

# WW1: REMEMBERING MEDWAY'S CASUALTIES

FOMA EXHIBITIONS AT  
MEDWAY ARCHIVES

BASED ON THE DE CAVILLE INDEX ON THE  
FOMA WEBSITE

# FOMA WEBSITE ....foma-lsc.org

## THE DE CAVILLE INDEX

An example of a page in Mick's folders  
at Medway Archive

### World War One in Medway

Index of the Men of the  
Medway Towns who died in  
Word War One  
by Michael de Caville 1946-  
2010




Michael De Caville

Mick served in the army, with the  
Middlesex Regiment, for a period in  
Northern Ireland, and this left him with  
empathy for those who had given their lives in the service of  
their country. He was drawn to the fallen of World War One  
and over twenty-five years ago he began a quest to record  
street by street the men of the Medway Towns who had died  
during the Great War.

Before his premature death in 2010, Tessa Towner, the  
Chairman of the Friends of Medway Archives (FOMA), promised  
Mick that they would finish his work and publish in 2014 an  
index to his research. In honour of this promise, and since  
2010, FOMA has added to Mick's work by incorporating all those  
commemorated on any war memorial in the Medway Towns,  
with the exception of the Chatham Naval Memorial. Names  
from the latter can be found on the **Commonwealth War  
Graves Commission website** [⌕](http://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead.aspx)  
(<http://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead.aspx>).



John Street.  
Pte Percy Casson Middlesex Regiment  
in Paper 19 May 1917. 66 John Street Rochester. 37 years old  
Was killed in action in France 10 April 1917. leaves a  
widow and a daughter. (Photo)  
John Street has been rebuilt, but the pubs are still the ones there  
1914-18.



Born Maidstone. Join Maidstone. 1 week Rochester  
KIA. 10.4.1917. formerly S/16966. Royal West Kents.

J.D. Ashdown RFA  
57 John Street Rochester, Chatham News 1918  
Seating from 1914 Mon List no 8, 1914

S. Ashdown RANC. J.D. Ashdown R3A  
S. Chapman HMS Vanguard.  
Paper. 21.7.1916. Killed  
64 John Street.



# The original Spreadsheet for the index

2650	PAYNE	Edward Ernest Wilson	Stoker 1st Class	SS/117592	Royal Navy	23	30 Jun 1917	26 Henry St	Rochester		26 May 1894	Rochester KEN	ADM188/1123	HMS Cheerful s/o Thomas Henry & EJ Payne of Strood; wife Hilda Daisy		Strood St Nicholas	Chatham Naval Memorial	
1745	HOLLOWAY	Thomas Charles	Gunner	915536	Army	24	01 Jul 1917	87 High Street	Rainham					D Bty 336th Bde Royal Field Artillery; s/o Joseph Thomas & Caroline			Rainham (St Margaret) Churchyard KEN	
3756	WELLS	Francis George Edward				39	01 Jul 1917	38 Richard Street	Chatham									no trace on CWGC
2309	MCDONALD	John Murdo	Deck Hand	14335/DA	RNR	18	02 Jul 1917						BT 377/7/62060	Ocean Gift hired net drifter d. illness RN Hospital Gillingham			Gillingham Woodlands Road; Grave Naval 1476	
729	CLIBBON	Harry James	Sapper	23151	Army		04 Jul 1917			CN 25 Aug 1917		Strood KEN				Rochester St Margarets		
839	COULING	Frederick Henry	Able Seaman	177892	Royal Navy	39	04 Jul 1917				14 Oct 1878	Lambeth SRY	ADM188/293	(R.F.R./CH/B/3089) HMS Vernon; d. RN Hospital Gillingham			Gillingham Woodlands Road; Grave Naval 1419	
18	AKEHURST	Ernest Archibald	Pte	34846	Army	40	06 Jul 1917	9 King Street	Gillingham			Tunbridge Wells, KEN		1st Bn Essex Rgt; s/o Alfred & Esther of Tunbridge Wells KEN; wife Harriett Sarah Ann		Gillingham	Bard Cottage Cnty	
79	ARCHER	George Henry	BSM	25269	Army	30	07 Jul 1917	39 Bumt Oak Terrace	Gillingham	CO 4 Aug 1917				147th Siege Bty, Royal Garrison Artillery wife E.B. Archer of 23 Frederick St, Neyland PEM		Gillingham	Barlin Comm Cnty	
1388	GILBY	William Thomas	Leading Signalman	230596	Royal Navy		07 Jul 1917				26 Mar 1887	Greenwich KEN	ADM188/408	HMS Ettrick		St George's Centre	Chatham Naval Memorial	
3624	VINCENT	George	Gunner	29294	Army	30	07 Jul 1917		Gillingham			Gillingham, KEN		29th Siege Bty Royal Garrison Artillery; s/o Alfred & Sarah Ann		Gillingham	Lijs senthoek Military Cnty	
3966	YOUENS	Frederick	2nd Lt		Army	24	07 Jul 1917	42 Luton Road	Chatham	CN 27 Jul 1917 & CO 4 Aug 1917 CO 11 Aug 1917				13th Bn Durham Light Infantry; s/o Vincent & Lizzie Youens, of "Belgrave," 64, Desborough Park Rd., High Wycombe BKM	VC	St Peter's Sch Rochester KEN	Railway Dugouts Burial Ground	
3170	SMITH	Arthur	Pte	19962	Army	19?	08 Jul 1917		Fringinghoe, Essex			Isle of Grain		9th Batt Essex Regiment; died of wounds France & Flanders			Duisans British Cnty Etrun	
122	AUSTEN	Thomas Charles Barwick	Boy Telegraphist	J/44773	Royal Navy	17	09 Jul 1917				09 Apr 1900	Ramsgate KEN	ADM188/736	HMS Vanguard; s/o Charles James & Kate A of 52, Church St., St. Peter-in-Thanel, KEN		St George's Centre	Chatham Naval Memorial	
145	BAKER	Alfred Robert	Yeoman of Signals	191009	Royal Navy	36	09 Jul 1917				25 Jul 1881	Dover, KEN	ADM188/326	HMS Vanguard; Robert & Alice Mary, of 78, Black Griffin Lane, Canterbury KEN	LS&GC Medal	St George's Centre	Chatham Naval Memorial	
209	BARTY	Bert	PO Stoker	305563	Royal Navy	30	09 Jul 1917		Allhallows	CO 28 Jul 1917	15 Feb 1885	Rochester KEN	ADM 188/498	HMS Vanguard;s/o Edward & Mary Ann		Hoo St Mary Church/ Chatham Naval Memorial	Chatham Naval Memorial	
256	BEESON	Joseph	Cooper	295517	Royal Navy		09 Jul 1917	9 Cross St	Chatham	CO & CN 28 Jul 1917	6 Jun 1878	Nottingham NTT	ADM188/478	HMS Vanguard;wife Ada Amelia		Chatham Naval Memorial	Chatham Naval Memorial	
272	BEMSON	Joseph			Royal Navy		09 Jul 1917	105 Sturla Road	Chatham					Cannot find any further info on this man		Chatham Naval Memorial	Chatham Naval Memorial	
287	BENNETT	William George	ERA	M/18041	Royal Navy	28	09 Jul 1917	18 Garden Row	Chatham		18 Aug 1889	Rochester, KEN	ADM 188/1054	HMS Vanguard; s/o of William Delce Rd Rochester KEN		Chatham Naval Memorial	Chatham Naval Memorial	
415	BRADLEY	Albert Thomas	Mechanician	309830	Royal Navy	30	09 Jul 1917	65 Albany Road	Gillingham		8 Mar 1888	Hackney, LND	ADM 188/506	HMS Vanguard; s/o Thomas & Sarah of Hackney LDN; wife Kathleen Mary		Gillingham/Chatham Naval Memorial	Chatham Naval Memorial	
520	BUGG	Charles	PO	190153	Royal Navy		09 Jul 1917			CO 21 Jul 1917	5 Jul 1881	Dinton, WIL	ADM 188/324	HMS Vanguard		Gillingham/Chatham Naval Memorial	Chatham Naval Memorial	
567	BUTTERICK	George William	Telegraphist	J/43846	Royal Navy		09 Jul 1917				2 Jun 1899	Hull YKS	ADM188/734	HMS Vanguard		ST George's Centre	Chatham Naval Memorial	
594	CARNEY	Francis	Boy 1st Class	J/52303	Royal Navy	17	09 Jul 1917				06 Jun 1900	Gateshead DUR	ADM188/751	HMS Vanguard; s/o Francis & Sarah, of 71, Monk St., Gateshead-on-Tyne. DUR		St George's Centre	Chatham Naval Memorial	
595	CARPENTER	Albert Frank	Leading Signalman	227303	Royal Navy	31	09 Jul 1917				19 Apr 1886	Chelsea LND	ADM188/401	HMS Vanguard; s/o Albert & Blanch, of 32, Bramerton St., Chelsea,LND		St George's Centre	Chatham Naval Memorial	
667	CHILCOTT	Cecil Osborne	Ship's Steward's Asst	M/20613	Royal Navy	24	09 Jul 1917	28 Stopford Road	Gillingham		7 Apr 1893	Plymouth, DEV	ADM188/1059	HMS Vanguard; s/o the late Thomas & Sarah Louisa(now Ames)		Gillingham/Chatham Naval Memorial/Chatham Dockyard Memorial	Chatham Naval Memorial	



