Cheshire Regiment.

The 10th Battalion of the Cheshires fought with the 7th Brigade as part of the 25th Division and fought in France and Flanders from 1915 through to 1918.

In late May 1918 the 25th Division was called up from reserve to a closer support position, in anticipation of a heavy

German attack. This became known as the Third Battle of the Aisne and was fought from May 27th to June 6th, 1918. This was known as Operation Bluecher to the Germans.

Fresher French troops had been moved North, leaving a small, tired British force to defend the area around Chemin. By the middle of the first day, following heavy bombardment and use of gas and high explosives a sustained infantry attack by the Germans had broken through and crossed the River Aisne. The units of the 25th Division were thrown piecemeal into action and were all but destroyed.

David was listed as missing and it was not until 15 months later that his death was confirmed.

**Private Josiah Rees Williams**

South Wales Borderers, Brecknock Battalion, Company A  
service no. 2285

Died in action on July 4th, 1915 in Aden, aged 22

Commemorated at the Heliopolis Memorial, Aden, Egypt

Rees was born in 1896, the youngest son of Josiah Williams, a mason, and his wife Ann (nee Davies). The family lived at Garthbrenegy where Rees and his siblings were born, later moving to Forge Villa, Brecon. By 1911, Rees' father was still working as a mason but the family were also involved in farming and running a milk business. Ann was assisting in the business, and whilst Rees' eldest brother was a mason like his father, his other brother John worked on a farm and his older sister Annie was a dairy worker. Rees, at 14 years, drove his father's milk cart and became well known on his rounds in the borough. Youngest sister Florrie was still at school. Rees joined the Brecknock Battalion as part of A Company, Brecon and, after training, left in a draft to Aden arriving on July 3rd 1915. One day later he had died, along with 12 other Brecknocks, during the forced march to Lahej in the extreme heat of the area.

The story of this incident in the Brecknock's history is related elsewhere in this book.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> See page 216



**Private William Morgan Williams**

Welsh Regiment, 2nd Battalion, service no. 9337

Killed in action November 13th, 1914 at Ypres, Belgium  
aged 27

Commemorated at the Ypres Memorial, Menin Gate, West  
Vlaanderen, Belgium

William was born in Battle, Breconshire in about 1897, the son of John and Hannah Williams. He was baptised there in 1889 when his father's occupation is given as labourer. William's parents and younger sister were all born in Battle also.

By 1891 the family had moved to Llangranog, Newcastle Emlyn in Cardiganshire where John now works as a gardener. The family later move to Brecon and are living in 9, Lion Terrace in 1911, although the family address in later army records is shown as 9, Bethel Terrace, Lion Yard, Brecon.

William had left the family home by 1904, when he is shown working as a cattle boy on a farm back in Battle, although it is Penycraig, in the Rhondda Valley he enlists, presumably before the war as he is already trained and ready to embark.

He joins the Welsh Regiment, 2nd Battalion and moving to Bordon on August 4th, 1914 as part of the 3rd Brigade in the First Division they land at Le Havre on August 13th, 1914 before moving to Fresnoy le Grande.

The First Division were involved in a number of important battles at this early stage of the war, including Mons, Marne and Aisne. They also took part in the first Battle of Ypres which continued from October 19th to November 22nd, 1914, including the battles of Langemarck, Gheluvelt and Nonne Bosschen. The last of these commenced on November 11th and is almost certainly where William was killed.

**Private Charles William Henry Winstone**

Border Regiment 8th Battalion, service no. 29531

Died on August 16th, 1918

Buried at Vendresse British Cemetery, France



Charles was born in Brecon in 1899; his parents were Percy and Jessie. They lived at 24, The Struet. His father was a tailor. By 1911 the family had moved to 5, St John's Road and Charles attended Brecon County School and was a member of the Brecon Church Lads Brigade. He later went to work for Coppage and sons, ironmongers.

He enlisted in Brecon in 1917, originally with the Cheshire Regiment, then the Manchester Regiment and finally the Border Regiment. He was initially listed as missing on May 27th, 1918, but in August his father, then living at 32, The Struet, was informed that Charles was a prisoner of war in Germany and doing quite well. Unfortunately, whilst nearly all the other Brecon boys who were prisoners of war in Germany returned home safely, Charles died of dysentery whilst in the hands of the enemy.

By 1919 the family had moved to Birmingham, which is also the address held for Charles.

**Private David Joseph Wood**

Royal Warwickshire Regiment, 2nd / 7th Battalion, service  
no. 267198

Killed in action March 22nd, 1918, aged 25

Commemorated on the Pozieres Memorial, The Somme,  
France

David was born in December 1892 in Llanddew, Brecon to Richard and Sarah Wood. He was baptised in St Mary's Church, Brecon in March 1893 when the family address was 3, Mainwaring Court. His father's occupation at the time was drainer, which probably referred to digging drainage trenches.

By 1901 the family were living at Oxford Road in Hay where Richard is listed as a general labourer. David has one older sister, Ellen (Nellie), living at home at this time, although there were older siblings at home earlier. The family later move in to Brecon and are living at 29, Newgate Street, Llanfaes, Brecon in 1911 and whilst Nellie is no longer at home, younger brother William was born in 1901. Richard is still listed as a general labourer, as is David.

David had been in the local territorial force, and possibly spent a short time with the Royal Welsh Fusiliers in the special reserve. In March 1914 he enlists in the South Wales Borderers at Wrexham. At the time of attestation his occupation was coal miner and he was living away from home. This enlistment did not work out and he was

discharged as no longer physically fit for war service in November 1914, at Pembroke Dock. However, David appears to be resilient and later joins the Welch Regiment, enlisting at Pontypridd, although this is soon followed by a transfer to the Royal Warwickshire Regiment.

In April 1915 David married Ellen Thomas of Steynton, Pembrokeshire, although his parish at this time is shown as Pontypridd.

The 2nd/7th Battalion of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment was initially formed in 1914 as a second line battalion, but became part of the South Warwickshire Brigade, 2nd South Midland Division. In August 1915 they were redesignated as the 182nd Brigade, 61st Second South Midland Division. They landed in France on May 21st, 1916.

David would have been involved in a number of major battles in his two years in France, culminating in the Battle of St Quentin, as part of First Battles of the Somme (1918).

**Private Milton Horace Wood**

Royal Army Medical Corps / 3 General Hospital, service no.  
5841

Drowned at Sea. May 5th, 1917, aged 29  
Commemorated on the Savona Memorial, Italy

Milton was born in about 1888 in Dewsbury, Yorkshire to Harry Wood, a brass finisher, and his wife Zilpah, nee Hoyland. His parents married in 1885 and Milton appears to be an only child.

The family live in Halifax for many years, although Harry has become a warehouseman by 1911, and Milton is working as a brewer's clerk. His mother Zilpah died in 1912.

Milton later works for the Cardiff City police, but had enlisted and joined the Royal Army Medical Corp by 1914, entering the war in mid-August of that year.

Whilst home on leave from France in December 1915 Milton married Frances May Davies of Brecon. May's family lived at Free Street in the town but at the time of the wedding she was living at the King's Arms Hotel with her sister and brother in law. Her brother was Lieutenant William Davies who also features in this book.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> See page 51

Milton appears to have made his home in Brecon and was a member of the Usk Lodge of Buffaloes.

Whilst Number 3, General Hospital was based in France, Milton appears to have been on his way to Alexandria, Egypt with other reinforcements when the ship he was travelling on, the *S.S. Transylvania*, was torpedoed near Savona, Italy with the loss of over 400 lives. Milton was among those lost and is commemorated at Savona.

**Private William Thomas Wood**

Machine Gun Corps (Infantry), 237th Battalion, service no.  
115810

Died on January 29th, 1918 in France, aged 19  
Buried at St Sever Cemetery extension, Rouen, France

William was born in Brecon in May 1898 and baptised at the Priory Church in July. He was the son of Henry and Hannah Wood and the family lived at 8, London Row, Brecon. Henry was a carpenter and wheelwright.

Henry had served with the Brecknocks, joining the Territorial Force in 1908, and previously been with the Volunteer Force for most of the period from 1888 until 1908. He regularly went on annual training with the Brecknocks. He was in to the army at the outbreak of war and served in Britain until 1917, although for the final year was released to work for the Metropolitan Carriage Works in Birmingham.

William initially joined the Royal Army Service Corps but later transferred to the Machine Gun Corps, fighting in France and Flanders. The 237th Battalion, MGC joined the 21st Division in 1917 at Moyennville. The division, known as the Leicester Tigers was involved in the Cambrai operations of November and December 1917, particularly against the German counter attack in early December. Cambrai was renowned for the introduction of tanks to the battlefield, with 476 being deployed. As well as William and his father, brothers George and John also served.



**Private Leonard Woolford**

South Wales Borderers, Brecknockshire Btn., service no.  
3238

Died on July 19th, 1916 in India, aged 22

Commemorated t the Kirkee 1914-18 Memorial, India

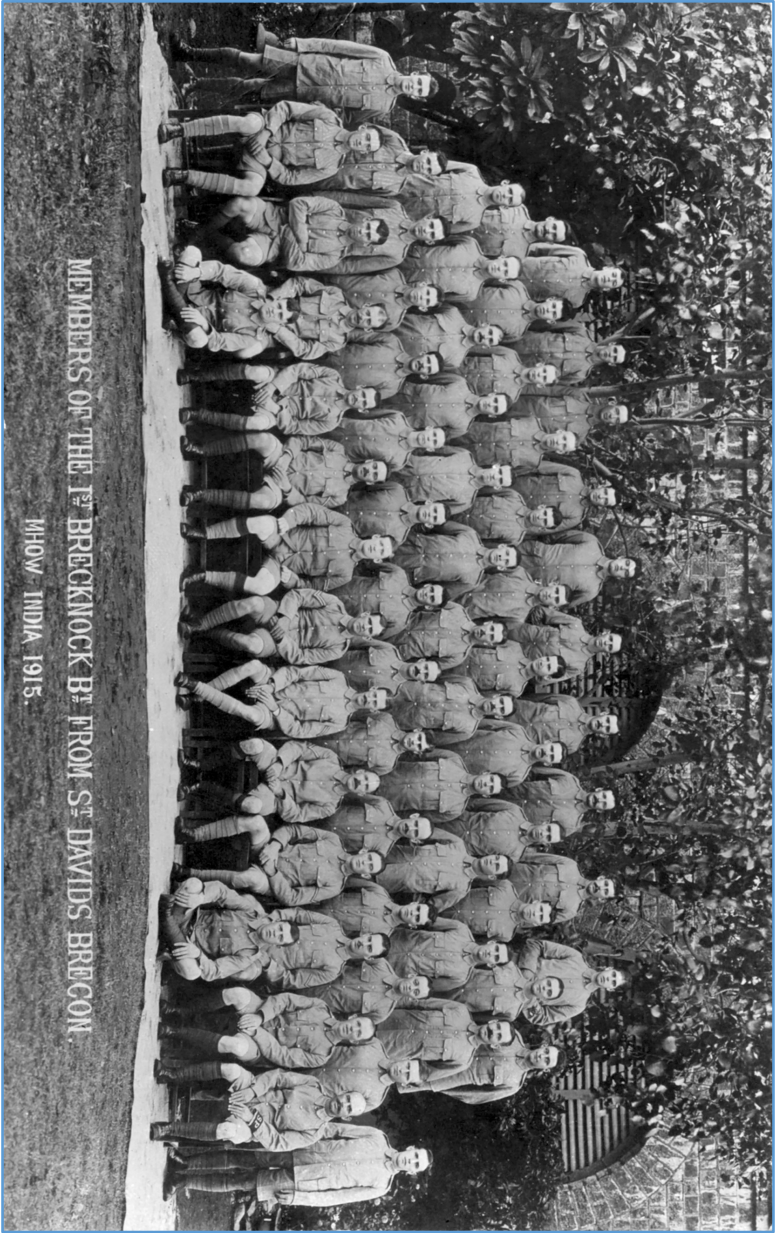
Leonard was born in Walworth, London in 1893, to William and Theresa, nee Green. William was a sweep, as was his father. Leonard's mother remarried Alfred Miles, a merchant's clerk, and the new family are living in Croydon in 1901 with Leonard listed as stepson. He attended the South Norwood Boys School in Croydon, Surrey but left after the 1908 summer term.

By 1911 Leonard had moved to Brecon and was boarding at 8, The Postern with the Thomas family, whilst working as a printer's apprentice at the Brecon County Times. He later moved to Cadmore House, St John's Road Brecon.

He enlisted in Brecon joining the 1st Brecknock Battalion and soon left Britain with a draft of recruits to join the Brecknocks in Mhow, India.

Leonard took ill with a fever in Mhow and died of septicaemia on July 19th, 1916, being buried the following day.

He was buried in Mumbai and is commemorated on the Kirklee Memorial in India.



MEMBERS OF THE 1<sup>ST</sup> BRECKNOCK BN FROM ST. DAVID'S BRECON.  
MHOW INDIA 1915.

## **SOUTH WALES BORDERERS The Brecknock Battalion (Territorial Force)**

The Brecknocks were a Battalion created from previous volunteer and militia regiments under the act creating Territorial Forces in Britain in 1907/8.

They were the only territorial battalion of the South Wales Borderers and have a history stretching back to 1859. Initially the Breconshire Volunteers. They went through a number of changes including, at one time being part of the Royal Radnorshire and Breconshire Rifles.

Choosing to be known by their county name rather than a numerical designation (as was the case in other regiments) the Battalion in 1914 was located in eight companies:

Headquarters and A Company at Brecon

B Company, Brynmawr

C Company, Crickhowell

D Company, Hay

E Company, Builth Wells, with a detachment at Llanwrtyd Wells

F Company, Talgarth,

G Company, Cefn-Coed

H Company, Ystradgynlais, Brynamman and Seven Sisters.

Having volunteered for foreign service, the Battalion were disappointed when not chosen to go to France. Instead it was sent to undertake garrison duty in Aden; thus enabling a regular regiment to proceed to France from this important coaling station.

On 29 October, 1914, the Brecknockshire Battalion, now numbered as 1/1st Brecknockshire, sailed from Southampton on the ship *Dilware*. Arriving on 25 November, the Battalion would, for its first months in Aden, enjoy a quiet time. Sickness, however, took its toll, and unused to the tropical climate of the area, four men died from illness within the first half of 1915. Many others were invalided home.