Record Number:	2006
Surname:	JOYCE
Forename(s):	Francis (Frank) Rupert
Rank:	Private
Service Number:	SP/2615
Served in:	Army
Age at Death:	19
Date of Death:	31-Jul-1916
Home Address:	169 Maidstone Road
Home Town / City:	Rochester
Photo / Newspaper Records (if any):	CO & CN 26 Aug 1916 & CN Almanac 1917
Date of Birth:	31 Jan 1897
Place of Birth:	St Ives HUN
National Archives Records (if any):	
Miscellaneous Information of service (if any):	24th Bn Royal Fusiliers; s/o Frank & Mary Annie of Fern Bank Loose Maidstone KEN
Awards Received (if any):	
Memorial Inscription Location:	Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School, Rochester & St Margaret Rochester
Burial Place (Cemetery):	Thiepval Memorial
Notes (if any):	

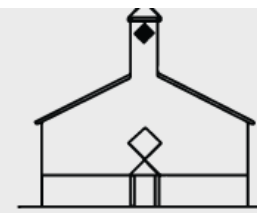
The De Caville entry page for Pte Frank Joyce, died 31-7-1916, age 19

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Burial Place (Cemetery):	Thiepval Memorial
Notes (if any):	

This example is one where we have yet to find a picture.

Sgt Major Archer Balcombe, of HMS Calliope, was lost at the Battle of Jutland, two months earlier than Frank Joyce

He has a memorial in the Sergeants' Mess at the RM Barracks and is listed on the Chatham Naval Memorial



No image available

We do not have a photo of this person on our database.

Record Number:	166
Surname:	BALCOMBE
Forename(s):	Archer William
Rank:	Serjeant/Major
Service Number:	CH/15620
Served in:	RMLI
Age at Death:	29
Date of Death:	31-May-1916
Home Address:	13 Reform Road
Home Town / City:	Chatham
Photo / Newspaper Records (if any):	CN 10 Jun 1916
Date of Birth:	17 Dec 1886
Place of Birth:	
National Archives Records (if any):	ADM 159/125
Miscellaneous Information of service (if any):	HMS Calliope; wife Dora of 98 Hythe St, Dartford KEN
Awards Received (if any):	Cross of St George (Russia)
Memorial Inscription Location:	Chatham Naval Memorial & Sergeants Mess R M Barracks
Burial Place (Cemetery):	Chatham Naval Memorial
Notes (if any):	

# THE EXHIBITIONS

- FOMA was asked by Medway Archives and Local Studies to mount an exhibition each year to commemorate those from the Medway area who lost their lives in World War 1
- Each exhibition featured those that had died 100 years previously, with information about the events in which those lives were lost as well as some information about events at home.
- We featured as many photographs from old newspapers and almanacs as we could find.
- The exhibitons were researched and produced for display by FOMA committee members.



# The first exhibition October/November 2014

[illegible]



The main loss of life in 1914 affecting the Medway area was caused by the sinking of the three cruisers, HMS Aboukir, HMS Cressy & HMS Hogue in September 1914





The wreath we purchased from the British Legion which was displayed each year, in our exhibition.

Recruitment and the Military & Naval hospitals in the area also featured

More pictures of men from the three cruisers that went down



# The 2015 Exhibition

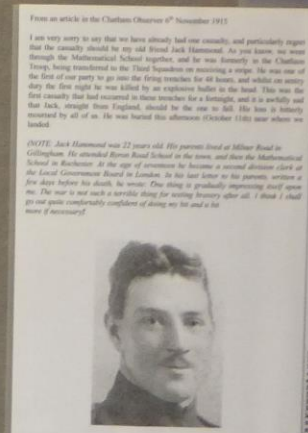
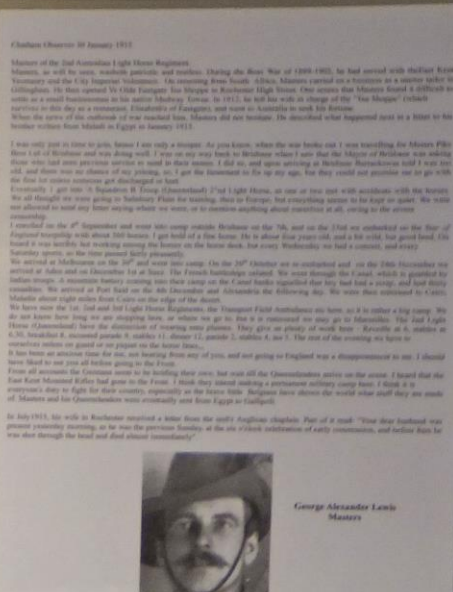
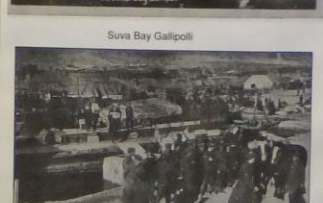
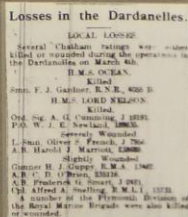
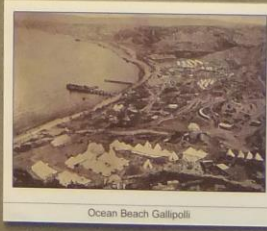
- In 1915 the two main campaigns were those on the Western Front and Dardanelles/Gallipoli
- The Western front battles included the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of Ypres, where gas was used for the first time by the German army, and those at Neuve Chapelle and Loos
- The Dardanelles and Gallipoli campaigns brought many casualties in both the Navy and Army.
- On the home front locally, recruitment drives continued and Air Raids began to appear, along with blackout regulations and adverts for air raid insurance.







## THE DARDANELLES and GALLIPOLI CAMPAIGNS





# NAVAL LOSSES 1915



P.O. Henry Ross, HMS Formidable  
12 Chatter Road, Colchester



Cook's mate J.W. Kennell, HMS Formidable  
Lower Raiton



L. Copt. Frederick B.M.L.L., HMS Formidable  
Brimston Road, Colchester



Chief Ammunition W.J. Needham, HMS Formidable  
via Rose St. Drive, Rochester



Pte. W. Williams R.M.L.L., HMS Formidable  
Two Rivers, High Street, Rochester



Pte. E. Smith R.M.L.L., HMS Formidable  
Two Rivers, High Street, Rochester



Pte. G. Phillips R.M.L.L., HMS Formidable  
100 Castle Road, Chatham



Sergeant T.D. White R.M.L.L., HMS Formidable  
1 Joyce Street, Chatham



Ldg. Stoker Ernest Turner, HMS Formidable  
Chatham



E.R.A. John Charlesworth, HMS Formidable  
127 Rochester Ave., Rochester

HMS Formidable  
Sunk by U24 off the Dorset Coast 1 January 1915



It was the first day of January 1915, in the early hours. The battleship HMS Formidable had been training and exercising in Lyme Bay with other ships when she was struck with two torpedoes. On the bitterly cold evening of 1 January 1915, Police Sergeant Stockley and Constable Ridout were patrolling the almost deserted streets of Lyme Regis in Dorset. Shortly before midnight they heard shouting coming from the seafloor area. Assuming that they would need to break up a drunken brawl they hurried to the scene, however there was no sign of troublemakers. The shouting was louder by now and was coming from a naval cutter which the officers could just discern as they peered out to sea. The vessel was approaching the beach from about 400 yards out. As Stockley and Ridout, accompanied by passers-by who had also heard the shouting rushed to the shoreline, they saw that the boat contained dozens of half-naked men. As the cutter drew nearer it became clear that some of them were dead. Only three of the occupants managed to stumble ashore without help. Lying among the dead were unconscious men who required artificial respiration. Three died after being helped ashore.

The survivors were taken to seafloor houses, where they were attended by local GPs. The Mayor of Lyme Regis arranged for the Assembly Rooms to be used as a temporary mortuary. The local Cottage Hospital took in the injured and those suffering from hypothermia. The rest were accommodated in the homes of concerned Lyme Regis residents.

In a matter of hours, the news of these events in the West Country had reached the Medway Towns. Crowds of anxious people surrounded the Naval Information Bureau at Chatham Town Hall because the men rescued from the Channel, and those who had been helped ashore at Lyme Regis, were from the battleship Formidable. Hundreds of sailors and marines from the vessel were either born and bred in the Medway Towns or had made their homes there. Once again, a matter of a few months after the destruction of the *Aboukir*, *Cressy* and *Hogue*, the district had been hit hard by a single tragedy.

Sloker William Parr from Chatham was one of the occupants of the cutter whose shouting attracted the two Dorset policemen. They had spent 22 hours in the cutter before reaching the beach at Lyme Regis.



Ship's Copt. J. Cripps, HMS Formidable  
10 Chatter Rd Colchester



Gunner P.H. Hallen, HMS Formidable  
8 Holmstead Colchester



Mechanic H.J. Watson, HMS Formidable  
Third Ave, Chatham



Ldg. Cook's Mate P. Payne, HMS Formidable  
11 East Street, Chatham



Ldg. Stoker R. W. Kemp, HMS Formidable  
151 Castle Road, Chatham



Stoker Gunner Albert Bailey, HMS Formidable  
148 Castle Road, Chatham



Bugler W. Reid R.M.L.L., HMS Formidable  
49 Skinner Street, Chatham



P.O. 1st Class S. Collins, HMS Formidable  
Chatter Road, Chatham

## MARVELLOUS ESCAPES. Adrift on a Raging Sea.

After a terrible experience, fifteen men were rescued from the wreck of the battleship Formidable, which was sunk on the night of 1 January 1915. The survivors were rescued from the sea by the battleship Formidable, which was sunk on the night of 1 January 1915. The survivors were rescued from the sea by the battleship Formidable, which was sunk on the night of 1 January 1915.

THE first order given by Captain Lambey was to throw the starboard door open and to use the starboard lifeboat to save as many of the crew as possible. The order was given to the crew, except of course, those whose duties would have been left behind.

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## MEDWAY DISASTER. EXPLOSION VICTIMS.

Child Killed at Port Victoria.

LARGE TALL TANK.

Mr. G. E. Harris, who formerly commanded the ship, was on the ship at the time of the explosion. He was on the ship at the time of the explosion. He was on the ship at the time of the explosion. He was on the ship at the time of the explosion.

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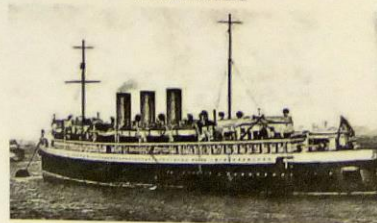
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HMS PRINCESS IRIDE



Salisbury Reach, in the Medway estuary, was filled with numerous grey-hulled vessels of the King's navy. Among yellow funnels showed that she belonged to a more powerful age. Her name was Princess Irene, less than a year old fresh from the shipyards of Deane's shipbuilders of Southampton on the Clyde. Still wearing her peace time colours in April 1915 she completed two mine laying sorties in the southern part of the North Sea and on 25 May was moored near No 28 buoy.

On the 27 May 1915 the Princess Irene was moored in Salisbury Reach, in the Medway Estuary between Port Victoria and Sheerness, being loaded with mines in preparation for deployment on mine mine laying missions.

At 11.14 GMT the Princess Irene exploded and disintegrated.

A column of flame 300 feet (100 m) high was followed a few seconds later by another of similar height and a pall of smoke hung over the spot where Princess Irene had been, reaching 1,200 feet (400m). Two barges lying alongside her were also destroyed. The explosion was larger than that which had destroyed HMS Bulwark in the Medway six months earlier, although the loss of life was less.

A total of 352 people were killed, including 273 officers and men and 76 dockyard workers who were on Princess Irene. On the Isle of Grain a girl of eight, Ida Barden, playing in her uncle's garden was killed by a falling metal which struck her on her head and a farmhand George Arthur Bradley was killed by the shock wave. A collier (road ship) half a mile (800m) away had its crane blown off its moorings. A part of one of Princess Irene's boilers landed on the ship, a man working on the ship died from injuries sustained when he was struck by a piece of metal weighing 70 pounds (32 kg).

Wreckage was flung up to 20 miles away with people near Sittingbourne being injured by flying debris, some of which landed in Broadhurst. Severed heads were found at Hartlip and on the Isle of Grain. A case of butter landed at Rainham 6 miles away. A 10 ton section of the ship also landed on the Isle of Grain, and the Admiralty's oil storage tanks were damaged.

The sole survivor from the Princess Irene was a stoker who suffered severe burns, but after a long convalescence, he served a further twelve years in the Royal Navy and became the father of nine children, including a daughter called Irene.

Three of her crew had a lucky escape as they were ashore at the time!



Ldg. Stoker A. Willingham, Princess Irene  
21 Layfield Road, Colchester



Mr. Turner, Princess Irene  
Glenora Road, Chatham



Ldg. Stoker J. Early, HMS Formidable  
13 Ridley Road, Rochester



C.P.O. Walter Horton, HMS Formidable  
East Street, Colchester



P.O. W.C. Southon, HMS Formidable  
Halegate Road, Colchester



P.O. A.G. Broadhead, HMS Formidable  
Chatham



P.O. 1st Class S. Evans, HMS Formidable  
42 Park Road, Colchester



Chief Cook C. Bryant, HMS Formidable  
Lambeth, London



Stoker P.O. B. Davis, HMS Formidable  
28 New Road, Colchester



Stoker P.O. F.F. Ford, HMS Formidable  
Colchester, Essex, Colchester



Rescues by Crew of  
Arethusa.

## HUMANITY OR THE BLUEJACKETS.

It was the British blood-pourer, the truly British, the man with all the fine traditions of the Service that in the hour of victory, Pride at having triumphed over the enemy is tempered with a humane sympathy for the fallen, and ready are the glories of personal sacrifice and self-sacrifice to be forgotten. — Keith, *ibid.*

It is complete without the Arushans," writes a member of the crew of that famous ship to his mother as he begins to describe the fight and the surrender, followed by the striking of the flag, which, followed by the striking of the flag, "the Arushans" were not what we have been longing for his newly few months, and it has come a victory.

It was the Arushans that finished the fight, and the writer tells how it was.

We let fire two independent, which found their mark. Both hit in the bows just below the water-line. I looked over at once. They came back again; then also lay on her starboard side for about ten minutes.

Her crew were all lined up along the side to be captured, and when we had steamed about 80 or 100 yards from her she gave her last heave. Then the Germans all disappeared into the water. It was

THE SINKING OF THE HYTHE.

### Bad News for Strood Homes.

Two other blood sons, who were members of the little company back in 1914, were killed in the attack on the machine gun position. They were killed by the enemy's machine gun fire. They were killed by the enemy's machine gun fire. They were killed by the enemy's machine gun fire.

## SERVICES IN THE HOUSE

## NAVAL MEN'S WIDOWS.

In Parliamentary written questions, Lord Phillips' demand asked the First Lord of the Admiralty to clarify the position. He called to the fact that widows of men in the Royal Naval Reserve were not entitled to a service pension until they were 60 years of age. He asked whether the Government would temporarily forgo an average period of nine years' service in order to ensure that there was no gap in the pension. He asked whether the Government would consider that there was a case for a special concession for those with regular service who were not entitled to a pension until they were 60 years of age. He asked whether the Government would be made of the readjustment of their finances to prevent this distress.

The Minister of the Admiralty replied, stating that a concession of this kind would be a misrepresentation, as I find that the Government's policy is to pay a pension which is discontinued on the death of the allottee, the first weekly payments of the pension being made to the widow. He stated that the Government would not make other widows or only a comparison with the pension of the deceased. He stated that the Government would not make other widows or only a comparison with the pension of the deceased. He stated that the Government would not make other widows or only a comparison with the pension of the deceased.

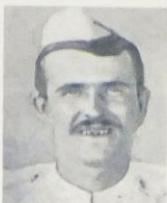
**DOCKWARD WORKERS' WAGES.**  
Lord Charles Russell also asked the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the reduction of the ordinary labourers' wages will have the effect of increasing the proportion of ex-convicts employed under the Director of Works Department.

**RE-MANAGEMENT.** The ruling of ex-convicts in the dockward work, especially in the case of the unskilled labourer, and any man at present employed as ex-convicts who are in receipt of less than the enhanced minimum salary for labourers, is a matter which should be raised to that rate, except probationers, who will be advanced to 5s. The present scale for skilled labourers is 5s. to 12s. 6d. with occasional rates for men of 12s. 6d. to 15s. 6d. and 15s. 6d. to 18s. 6d.

**Handwriting.**



Ship's Cpt RR Sheffield      Clin McLaughlin  
49 Jubilee Cottages, Lorton



Prof W E Young, B.M.B., Chm McNamington  
28 Dale Street, Chatham



Prof A F Watts B.M.B.E.      Clive McNaughton  
13 Clarence Ave, Delee, Rochester



Douglas W R Fuller B.M.B.L. Class McNaughton  
76 Dale Street, Chalfont



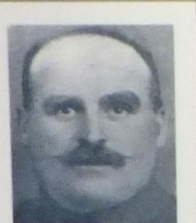
Capt W J Griffiths R.M.L.I.     Clun McNaughton  
2 Wellington Road, Gillingham



Sacker T J Hakcombe HMS Hood  
High Street, Old Brompton



Photograph taken from the book  
McCUDDEN V. C.  
By Christopher Cole



CSM J Carter, R.E.      Lost on HMS Hythe  
77 Mountbatten Road, Bristol



Supper H O Paterson, R.E. Lost in 1885 Hyatt  
Lawrence Street, Gillingham



A. B. Walther, Johns Hopkins  
60 Calver Street, Chestnut



The first RCAF aircraft deployment France was a mixture of Be2's (below left), Blarion monoplanes and Farmans, Aero 504s & BE8s. The RNAS used mainly Spads & Dubys (below right)

The BE2 was the principal aircraft type. The BE2 was not a practical military design with the pilot at the rear having the best view and the observer sitting forward with his view obstructed by the wing. When guns were fitted to the BE2 they could be placed in four positions but this involved the observer lifting the gun out of one socket and placing it in another. This required the observer to stand and work while the aircraft was likely to be manoeuvring. Later aircraft were fitted with a single gun to give the observer an improved field of fire. The BE2 flew initially in a reconnaissance and observation role with a camera fitted in its side next to the pilot. During 1915 it was used in a limited bombing role with the observer being substituted for bombs.