In June, 1915, the Turkish Army adopted a more aggressive attitude and from their camps in the Yemen began a series of provoking attacks to the north. Subsequently, on 3 July, some four hundred of the 1/1st Brecknockshire Battalion set out for Lahej. Many of these men had only arrived in a new draft from Britain in the previous twenty-four hours.

Forming the main body of a force known as the Movable Column, the detachment on its first day's marched six miles to Sheikh Othman and suffered badly from the heat. Two men actually died, while many others were forced to fall out, unable to continue. With another nineteen miles to go, what remained of the column pressed on. Only to incur many cases of heatstroke and left just one hundred men fit for service upon arrival at Lahej.

Some action was seen at Lahej, the Brecknocks helped to keep the advancing Turks from a defensive position that had been set up in a large walled garden. Soon, however, a withdrawal was ordered and the column fell back to the Khor Maksar lines, where, an account of the operation was undertaken. There had been thirty deaths from heatstroke (half of this number being men from the Brecknockshire Battalion); four of the Battalion were missing (one had been taken prisoner) and three were wounded. In addition to these casualties, many men were subsequently considered to be unfit for active service and were sent home.

Those that remained were relieved by a battalion of the Buffs and on 5 August sailed for India. Reaching Bombay on the 11th, the 1/1st Brecknockshire Battalion were then sent to Mhow, where it would remain until August, 1919, moving then to Calcutta. As a battalion, the only action seen by the Brecknocks was at the walled garden in Lahej. This gained for the Battalion, and the South Wales Borderers, the battle honour Aden.

Whilst the Brecknocks moved to Mhow, many of their number later chose to volunteer to fight with other battalions in other theatres of war.

## **The Brecknockshire Memorial in St Mary's Church, Crater, Aden - a transcript**

FOR THE GLORY OF GOD  
AND  
IN MEMORY OF THE FOLLOWING NCOs & MEN  
OF THE BRECKNOCKSHIRE BATTALION  
SOUTH WALES BORDERERS  
WHO DIED WHILE ON ACTIVE SERVICE  
AT ADEN 1914-15

30 Sgt HUGHES, PRICE	2212 Pts JONES, RT
1688 Sgt CROMPTON	1775 Pte LEWIS, C
813 Cpl SMITH, JH	1319 Pte LLYOD, W
1370 LcsCpl JENKINS, G	1478 Pte LLOYD, H
2047 LcsCpl WILLIAMS, RW	2383 Pte MORGAN, W
1381 Pte COOMBE, PA	2133 Pte OXENHAM, W
2345 Pte DAVIES, WE	1840 Pte PROUT, TJ
2308 Pte GREEN, E	2305 Pte SYMONDS, C
2316 Pte ISAAC, C	2285 Pte WILLIAMS, JR
1518 Pte JONES, GJ	

This Tablet is erected  
By their Comrades of the Regiment

## **BRECON MEN NOT RECORDED ON THE TOWN MEMORIALS**

RESEARCHED AND INCLUDED BECAUSE OF THEIR BRECON  
CONNECTIONS





**Lt Colonel James Robert Angus**

Welsh Regiment, 16th Btn., attached to 11th Btn. SWB

Died on September 17th, 1917, aged 45

Buried at Erquinghem-Lys Churchyard Extension, Nord,  
France

James was born in Dumfries, Scotland in 1871, but lived in Brecon from a young age, the family having moved here in the 1870s.

The family lived in 24, John Street in 1881. His father, also James was a general labourer, although he had previously been in the military as a colour sergeant in the 23rd regiment, fought in the Crimea and stationed at Brecon Barracks for many years. James' father was born in Aberdeen, but his mother Emma was born in Brecon. James attended Pendre School.

James had previously joined the army as a private and served with the Grenadier Guards, but later joined the Glamorgan Constabulary, rising to the rank of inspector and worked in Cardiff and Barry. On the outbreak of war in South Africa he rejoined his regiment in London and fought against the Boers. He was of a modest and genial disposition and a good violinist.

James was promoted to major and became second in command of the Cardiff City Battalion in France in December 1915. He was later promoted to lieutenant colonel and in

August 1917 took command of a battalion of the South Wales Borderers. He unfortunately died of drowning whilst bathing in a canal early in the morning of September 17th. Two of his men saw that he was in difficulties, presumably from cramp, but he sank before assistance could reach him.

He left a widow and three children.

**Private Benjamin Morris Bather**

Middlesex Regiment 2/10th Battalion, service no. G/87008

Died May 23rd, 1918. Jerusalem, aged 30

Commemorated on the Jerusalem Memorial

Ben was born in 1887 to John Morris Bather and his wife Annie (nee Rees) in Lower Sydenham, Kent, although the town was later included within the borough of Lewisham.

Ben's father John had been born in Brecon in 1860 and lived at 60, Orchard Street, Llanfaes. His family moving to Free Street, Brecon by 1871. By the time he is 21, is John boarding in Ystradyfodwg and working as a gas fitter. He later meets Annie Rees from Tredegar and they get married in Lewisham in 1885 and live there for a number of years, having five children, with Ben being the second eldest.

The family had been living at 38, Stanton Square, Kent Lane, Lewisham in 1891 and had moved to 4, Florence Villas, Lewisham by 1901. At the time the family were living in Lewisham they appear to have made friends with another local family living nearby, the Phillips family.

Unfortunately, John dies in 1908 and Annie and most of the family move back to Brecon and live at 73, The Struet in 1911. One of the Phillips' sons, Charles, moves to Brecon with the Bathers.

Ben and his eldest brother Fred remain in Lewisham as gas workers and in 1911 are in lodgings with the Phillips family. The Phillips had also lost their father by this time and widow Louisa is head of the household at 1, Stanton Place, Kent Lane, Lewisham.

In August 1915 Ben married Mary Roberts of 2, Rock and Castle, Brecon in the Priory Church. The couple intended to make their home in London, although Mary appears to have remained in Brecon and had a daughter Florence in early 1917.

Ben enlists in Surrey in 1916 under conscription and joins the Middlesex Regiment (the Duke of Cambridge's Own).

The 2nd/10th Battalion Middlesex Regiment was by 1916 in Egypt fighting as part of the 160th (Welsh Border) Brigade within the 53rd (Welsh) Division and fought in many battles in the region, including the Palestine campaign.

Benjamin's younger brother Charles, also in this book<sup>30</sup>. died in service with the South Wales Borderers in Mesopotamia in 1917 and his older brother Fred was seriously burnt in France whilst serving with the Army Ordnance Corps.

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<sup>30</sup> See page 21

**Second Lieutenant Cecil Hoyle Broadbent**

Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, 4th Battalion

Died of wounds, March 1st, 1916 in Albert, France, aged 34

Buried at Warloy-Baillon Communal Cemetery, Somme,  
France



Cecil was born on October 25th, 1881 in Cannock, Staffordshire and was baptised that December in St Luke's Church, Cannock. He was the son of James, a bank manager and his wife Eliza, nee Jennings.

By 1891 the family have moved to Rochdale where Cecil is one of seven children living at home with his parents, his mother's sister and three servants.

Cecil attended Oundle School and did well, playing for the school's rugby and cricket teams but also applying himself to learning. He earned a senior scholarship in 1898 and at prize day in 1900 he won six prizes, including the Headmaster's Prize for Greek and Latin Prose.

He also won a major scholarship in Classics to Trinity College, Cambridge where he won various college prizes and obtained a first in his classics degree in 1903.

In 1901 Cecil is listed as living in Kingston on Thames with his sister Jessie and her husband, Charles Rowland, a clergyman. This is probably his address when not in college.

Cecil decided to be a schoolmaster and his first appointment was at Christ College, Brecon in 1903 as a classical sixth form master. Three years later he moved on to Bradford Grammar School. At the outbreak of war, Cecil was involved in the formation of the school's Officer Training Corps and in November 1914 was gazetted second lieutenant with the Bradford School Officer Training Corps.

In August 1915 Second Lieutenant Broadbent joined the 1/4th Territorial battalion of the Yorkshire Light Infantry and after a brief period of training in Beverly and Leeds.

He went to France in September 1915 and served in the trenches near Ypres. By February 1916, he had moved to the Somme area and was in charge of a Brigade Bombing School in Albert, behind the lines. There he was accidentally killed on 1st March 1916 when a mills bomb exploded prematurely while he was acting as instructor.

**The Lord gives and the Lord hath taken away**

**Private Bernard Pitt Bryant**

King's Shropshire Light Infantry, 3rd Battalion, service no.  
7079

Died on March 27th, 1918 at home, aged 27  
Buried in Rhondda (Trealaw) Cemetery

Bernard was born in Brecon in 1896 the son of Samuel and Mary Pitt Bryant. At the time the family were living at 39, The Struet in Brecon. His father Samuel was born in London and married Mary Fury in October 1883 in St John the Evangelist Church, Brecon (now Brecon Cathedral). Mary was from Talyllyn near Brecon. John was a plasterer and they had four other children, Mary Ann born, 1884/5, Roseanna (Rosie) 1889, Florence 1891 and Samuel 1893.

In 1901 Bernard was living in White Lion Terrace, near Bridge Street Brecon with his cousin, George Lodge, a garden labourer. Samuel, his father had died 1898 age 51 and Mary, his mother, died 1903.

By 1911 he was living in the Rhondda with his sister Mary, now married to John Manning, and her family and other relations. Bernard and the other men in the family were working as coal miners. Bernard was now fourteen.

On the 26th August 1914 he enlisted in the Army Special Reservists at Tonypany joining the Shropshire Light Infantry 3rd Battalion.

He was posted to the 6th Battalion and embarked for service in France on 23 July, 1915 and in Boulogne suffered an accidental bayonet injury in the thigh, requiring a return to England. On his return to France the next month he was posted to the 7th Battalion. In 1917 he became an acting lance corporal and then a corporal but was subsequently returned back to a private.

In 1917 he was serving on the Somme and in that summer he contracted pneumonia and was sent back to England in the November. Back in England in the 1st Southern General Hospital in Birmingham he was diagnosed with pulmonary tuberculosis contracted due to exposure while on active service. His family had no history of TB. As a result, he was discharged on 17th November 1917 and issued with a Silver War Badge. He returned to live with his sister in Williamstown, Pen y Graig and died the following year.



**Private James Clark**

Gloucestershire Regiment, 12th Battalion, service no. 14639

Killed in action on September 3rd, 1916, aged 24

Commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France



James was born in Brecon on October 28th, 1891, the seventh of nine children of Thomas William Clark and his wife Martha, nee Davies. The family had recently moved from Lyonshall, Herefordshire to Cradoc Cottage where Thomas had taken a job as gardener at Penoyre House. Thomas continued to work on the Penoyre Estate for many years and the family remained there, although later in Penoyre Cottage. By 1911 James had moved out and is was a grocer's assistant for John Rees Powell of Dowlais, Glamorgan. He boarded with the family.

He moved to Bath at some point and enlisted with the 12th Bristol Battalion of the Gloucesters. The battalion came under the command of the 95th Brigade under the 32nd Division. After training at Salisbury Plain in the Summer of 1915 he landed in France on November 21st of that year. The Brigade then came under the 5th Division who in early 1916 took over

a section of front line near Arras and it was a lively time with trench raids, sniping and mining activity. With the start of the Somme offensive in July 1916 the 5th Division were called from a period of rest and refit, and over the coming months took part in the battles of Hugh Wood, Guillemont, Flers-Courcelette, Morval and Le Transloy.

The Battle of Guillemont took place between September 3rd and 6th, 1916. South of Delville Wood, the second German defensive system snaked down to the village of Guillemont. It became another place where men of both sides were cut down in their thousands, as attack and counter-attack took place. This is where James lost his life. James is also commemorated on the gravestone of his parents and sister in Battle Churchyard.

James' brother John (Jack) was an artist and photographer who went on to open a studio and shop in Brecon, where the family continue to trade.

**No mother's care did him attend, nor o'er him did a father  
bend**

**No sister by to shed a tear, no brother by his words to hear  
Dying in a foreign land, no father by to take his hand  
No mother near to close his eyes, far from his native land  
he lies**

**Regimental Sergeant Major Albert Alfred Cornish**

South Wales Borderers, 4th Battalion, service no. 4/12752

Died in Mesopotamia on June 22nd, 1916, aged 39

Buried at Basra War Cemetery, Iraq

Albert was born on March 1st, 1877 in Islington, London, the son of Alfred William Cornish, a musician and professor of music, and his wife Elizabeth Ann. Albert was baptised later that month. In 1881 the family were in Latchmere Road, Battersea and Albert had three sisters and a baby brother. Ten years later the family were in the same house; Albert's father now listed himself as a musician; Elizabeth and two daughters were dressmakers.

In April 1893 Albert, at 16, enlists in the army in Brecon, joining the South Wales Borderers, stating his occupation as musician. Albert is initially posted as 'boy', before becoming a drummer 3 months later. He is noted as a private in November 1897, made corporal in June 1899. He goes to South Africa in October 1899 and serves there until June 1904 when he returns to Britain until 1910.

Albert married in Brecon on February 4th, 1909 to Elizabeth Dowdeswell, a sister of William Dowdeswell, also featured in this book<sup>31</sup>. In 190 lived with her parents at 6, High Street

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<sup>31</sup> See page 236

where her father was an inn keeper. The family later moved to 2, Lion Street, Brecon. Elizabeth was at 2a, John Street, Brecon in 1911 with her baby daughter, also Elizabeth. The couple had two further children later.

Albert was promoted to lance sergeant in April 1910, and then sergeant in December of that year. He returned to South Africa at this time and remains there until March 1912 when he returned to Britain and was discharged at his own request after 18 years' service. Whilst in Brecon, Albert was a member of the Buffaloes. During his service in South Africa Albert was awarded the Queen's and King's medals for service as well a number of clasps for different campaigns, including the relief of Kimberly. His military records also show Mentions in Despatches, Meritorious Service Medals and Territorial Force Efficiency Medals. Albert was called up from the Reserves when the war broke out and became regimental sergeant major. He served in Gallipoli and later in Egypt and Mesopotamia where he was in the force that attempted to relieve Kut. He was mentioned in despatches by General Sir Percy Lake for distinguished service in this expedition

He subsequently died of dysentery in Mesopotamia, leaving a widow and three children.

**Sergeant John Davies**

Royal Engineers, Anti-Gas Est, service no. 279219

Died in Nottingham on November 27th, 1918, aged 34

Buried at Wrexham Cemetery

John Davies was born in Wrexham in 1883, where his father was a blacksmith in a local iron foundry. He was schooled in Wrexham and gained a degree in mathematics from Bangor in 1905. Having previously taught in Dorset, he was appointed to teach mathematics at Brecon County Intermediate School for Boys in September 1908, where he was also the sports master. John spent 8 years in Brecon and boarded in Bowen Terrace.

John appeared in the school photographs of 1914 and is credited with introducing advanced mathematics to the curriculum.

He was called up in March 1916 and because of his scientific training he was UK based and attached to the Royal Engineers and employed on the testing of poisonous gas, which aggravated a chest condition from which he suffered.

Following the Armistice, he was struck down by the influenza epidemic (Spanish flu) from which his damaged lungs failed to recover. He died in Nottingham in November 1918 and is buried in Wrexham cemetery.

**Rifleman Robert George Duncan Dempster**

Monmouthshire Regiment, 2/1 Battalion, service no. 227181

Died of Wounds on October 10th, 1918 at no. 12 Casualty

Clearing Station in France, aged 36

Buried at Tincourt New British Cemetery

George was born in Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire in 1882, but the family soon moved to Bromyard, Herefordshire and later to Brecon. In 1889 they are living at Kennels Cottage in The Watton, where his father was huntsman. The family remain in Brecon for over twenty years but later moved to Wiston in Pembrokeshire, his father's birthplace.

In 1901 George is still at home, but by 1911 he and his older brother Thomas are living with their uncle and aunt at Dolgwili, Abergwili, Carmarthenshire and whilst Thomas is working as manager at a local quarry, George is shown as clerk at the same works. Their uncle Thomas Evans is the slate mine quarry owner. George is well known in Abergwili and becomes secretary for the Abergwili show.

George enlists in the Monmouthshire Regiment and is in the 2/1st battalion. Formed in Newport in September 1914 the Battalion became part of the 68th Division of 205 Brigade but remained on home service until disbanded in March 1918. George then joins the 1/1st where they were the Pioneer Battalion for the 46th Division. It is presumed the remaining

men of the 2/1 were sent out as reinforcements for the 1/1 in France.

By this time, the German Spring Offensive was at its height, and the Allied armies were suffering a terrible onslaught, with many battalions being almost wiped out. The War turned in the Allies' favour on 8 August 1918, the Black Day of the German Army, when Australian troops won a decisive battle at Villers Brettoneux, and from that day on the Allies held the upper hand. The 46th Division pushed the Germans back in Flanders, then moved southwards, forcing a crossing over the formidable Hindenburg Line at Riqueval Bridge, and pushing on toward Cambrai. George was wounded in action during the Pursuit to the Selle and died shortly after. He is buried in Tincourt New British Cemetery, France. He is also commemorated on the Abergwili War Memorial.

His brother Harry was killed in 1915 and is commemorated at Llanelli and features elsewhere in this book<sup>32</sup>. Another brother Sidney served with the 1st Brecknock Battalion and after the war was well known in Brecon, working for the County Education Office.

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<sup>32</sup> See page 299

**Private William John Dowdeswell**

Royal Army Service Corps, service no. MS/951

Died of Pneumonia March 6th, 1919, aged 40

Buried at St John the Baptist Churchyard, Clydach-on-Tawe

William was born about 1879 in Llanddewi'r Cwm, Builth Wells. He was the son of William Henry Dowdeswell and his wife Mary Ann. The family home was at Oakland Cottages, Llandewi and William's father worked as an engine fitter in a local works.

By 1911 his parents were living at 2, Lion Street, Brecon, but subsequently moved to 34, The Watton before buying 28, Free Street for £150 in a property sale in April 2015.

William's family were well known and respected in Brecon with William's father being a Brecon native and having worked for the Cambrian Railway in Builth for a number of years before returning to Brecon and running the Victoria Inn for a few years. He was later engaged by the Brecon Town Council as hall keeper, undertaking other roles in his tenure there. The council paid tribute to him on his death in 1916, aged 61.

William joined the Navy in 1899 serving about 14 years before leaving in 1913. He was living in Portsmouth in 1901 and his occupation was listed as Royal Navy Engine Room Artificer. His naval records show that he had about 28 placements on



20 different ships in his 13 years and this may suggest that he was shore based.

On August 10th, 1914 William, aged 36, enlisted in the British Army at Portsmouth, joining the Army Service Corps as a private. His occupation on enlistment is listed as fitter, having served an apprenticeship in Builth.

He served in the UK until September 1915 when he left for France, embarking at Southampton on the *SS King Edward* for Rouen. He spent over two years in France, mainly at the Motor Transport Depot. He came back in July 1917 for ten days leave. Later in November 1917 he was transferred back to England as he had been selected for service in the Navy, although it seems nothing came of this.

William is recommended for discharge from the army in May 1918 with chronic bronchitis, originating during his service in France, and sent to a discharge unit in Ripon. After examination there he is recommended to be released to ship building and went to work in Newcastle Upon Tyne for some years before later obtaining an important post at the nickel plate works at Clydach in the Swansea valley.

His chest appears to have been a continuing problem and he died of pneumonia at Clydach in 1919.

**Private Bert Eldred**

South Lancashire Regiment, 3rd Battalion, service no. 48757

Died 20th May 1920, aged 34

Buried in Brecon Cemetery

Bertie was born in Brecon in 1886 to George and Elwyna Waterloo Eldred. His father, George, was a chimney sweep. There were four children at home around this time. Bertie had an elder sister, Grace Alice, a brother George Harold and a younger sister Lilian. All the children were born in Brecon. The family lived at 2, John Street, The Watton. There were three older brothers who did not survive childhood and all died in 1883.

George, Bertie's father, had previously served in the army. He married Elwyna in Brecon in 1872.

By 1901 the family were still in The Watton but now lived in the Old Turnpike near to Watton Villa. All four children are still at home with Grace now working as a dressmaker. George and Bertie are working as labourers.

The family later moved again and in 1911 lived at 18, The Watton, Brecon. Bertie is still a general labourer and Harold is now working on a farm. Grace had got married in 1905 and left the family home for 54, The Watton, Brecon. Her

husband, William Howcroft was a brother of Henry Simpson Howcroft also featured in this book<sup>33</sup>.

Bertie's sister Lilian is still living at home in 1911 but married in 1913 to Samuel Nesbitt, also in this book.

Bertie served with the South Lancashire Regiment (The Prince of Wales' Volunteers). He died at home in 1920 and was according to the Cathedral Parish Magazine '*the victim of illness contracted on active service*', believed to be phthisis, a disease of the respiratory system.

**I will guide thee with mine eye**

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<sup>33</sup> See page 86

**Private James Flaherty**

South Wales Borderers 56rd Training Reserve Btn., Labour  
Corps

Died November 21st, 1918, aged 19

Buried in Brecon Cemetery

James was believed to be born in St Helens, Lancashire 1899. James was the youngest son of Martin, a coal hewer and his wife Ellen.

In 1901 James eldest brother Thomas, a coal drawer and was living at home with the family, as were his three older sisters Mary, Ellen and Margaret. His eldest sister was no longer at home.

By 1911 only James was at home with his mother and father. James' father Martin died in 1917, aged 63.

Having previously served with the South Wales Borderers he later transferred to the Labour Corps and was based in Brecon at the time of his death from pneumonia.

James was buried with full military honours in Brecon Cemetery. The Band of the Borderers played funeral marches, the customary three volleys were fired over the grave and the bugler sounded the last post. The mourners were his mother and three sisters. Rev Father Finucane from Brecon Catholic Church officiated.

**Lance Corporal Michael Fury**

South Wales Borderers 2nd Battalion, service no. 10458

Died at Gallipoli on July 11th 1915, aged 24

Remembered on Helles Memorial, Turkey.

Michael was born in 1891 in the Parish of St John the Evangelist, Brecon. He was the son of Michael and Mary Fury. The family lived in The Struet, Brecon and his father Michael was a tinsmith. They also ran a lodging house next door. His mother died in 1895 and his father remarried to Emily in 1901. Michael was 10 living at 17, Mill Street, Brecon with his father and stepmother and one sister. His father died in 1902. Michael enlisted in Merthyr Tydfil into the 2nd Battalion South Wales Borderers as a private. He is 19 and single on the 1911 Census in the Barracks, at Fort Pitt Hospital, Rochester, Kent with other soldiers from the South Wales Borderers (SWB). The 2nd Battalion SWB were in China in 1914 and involved in operations against the German Territory of Tsingtao. They left in December 1914, embarking at Hong Kong to travel to Plymouth. On arrival in January 1915 they came under the 29th Division and moved to Rugby. In March 1915 they left from Avonmouth for Gallipoli, via Malta to Alexandria before moving to Mudros and then landing at Cape Helles in April 1915. Michael died at Gallipoli on 11th July 1915. At the time he was a lance corporal. Michael is remembered on the Helles Memorial, Turkey.

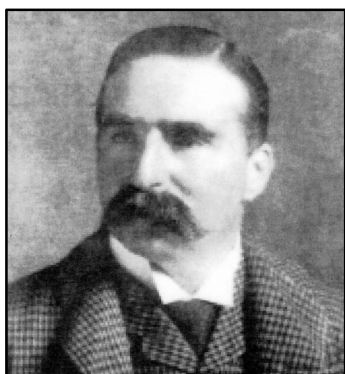
**Lieutenant-Colonel Richard Davies Garnons Williams**

Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment) 12th Battalion

Killed in action at the Battle of Loos September 12th, 1915

aged 59

Buried: Departement du Pas-de-Calais, Nord, France



Richard was born in 1856 in Llowes, the second child of the Reverend Garnons Williams of Abercamlais, but soon moved to St John's Mount in Brecon where his father was vicar. By 1871 he is back at Llowes as a scholar, but by 1876 he has left home and has become a lieutenant in the 7th

Royal Fusiliers, and in 1881 is living at Hounslow Barracks.

By the time he is 35 he is married, with one child, and living in Chelsea as a captain in the same regiment. He retired from the army in 1892 though he continued to serve in a voluntary capacity until 1906. In 1901 his wife and two daughters are recorded at Ty Mawr, Llanfrynach but on the date of the census, Richard is at his brother-in-law's address in Kensington, showing as an ex-army Captain. Ten years later, the family are living in Waunderwen, Hay.

Richard was privately educated at Wimbledon School in Surrey, before graduating to Magdalen College, Oxford, later

switching to Trinity College, Cambridge in 1874. Richard was a Welsh International Rugby Union forward who played club rugby for Brecon and Newport. He also played rugby for both Oxford and Cambridge, although not winning a sporting blue with either. Williams is notable for playing in the very first Wales Rugby Union match (1881).

He rejoined the army shortly after the outbreak of the war, initially with his original regiment, then posted to the 12th (Service) Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers as a major in September 1914. Promoted to temporary lieutenant colonel in October he was transferred back to the South Wales Borderers to command the Brecknockshire Battalion. Richard was later posted back to the 12th Royal Fusiliers and was killed in September 1915 whilst leading his Battalion at the Battle of Loos.

### **Regimental Sergeant Major George Halford**

South Wales Borderers, 4th Battalion, service no. 13852

Died of wounds 12th August 1915, aged 43

Buried Chatby War Memorial Military Cemetery,  
Alexandria, Egypt.



George Halford was born Albert George Halford in Monaghan, Ireland in 1871 to James and Susan Halford.

By 1881 his family had moved to 7, Water Lane, Rhayader. His father is listed as an army pensioner, born in Middlesex, and his wife Susan was born in Lancashire. George is nine years old with six siblings.

In 1851 George's father James aged 10 was in Hackney Workhouse and it seems likely he would have joined the army as soon as he was old enough to leave the workhouse.

In 1891 the family had moved to Hereford. There are two more children but George and his elder brother James and elder sister Mary Anne are no longer living with their parents. James enlisted in the South Wales Borderers in 1886.



In 1888 George age 18 enlisted at Brecon joining the South Wales Borderers. In total George served over 25 years, extending his initial contract a number of times. He spent almost three years in Gibraltar and five years in India. He rose from private, through corporal to sergeant with the Borderers and in 1908 transferred to the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, again progressing to colour sergeant and acting sergeant major.

He was discharged in March 1914 but reenlisted on the outbreak of war, rejoining the Borderers.

In March 1904 George had married Elizabeth Norah Llewellyn in London. Elizabeth, George's wife, was born in Brecon in 1884. She was the daughter of Sergeant Llewellyn of the 1st South Wales Borderers and had resided at Newmarch Street in the town.

By 1911 George and Elizabeth were living in 34, Idris Villas, Towyn. George is still a soldier and they have three children, George, aged 5 born in Eltham Kent and Irene aged 3 and Cyril aged 2, both born in Towyn.

George was a fine football player in his day, and was captain of the 1st Battn. South Wales Borderers' team that won the Murraj Cup against all the troops in India, and at one time played for Brecon.

George died on a hospital ship of wounds received on active service, on 12th August 1915. Although wounded at Gallipoli, he was taken by hospital ship to Egypt, where he

was buried. Elizabeth was living in Peckham, London at the time of George's death.

The 4th Battalion, South Wales Borderers was formed in August 1914 and embarked at Avonmouth in June 1915 and landing in Gallipoli on 15th July that year. The whole of the 4th Battalion was evacuated from Gallipoli in January 1916 due to severe casualties from combat, disease and harsh weather. The battalion moved to Mudros in January 1916 and subsequently to Egypt and Mesopotamia.

**Ordinary Seaman Cyril Hardwick**

HMS Indefatigable. Signaller

Killed in action, the Battle of Jutland May 31st, 1916, aged 18

Remembered at Portsmouth Naval Memorial



Cyril was born in Brecon on December 25th, 1897. He was the eldest child of Thomas Hardwick, a railway worker and his wife Rose, nee Miffling. His father Thomas, also born in Brecon, was a brother to William Emlyn Hardwick who also features in this book<sup>34</sup>.

The family had moved to Colne in Lancashire by 1901, with Thomas working as a railway checker, but soon moved on to Stockport, in Cheshire and Cyril's three siblings were all born in the county between 1905 and 1910, Thomas was working as a railway foreman.

In the 1911 Census Cyril is still in school and living at home with his parents. Before enlisting he worked as a junior railway porter for the Midland Railway.

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<sup>34</sup> See page 75

Cyril joined the Navy on March 5th, 1915 signing on for twelve years. He trained upon *HMS Vivid, Ganges and Victory*, all port based and serving as a 'boy' and then as 'signaller boy' until his 18th birthday when he became an ordinary signalman. Cyril joined *HMS Indefatigable* in January 1916 as an ordinary signalman, and died in the Battle of Jutland on May 31st, 1916.