The Sopwith Aviation Company was a British aircraft company that designed and manufactured aeroplanes mainly for the Royal Naval Air Service and the Royal Flying Corps. The Baby was used as a shipborne reconnaissance and bomber aircraft operating from seaplane carriers and cruisers, as well as naval tenders and minelayers. Many Babies were attached to RNAS coastal air stations located in England and Scotland and RNAS stations in Egypt, Greece and Italy.





Mementoes  
loaned to us by a  
FOMA member of  
a relative who lost  
his life in 1915



# 2016 Exhibition

- The greatest loss of life to men in 1916 were the Battle of Jutland and the Somme campaign.
- Over 250 men lost their lives between July & November in the Somme campaign of whom we were able to find photos of about 70.
- Conscription featured large locally with many appeal panels hearing, and usually rejecting, requests to be exempt from being called up.
- The local VAD hospital work was also shown



# 1916 BATTLE OF JUTLAND





# SOMME CAMPAIGN

## BATTLE OF THE SOMME

A detailed display board for the Battle of the Somme, featuring numerous portraits of soldiers, maps, and historical photographs. The board is organized into several sections:

- Portraits:** Numerous individual portraits of soldiers, many with their names and ranks written below them.
- Maps:** Several maps showing the battle's progress, including "THE SOMME OFFENSIVE" and "BRITISH PUSH ON 20-MILE FRONT THIS MORNING".
- Photographs:** Historical photographs of soldiers in action, including one labeled "DEATH BEFORE SURRENDER".
- Text:** Various text blocks providing context and details about the battle, such as "THE SOMME BATTLES" and "DEATH BEFORE SURRENDER".
- Decorative Elements:** A large red poppy with the number "100" is prominently displayed in the center.

A detailed display board for the Battle of the Somme, featuring a mix of historical documents, photographs, and decorative elements. The board is organized into several sections:

- Historical Documents:** Several newspaper clippings and official reports, including "BATTLE OF THE SOMME" from Gillingham Inverca, "GALLANT STAND IN THAMES WOOD", and "THE GLORIOUS WEST KENTS".
- Photographs:** Historical photographs of soldiers in action, including one labeled "AERIAL WARFARE".
- Portraits:** Portraits of soldiers, including one labeled "BROTHERS OF PRIDE WILLIAM BROOKS".
- Decorative Elements:** Two large red poppies with the number "100" are prominently displayed in the center.
- Text:** Various text blocks providing context and details about the battle, such as "GALLANT STAND IN THAMES WOOD" and "THE GLORIOUS WEST KENTS".



# CONSCRIPTION

The military losses during the first two years of the war saw conscription being introduced for the first time, and by mid July even married men were no longer exempt. There were regular tribunal hearings for men requesting exemption, but they rarely succeeded – at most the applicant was given six months to make alternative arrangements, often less than this.

Conscientious objectors, given the Naval & Military concessions and losses suffered in the area, were particularly given a hard time, as the Chatham News reported in August when six men were removed to being released from the army, when in fact they were on their way to Wormwood Scrubs – see article.

A selection of the tribunal hearings are displayed on this board.

Increasingly women were taking on roles previously done by men as can be seen in the Chatham News 'Stray Notes' column of June 3 1916.

## CONSCRIPTION

### CHATHAM NEWS JUNE 3 'STRAY NOTES'

A shortage of labour caused by the war is being felt in all directions, and women are helping the nation out of its difficulties. In Gillingham we have become quite accustomed to being served with groceries and provisions by ladies. A few days since, an exceptionally modest friend of mine was seen in a gentleman's outfitter's establishment with blouses sufficing his cheeks while his hands were serving him a pair of pants.

Then we have lady window cleaners and very smart and businesslike they appear as they ramble second stations in their brown overalls and haggards. The Corps has this week sent round several buson baskets on milk rounds. Mr Rose of Duncan Road can claim the distinction of being the first baker to employ girls to round with the bread barrow, and right well do they perform their duties. A rumour reaches me that some of the house decorators – who are at their wits end to know how to grapple with spring decorating – are seriously contemplating women, more especially for hanging wallpaper. The times are indeed changing.

## THE MILITARY SERVICE ACT, 1916.

APPLIES TO UNBARRACKED MEN WHO, ON AUGUST 1914, WERE 19 YEARS OF AGE OR OVER AND WHO WILL BE 20 ON 1 JANUARY 1916.

**ALL MEN (NOT EXEMPTED) ON EXEMPTION.**

between the above ages who, on November 2nd, 1915, were unmarried or widowers without any child dependent on them will, on

**Thursday, March 2nd, 1916**

be deemed to be EXEMPTED FOR THE PERIOD OF THE WAR.

They will be placed in the Reserve until called up by their Class.

**MEN EXEMPTED:**

RELIGIOUS, including Testaments who have volunteered for Foreign Service; MEN serving in the ARMY or NAVAL RESERVE;

MEN POSSESSING FROM 1915 or 1916, issued as 20, or TIME-EXPIRED MEN; MEN EXEMPTED FOR THE ARMY since AUGUST 1915;

CLERGYMEN, PRIESTS, and MINISTERS OF RELIGION;

WIDOWERS from the 1915-1916.

**MEN WHO MAY BE EXEMPTED BY LOCAL TRIBUNALS:**

Men who are unable to do the full time of their present employment;

Men who are unable to do the full time of their present employment;

Men who are unable to do the full time of their present employment;

Men who are unable to do the full time of their present employment;

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Men who are unable to do the full time of their present employment;

Men who are unable to do the full time of their present employment;

## MILITARY SERVICE ACT, 1916

Every man to whom the Act applies will, on Thursday, March 2nd, be deemed to have called for the period of the War unless he is exempted or excused.

Any man who has adequate grounds for applying to a Local Tribunal for a

**CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION**

**UNDER THIS ACT**

Must do so **BEFORE**

**THURSDAY, MARCH 2**

**ATTEST NOW**

Why wait for the Act to apply to you?

Come now and make out your own free will.

You can at once put your claim for exemption

from being called up before a Local Tribunal if you wish.

**ATTEST NOW**

**ATTEST NOW**

**ATTEST NOW**

**ATTEST NOW**

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**ATTEST NOW**

**ATTEST NOW**

JULY 8, 1916.

## ARMY RESERVES, CLASS "B," GROUP AND CLASS RECRUITS.

The following List of RECRUITS are required to report themselves without delay at the Recruiting Office, 34, HIGH STREET, ROCHESTER.

The public are invited to assist the Military Authorities by giving any information in their possession which will assist in locating any of the above-named recruits.

Information so afforded will be treated as confidential, and should be addressed either personally or by letter to:

THE RECRUITING OFFICER, 34, HIGH STREET, ROCHESTER.

The recruits should be marked "CONFIDENTIAL."

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The recruits should be marked "CONFIDENTIAL."

## THE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR AT THE FRONT!

OH, YOU NAUGHTY UNKIND GERMAN – REALLY, IF YOU DON'T DESIST I'LL FORGET I'VE GOT A CONSCIENCE, AND I'LL SMACK YOU ON THE WRIST!

Chatham News August 1

'Then came definite news that six of these 'men' were leaving Lower Barracks for the railway station, soon after six o'clock. A large and representative crowd

assembled, just without the Government boundary, below the barracks. Suddenly there is a movement of the small body of men at the barrack gates,

who looking back, commence to descend the hill towards the waiting crowd, gazing over their shoulders every now and then. The silence of the crowd is

broken, for a murmur arises, swelling gradually into shape, and resolving itself into the words "They're coming!" Almost immediately those who have been so

long expected break into view, and their appearance has an electric effect on the assembly—there is an immediate closing up—a large body of Jack Tars stand

solidly in the middle of the roadway, the Tommies press towards the centre of attraction in broken segments, and crowd on either side of the roadway.