The Battle of Jutland was the largest naval battle of the war. An extract from the official history of Naval Operations by Sir Julian S, Corbett records that

*'...at the other end of the line the duel between the Indefatigable and the Von der Tann had been growing in intensity till, a few minutes after 4.00 the British ship was suddenly hidden in a burst of flame and smoke. A salvo of three shots had fallen on her upper deck and must have penetrated to a magazine. She staggered out of the line, sinking by the stern when another salvo struck her; a second terrible explosion rent her, she turned over and in a moment all trace of her was gone .....'*<sup>35</sup>

Only two of the crew of 1019 are reported to have survived.

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<sup>35</sup> The National Museum of the Royal Navy

**Private Lewis George Hodson**

Royal Army Veterinary Corps, service no. SE/14518

Died on July 11th, 1920 at home in Carmarthenshire

Buried in st David's Churchyard, Llanfaes, Brecon

George was born in Boyle, Ireland in 1872 to George and Margaret Hodson. The family were well travelled with his father George serving in the army and had spells in Ireland and Gibraltar where George's sister Margaret Ann was born in 1879. The family are living in Ystradgynlais in 1881 when his father has left the army and is working as a railway labourer. His younger brother Tom<sup>36</sup>, also in this book, was born Brecon in 1885. By which time the family have settled in Llanfaes and George's father is working as a labourer.

The family suffers some upheaval around 1901. Lewis George has left the household and Margaret Ann leaves to be a servant in Cardiff. George is in the mental asylum in Abergavenny. No record has been found for Margaret and Thomas, although Margaret was living at 7, Ffrwdgrech Road in 1911, suggesting she remained in Llanfaes until later moving to Twickenham and subsequently Abergavenny.

George has joined the army and served with the Second Battalion, South Wales Borderers (Mounted Infantry) during

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<sup>36</sup> See page 82

the South Africa campaign. He later leaves the army and is working as a tanner and living back with his mother in Ffrwdgrech Road, Brecon when he meets and marries Kate Price (b1877) of Talbot Terrace, Llanfaes, Brecon.

By 1911 George and Kate are living in Brynamman where George works as a colliery labourer. George rejoins the army during the war and is assigned to the Royal Army Veterinary Corps.

He dies in 1920 and whilst the cause of death is not known, it is assumed to relate to his military service, given his inclusion in the War Graves records. His wife is still living at Brynamman at the time of his death.

**I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course. I  
have kept my faith**

**Private Albert Robert Holbrow**

Army Service Corps, service no. M2/045707

Died on February 8th, 1915 at the Royal Herbert Hospital,

Woolwich, aged 35

Buried at Greenwich Cemetery



Albert was born in Llanigon in 1879, a son to James and his wife Emma, nee Watkins. He was baptised later that year. The family were living at Nant y Scallon, Llanigon and father James was employed as a coachman. By 1881 the family were living at Tregoyd Mansion, with James now a coachman to Viscount Hereford and Emma a servant. He had one sister, Lilian Grace, who was born in 1884. By 1891 the family had moved to 26, Castle Street in Hay where James was now an inn keeper.

Albert later followed in his father's footsteps and in 1901, as a 21 year old was third coachman to George Charles, Earl of Powys. He was living at Walcot Stables attached to Walcot Hall in Lydbury North, Shropshire. He moved on and in about 1903 he became chauffeur to Captain J H Conway Lloyd of Dinas House Brecon.

He married Jessie Crump in Hereford in 1909 and was still in Captain Lloyd's employment in 1911 and living with his wife Jessie in Trefedw, Dinas. At this time his father was still an inn keeper in the Mason's Arms, Castle Street, Hay, assisted by Albert's mother and sister, although the three later ran a butcher's shop in the same street.

Albert was known all over Brecon having driven his employer to countless political and other public gatherings. He had joined the Motor G Transport section only three weeks before his illness.

He enlisted in London in January 1915 as a private in the Army Service Corps, joining the Motor Transport section, and was stationed at the Grove Park Barracks, S.E. London. He contracted a chill and found himself compelled to enter the Royal Herbert Hospital in Woolwich on a Friday, but by the Saturday his condition became critical and his wife and relatives were sent for. He passed away the following Monday morning.

The funeral took place with full military honours at Greenwich Cemetery the following Thursday. The coffin was conveyed on a gun carriage draped with the Union Jack and was preceded by one of the companies of the corps, but not the one to which he had belonged to, they having been sent to the front subsequent to his illness. The whole of the burial service was held at the graveside, which was in a plot of ground specially reserved for soldiers and to be known as



The Heroes' Corner. After the interment three volleys were fired and the Last Post was sounded.

Owing to illness, Albert's father was unable to be there but his wife and mother were both present. Among the wreaths was one from Captain and Mrs B Conway Lloyd and the family also received a letter of sympathy from the Captain who was somewhere in France at the time.

Albert's wife Jessie was later shown in military records as living in Hereford.

**Driver David Lewis Hughes**

Royal Field Artillery, 26th Battery, 17th Brigade, service no.  
745274

Died of Wounds October 29th 1918, aged 22  
Buried at Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Flanders



David was born in Brecon on the 4th July 1896 and was christened in St David's church on the 26th of that month. His father was Lewis Hughes and his mother Sarah Ann Hughes. The family were living at 29, Newgate Street, Brecon near the Brecon Jail. David's father, who had been born in Brecon was a warden at the Jail. The family had lived in Newgate Street for many years including David's Grandfather who had been a cooper. Several of David's ancestors had served in many of the continental wars under the Duke of Marlborough.

David was the eldest son and he had a brother Thomas and a sister Alice, both born in Brecon. The family were still living in Brecon in 1901 but by 1911 they had moved to Cardiff. David's father was then an electric car driver, which was possibly an early form of electric tram. David, 14 was still at

school, as were Thomas, 13 and Alice, 10 and Bronwyn had just been born.

David had enlisted in the army in about 1911 and served all through the war, although he did not leave Britain to join his Battery in Gallipoli until November 1915.

The 17th Brigade, RFA was serving in Allahabad, India as part of the Regular Army when war was declared. They were ordered to return to England and with other units returning from distant garrisons were formed into Divisions in late 1914 and early 1915. 17 Brigade RFA joined the 29th Division and initially went to Egypt in March 1915, before landing in Gallipoli the next month. They served there until the withdrawal in January 1916, and then returned to Egypt before going to France in March 1916. They served on the Western Front for the remainder of the war and went through many battles, the last of which was the Battle of Courtrai, 14th -19th October 1918. It was probably here that David received his wounds. A few days before he had been awarded the military medal. He had served seven years in the army.

**Forget him no, we never will, we loved him then, we love  
him still**

**Company Quarter Master Sergeant Major Pryce Hughes**

South Wales Borderers, 1st Brecknockshire Battalion, service  
no. 30

Died June 19th, 1915 at Aden, aged 41

Buried at Maala Cemetery, Aden, The Yemen.

Pryce Hughes was born in Brecon in 1874, the son of Robert and Anne Hughes. Robert was an innkeeper and in 1881 was running the Cross Keys Inn at 4, Orchard Street, Llanfaes Brecon.

The family later moved to the Wheatsheaf Inn in Brecon and when Pryce's father Robert died in 1991, aged just 41, his widow Annie took over as innkeeper. Pryce is still listed at the family home and works as a printer (compositor) with the Brecon County Times. The family later moved to Merthyr where Annie ran the New Inn. Pryce was well known and popular in Brecon and Merthyr.

Pryce was educated in Brecon and joined the Brecknock Volunteers in 1893 when he was 19 years old. He later went with them to fight in the South Africa War, earning the Queen's Medal and subsequently a Long Service Medal.

Pryce passed with them into the Territorial Force in April 1908, becoming a sergeant in December that year, and later a company sergeant major. He mobilised with the Brecknocks in August 1914, volunteered for imperial service and went

with the battalion to Aden in October that year (as we have heard).

The news of his death was sent by cable to his mother at Merthyr with the only particulars being that his death was caused by sun and heart failure. He had previously been in excellent health and his illness was reported as being only a few hours, duration and he had bravely held on to duty when he perhaps should have been in hospital. The suddenness of his death caused quite a gloom over the battalion.

The Brecon County Times carried an account of the funeral as sent in by a comrade of his. This stated he had died suddenly at Station Hospital and was buried the same day at the English Cemetery on Maala plain which was mid-way between Steamer Point Barracks and Crater Barracks.

A full military funeral was held and was a most imposing and impressive affair. The procession was headed by the battalion band, followed by the funeral party, furnished by G Company (Cefn-Coed) and then the gun carriage bearing the coffin enshrouded in the Union Jack with helmet, belt and bayonet.

This was followed by many officers including Lieutenants Frank and Stephen Best and men from the remaining companies.

They marched slowly to the pier side watched by the many people, with the natives very picturesque in their Eastern dress. All appeared to show the deepest respect.

On arrival at the pier the coffin was transferred to one barge, with another set aside for the troops and a short journey was undertaken up the harbour to the coaling station. On arrival the procession was reformed and the coffin lifted by the bearers and carried to the cemetery where they were met by the chaplain and Colonel Lord Glanusk.

A beautiful Church of England burial service was read, followed by the Lord's Prayer. A salute of three rifle rounds was fired and the Last Post sounded.

**Lieutenant Titho Glynne Jones**

Royal Welsh Fusiliers, 1st/7th (Merioneth and  
Montgomery) Battalion

Killed in action on April 20th, 1917, aged 30

Remembered with Honour at the Gaza War Cemetery,  
Palestine

Titho was born in Soham, Cambridgeshire in March 1887, and was baptised there a month later. He was the eldest son of Edmund Osborne Jones and his wife Ada, nee Howells. His father Edmund was a Church of England clergyman.

In 1889 the family moved to Brecon when his father gained a teaching position at Christ College and in the early part of 1891 they were living at 5, Alexandra Road, Brecon and Titho now had a younger brother, Edmund. Later that year Titho's father was given a post at Llanidloes, Montgomeryshire and the family moved to the vicarage there.

Titho returned to Christ College as a pupil in 1897. He was successful academically and also played for the college's first team at rugby. He was also a keen footballer and played for Brecon. He left the college in 1905 having passed all his higher certificates.

Titho then became an articled clerk, to Mr. W. P. Jones, solicitor of Aberystwyth in 1906, passing his final law examination in 1910.

In 1911 Titho is living at home in Llanidloes' vicarage with his parents and whilst younger brother Edmund is now in Oswestry Grammar School, two more siblings have arrived. Enid Adelaide, born about 1892 and Russell Hafrenydd born about 1895.

Titho later emigrated to Canada and set up business in British Columbia. He returned to Britain in June 1914 arriving in Liverpool, aboard *the Lusitania*.

When war broke out, Titho enlisted in the London Regiment, in the 1/9th Queen Victoria Rifles and served in the ranks in France from November 1914 to March 1915 and would have been involved in most of the major actions of this time.

He was later given a commission in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers and within the 1/7th Battalion fought with the 53rd (Welsh) Division in the Palestine Campaign and fell in the second battle of Gaza.

Titho's youngest brother Russell died in the Gallipoli fighting.



**Private William Owen Lewis**

The Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, 9th Btn., service no.  
34536

Died on October 14th, 1918 in Germany, aged 37  
Buried at the Niederzwehren Cemetery, Hessen, Germany

William was born in 1882, the second eldest son of John and Elizabeth Lewis. Whilst he was born in Llanidloes, like his three brothers, the family had moved to Brecon by about 1891 and were living at 21, Newmarch Street. William now 8 years old attended Pendre School in Brecon. By 1901 the family had moved to 1, Kensington Place and William's four younger sisters had all been born in the town.

John, William's father worked as a railway guard whilst in Llanidloes and subsequently in Brecon. By 1911 John has died and William's mother, now a widow, lived at 5, Brewery Court, Brecon with her youngest daughter Florence Emily, 13.

William was working as a house painter in Brecon in 1901 and married Annie Hargest, a dressmaker from Crickhowell, in 1905. They had two children Owen Thomas, born in 1906 and Mary Helena, born in 1908. The young family were living at Fair View, Old Road, Bwlch by 1911 when William is listed as an estate painter.

William enlisted in Brecon joining first the Royal Engineers (177823) before transferring to the Loyal North Lancashire

Regiment. He fought on the Western Front in 1917 and the local paper reported on his 14 days' leave in April 1918 after 12 months in France, and how fit he was looking. William was mentioned by Sir Douglas Haig for good work done in Picardy and Flanders.

In September 1918 he was reported to be a prisoner of war in Germany, and subsequently died there of heart failure.

**Private Michael Mines**

South Wales Borderers, service no. 15446

Died in Brecon February 14th, 1915, aged 58

Buried at Brecon Cemetery

Michael was born in Hugginstown, Kilkenny, Ireland in about 1857. In 1876 he joined the Army at the age of 19 years enlisting at Fermoy with the 69th Brigade of the Royal Irish Regiment. He had previously worked as a labourer and also served with the Kilkenny Militia from which he was released on enlistment. He signed on for 12 years being 6 years' service and a further 6 as a reserve.

Michael transferred from the 69th Brigade to the 38th in 1879, but later transferred back to the 69th. Most of his service was at home, but he did spend about 4 months in Zululand in 1879 serving in the South Africa campaign. He transferred to the army reserve in 1883.

He had married Maria McGrath in 1881 in Lismore and they later had 3 children, two boys and a girl.

Michael reenlisted in 1888 as a private after his original time had expired. He had again been working as a labourer prior to joining up. He was sent to the Curragh camp in 1889 and spent about 20 years with the army before being discharged on termination of engagement in 1908.

In the 1901 Census he is listed as a married man of 44 years serving as a lance corporal with the Royal Irish regiment based in Aldershot.

In 1911 Michael is back in Kilkenny working as a servant for a family in Danville, but is later living in Monkstone, Co. Dublin.

He enlists in the South Wales Borderers in Brynmawr early 1915, listing his previous occupation as blast furnace worker. He is working at the Depot in Brecon when he catches a cold which develops into pneumonia. He is treated at the Brecon military hospital but does not recover.

Michael is given a military funeral at Brecon cemetery with troops from the depot in attendance. The customary three volleys were fired before the bugler sounded the Last Post.

**Sapper James Morris**

Royal Engineers, 257th Tunnelling Company,  
service no. 158273

Killed in action August 8th, 1916, aged 43  
Buried at Pont Du Hem Military Cemetery, La Gorgue,  
France



William James Morris was born in Bedwellty in 1873, the eldest child of James and Mary Ann Morris.

He remained with the family up to 1891, living in Bedwellty but sometime after that he has left to join the South Wales Borderers and we have little record of him until after 1901, when he is at Brecon barracks and meets Margaret Florence Smith de Lonra, a local girl and a barmaid in a Brecon hostelry.

They marry in 1903, after James has promised to leave the army, which he does. They live in Brecon for a number of years and their first two children are born here, but by 1911 they move to Bedwellty where James becomes a coal miner.

Miners were targets for the army recruiters but apparently James resists on a number of occasions before finally signing

up in 1916. He is immediately assigned to the Royal Engineers, where his mining expertise will be of value to the tunnellers.

He was killed in August 1916 by a sniper's bullet whilst above ground repairing some works. His wife, who had been living in miners' accommodation is evicted and has to return to live with her family in Brecon.

James and Margaret had 6 children, 5 girls and a boy, and a number remained in Brecon to continue a Morris line, as well as Simpsons, Keddlers and Allens.

Margaret Florence remained in The Struet until her death in 1956 and was fondly known as Aunty Flo to street residents.

**Lance Corporal Samuel R Nesbitt**

South Wales Borderers, 3rd Battalion, service no. 3/12065

Died 15th January 1921, aged 35

Buried in a military grave at Brecon Cemetery

Samuel was born in Tenby in 1887, the son of Samuel Nesbitt, a soldier, and Alice, nee Jenkins. Alice died in 1887, whilst Samuel (senior) died of pneumonia whilst on military service in Jersey in 1889 leaving the boys orphaned.

In the 1901 Census young Samuel and his elder brother Joseph are listed as orphans living with Thomas and Susan Williams in Tenby. By 1911 he is working as a groom in the Heath, Cardiff.

In June 1913 he married Lilian Eldred of Brecon in St Mary's Church, where his occupation is a groom and address as 54 The Watton, Brecon. The witnesses were William Howcroft and Charlotte Hill. William Howcroft had previously married Lily's sister Grace Eldred and their family home in 1911 was 54 The Watton. William's brother Henry Simpson Howcroft also features in this book, as does Bertie Eldred. Lily's brother<sup>37</sup>.

By 1914 the couple are living in 54, The Watton, Brecon, presumably with the Howcroft family. Samuel and Lily had

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<sup>37</sup> See pages 86 and 238

three daughters and one son (Dorothy Rose, Edna Lorraine, Hilda G and Gordon).

Samuel served four years with the Pembrokeshire Yeomanry before enlisting on October 28th, 1914. Initially joining the Brecknocks, he later served with the South Wales Borderers in France.

In April 1917 his record shows he was wounded in the field. He suffered a scalded foot, in the performance of military duty, cooking for the company Officers' Mess at Arras, but was in no way to blame.

On 18th September 1917 in Shrewsbury he was discharged as no longer fit for active war service on account of Phthisis (a respiratory disease) caused by active service. On his subsequent death his details were included in the Commonwealth War Grave Commission list.

His widow, Lily, was still living at 54, The Watton, Brecon when she was awarded an army pension after his death in 1921.



**Lieutenant Williams Eustace Palk**

Royal Air Force

Died on August 27th, 1921, aged 26

Buried in St. David's Churchyard, Brecon

William was born in 1895 in Winson Green, Birmingham, the son of Thomas and Frances Palk. His father Thomas was the last governor of Brecon Prison from 1908 to his death in 1915. He had two brothers Harry and Edward who both served in the army and survived the war.

He was educated in Handsworth Grammar School, Birmingham, before transferring to Brecon County School.

In 1909 he received a Certificate from Royal Humane Society for saving a lad from drowning in Newton Pool.

William initially joined the South Wales Borderers and then moved to the Royal Engineers and subsequently the Royal Flying Corps which later became the Royal Air Force.

He went to Aden with the Brecknock Territorials (Brecon Company) in October 1914 and afterwards to India.

In 1916 he transferred to the Royal Engineers Signal Services as a driver and served with them in Mesopotamia until 1917. He then joined the Royal Flying Corp in Egypt as a cadet.

William was travelling to England in April 1917 on *The Leasowe Castle* when she was torpedoed and damaged. (This ship was later sunk by torpedo in May 1918). William was

gazetted as a pilot in early 1918 and promoted second lieutenant. He went to France in May 1918. William was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for action in France. The London Gazette stated:

*'On 4th November 1918 after bombing enemy troops and transport, this officer attacked, from a very low altitude, two companies of enemy infantry, turning their orderly retirement into a rout. On numerous occasions the damaged state of his machine has borne testimony to his boldness in pressing home his attack on various ground targets.'*

Supplement to the London Gazette, 7 February 1919  
(31170/2044)

In July 1919 he attended an Investiture at Buckingham Palace and was decorated by the King. He was also promoted to flight lieutenant at this time.

William was killed in a motorcycle accident near Gilwern in August 1921. He was returning from playing in a football match for Hereford Thistle Football Club. Since leaving the services he worked as an agent and salesman for Messrs Nott, Motor Engineers in Brecon. His funeral was held in St David's Church, Brecon and both his brothers attended, as well as military personnel from the Barracks and members of the Hereford Thistle Football Club. His grave is in St David's Churchyard.

His mother lived at Redcot in Brecon until her death in 1931.

**Sergeant Arthur George Payne**

South Wales Borderers, 2nd Battalion, service no. 7235

Killed in Action in China on November 6th, 1914, aged 30

Saiwan Memorial Hong Kong

Arthur was born in Portskewett, Newport in 1884, the son of George and Elizabeth Payne. Arthur's sister Florence was born in 1887. By 1901 The family had moved to Abertillery. Arthur, now seventeen, is working with his father as a coalminer. Only Arthur and younger sister Mabel, 7 were living at home at this time.

Arthur enlisted in Brecon on December 31st, 1901 completing his drill training there before joining up with the South Wales Borderers, 3rd Battalion in early March, 1902 and later moving to the 2nd Battalion.

On the 26th June 1908 Arthur married Alice Parsons in Farnborough; Arthur was now a lance sergeant.

In 1911 he was serving in South Africa and was now a full sergeant. His battalion, the 2nd, had left England in December, 1910, and sailed for South Africa. They went up to Pretoria, and remained there until October 1912, when they went to TienTsin in China. There was a great deal of tension in the area due to Imperial Germany and other European powers making attempts for colonial control, Germany had begun to interfere in Chinese local affairs.

When the war broke out in August 1914 the Germans made arrangements for the defence of TsingTau and the British sought Japanese assistance.

The Borderers were escorted from TienTsin on September 19th by *HM battleship Triumph*, the torpedo boat *Usk* and the Japanese force. From the time they encountered the Germans they were under continuous fire, and they dug themselves into the sides of the hills. By November 4th they had got to within a few hundred yards of the enemy's advanced positions and on the 7th of November the Germans surrendered. The German reaction to the Borderers was far from pleasant; some of the Germans spat on the Borderers' flags.

These events became known as the Siege of Tsingtao and took place between 31 October and 7 November 1914. It was fought by Japan and the United Kingdom against Imperial Germany. The siege was the first encounter between Japanese and German forces and also the first Anglo-Japanese operation during the war.

Thirteen of the Borderers were killed, including Sergeant Arthur Payne, and thirty-seven wounded. On the 4th December 1914, The 2nd Battalion went to Hong Kong and then to Aden where they joined other soldiers from Breconshire for a time. Shortly afterwards they embarked for England arriving at Plymouth. From there they were billeted in Coventry. Following the news of these events the

Borderers in Brecon sent a football team to play a Coventry team for the benefit of the widows and family of soldiers killed in the action.

There is limited evidence of Arthur or his parents living in Brecon. However, Arthur enlisted at the Brecon Barracks and spent time there as well as serving for about thirteen years with the South Wales Borderers. Military records also show his parents as living Brecon but that has not been verified.

**Lance Corporal Thomas William Perry**

Royal Welsh Fusiliers, B company 2nd Garrison Battalion,  
service no. 38230

Died 4th November 1918, aged 30

Buried in Alexandria (Hadra) War Memorial Cemetery

Thomas was born in Tottenham, London, the eldest child of James and Ellen Perry. The family lived in Noble Street, Clerkenwell in 1891 and Thomas now had a sister, Ellen. They remained at the same address in 1901 and James is now shown as a cab driver. Thomas' two younger brothers, George and Richard, had arrived by this time.

Thomas joined the militia in October 1905, when he was working as a general labourer. He then enlisted in the army in January 1906, joining the South Wales Borderers. He signed up for 9 years in the army and three in the reserves, which was known as a Short Services Attestation. His occupation on enlistment was given as carman.

He served in India for four years between 1907 and 1910, and later service included about eighteen months as hospital orderly and about six months as a batman.

In 1911 he is based at Chatham Barracks in Kent with the 1st Battalion, South Wales Borderers.

Thomas was wounded in action by a gunshot to the head in April 1915, whilst in Gallipoli. After treatment he returned to

the Battalion on May 17th, but was admitted to hospital on June 4th and subsequently transferred to hospital in Malta on June 14th before embarking on the *SS Euripedes* for England on June 20th.

The above indicates he was with the 2nd Battalion, South Wales Borderers at this time as they had left England in March 1915, arriving in Gallipoli in late April.

After his return, it is presumed Thomas spent some time in Brecon and met local girl, Elizabeth Davies, whose family lived in Charles Street. They were married in the summer of 1915.

His only son, Baden Thomas William Perry, was born on December 1st, 1916, but sadly died of heart failure in February 1918.

Thomas transferred to 2nd Battalion, Royal Welsh Fusiliers on 26th October 1915 and was sent to Egypt. He embarked on the *RMT Minnewaska* from Devonport on March 6th, 1916, disembarking at Alexandria on March 16th. Thomas was promoted to Lance Corporal on May 25, 1916.

A telegram was sent from Alexandria to Charles Street, Brecon on November 1st, 1918 advising that Thomas was dangerously ill with influenza. Just three days later another telegram was sent to Walnut Square, Brecon saying he had died of pneumonia. Elizabeth was living at 40, Walnut Square, Llanfaes, Brecon at the time.

**Bugler John Douglas Phelan**

Royal Marine Light Infantry, HMS Invincible, Service no.

PO/16860

Died in action at sea on May 31st, 1916, aged 17

Remembered on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial

John Douglas Phelan was born in Brecon 4th May 1899, the son of John and Nellie Phelan (nee Chant). When he was born, John had an older brother Christopher and a sister, Kathleen. Christopher was born in 1897 and Kathleen in 1898; both were born in Brecon and baptised in St Mary's Church, Brecon; John was baptised there June 2nd 1899.

His father was born in Kilkenny, Ireland but at the time of young John's birth he was a sergeant major in the South Wales Borderers. He had enlisted in Ireland in 1884 and subsequently retired from service in 1909. He enlisted again in October 1914 at the age of 49. He then served with the Portsmouth Battalion of the Hampshire Company as a colour sergeant until he was discharged on health grounds in 1916.

In 1901 the family were living in Abersychan, near Blaenavon. John had a new sister then, Violet, who eventually married and emigrated to Australia.

In 1911 the family had moved to Gosport, near Portsmouth, hence John's father later enlisting in the Portsmouth regiment and probably leading to John Douglas joining the Royal Marines. John now had another sister, Gladys and another



brother, Cyril. His parents were running a pub; John and the other children were still at school.

On the 14th May 1913 at the age of fourteen, recorded as a schoolboy and under age, John enlisted in the Royal Marines in Gosport and joined *HMS Invincible* as a bugler on August 3rd, 1914.

On the 31st May 1916 he was killed in action when the ship was blown up and sank in the Battle of Jutland, and consequently his body was not recovered. John had just turned seventeen.

*HMS Invincible*, built in 1907 was a battlecruiser attached to the 1st Cruiser Squadron, Home Fleet at the end of 1908. She took part in the Battle of Jutland, where she blew up and sank after taking a hit from the German ship *SMS Lützow*, with the loss of 1,026 crew. Only six crew members survived.

The Battle of Jutland was a naval battle fought by the Royal Navy's Grand Fleet under Admiral Sir John Jellicoe against the Imperial German Navy's High Seas Fleet under Vice-Admiral Reinhard Scheer. The battle was fought from 31 May to 1 June 1916 in the North Sea, near the coast of Denmark's Jutland Peninsula. It was the largest naval battle and the only full-scale clash of battleships in the war.

**Private Charles Richard George Phillips**

1st Brecknock Btn., South Wales Borderers, service no.  
200950

Died of illnesses contracted on active service, April 24th,  
1920, aged 23

Buried in Brecon Cemetery

Richard was born in Sydenham in the Lewisham borough of London in 1896. His father was William Phillips, a general labourer, born in Paddington, and his mother Louisa was born in Devon. In 1901 Richard, aged four, had a brother William, aged 10, a sister Annie, 2 and brother Rees, 1. All of the children had been born in Sydenham. The family were living in Relinque Road, Lewisham. At the time Ritchie was born there was a Welsh family living nearby, the Bather family. John Bather was from Brecon and his wife Annie from Tredegar; John was a gas fitter and before marrying had worked in the Rhondda. As a boy he lived in Free Street in Brecon. They had been living in 38, Stanton Square, Kent Lane, Lewisham in 1891 and had moved to 4, Florence Villas, Lewisham by 1901. It is assumed the families became friends. By 1911 Ritchie's father William had died and Louisa, a widow, was head of the Phillips household living at 1, Stanton Place, Kent Lane, Lewisham. With her are sons William and Rees, as well as boarders Frederick John Bather, 25 and Benjamin Morris Bather, 24, sons of John Bather and both also gas workers.

John Bather died in 1908 and by 1911 his widow Annie had moved back to Brecon, living at 73, The Struet with the rest of her family, including son Charles Edward, 15. Also living there as a visitor at the time of the census was Richard Phillips, 14. Both lads were errand boys at the time although Ritchie later started an apprenticeship at Garratt's Boot and Shoe Factory. Ritchie is referred to later as Mrs Bather's adopted son.

Ritchie enlisted in the 1st Brecknock Battalion, South Wales Borderers soon after the outbreak of war, later being transferred to the 2nd Monmouthshire Regiment. He survived the war although he was badly gassed in France and was invalided out of the army, never really recovering from this cruel engine of war.

Back in Brecon he returned to work for Mr. S Garratt, Boot maker but was unable to continue his employment and shortly before his death arrangements were being made for him to go to the seaside in the hope that his health might improve, He died in April 1920 and was buried in Brecon Cemetery.