As the 'conscientious' descend the hill, their countenances are keenly scanned by the crowd, and their gait is no less closely observed. Both plainly say 'We

have our belief—our belief is good—we have suffered for that belief—we have won!' No sooner has the crowd realised what their expressions and bearing mean, than

an ominous murmur breaks forth. Almost instantaneously the murmurs develop into shouts of derision and scorn. Two or three of the 'conscientious' pale

obviously, and they all close in together—but not for long. They reach the Government boundary—a bag of four is thrown—a rotten egg follows, thrown with

great force at close quarters—it strikes its victim squarely between the eyes—he

bernds down trying to clear his vision, and his head is whirled by more force. This is the signal for masses of all descriptions to be showered on the victims,

but even this does not satisfy the more indignant of the crowd. Suddenly, a man—

a Tommy—dashes forward and strikes right and left at one of the 'objectors' and in

a second, the six are surrounded. Knocked down, kicked and clawed at, with

clothes torn to rags, they find they are suffering again for their belief, and that

they have not yet won through. At last four of them succeed in breaking away

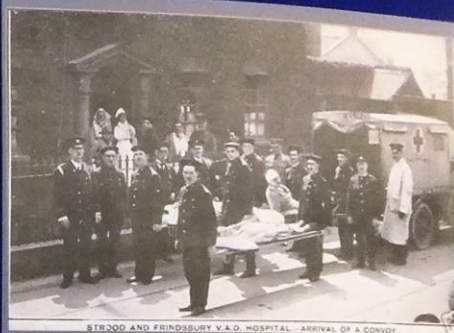
and running for their lives towards the Town Hall. The remaining two are not so

fortunate and suffer still more severely before they succeed in breaking through,

and when they do their progress can be traced by the blood they leave behind.



VADs were an uneasy addition to military hospitals' rank and order. They lacked the advanced skill and discipline of professional trained nurses and were often critical of the nursing profession. Relations improved as the war stretched on. VAD members increased their skill and efficiency, and trained nurses were more accepting of the VADs' contributions. During the years of 1914-1918, VADs worked in hospitals and served as ambulance drivers and cooks. VADs served near the Western Front and in Mesopotamia and Gallipoli. VAD hospitals were also opened in most large towns in Britain. Later, VADs were also sent to the Eastern Front. They provided an invaluable source of bedside aid. Many were decorated for distinguished service.



STROOD AND FRINDSBURY V.A.D. HOSPITAL. ARRIVAL OF A CONVOY.

The extracts shown are taken from the Stood & Frindsbury V.A.D. reports in the Chatham News for the four weeks following the start of the Somme offensive. In particular they highlight the case of one very seriously wounded Canadian soldier and the intensive nursing resources he needed. I am sure that the readers were pleased to hear that he was finally making good progress towards recovery.

[illegible]

[Copy.]

Strood, England, July 28th.

To Miss Maudie, the Commandant of the  
Charge, Street V. A. Hospital, to Miss M.  
H. Brown, Malvern U. Hospital, and  
Sister.

Before leaving your midst, I desire to tender  
to you and your sisters my warmest thanks  
for your kindness and attention to me  
during my stay at the hospital. I am  
ward of your hospital. Though not requiring  
much of your attention, I have been the  
benefit of the attention that has been given to the  
unfortunate ones who did require it, by such  
kindness and attention. I have been  
in the good work both day and night  
and I have been able to do so much  
pleasant memories of the many kind  
words and acts of kindness which I have  
received and which I shall never forget  
and when I arrive back in my own home  
I shall be able to tell of the kindness  
in giving all possible publicity to the grand  
work of the hospital. I have been  
much interested in the work of the  
house and attention I received while under  
your care.

I must also express my sincere gratitude  
to many of the residents of the hospital  
for the kindness and attention which I have  
received. I have been able to do so much  
pleasant memories of the many kind  
words and acts of kindness which I have  
received and which I shall never forget  
and when I arrive back in my own home  
I shall be able to tell of the kindness  
in giving all possible publicity to the grand  
work of the hospital. I have been  
much interested in the work of the  
house and attention I received while under  
your care.

To attend. With the many reminders of pleasure provided, we completed the first of the time being; that there is such a thing as a War on.

Trusting that other N.E. wounded soldiers will be fortunate enough to come under your care, and suitable the same good things provided, together with the loving care and kindness of all concerned in the work, and that your combined efforts will be crowned with the success and glory that you richly deserve. We have the honour to be, yours very gratefully.

GEORGE McRAY, 22216 Emler,  
Divisional Ammunition Column,  
N.E. Field Artillery.

P.S. - As I am the first of the N.E. Forces to come under your care, you may make use

The Committee desire to thank the Hospital Union authorities for the loan of a typewriter. They also wish to record their appreciation of the assistance rendered by the nursing staff. One of the wounded patients was very dangerously ill; he underwent an operation on the 10th inst. and was removed to the hospital ward into the open air, with the hope, for special treatment. It was necessary to engage the services of a nurse to attend to him; he did not leave day or night. His shelter was completed the same day, and the Hospital Union authorities were able to return him to his home for his holiday season. The kindly made up the other. The management of the hospital is in the hands of the Hospital Union, which is in a very good condition for recovery. This case also illustrates how financial conditions are not a hindrance to the work of the Hospital Union. This special case costs nearly 40 pence per week. But could money be even spent better than in saving the life of a man? The Hospital Union is saving the life of a man for his country's sake?

[illegible]

**St. Bartholomew's Hospital**  
Patrons and Governor, The Very Rev.

**ADDITIONAL**

[illegible]

Save. Let all those who help by contributing their support and kindly sympathy in this good cause comfort in the knowledge of the good work being done. It is sincerely in this sense that the Committee express their thanks to every donor whose gift is noted below.—Mr. Eagle, No-theus-pond, magnum; Mrs. Muggings; Cooling, basket of cherries, eggs, and gooseberries; Mr. W. Edmonds, two chickens; Mr. J. B. Allen, 50 High-Rock, straw; Mrs. Chambers, three chickens; Mr. Magnum; Mr. Betta, geese; Miss West, magnum; Mr. and Mrs. Tingley, North Hill; Dr. Mrs. John Brown, Jr., Mrs.

**Hospital, Rochester.**  
the Dean of Rochester.

## SUPPORT

[illegible]

1947's Annual: Cathedral School, p. 26.  
 Georgetown, Baker, 196 p., half cover.  
 Empire, 1960, 228 p., 60¢. 12 pages.  
 Philadelphia, 1. Columbia, 1960.  
 Berlin, Thompson, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 26

**ACTIVE PERFORMANCE FOR  
WOUNDED SOLDIERS**

**Yuge Party at Cantonham Empire.**

Probably the largest charitable function ever assembled at the Cantonham Empire, which took place on Thursday afternoon, in response to the generous efforts of the management, a huge party of

... 2,000, attended from the farthest limits  
in and around the district, and were  
entitled to an honorable and well-earned  
prize by the company appearing at the  
state fair. The audience represented  
... from as far as thirty miles  
... including the United States Marine Corps,  
... Naval Academy, Navy, and Port  
... Naval Academy, Navy, and Port

Patron and Governor, The Very Rev. the Dean of Rochester

**ADDITIONAL SUPPORT  
IS MOST URGENTLY NEEDED.**

**£9,000**  
At least will be required during 1912.

New and Increased Annual Subscriptions are earnestly requested.

### Boys City at Christian Empire

Probably the largest assembly of boys in the world is taking place at Christian Empire camp, near the town of Christian, N. D., today. The boys, who are from all over the world, are here to receive training in the various trades and professions. The camp is located on a beautiful lake, and the boys are living in comfortable quarters. The training is given by experienced men, and the boys are given a good education. The camp is open to boys of all ages, and the training is free of charge. The boys are given a good education, and they are given a chance to learn the various trades and professions. The camp is a great place for boys to learn and to grow.





# 2017 Exhibition

- This exhibition on the events of 1917 was exhibited in the community area of the new Medway Archive Centre. It was compiled as usual by FOMA members but the display screens were produced by the Medway Council Communications team, so were rather different from previous years.
- The Arras and Third Ypres campaigns and the sinking of HMS Vanguard in Scapa Flow caused the main loss of life to Medway men.
- In recognition of the founding of the Commonwealth Graves Commission in 1917, we also illustrated how the casualties were treated and the dead buried and commemorated.

# BATTLE OF ARRAS

# WHAT HAPPENED TO BATTLE FIELD CASUALTIES

# CWGC MEMORIALS

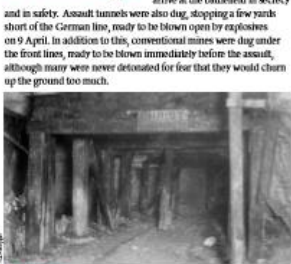
- ▶ The Battle of Arras. 9 April – 16 May, 1917
- The Arras Offensive comprised a series of battles:
- Battle of Vimy Ridge 9-14 April
- First Battle of Scarpe 9 – 14 April
- First attack on Bullecourt 11 April
- German attack on Lagnicourt 15 April
- Second Battle of Scarpe 23-24 April
- Battle of Arleux 28-29 April
- 3rd Battle of Scarpe 3-4 May
- Battle of Bullecourt 3-16 May

**Background**  
The ground and date for the offensive was dictated by the need to support the French attack further south along the Aisne River. Field Marshal Haig wanted to concentrate his attacks along the Ypres salient to prevent the German submarine use of the Belgian coast and to cut off German supply lines. However he was overruled.



A military band playing in the ruined Arras town square, 30 April 1917.

**Preparations**  
Prior to opening of the battle it was planned that the concentration of troops had to be concealed from the Germans. Mining Engineers had been working underground from October 1916 in constructing tunnels for the troops and supplies so that they could remain unseen. The area in and around Arras is chalky and easily excavated. Under Arras itself there was a vast network of caverns which consisted of underground quarries, galleries and sewage tunnels. New tunnels were added to this network so that troops could arrive at the battlefield in secrecy and in safety. Assault tunnels were also dug, stopping a few yards short of the German line, ready to be blown open by explosives on 9 April. In addition to this, conventional mines were dug under the front lines, ready to be blown immediately before the assault, although many were never detonated for fear that they would churn up the ground too much.



Soldiers take a rest in a tunnel during the battle.

The preliminary bombardment started on 20 March at Vimy ridge and the bombardment of the rest of the sector on 4 April. Limited to a front of only 24 miles the bombardment used 3,669,000 shells, over a million more than had been used on the Somme.



A Corporal in the Machine Gun Corps stands at a machine gun post in a captured trench at Stashy.



**The first day - 9 April**  
The assault began in sleet and snow with the British troops moving forward behind their creeping barrage. At Vimy Ridge the Canadian Corps achieved stunning success and quickly took their objectives, making liberal use of machine guns, and after pushing through the enemy defences reached the crest of the ridge around 1pm. A breakthrough may have been achieved but the attack plan called for a two-hour pause once the objectives had been taken and darkness prevented the attack from continuing.



Troops moving on Arras battle field between Hazy and Stashy.

In the centre, British troops attacked east from Arras between Watcourt and Pouchy, the 1st Battle of the Scarpe. A key section of the German defences in the area were taken on 9 April, however it took several more days to completely clear the Germans from the trench system. British success on the first day was significantly aided by German reserve divisions being stationed fifteen miles behind the lines.

**Consolidation**  
On 11 April, a two-division attack was launched against Bullecourt to widen the offensive on the British right. However the British and Australian divisions were repulsed, with heavy casualties. After Bullecourt, a pause in the fighting occurred as the artillery had churned the ground up slowing down supplies, meaning temporary roads had to be built across the churned up battlefield. Over the first few days, the British had made dramatic gains including the capture of Vimy Ridge and advanced over three miles in some areas.



Royal Horse Artillery pulling a captured German gas into position to use against them, battle of the Scarpe, April 1917.

By 15 April, the Germans had reinforced their lines across the Vimy-Arras sector and were prepared to launch counterattacks. The first of these came at Lagnicourt where they succeeded in taking the village before being compelled to retreat by the determined Australian 1st Division.

Fighting resumed in earnest on April 23, 2nd Battle of Scarpe, with the British pushing east of Arras in an attempt to keep the initiative. As the battle continued, it turned into a grinding war of attrition as the Germans had brought reserves forward in all sectors and had strengthened their defences.



Cavalry meeting at the roadside during the battle of Scarpe.

Though losses were increasing rapidly, Haig was persuaded to keep the attack going as the French offensive (began April 16) was falling badly.

On April 28-29, British and Canadian forces fought a bitter battle at Arleux in an attempt to secure the southeast flank of Vimy Ridge. While this objective was attained, casualties were high.

On May 3, twin attacks were launched along the Scarpe River in the centre and Bullecourt in the south. While both made small gains, huge losses led to the cancellation of both assaults on May 4 and 17 respectively.



Workers in the ruins of Thiane destroyed at the battle of Vimy Ridge.



British troops go back behind the lines for a rest in London after the battle of the Scarpe, May 1917.

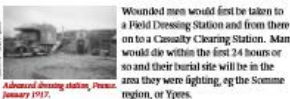
**Aftermath**  
In the fighting around Arras the British, (inc Commonwealth Divisions) suffered 158,600 casualties while the Germans incurred between 130 and 160 thousand. The Battle of Arras is generally considered a British victory due to the capture of Vimy Ridge and other territorial gains, but the inability to swiftly follow up prevented a decisive breakthrough.



A German view of the devastated battle ground.

**Where they fell**  
At the start of the war wealthy families, who could afford the high costs, brought home the bodies of their relatives to bury in family graves, but for most families paying the cost of having their loved ones brought back to England was impossible. Parliament therefore passed an act which said that all those who died should be buried where they had fallen.

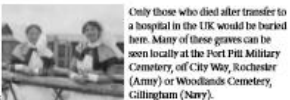
Those killed in action were buried in temporary graves, and moved to permanent sites in the area when the battle had moved on.



Wounded men would first be taken to a Field Dressing Station, and from there on to a Casualty Clearing Station. Many would die within the first 24 hours or so and their burial site will be in the area they were fighting, eg the Somme region, or Ypres.



Stationary Hospital under a canopy, St Paul General Hospital, Arras, February 1917.



Only those who died after transfer to a hospital in the UK would be buried here. Many of these graves can be seen locally at the Port Hill Military Cemetery, off City Way, Rochester (Army) or Woodlands Cemetery, Gillingham (Navy).



In 1917 the Commonwealth War Graves Commission was founded with the responsibility for giving all casualties a properly recorded burial site and for maintaining those sites in perpetuity.



Wounded men lying on stretchers on the grass at an advanced dressing station, Belgium, July 1917.



Stretcher bearers of the RAMC going forward near Zillebeke, Belgium, September 1917.



Private John Briscow, stretcher bearer.



Military hospitals at Reumont, France.



Private Charles Henry Evans



Private Victor Tester

**Menin Gate memorial**  
The Menin Gate is one of four memorials to the missing in Belgium Flanders which cover the area known as the Ypres Salient. Broadly speaking, the Salient stretched from Langemark in the north to the northern edge in Ploegsteert Wood in the south, but it varied in area and shape throughout the war.



The battles of the Ypres Salient claimed many lives on both sides and it quickly became clear that the commemoration of members of the Commonwealth forces with no known grave would have to be divided between several different sites. The site of the Menin Gate was chosen because of the hundreds of thousands of men who passed through it on their way to the battlefields. It commemorates casualties from the forces of Australia, Canada, India, South Africa and United Kingdom who died in the Salient.

In the case of United Kingdom casualties, only those prior 16 August 1917 (with some exceptions) are listed here. United Kingdom servicemen who died after that date are named on the memorial at Tyne Cot, a site which marks the furthest point reached by Commonwealth forces in Belgium until nearly the end of the war.

The Ypres (Menin Gate) memorial now bears the names of more than 54,000 officers and men whose graves are not known

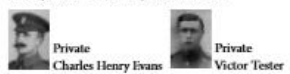
Menin Gate men named on the Menin Gate memorial:



**Tyne Cot memorial**  
The memorial forms the north eastern boundary of Tyne Cot cemetery, which was established around a captured German blockhouse or pill-box used as an advanced dressing station. The original battlefield cemetery of 343 graves was greatly enlarged after the Armistice when remains were brought in from the battlefields of Ploegsteert and Langemark, and from a few small burial grounds. It is now the largest Commonwealth war cemetery in the world in terms of burial.



Menin Gate men named on the Tyne Cot memorial:



**Arras memorial**  
The Arras Memorial is in the Iteudun-d'Amiens Cemetery, which is in the Boulevard du General de Gaulle in the western part of the town of Arras.

The Arras memorial commemorates almost 35,000 servicemen from the United Kingdom, South Africa and New Zealand who died in the Arras sector between the spring of 1916 and 7 August 1918, the eve of the Advance to Victory, and have no known grave. The most conspicuous events of this period were the Arras offensive of April-May 1917, and the German attack in the spring of 1918. Canadian and Australian servicemen killed in these operations are commemorated by memorials at Vimy and Villers-Bretonneux.

A separate memorial remembers those killed in the Battle of Cambrai in 1917.



The adjacent Arras Flying Services memorial commemorates almost 1,000 airmen of the Royal Naval Air Service, the Royal Flying Corps, and the Royal Air Force, either by attachment from other arms of the forces of the Commonwealth or by original enlistment, who were killed on the whole Western Front and who have no known grave.

Menin Gate men named on the Arras memorial:





# 3<sup>RD</sup> YPRES CAMPAIGN

## ► The Battle of Messines Ridge, 7 June, 1917

This was to enable the British to gain control of the high ground on the Ypres salient. It was well planned with 24 mines laid in advance. Heavy artillery bombardment began on 21 May, with aerial reconnaissance ensuring that defensive positions were targeted, ceasing at 02.50 on 7 June. The Germans, realising that the attack was imminent, rushed to their defensive positions, but 30 mins later 22 mines were exploded, and blew the crest of the Messines-Wytschaete Ridge. This simultaneous explosion produced the loudest man-made noise, and lit up the sky as the detonations spread. The explosion was heard in Downing Street and in Dublin!

It also destroyed the German defences, killing some 10,000 German soldiers. The British targets were all achieved by mid afternoon on the 7 June, with a further 7000 captured.

The Allied losses were 3,500 killed and just over 20,000 wounded or missing, losses considered acceptable to the Germans compared with the 1st day of the Somme Offensive the previous summer. The Germans unsuccessfully tried to counter attack, but within a week the Allies had taken command of the area.



Shells bursting in the valley, near Messines Ridge, 7 June 1917.



British troops in a captured German trench. Several dead German soldiers in foreground. Messines Ridge 7 June 1917.



Wounded soldiers on stretchers under awnings near Messines, 7 June 1917.



Infantry in trench near Wytschaete (aka White Chert), 13 June 1917.