(Charles Edward and Benjamin Morris Bather<sup>38</sup> also feature in this book)

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<sup>38</sup> See pages 21 and 223

**Private James Rimmer**

Army Service Corps (Driver); then Labour Corps, service no.  
T4/263320; 482574

Died in Brecon April 17th, 1918, aged 30

Buried in Crossens Churchyard, Southport, Lancashire

James was born in Southport, Lancashire in about 1888, son of George, a labourer and his wife Betty (nee Jones). The family were still living in Southport in 1891, with James' elder siblings Henry, John and Margaret. By 1901, the family were still in Southport but George was remarried, to Jane, working as an office caretaker; only John and James are at home. James left home shortly after and joined the army serving with the Kings Liverpool Regiment for about three years and seven months, leaving on the expiry of his contract.

In 1908 James married Edith May Milner in Ormskirk, Lancashire and the couple lived there in 1911. James was a tradesman's carter and later drove a bakery cart. Three children follow, two sons George, born 1912 and Gerald, born 1916, and then daughter Eveline who is born in August 1918, some months after James' death. Unfortunately, the eldest child George also died in 1918.

James reenlisted in the Army at Seaforth on August 31st, 1914 initially rejoining the Kings Liverpool Regiment (12th Battalion) although he was subsequently discharged in January 1915 due to cardiac disease. He apparently rejoined

with the Royal Army Service Corps, as a driver, and served at the front in France before being transferred to the Labour Corps. In January 1918, whilst still with the Labour Corps and stationed at the depot in Brecon, James worked for Breconshire Coal and Lime as a substitute haulier. He had a nasty accident whilst leading a horse near Llandefaelog. The horse bolted and James was knocked down and the cartwheel went over part of his body. He was treated in the Depot Hospital in Brecon.

James later returned to work but in April of that year was involved in another accident, this time with fatal consequences. He was driving a motor tractor with a plough attached, at a field above Camden Road in Brecon. The front wheels skidded close to a hedge and James left his seat to check the wheels. A pin from the flywheel caught his tunic and he was whirled around several times. He was admitted to the infirmary but died shortly after. An inquest was held the next day and the cause of death was stated as shock with a verdict of accidental death was returned.

**Lieutenant John Stanley Robinson**

Royal Navy H.M.S. Royal Oak. Instructor

Died on 13 November 1918, aged 30

Buried at Dalmeny and Queensferry Cemetery, West  
Lothian, Scotland

John was born in about 1888, a son to Walter Stanley and Janet Robinson. He was educated at Cambridge, obtaining his degree from Sidney Sussex College.

He arrived to live and teach maths at Christ College, Brecon in September 1911 and immediately began playing a full and active part in school life. At the time, masters could play in many of the school teams and John participated in rugby, hockey, golf and cricket, as well as coaching football and helping out with athletics. John was also involved with the College's Cadet Force.

Although members of the teaching profession were exempt for military service, John left Christ College at the end of Christmas Term, 1915 and in 1916 John voluntarily became an instructor in the Royal Navy serving on *HMS Royal Oak*.

John remained fond of Christ College and Brecon and returned a number of times to visit during his periods of leave. Unfortunately, John contracted influenza in Scotland and died in the Royal Naval Hospital, Queensferry two days after the war ended.

John's home address at the time of his death is given as Sheffield. His parents are listed as living in Malta.

*HMS Royal Oak* was one of five Revenge-class battleships built for the Royal Navy during the First World War. Launched in 1914 and completed in 1916, *Royal Oak* first saw combat at the Battle of Jutland as part of the Grand Fleet.

### **Lieutenant Henry St John Saunders-Jones**

30th Punjabis, Indian Army

Died of wounds August 3rd, 1917, aged 22

Buried at Dar Es Salaam War Cemetery



Henry was born in Llanfrynach, Breconshire in 1895, the third of four children of the Reverend David Saunders-Jones and his wife Mary. All four children were born whilst in Llanfrynach. David had first served for about three years in the parish of St John in Brecon before taking on the parish in Llanfrynach in about 1889.

The family moved to St David's vicarage in Llanfaes when David was vicar of St David's in about 1900 There for 15 years before moving to Cantref in late 1915. Henry was educated at Christ College, Brecon before becoming a motor car engineer with Messrs Rich of Brecon. His two older sisters became teachers.

Henry joined the Brecknocks as a Private in September 1914 and went to Aden and then India. In India he was given a commission in the Indian Reserve of Officers in June 1916, and was attached to the 19th Punjabis.



He relinquished this to go through a course of training at the Quetta Cadet College.

He passed out in five months, and received a Commission as second lieutenant in the Indian Army and then sent to German East Africa in December 1916. He was in the thick of the fighting and hardships the troops had to endure in the trying climate.

Henry was reported missing in action on August 3rd, 1917 and his death was confirmed on August 12th. Reports at the time confirmed that he was involved in a surprise attack by the Germans in overwhelming numbers and his men were forced to retire. Henry was seen to be wounded in the attack, but carried on fighting with his revolver. When he saw the position was hopeless he ordered his men to retire and send out for him as soon as possible. He was last seen fighting gallantly, though surrounded by the enemy. When the Germans had retired and the ambulance was sent out his grave was found near the spot he was last seen in the battle.

An impressive memorial service was held in Cantref Church the following month. The entry in the De Ruigny's Roll of Honour states that a brother officer wrote of him:

*'His brother officers all deeply regret the loss of a gallant comrade, who was highly respected and loved by officers and men. By his coolness and pluck under fire he set a splendid example to his men and at all times was a perfect example of a brave and fearless leader. His absence is felt very much by everyone, as he was most capable*

*in the field, and at all times displayed the spirit of a true gentleman.*<sup>39</sup>

**Diligent in Business  
Fervent in Spirit  
Serving the Lord  
Faithful unto Death**

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<sup>39</sup> Ancestry

**Private Arthur Thomas**

The Queen's Royal West Surrey Regiment 4th Battalion and  
Labour Corps., service no.430680  
Died October 28th, 1918, aged 30  
Buried at Brecon Cemetery

Arthur was born in Hammersmith, Middlesex in 1889, son of William Mitchell and Elizabeth Maria Thomas. William was a train driver. The family lived in Hammersmith for many years in Miles Road, later on in Standish Road. Arthur had a younger sister Laura, and a younger brother, Ernest. By 1911 Arthur was a clerk, but still at home with his family. Arthur married Etheldine May Gordon-Gall in 1916 in Dartford, Kent where they then lived; their daughter Ivy was born there in February 1918. Etheldine was born and brought up in Hammersmith and was a saleswoman there in 1911. Her parents were a house decorator and confectioner. Arthur joined the Queens Royal West Surrey Regiment initially but was later transferred to the Labour Corps. Little is known of his military service but it is presumed that his Labour Corps service brought him to Brecon. He died in the military hospital there was then buried in Brecon Cemetery with a military gravestone.

In 1939 his widow Etheldine lived in Slough and was a shop assistant. Arthur's mother lived with her, and her daughter Ivy, then 21 and working as a stenographer.

**Sergeant David Thomas**

Brecknock Battalion, South Wales Borderers, service nos. 82,  
200014

Died of Illness May 15th, 1920, aged 33

Buried at Brecon Cemetery

David was born in Breconshire in 1887, the son of David and Mary Thomas who were living at Cwmcâr, Llanddetty in 1891 when David's father was working as a plate layer for the Brecon and Merthyr Railway.

By 1901 the family had moved to Brecon and were living at Machine House, The Watton. Young David is not at home at this time but at the age of 14 years may be working away from home.

The family are at the same address in 1911 and David is living back at home. His father is now listed as a timber haulier and David is also following the trade, working for B. Jenkins of Brecon.

David served with the Brecknock Battalion (Territorial Force) before the war and was mobilised in August 1914 when war broke out.

He went with the 1st Battalion of Brecknocks to Aden in 1915, followed by Mhow in India later that year. He enlisted in Brecon in 1914 joining as a private but rises to corporal and is listed as sergeant at the time of his death. David remained

overseas for the rest of the war, returning with the Brecknocks in November 1919. He had been in good health throughout his overseas service but after his return his health began to fail.

David died of pneumonia at the borough infirmary and was buried in Brecon Cemetery with full military honours. Mourners included his mother and father and three brothers John, Chris and Albert.

**Private Frederick Alfred Whitcher**

Hampshire Regiment, 3/7th Battalion, transferred to the

Labour Corps, service no. 4326, 527714

Died on March 15th, 1918 at home, aged 37

Buried in Brecon Cemetery

Frederick was born in Bashley in the Lymington district of Hampshire in 1880. His father, Alfred was a farm labourer and his mother's name was Lucy. When he was born, Frederick had an older sister Anne and an older brother Willy. In 1885 Frederick's father died and by 1891, Lucy was remarried to Edward Lawrence a woodman on a local estate where the family were living. He now had another brother, Sidney, plus three step-brothers, Alfred, Harry and Albert and a step-sister Edith.

In 1901 the family are still living near the local estate, The Bashley Manor where they are all probably working. Frederick is working as a general labourer, his brother as a garden labourer and his stepfather is still a woodman.

In 1908 Frederick married Jessie Hayward Payne from Trowbridge in Wiltshire. They lived in Bashley where Frederick worked as a carter on a on a local nursery, possibly part of The Bashley Manor.

Frederick enlisted in the 3/7th Battalion of the Hampshire Regiment. It was part of the Territorial Force formed at Bournemouth in March 1915 as a third line unit. These were

usually used for home defence or training. On 8 April 1916 it was renamed 7th Reserve Battalion and moved to Romsey. On 1 September 1916, it was combined with the 5th Reserve Battalion. Frederick was wounded in France and was later transferred to the Labour Corps.

The Labour Corps were formed in January 1917 and grew to some 389,900 men (more than 10% of the total size of the Army) by the Armistice. Of this total, around 175,000 were working in the United Kingdom and the rest in the theatres of war. They differed from normal infantry in that they would be composed of a mixture of men who were experienced with picks and shovels (i.e. miners, road men, etc.,) and some who had skilled trades (smiths, carpenters, joiners, bricklayers, masons, tinsmiths, engine drivers and fitters).

Frederick died of pneumonia at Brecon Military Hospital March 15th, 1918 aged 37. He was buried in Brecon Cemetery with full military honours. On his memorial are the words:

**In loving memory of my beloved husband Pvt Frederick  
Alfred Whitcher,  
son of Lucy Lawrence (Bashley)**

**Private Ernest Whittall**

Montgomeryshire Yeomanry, service no. 2935

Died February 25th, 1916, aged 33

Buried at Brecon Cemetery

Ernest was born in May, 1883 in Clun, Shropshire to Ann Elizabeth Whittall who was a domestic servant around that time. By 1891 Ernest is living with his great aunt, his Grandfather's sister, Hannah Brick a widowed farmer in Lydbury, Shropshire. By the time he is 18, in 1901, Ernest is a servant, a wagoner on a farm, although still in Shropshire. Ten years later, in 1911, he is boarding at a different farm in the area, working as a farm labourer.

Ernest enlisted with the King's Shropshire Light Infantry in October 1914 (service no. 2503), but was discharged a month later as being unfit for service. He still lived at Aston on Clun, Shropshire. He was later living in Beguildy and enlisted at Knighton in the Montgomery Yeomanry which was a mounted arm of the part time Territorial Force established in 1908. The Montgomeryshire Yeomanry were a Battalion of the Household Cavalry and Cavalry of the Line. Ernest did not serve abroad. It is likely that Ernest served with the 3/1st Battalion which was a third line training unit and moved to Brecon in June 1915. He died in the Military Hospital in Brecon.



## **BRECON COUNTY SCHOOL**

Brecon County school pupils not linked directly to Brecon town but who would have spent some years studying at the school and either travelled daily or lodged within the town



**Driver Lewis Westcott Smith (Bob) Baker**

Royal Field Artillery, D Btn., 119th Brig, service no. W2939

Died June 21st, 1917 aged 22

Commemorated at Railway Dugouts Burial Ground

Bob Baker was born in Hay in 1895, son of Joseph Baker and Annie Elizabeth, nee Smith who ran a grocer's shop at the Pavement, Hay on Wye. He was a pupil at Hay council school before moving to the Brecon County School where he completed four terms (1908/09) before leaving to take up his father's occupation. However, before enlistment, he was actually employed as a clerk in the Gurnos Anthracite Colliery, Ystradgynlais.

Bob, then living at Ystalfera, enlisted in the Royal Field Artillery in April 1915 at Swansea. Initially stationed at Cricieth in June of that year, he was drafted to France in December 1915, leaving on Christmas Eve. He acted as a signaller as well as being driver to his commanding officer. Bob went through some of the severest fighting on the Western Front, including the Somme and Ypres.

He was seriously wounded by shellfire early in the morning of the 21st June, 1917 and died shortly afterwards.

His brother, Lance Corporal Harold Horatio Roberts Baker, was killed in Gallipoli in May 1915. He had emigrated to Australia in 1911 and fought with the Australian Infantry. Two other brothers, Frank and John also served.

**Private Charles Davies**

Royal Army Medical Corps, service no. 26523

Died on September 5th, 1917, at Camberwell Infirmary,

London, aged 25

Buried at Brookwood Cemetery, London

Charles was born in 1892, the eldest son of David, a coal seller/agent and Anne Davies of Tredegar Road, Sennybridge. The family address is later listed as Stockwell House, Sennybridge. He attended Defynnog Endowed School and then Brecon County Intermediary School from 1905 to 1912. He became a student teacher in 1911 and on leaving became a teacher with Breconshire County Council, appointed to Coelbren School in April 1912, but is later noted to have left teaching in favour of hewing coal, most probably in May 1913.

Charles enlisted in August 1914 and is believed to have served in India before being discharged sick, under King's Regulations in February 1915. The actual reason for discharge is not stated but may be presumed as T.B. as there was a high incidence in the family, and Charles had been hospitalised for a period during the course of his military service.

(See also David Davies, his brother the next record)

**Private David Davies**

Herefordshire Regiment, 1st Btn. service no. 1342

Died on November 17th 1915, at Cadoxton, aged 18

Buried at Sion Baptist Church, Sennybridge

David was a younger brother to Charles Davies, and was born in 1897 the second son of David and Anne Davies of Tredegar Road, Sennybridge, later listed as Stockwell House, Sennybridge. He attended Defynnog School and then Brecon County Intermediary School from 1909 to 1911. He achieved third place in the 1909 entrance examinations, even though his mother had died in March of that year. After school he became a clerk on the Neath and Brecon Railway at Sennybridge.

David's father, also David, remarried in 1911 to Ann Morgan of Cefn-coed Uchaf, Ystradgynlais and they moved to Hay in 1912. It appears that young David went with them as by 1913 he is working as a nurseryman in the King's Acre Nursery in Hereford and living in the town.