Troops in trench, Polygon Wood (aka Plug Street), 11 June 1917.

## ► The Battle of Passchendaele

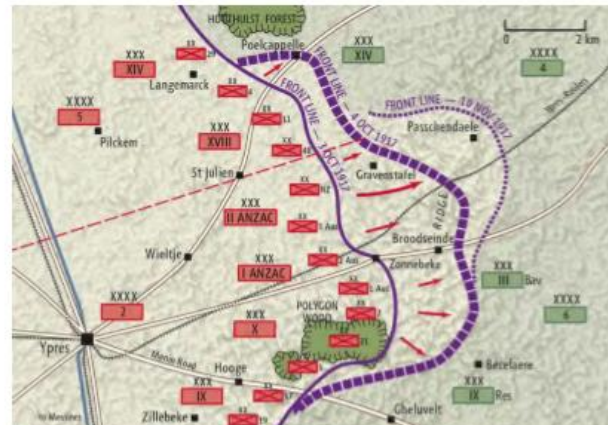
"The Battle of Passchendaele is a vivid symbol of the mud, madness and the senseless slaughter of the First World War." This is how the Canadian forces involved summed up the third Ypres offensive.

The offensive comprised a series of battles between the 31 July and 10 November

- Battle of Pilkem 31 July - 2nd August
- Capture of Westhoek 10 August
- Battle of Langemark 16 - 18 August
- Battle of Menin Road 20 - 25 September
- Battle of Polygon Wood 26 September - 3 October
- Battle of Broodseinde 4 October
- Battle of Poelcapelle 9 October
- 1st battle of Passchendaele 12 October
- 2nd Battle of Passchendaele 26 October - 10 November

The attack at Passchendaele was Sir Douglas Haig's attempt to break through Flanders. His main aim was a breakthrough to the coast of Belgium so that German submarine pens could be destroyed, and also to disrupt the German rail transport system to the east of the area.

Haig also had another reason for going ahead with his plan. He believed that the morale of the German army was very low after the success of the Allies at the Battle of Messines. He believed that the Allies roll through Flanders without too much trouble.



These before and after aerial photographs of the Passchendaele battlefield show quite graphically the scale of destruction to the area.



On 18 July 1917, a heavy artillery barrage was launched at the German lines. This lasted for ten days. Therefore, the German army in the area fully expected a major Allied attack.

The infantry attack started on 31 July, the Battle of Pilkem. The Germans were fully prepared and the Allied attack, launched across an eleven mile front, made only small gains.



Battle of Polygon Wood, infantry moving up line past camouflaged tanks at "Clapham Junction", 15 miles east of Ypres, 30 September 1917.

Then the heaviest rain for over thirty years set in and called a halt until mid August. The rain turned the lowland soil into a thick muddy swamp - made worse by the artillery bombardment that had begun the action. The shell craters made by the Allied shelling filled with water and did not allow advancing men the opportunity to hide in them. The fields through which men should have gone became impassable and tanks just got bogged down.

On 16 August the Battle of Langemark saw several days fighting resulting in very small gains but with very heavy casualties. The attack began again on 20 September after a spell of dry weather, with the Battle of Menin Road Bridge followed by the Battle of Polygon Wood and Broodseinde which gave the Allies control of the ridge east of Ypres.

Haig then decided to push on to the Passchendaele Ridge 10 miles east of Ypres, convinced the Germans were close to collapse, but they were reinforced by troops from the Russian front and then made full use of mustard gas against exhausted British troops.

The Battles of Poelcapelle and the first Battle of Passchendaele failed to make progress, but Haig would not concede that the attack had failed. Finally, with the aid of the Canadian troops the second battle of Passchendaele took the village.

The third Ypres campaign had been very costly in terms of British casualties, some 310,000 to the Germans 200,000, for a gain of a few miles, with neither the coast nor the railroad gained.



German soldier sitting on wooden track between Ypres and Passchendaele. British soldier standing on wooden track leading to Crest Farm and Passchendaele, 27 October 1917.



Battle of Pilkem Ridge, 18 powder battery taking up new position near Hockley, 31 July 1917.



Troops walking along wooden track through the remains of Chateau Wood, near Haig, after the end of crossing the gap, 27 October 1917.



# HMS Vanguard

## HMS Spey

## Various individuals

### HMS Spey disaster. 7 March, 1917

HMS Spey was an old river gunboat built in 1875, which had been converted to a diving vessel, based at Sheerness. On 7 March the Spey was operating in the Thames Estuary, but with deteriorating weather and gale force winds, the Spey decided to return to Sheerness.

Coming down the Thames the SS Hebebrand, a London County Council mud-hopper carrying 1000 tons of sludge, was on its way to dump its cargo in the estuary.

At about 1.40pm the Hebebrand was seen to alter course towards the Spey who responded by turning to port and signalling two blasts on the siren. Unfortunately it was too late to avoid collision.

The Hebebrand struck the Spey a glancing blow on the side, and the 40 year old gunboat suffered badly, its riveted seams sprang open and seawater rushed in, sinking the ship in about three minutes.

13 men got away on the Carley Raft, and 13 more launched the cutter. The remaining on board skiff launched with four men on

board, leaving seven crew to be rescued or take to the water. They presumably expected to be rescued by the Hebebrand.

Meanwhile on the Hebebrand the second officer in charge ordered the crew to discharge the 1000 tons of sludge before launching the rafts. The sea boat found rowing against the wind impossible, so gave up and returned to the Hebebrand. Other Naval ships in the vicinity searched into the evening but found no more survivors. The cutter, a good seaworthy boat, reached the safety of Sheerness Dockyard about 5pm and all 13 of the Spey crew on board survived.

The skiff washed up on the mud-flats off the Isle of Grain, and the survivors were found by men at the nearby RNAS base.

The Carley raft also drifted onto the mudflats later that evening but all 13 men had died. The raft had been swamped and half submerged and the men had all succumbed to the wet and cold. The remaining seven men's bodies were found at intervals much later.

From a Chatham Historic Dockyard Research Study published in the South East History Board. For a more detailed account see separate laminated sheet.



HMS Spey in dock at Sheerness.

### The inquest on the HMS Spey disaster

The Chatham Observer reported the inquest in full which was held on the 10, 12 and 17 March 1917.

Although there was a variation in how the crews of the two ships had seen the collision, the jury decided that the deaths due to drowning were caused by an accident.

The Coroner advised that Carley Rafts should be fitted with a flag and a light which would burn for an hour to make them more visible in poor weather or darkness.

For a detailed account of the inquest from the Chatham Observer see separate laminated sheet.

### Carley Rafts

The Carley raft was formed from copper or steel tubing bent into an oval ring. The ring was surrounded by a buoyant mass of kapok or cork, and then covered with a layer of canvas rendered waterproof. The raft was rigid, and could remain buoyant, floating equally well with either side uppermost, even if the waterproof outer was punctured. The floor of the raft was made from a wood or webbing grating. Boats containing paddles, water, rations and survival equipment were lashed to the floor grating.

Simply by casting it over the side, the lightweight Carley raft could be launched more rapidly than traditional rigid lifeboat designs. Seafarers in it were however completely exposed to the elements, and would suffer accordingly.

### Sludge boats

The London County Council's sludge boats *Barrow* (1892) and *Barling* (1889) at anchor, probably off Barling. The sludge boats carried sewage sludge from the treatment plants at Beckton and Crossness to Barrow Deep and Black Deep, beyond the mouth of the Thames Estuary.



Barrow and Barling

### HMS Vanguard

An internal explosion on 9 July 1917 destroyed HMS Vanguard, while anchored in Scapa Flow, killing 813 of the 845 men on board at the time.

HMS Vanguard was a St Vincent Class battleship launched at Barrow-in-Furness in 1909. The ship was involved in North Sea battles, particularly the Battle of Jutland in 1916, suffering no damage or casualties. On 9th July 1917 Vanguard was anchored in Scapa Flow when at 11.30 pm the entire ship was destroyed in an instant by an internal explosion. Neighbouring ships were showered with wreckage and human remains.

A total of 845 men were on board. Only 3 survive the initial explosion, but Lt Commander Duke died later of his injuries. Some of the ships officers were on another vessel at the time and thus survived. 621 men were Chatham based, their names listed on the Chatham Naval War Memorial on the Lines. At least 30 of these men came from the Medway Towns area.

A court of enquiry attributed the tragedy to the internal explosion of faulty corlitz thought to have been in one of the magazine storage areas. This was confirmed in 1975 when a RN Command Clearance Diving Team found that the original explosion had destroyed virtually all the explosive ordnance on board and blown the ship apart.

The wreck lies in 14 metres of water to the north of the island of Flotta, and west of the Caik of Flotta. Today the wreck has statutory protection as a war grave.

The Chatham Observer, dated July 21 1917, listed the names of all those lost, including career details for 28 of the Medway men.



Navary divers lay a Red Flag on the wreck of HMS Vanguard as part of the commemorations in July 2017.



A colour portrait of the HMS Vanguard taken in 1916.