David enlisted in June 1913 and is accepted as fit to join the Herefordshire Regiment Territorial Force. He is embodied in the 1st Battalion in August 1914, but discharged as physically unfit for future service. The illness is diagnosed as TB and originated in March 1915, although not as a result of military service.

**Second Lieutenant Daniel William Cyril Delahaye**

Royal Engineers Special Coy N

Died of wounds in France on May 23rd, 1918, aged 24

Buried at Varennes Military Cemetery, France

Cyril was born in Ystradgynlais in 1894 the eldest son of the local stationmaster, Herbert and his wife Annie. He attended Brecon County School but left during 1907/08 to attend the recently opened Ystradgynlais County School. He spent five years there before gaining admission to Cardiff University. Cyril enlisted with several other students in September 1915 and was very soon serving in France.

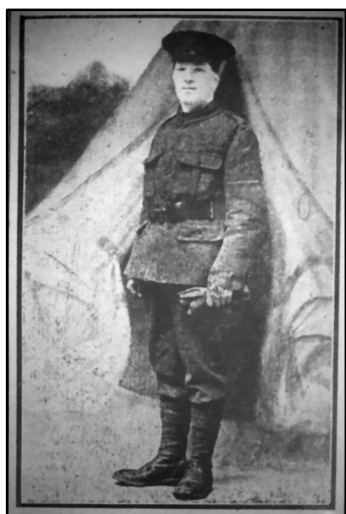
He initially joined the Royal Fusiliers, Public School Battalion, but soon transferred to the Royal Engineers, with whom he served in France for three years, first as corporal, then as lieutenant, being commissioned in September 1917. Cyril was reported as being hospitalised after the Battle of Loos in December 1915 suffering with influenza and general breakdown but was soon back on duty. He died of wounds received in May 1918.

### **Lance Corporal Harry Skeel Duncan Dempster**

King's Royal Rifle Corps. 7th Battalion, service no. R/6328

Died of wounds in France on August 3rd, 1915, aged 27

Buried at Etaples Military Cemetery, France



Harry was born in Bromyard, Herefordshire in 1888. The family soon moved to Brecon and in 1889 were living at Kennel Cottage in The Watton, where his father was a huntsman. The family remain in Brecon for over twenty years but later moved to Wiston in Pembrokeshire, Harry's father's birthplace. Harry attended Brecon County School where he was in the Cadet Force and also appears on a list of Christ College pupils, although there is some doubt about this. He became a clerk for the Midland Railway in about 1906, having spells at both Pontardawe and Brynamman. By 1911 Harry is working as a canvasser in the printing industry, and boarding, in Carmarthen. He enlisted in the King's Royal Rifles at Haverfordwest on November 2nd, 1914, joining up with them at Winchester two days later. He states his occupation as clerk and joins as a private. Harry was promoted to lance corporal in April 1915 and went to France in May. He wrote home giving a vivid picture of life

in the trenches and one of his letters was reproduced in the local paper at the time of his death.

The 7th King's Royal Rifles (KRR) were attached to the 41st Brigade, 14th Light Division and were involved in fighting in the Ypres area. The Division was to see its first action during the Action of Hooge, where the Division were the first to be subjected to German use of flamethrowers.

Harry was probably wounded in the German attack of 30th/31st July, 1915 when the 7th KRR position was caught from the front, back and flank, forcing the battalion to withdraw from its forward position. There is a memorial cross to the KRR in this vicinity. Harry had left the trenches when he thought a comrade had been hit and wounded and in going back to him was himself critically wounded from gunshot wounds to the head. He is commemorated on the Llanelli War Memorial. Harry's brother George<sup>40</sup> was also killed in October 1918 whilst serving as a Rifleman with the Monmouthshire Regiment and his story is related elsewhere in this book.

Another brother Sidney served with the 1st Brecknock Battalion and after the war was well known in Brecon, working for the County Education Office.

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<sup>40</sup> See page 234



**Corporal John Vaughan Edwards**

Royal Gloucestershire Hussars, service no. 235066

Killed in Action in Palestine, November 12th, 1917, aged 28

Commemorated on the Jerusalem Memorial

John (Jack) was born in Cwmdru in 1889 and grew up on the family farm, Middle Gaer. He was educated at the County School, Brecon and worked on the farm with his father until his death in 1903, and then with his brothers.

He enlisted in Crickhowell early in the war and went through the Gallipoli campaign and later went with the regiment to Egypt in 1915. A local paper reported him as well in September 1915 from a postcard received, and in 1916 recorded him as being home on leave. The Regiment moved on to Palestine in 1917. Jack was killed in action when he was shot in the neck during a charge and died instantly.

Jack's eldest brother William served with the Australian forces, was seriously wounded in action, and was hospitalised in London after a lifesaving operation.

**Private Edmund Fitton**

Canadian Scottish Regiment 16th Battalion

Died of Wounds in the UK on July 29th, 1916, aged 25

Buried at Bwlch (Penuel) Presbyterian Chapel

Edmund was born in Bwlch in 1891 to William and Elizabeth. The family lived at Pleasant View, Bwlch and William was a labourer on a local estate. Edmund attended the Brecon County School for five years. He became a clerk with Lloyd's Bank, but had to leave due to effects of prolonged standing. He went to Canada and worked in a bank there until enlisting in the Canadian Army and going to the Western Front in 1915. He came home on leave to Bwlch in December 1915 but was subsequently wounded in Ypres in June 1916 when he was hit in both legs and arms by a German bomb. Edmund was moved to the Sheffield General Hospital but unfortunately died there.

He is commemorated on the Cathedine war Memorial.

**Quarter Master Sergeant Edward Walter Greenway**

Royal Army Medical Corps, Territorial Force, service no.  
372013

Died of Influenza and Pneumonia in France on September  
23rd, 1918, aged 28

Buried at Mazargues Military Cemetery, Marseilles

Edward was born in Brecon in 1890 when the family are living at 45a, Free Street, Brecon. Walter, his father, is a sergeant instructor with the South Wales Borderers, whilst his mother, Annie works as a dressmaker.

By 1901 Annie and the children are living with Edward's grandfather in 41, Free Street, whilst Walter is now a patient in The Royal Victoria Hospital, Hampshire, still a sergeant in the SWB. Edward attends the Brecon County School where he is a member of the Cadet Force.

In May 1907 Edward joins the Great Western Railway as a passenger clerk in Crumlin, moving on to Cardiff in January 1908 before resigning a month later, presumably to take his next employment as an insurance clerk in Cardiff where he is living with his widowed mother and brother in 1911. Edward enlists in Cardiff in May 1912 into the Royal Army Medical Corps, Territorial Force as a private but has successive promotions to his final rank (QMS). Walter subsequently marries Iona Elizabeth Huntley and has two sons Edward (b

1914 and Norman b 1916) and this family is based in Cardiff at the time of his death.

Edward does not embark for France until April 1917 and it is there when serving as quartermaster sergeant in Marseilles that he later dies of influenza and bronchopneumonia.

**Sergeant Basil Gwynne Griffiths**

Royal Field Artillery, 56th Battery, service no. 41567

Killed in Action on November 4th, 1914, aged 22

Commemorated on the Menin gate Memorial, Ypres,  
Belgium

Basil was born in Aldershot in Hampshire in 1892, to Isaac and Sarah. His father was a sergeant major, (and DCM) in the Welsh Regiment and the family moved a number of times, including being in Cairo in 1896, Clapham in 1898 and in Brecon by 1900, living in the Barracks in The Watton. Basil attended Mount Street and the County School in Brecon and both provided references for him when he joined the Royal Field Artillery in 1906 at the age of 14 years, signing on for 12 years with the colours, enlisting in Brecon.

He is shown at Woolwich Barracks in 1911, whilst the rest of his family have moved to Cardiff.

Initially a trumpeter, he was promoted to bombardier and then corporal in 1913 and then sergeant in 1914. Basil went to France with the British Expeditionary Force in August 1914.

**Private David James Jones**

South Wales Borderers, 4th Btn., A Coy, service no. 26579

Died of Wounds in Mesopotamia May 2nd, 1917, aged 21

Commemorated at the Basra Memorial



David was born in 1896 to Llewellyn, a farm labourer, and Annie Jones of Stone Street, Defynnog. He attended Defynnog School and Brecon County School and on leaving in 1911 he became an apprentice draper with D. Morgan and Lewis of 31, High street Brecon, probably lodging with Mr. Morgan at 10, Priory Hill, Brecon. He moved on to a post of assistant draper in Tredegar in 1914

and was then living at 1, Saron Row, Ebbw Vale until he enlisted at Abertillery.

David initially went to camp in Liverpool and then after some home leave in June 1916 he embarks with the battalion in July 1916 and by August he is in a rest camp in Kirklee, India, and later in the year in Mesopotamia.

**Second Lieutenant Thomas Mozart Jones**

Royal Garrison Artillery, 26th Siege Battery.

Died July 6th, 1918, aged 36

Buried at Saron Congregational Chapel

Mozart was born in 1882 to William and Elizabeth Jones of Blaenau, Cwmwysg. One of a large family of 14 children, he was a pupil of Brecon County Intermediate School during which time he boarded in Brecon. On leaving school he became a cashier at the United Counties Bank, Brecon (now Barclays), and later in Bristol, where he was in 1915. Whilst working in Brecon he lived at 96, The Struet and was a member of Brecon Golf Club and Sports Club.

Mozart joined the army in 1916, initially as a gunner with the RGA. He went to France in February 1917 and was commissioned in August of that year. He died unexpectedly after showing signs of recovery from wounds suffered in his first action at Cambrai, France on March 21st, 1918. He died in the UK.

**Private Walter Jones**

Wellington Regiment, NZEF, service no. 10/396

Died on May 8th, 1915, aged 22

Buried at Twelve Tree Copse Cemetery, Helles, Gallipoli  
Peninsula, Turkey

Walter was born in Crickhowell in 1893 the son of John and Caroline Jones. In 1901 the family are living at 2, Penydre, Crickhowell where Walter's father is shown as a gardener (domestic). Walter attended Brecon County School during the 1900s but by 1911 John is farming at Gelli Ffanw, Llanbedr and the 17 year old Walter is working on the farm.

Walter later emigrated to New Zealand and subsequently enlisted in the New Zealand armed forces. He was part of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force that took part in the Gallipoli campaign.

The Twelve Tree Copse cemetery commemorates NZ soldiers who died in the Second Battle of Krithia.



**Private William Henry Ernest Pettifor**

Cheshire Regiment 15th Battalion, service no. 67638

Died of wounds in France on June 28th 1918, aged 19

Buried at Bagneux Cemetery, France

Bill was born in Durham in 1899, the son of Richard Edward and Catherine Pettifor, but by 1901 the family had moved to Treberfydd, Bwlch where Richard was a gardener to the Raikes family. He attended Brecon County School between 1910 and 1916 and on leaving became an Inland Revenue officer.

In 1917 Bill was conscripted, and the family were by then living in 3, Castle Street, Brecon and his father was now a seedsman, fruiterer and florist, and during the war was a representative of the Food Production Department.

Bill was severely wounded by a gunshot wound to the thigh on June 12th, 1918 and could not be moved from the casualty clearing station.

**Private Cyril John (Jack) Powell**

London Regiment 15th Battalion. PWO Civil Service Rifles,  
service no. 535008

Died of wounds, November 30th 1917, aged 19  
Commemorated on the Cambrai Memorial, France

Jack was born in 1899 the third son of Evan and Mary Anne Powell who farmed at Pant y Bailey, Bwlch for many years. He attended Llangynidr National School before winning an entrance scholarship to Brecon County School between 1910 and 1916, where he was an excellent sportsman, and then joined the Inland Revenue branch of the Civil Service.

Jack enlisted in Brecon in July 1916, when he was just 18 years old and was initially posted to the Army Reserve, but was mobilised in February 1917 and posted to the Prince of Wales' Own Civil Service Rifles and soon found himself in France.

He died of wounds on 30th November 1917 aged 19.

**Trooper John Eric Rowland Price**

Wellington Mounted Rifles, NZEF, service no. 11/843A

Killed in Action at Gallipoli. August 27th, 1915, aged 28

Commemorated Hill 60 (New Zealand) Memorial

John was born in 1887, the second son of John Henry and Jane Price, who farmed at Abercrai, Traeanglas. He emigrated to New Zealand around 1909 to farm, taking some pedigree Hereford cattle and sheep-dogs with him. John was followed by his younger brother Ivor, who had a bad accident with a horse and was unfit for military service.

John joined the Wellington Mounted Rifles at the outbreak of war, providing his own horse. The memorial where John is commemorated is named after a low hillock that was attacked on August 21st, 1915 by a combined force of Australians, New Zealanders, British and Gurkhas, the fighting lasting for eight days. The cemetery lay among the old trenches.

John is also commemorated on the family gravestone at Traeanglas Church and on the Roll of Honour of the Brecon Boy's County Grammar School.

**Merchant Seaman John Reginald Redvers Price**HMTS *Glendine*

Died of illness. August 4th, 1918, aged 17

Buried in St Peter's Churchyard, Glasbury

Reggie was born in early 1901, the youngest son of George and Elizabeth Price of Velindre. George was a tailor and innkeeper, running the Three Horse Shoes Inn at Velindre. Reggie attended Velindre School before entering Brecon County Intermediate School in September 1913, continuing there until December 1915 when he left to become a mechanic on the railway.

Reggie joined the Merchant Navy and was on board the SS *Glendine* on its return voyage from Cuba. The ship berthed at the port of London, Gravesend and Reggie is reported as having died on board an hour after arrival from typhoid. He had been looking forward to going home for his first leave but had contracted the illness, probably in Cuba. His father and brother attended the inquest where this verdict was returned.

**Second Lieutenant Thomas Walter Prosser**

Gloucester Regiment, 1st/6th Btn., attached to Machine Gun

Corps 38 Btn.,

Died of Wounds. October 9th, 1918, aged 22

Buried in Beaulencourt British Cemetery, Ligny-Thilloy,  
France



Thomas, known as Walter, was born in 1895, the son of William and Sarah Prosser who farmed at Cefnbrynich, Brecon. He studied at Brecon County Intermediate School between 1907 and 1911 and left to take up farming.