Chief Petty Officer Frederick Barlow



Cooper Joseph Beeson



Petty Officer Charles Bugg



Chief Yeoman of Signals Oscar Cox



Chief Gunner James Dennis



Engine Room Artificer James Hodges



Chief Petty Officer William Henry Seal



### Chatham's Victoria Cross hero

Posthumous Honour for 2nd Lieutenant Frederick Youens  
This thrilling story of bravery, was first published in the London Gazette on Thursday 2 August, 1917.

For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty.  
While out on patrol this officer was wounded and had to return to his trenches to have his wounds dressed. Shortly afterwards a report came in that the enemy was preparing to raid our trenches. Second Lieut. Youens, regardless of his wound, immediately set out to rally the team of a Lewis gun which had become disorganised owing to heavy shell fire.

During this process an enemy's bomb fell on the Lewis gun position without exploding. Second Lieut. Youens immediately picked it up and hurled it over the parapet. Shortly afterwards another bomb fell near the same place. Again Second Lieut. Youens picked it up with the intention of throwing it away when it explodes in his hand, severely wounding him and also some of his men.

There is little doubt that the prompt and gallant action of Second Lieut. Youens saved several of his men's lives and that by his energy and resource the enemy's raid was completely repulsed.

This gallant officer has since succumbed to his wounds.

Source: Chatham Observer, 6 August, 1917



### Chief Petty Officer Albert Edward Boorman

The late CPO Albert Edward Boorman of 43 East Street Gillingham was one of the victims of the collision at the age of 44.

He joined the Royal Navy aged 15 and served on HMS Calypso, HMS Immortalite, HMS London, and HMS Hyacinth where he had risen to Chief Petty Officer. He retired in 1913 aged 40 after 25 years service to work in the Dockyard. He went back to Navy when war broke out and served until the loss of HMS Spey in March 1917.

He was adept in most outdoor sport in particular cricket football and hockey, where his ability earned him the nickname 'Trolley Boorman'.

His funeral, along with those of other victims of the tragedy, was held with full military honours at Woodlands Cemetery, Gillingham. The cortege was headed by a naval band followed by 200 blue-jackets who pulled the gun carriages. There was also a detachment of military and a strong body of Marines. Each coffin was covered with a Union Jack and floral tributes, handsome wreaths having been sent from the naval barracks. At the conclusion, the Last Post was sounded by buglers.

Albert's mother and brother Arthur were at his funeral, his brothers Harry and Jim were both serving in the military.



### Michael de Caville. 1946 - 2010

Michael de Caville served in the army, with the Middlesex Regiment, for a period in Northern Ireland, and this led him with empathy for those who had given their lives in the service of their country. He was drawn to the fallen of World War One and over twenty five years ago he began a quest to record direct by name the men of the Medway Towns who had died during the Great War.

Before his premature death in 2010, Tessa Towner, the Chairman of the Friends of Medway Archives (FOMA), promised Mick that they would finish his work and publish in 2014 an index to his research.

In honour of this promise, and since 2010, FOMA has added to his work by incorporating all those commemorated on any war memorial in the Medway Towns, with the exception of the Chatham Naval Memorial. The De Caville Index can be found on the FOMA website, foma-bc.org.

Memorials which are included in the index were found in schools, factories, village halls, and churches.

A solitary name was even found at the National Westminster Bank in Rochester High Street.



### Acting Colour Sergeant Frederick Charles Wellard

As his commanding officer wrote in the letter sent back to his wife, Frederick Wellard 'was unfortunately killed actually by an enemy pineapple' shell as he brought rations up to the trench'. A 'pineapple' or 'fish tail' shell was trench slang for a German eight inch mortar shell that had fish-tail shaped wings.

Frederick, 35, left a widow and five children at the family home in Henry Street, Chatham. The eldest age 11, a boy, managed to get

work. Mrs Wellard tried to get a pension and was unsuccessful, so the next three children finished up going into an orphanage with only the youngest staying with his mother.

Frederick was clearly held in great esteem as there is a letter from the Royal Marines barracks in Chatham enclosing a cheque from the Sergeants Mess for £5.



This exhibition, to remember the men of the Medway Towns who gave their lives in WW1, is the fourth in a series of annual exhibitions that FOMA have put together. It has been compiled by Elaine Gardner and Tessa Towner with the assistance of the staff at Medway Archive Centre.

The photographs of the men featured were originally published in the Chatham Observer.

With thanks to...

The Friends of Medway Archives  
The Friends of Medway Archives (FOMA) help with the conservation and preservation of the records and other materials

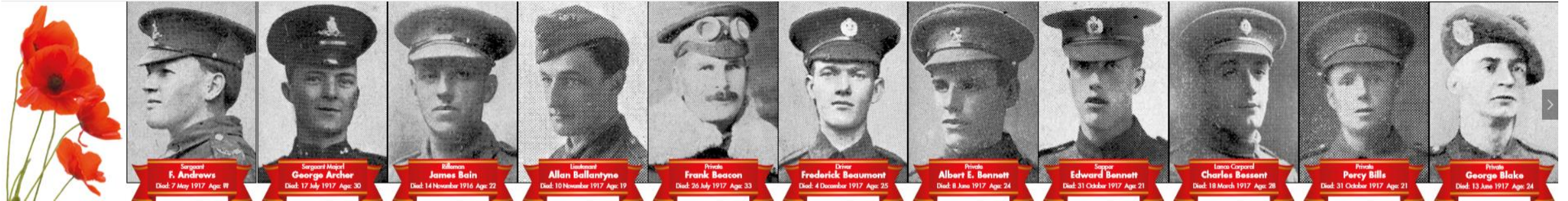
of historical interest held at the Medway Archives Centre, and to promote public access to those collections. If you'd like to find out more about our work and how you can get involved please visit foma-bc.org

Medway Archives Centre  
Medway Archives Centre is the place to visit for anyone wishing to research the history, geography and people of Medway. The centre has an extensive range of resources open to everyone.

The Medway Archives Centre at 52 Bryant Road, Strood ME2 3EP is open to the public on Monday, Thursday, Thursday and Friday 9am-5pm, and on Saturday 9am-4pm.



# Some of the Photos of individuals.





## In Flanders fields the poppies blow

The men of Mesway who gave their lives in 1917

### The Battle of Messines Ridge, 7 June, 1917

This was to enable the British to gain control of the high ground on the Ypres salient. It was well planned with 24 mines laid in advance. There were 100,000 British troops in the area, with 200,000 German troops. The British were to attack the German positions, which were well fortified. The attack was successful, and the British gained control of the ridge. The German positions were well fortified, and the British had to dig in for several days. The British were to attack the German positions, which were well fortified. The attack was successful, and the British gained control of the ridge. The German positions were well fortified, and the British had to dig in for several days.

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British soldiers in the valley, near Messines Ridge, 7 June 1917



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### The Battle of Passchendaele

"The Battle of Passchendaele is a cruel chapter of the war, marked and the greatest disaster of the First World War"

This was the last battle fought in the First World War.

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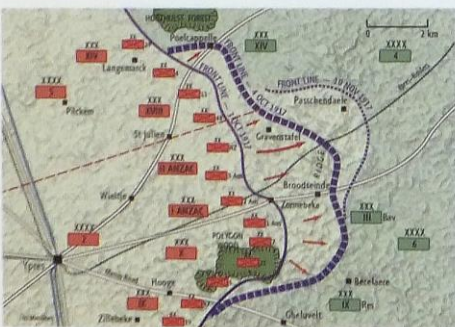
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A printed copy of this exhibition is available in the Local Studies search room if you prefer to sit and read it.

## In Flanders fields the poppies blow

The men of Mesway who gave their lives in 1917



British soldiers in the valley, near Messines Ridge, 7 June 1917

On 18 July 1917, a heavy artillery barrage was launched at the German lines. This lasted for two days. The German army in the area fully expected a major Allied attack.

The infantry attack started on 18 July, the Battle of Pilkem. The Germans were fully prepared and the Allied attack, launched across an eleven mile front, made only small gains.



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Then the heaviest rain for over thirty years set in and called a halt until mid August. The rain turned the land into a thick muddy swamp - made worse by the artillery bombardment that had begun the action. The shell craters made by the Allied shelling filled with water and did not allow advancing men the opportunity to take in them. The fields through which men should have gone became impassable and tanks just got bogged down.

On 16 August the Battle of Langemark saw several days fighting resulting in very small gains but with very heavy casualties.

The attack began again on 26 September after a spell of dry weather, with the Battle of Menin Road Bridge followed by the Battle of Polygon Wood and Broodseinde which gave the Allies control of the ridge east of Ypres.

They then decided to push on to the Passchendaele Ridge 10 miles east of Ypres, across what the Germans were close to collapse, but they were reinforced by troops from the Russian front and then made full use of mustard gas against exhausted British troops.

The Battle of Passchendaele and the first Battle of Passchendaele failed to make progress, but they would not concede that the attack had failed. Finally, with the aid of the Canadian troops the second battle of Passchendaele took the village.

The third Ypres campaign had been very costly in terms of British casualties, some 250,000 to the Germans 200,000, for a gain of a few miles, with neither the sea nor the railroad gained.

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British soldiers in the valley, near Messines Ridge, 7 June 1917