Walter joined the army in September 1914, initially joining the Montgomery Yeomanry and serving on the home front and in Egypt until 1916. He then transferred to the Royal Welsh Fusiliers and went to France with the 15th Battalion in December 1916 serving as a corporal. He was gazetted a second lieutenant in November 1917 and served in Italy with the 1/6th Gloucester Regiment until 1918 when he returned home for transfer to the Machine Gun Corps. Returning to France in August 1918 he was seriously wounded and died in October of that year.

Walter's father William had been a company quarter master sergeant with the Brecknocks up to 1917 and went to Aden and India. His uncle T W Prosser served in France with the 9th Devon Regiment and died of wounds at Loos in September 1915. His eldest brother, Sergeant J Prosser served with the 1st Battalion South Wales Borderers.

**Private Rhys Thomas Prytherch**

13th Labour Coy., The King's Liverpool Regiment, service  
no. 70532

Died Easter Monday March 23rd, 1917, aged 34  
Buried at Longuenesse (St Omer) Souviner Cemetery,  
France



Rhys Thomas Prytherch was born in 1883, son of William and Sarah Prytherch, who were farmers. Rhys was born at Y Rhiw, Llandeilo'r Fan, but by 1891 the family were at Middle Penllannfel, Llangorse and later moved to The Wern in Talgarth.

Rhys was one of the first intake of pupils to Brecon County Intermediate School in 1896. In 1901 he was lodging in Cardiff whilst studying for, and achieved an honours degree in Welsh, later attends Carmarthen Theological College where he gained his BD.

By 1911 he was lodging in Swansea where he worked at a mission hall and was very respected in the area. Later he took on the pastorate of Hay and Clifford CM churches. He was

well known as pastor in Talgarth and Bronllys, where he did a great deal of work visiting the sick and aged.

Rhys volunteered for the Army in 1914 but was refused due to a bad hip-related to TB. He was offered a chaplaincy but was not eligible as he wanted to work alongside private soldiers. In all, he made four unsuccessful attempts to join up, including the Welsh Guards. Eventually he was allowed to join the Welsh Regiment and later transferred to the Pioneer (Labour) Battalion. His battalion arrived in France ten days before he became ill whilst on active service and was admitted to a military hospital, where he later died of meningitis.

Rhys's name is included in a memorial at Pengenfford Chapel at Talgarth that was unveiled in 1920.

His father and sister lived at Blainau Farm, Talgarth at the time.



**Private Daniel Spencer Rees**

Royal Sussex regiment, 2nd Battalion, service no. G/28005.

Killed in Action September 18th, 1918, aged 27

Commemorated Vis-En-Artois Memorial, France

Daniel was born in 1891 to Thomas and Mary Rees who were grocers in Ship Street, Brecon. The family were at 17, Ship Street at this time although by 1901 had moved to number 8, still as grocers. By 1911 the family were living at 33, The Watton where Thomas was now listed as a corn merchant, although Daniel was boarding in East Dereham, Norfolk whilst working as a bank clerk, having previously attended the Brecon County School. The family later moved to Besford in Worcester.

Daniel enlisted in Hastings, initially with the Suffolk Regiment but later transferring to the Royal Sussex. He probably joined quite early in the war as he is linked with the British Expeditionary Force.

### **Captain Tom Rees**

Royal Flying Corps, 11th Squadron and Royal Welsh  
Fusiliers, 14th Battalion

Died September 17th, 1916, aged 21

Buried in Villers-Plouich Communal Cemetery, France



Tom was born in 1895 to Thomas and Alice Rees of Cefnbrynich Farm, Defynnog. Tom's parent's later lived at Troedyrhiw Villa, Defynnog.

Tom attended Defynnog School before going to Brecon County Intermediate School in 1907. He was a student teacher in his final year before going to Aberystwyth University in 1913, where he was a

member of the Officer Training Corps. He joined the Royal Welsh Fusiliers (RWF) in November 1914 as a private, gaining rapid promotions to lance corporal and sergeant in the December before being commissioned as a second lieutenant in the RWF in January, 1915. He went to France with his Battalion in November 1915 and fought at the front. He successfully applied to transfer to the Royal Flying Corps and, after training in Britain he returned, to France to join the 11th Squadron at the front by July 1916.

Tom Rees had the unenviable distinction of being the Red Baron's first aerial kill when, as an observer his aircraft, piloted by Lt. Lionel B. F. Morris, was shot down. Von Richthofen landed his plane alongside the wreck and helped extricate the airmen only for both to be pronounced dead at the crash site. Tom's promotion to captain came through on the day of his death.

Tom's family were initially informed that he was missing and received this telegram on the morning of the funeral of Tom's brother David John who had tragically died at home, on the same day that Tom was shot down, in accident involving lightning and a falling tree. Tom is with his brother David in the photograph.

Lionel Morris and Tom Rees were recommended posthumously for a Mention in Despatches in October 1916. Tom's recommendation read *'for gallantry, ability and devotion to duty in his work as an observer. Has taken part in many aerial combats. Period 19th July, 1916 to 17th August, 1916. Missing whilst engaged on bombing escort on 17th August, 1916.'*

Captain Tom Rees is also commemorated on the Aberystwyth University War Memorial.

**Private Brychan Thomas**

London Regiment, 2nd / 20th Battalion, service no. 7648.

Killed in Action at High Mametz Wood October 16th, 1916

aged 32

Buried at Ecoivres Military Cemetery, Mont-St. Eloi, France

Brychan was born in 1884 to Thomas, a plasterer, and Elizabeth Mary, of 5, Stone Street, Maescar. He attended Defynnog School before moving on to Brecon County Intermediate School. He served an apprenticeship as a pupil-teacher at Defynnog, before going to Carmarthen Training College to qualify as a teacher. Before the war he taught in Caegarw School, Mountain Ash, where he was well known in the area.

Brychan enlisted in March 1916 and went to France in June of that year. His brother Thomas also an ex pupil of Brecon County school, was a lieutenant in the Royal Garrison artillery winning the Military Cross in 1918.

**Private Cuthbert Gordon Thomas**

Monmouthshire Regiment, Territorial Force, service no.  
229317.

Killed in Action July 31st, 1917, aged 26years  
Buried at Duhallow A.D.S. Cemetery, Ypres, France

Cuthbert was born in 1891 to Arthur, a county court bailiff, and May Maude, a headmistress. Whilst born in Merthyr, the family had moved to Llangorse by 1901 and Cuthbert earned a scholarship to Brecon County Intermediate School which he attended for six years (1903-09).

He then went on to Carmarthen College where he was boarding in 1911. He qualified as a teacher and began his career as head teacher at Felindre school, leaving there to take a post in the Upper Rhymney School in Glamorgan from where he enlisted.

Cuthbert enlisted in Cardiff in January 1916 and was initially posted to a Reserve Battalion but was mobilised in February 1917 and posted to the Monmouthshire Regiment (3/1) at a base camp in March and in June was posted to the South Wales Borderers, 11th Battalion in France. He was subsequently killed in action at Pilken Ridge.

**Second Lieutenant Gwilym Williams**

South Wales Borderers, 4th Battalion.

Died May 22nd, 1918, aged 28

Buried at Defynnog (St Cynog) Churchyard

Gwilym was born in about 1890 in Maescar, Defynnog, Breconshire the eldest child Jenkin Williams, and his wife Elizabeth, nee Price. His sister Margaret was born two years later. The family lived in the area for many years, initially in Mill Street, then Penybryn, later at Trephilip. Gwilym's father Jenkin Williams was a miller like his father; later a timber merchant. He served as a Justice of the Peace and Chair of Brecon Rural Council. Gwilym went to Defynnog Endowed School, then with a county scholarship to Brecon County school. After school he was articled to Mr. Trevor, surveyor to Swansea Rural Council; then had an appointment as a civil engineer with Mr. Ben Jones, public works contractor for Swansea. He was later, deputy surveyor back with Swansea Rural Council. Gwilym volunteered for army service and received a commission in 1915 as second lieutenant in the Brecknockshire Territorial Battalion of the South Wales Borderers. He was later discharged in 1917 due to ill health. He continued his studies and passed the examinations for the Surveyors Institute and enrolled as a Fellow. He contracted influenza which proved fatal. This was almost certainly part of the 1918/19 flu pandemic that was responsible for millions of deaths across the world at the time.

**Private William Francis David Williams**

Royal Fusiliers, 22nd Btn., (London), service no. 49820

Died February 19th, 1917, aged 22

Commemorated at Varennes Military Cemetery

William, known as Willie, was born in 1895 to Evan, a grocer, and Mary, nee Price. Following his father's death in about 1899, Willie lived with his mother and grandfather, William Price, a cartwright, in 13, High Street, Talgarth. By 1911 they are living with Mary's younger sister Sarah, now a grocer in High Street Talgarth. Willie went to Talgarth Council School and then attended Brecon County School from 1907 to 1913. On leaving school he became a bank clerk in Abergavenny, where he was living when he enlisted in Brecon.

Willie joined the Bankers Battalion, the 22nd Battalion, City of London Regiment, Royal Fusiliers. He was wounded in France on February 18th, 1917, and died the next day in a field hospital.





## War memorial Plaque to the Old Pupils of Llanfaes Primary School, Brecon

These Old Pupils whose loss we mourn, died in the noblest of causes. This country will be ever grateful to them for the Sacrifice they made for Freedom and Justice

To the Glory of God and the Honoured Memory of:

Pte Frank Richards	S.W.B.
Pte Osmond Richards	R.W.F.
Pte Clifford Lewis	2nd Brecknocks
Serg Thomas Hudson	S.W.B.
Serg William Bowen	A.B. H.M.S. Defence
Pte Percy Bate	R.F.A.
Pte W. Clarke	S.W.B.
Pte Fred Russell	Brecknocks
Pte Fred Evans	The Monmouths
Pte Arthur Williams	S.W.B.
L. Cpt Willie Price	M.G.C.
Pte Bertie Price	K.A.M.C.
Pte Albert Lowe	2nd Monmouths
Pte David Wood	S.W.B.
Pte Edward James Tonge	R.W.F.
Pte Phillip Hargest	Lan. Fus.
Pte William Evans	S.W.B.
Pte T Kelly	2nd Yorks
Pte D Richards	S.W.B.



## BRECON CHURCH MEMORIALS

### Some Brief Details

#### St. Mary's Brecon

There are ninety-two names, including those of brothers and former pupils at Christ College, Brecon. Stephen, Frank and Arthur Best are recorded on the base of a stone Celtic cross at the entrance to the church. These, together with the dedication on three of the four sides:

‘IN THANKFUL REMITTANCE OF THE MEN FROM THE PARISH OF ST. MARY'S BRECON WHO DIED IN THE GREAT WAR 1914-1918’

On the fourth side:

‘THANKS BE TO GOD’.

A small brass plaque on the north side of the church commemorates the death in France during the final months of the war of another Christ College Old Boy, Francis Alfred Ismay Musk.

On 25 September, 1921 Francis Musk's mother, in memory of her son, presented a framed Roll of Honour to the church. On the south aisle the Roll in a dark wood frame, has a dedication handwritten in fine copperplate. It records in three columns the names of fifty-one men.

## **Brecon Presbyterian Church, The Watton**

A framed roll of honour hangs in the vestry.

## **Kensington Baptist Church**

There is a roll of honour in the main church, and there are one or two individual plaques as well for example, Trew.

## **Brecon Cathedral**

There is a memorial connected with the Maybery family, and also at the west end of the Cathedral, there is an illuminated Roll of Honour listing those from the Parish of St. John`s that served in the World War One. It is by M.K. Vincent, and dated 1920. The Roll comprises two matching frames. There is a small brass plate attached to one with an inscription.

The larger of the two documents records a total of three hundred and fifty-eight names, together with ranks, regiments and home addresses. The forty-three that were killed are shown in gold lettering and grouped together at the beginning of the list. The remaining entries of those that survived are arranged in five columns below. The smaller of the two frames contains a further forty-eight individuals, four of whom were killed.

Breconshire Constabulary: On the south wall of the Baptistery is a brass plaque commemorating five members of the county's police force.

In Havard Chapel six officers are remembered on wall plaques. Two are of Brecon town interest: Franklin Macaulay Gillespie and Willie Ross.

Two battalions of the South Wales Borderers are commemorated on plaques within the chapel. The first below several sets of Colours shows the Regimental Crest in gold and set into marble. Dating from 1759, the Royal South Wales Borderers Militia became 3rd Battalion, South Wales Borderers in 1881 and throughout the First World War supplied trained men to other battalions of the Regiment.

The second battalion plaque commemorates a short period in the war service of the South Wales Borderer's only Territorial Force Battalion, The Brecknockshire Battalion. On a brass tablet, and below the Regimental Dragon badge, there is the inscription:

'TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND IN MEMORY OF THE FOLLOWING NCOs, & MEN OF THE BRECKNOCKSHIRE BATTALION SOUTH WALES BORDERERS WHO DIED WHILE ON ACTIVE SERVICE AT ADEN 1914-15 - THIS TABLET IS ERECTED BY THEIR COMRADES OF THE REGIMENT.'



## St David's Church, Llanfaes

In the early twentieth century, before the Second World War, there was a memorial, near the alms houses in Llanfaes. It has since disappeared. An early photograph is shown here.



The middle section lists those who died and the outer sections, the other Brecon men who served in the war.

Now in the church, there is a large wooden board in the ringing room, containing a roll of honour of all who served as well as those who died. Names are also inscribed on a wood panel at the entrance of ringing room. A tablet recording a roll of honour is near up the altar and pulpit.



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Brecon Town Council



Gwanwyn Festival associated  
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Best, Arthur, Frank & Stephen  
Brecon County School

Broadbent, Cecil H, 2nd Lt  
Clark, James, Pte  
Christ College boys and teachers  
Coombe, Percy Alexander, Pte  
Eldred, Bert, Pte  
Elston, William Bert, CQ Sgt  
Finch, Harry William, Pte  
Garnons Williams, Lt-Colonel  
Green, Ernest, Pte  
Hardwick, William Emlyn, Lt  
Hardwick, Cyril, Ord. Seaman

Hellard, William Mostyn, Pte  
Hooper, Richard William, Cpl  
Irons, James, CSM  
Jones, David James, Private

Lowe, Albert Edward, Pte  
Maybery, Richard Aveline, Lt  
Morgan, Christmas, Sergeant  
Morris, James, Sapper  
Nesbitt, Samuel R, Lance Cpl  
Photograph of Ship St., Brecon

Price, Alfred John, Pte  
Prosser, Thomas W, 2nd Lt  
Rees, Tom, Captain

Prytherch, Rhys Thomas, Pte

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## **On-line research resources**

Ancestry  
Find My Past  
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The Long Long Trail

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